



AmeriCorps
District of Columbia



2023-2024 Serve DC Planning Grant Request for Applications

Full Applications will be submitted according to the application instructions below and should be [submitted here](#). The application window will be open on January 8, 2024 and submissions must be received no later than March 8, 2024 in order to be considered for funding.

Application is Open for Submissions	January 8, 2024
Submissions Close	March 8, 2024
Applicants are Notified of Decision	One Month After Receipt
Planning Grant Begins	April 1, 2024

Serve DC

Serve DC – The Mayor’s Office on Volunteerism and Partnerships, is the DC Commission on National and Community Service and provides oversight and support to applicants selected as sub-grantees. Oversight includes monitoring and programmatic site visits, fiscal monitoring, and reporting requirements. Support includes AmeriCorps training, program director meetings, and one-on-one technical assistance.

Serve DC was established by an Executive Order in 2000 and is housed in the Office of Community Affairs in the Executive Office of the Mayor. Serve DC is the District of Columbia Government agency dedicated to promoting service as an innovative, sustainable solution to the challenges we face as a community and a nation. Serve DC engages District communities by building partnerships and organizational capacity, serving as the local lead for national volunteer and service initiatives, and providing and promoting meaningful service opportunities throughout the year. This application applies to Single State applicants operating only in the District of Columbia.

AmeriCorps

Serve DC receives federal funding from the National and Community Service (AmeriCorps) to support National Service programs in the District of Columbia including the AmeriCorps State program. The mission of AmeriCorps is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic participation through service and volunteering. Through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Volunteer Generation Fund, AmeriCorps has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

AmeriCorps also authorizes awards to organizations that engage in work that aligns with AmeriCorps’ key issue areas and Serve DC’s funding priorities. Planning grants are awards granted to organizations to support a planning period to develop an AmeriCorps program. By the end of the planning period, a grantee will have developed a plan to apply for funding to support an AmeriCorps State Program. Planning grants do not support AmeriCorps members.

Eligible Applicants

The following non-federal entities (all of which are defined in 2 CFR 200.1) are eligible to apply

- Native American Tribes
- Institutions of higher education
- Local governments
- Nonprofit Organizations

Grant Purpose

Serve DC considers new planning grant proposals from any eligible applicant, as defined above, to:

- Assess the feasibility and fit to AmeriCorps with applicants' ideas.
- In close partnership and assistance from select Serve DC staff: develop internal controls, hire and train new staff and/or re-focus and train existing staff, develop AmeriCorps specific policies and procedures, train in the areas of AmeriCorps member recruitment, enrollment, member supervision, and cost-reimbursement grant management. These various products will be developed in a structured, iterative process during the planning period.
- Create the best possible operating grant application in the subsequent funding competition, if the planning grantee decides to move forward with an operational application.

Note: Planning grants are not used to support AmeriCorps members

If planning grantees opt to apply for an operational AmeriCorps grant, those are awarded to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions/practices to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that members can use to pay for higher education and training program expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

Serve DC awards planning grants up to \$100,000. Applicants must request a minimum of \$30,000 to be considered for a planning grant.

Funding Priorities

Serve DC is currently prioritizing organizations whose mission and programmatic work prioritizes the following:

Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention

Organizations and programs that center evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions into eroding the gun violence crisis.

- Applicants should demonstrate that the organization has a strong knowledge of the root causes of gun violence, understand where gun violence is most prevalent, as well as detail how their organization can be a change agent in harm reduction and prevention.
- Applicants should also describe the specific activities and programs associated with gun violence prevention and intervention that the grant would support.

Public and Behavioral Health

Organizations and programs that focus on one of several key health areas:

- Reduction and prevention of drug and opioid use/abuse

- Expansion of access to physical or mental health services, especially programs whose primary beneficiaries are residents of Wards 5, 7 and/or 8.
- Programs that create opportunities for health care professional development for residents

Climate and Clean Energy

Organizations that center land and water conservation, community resilience and solutions to climate injustice.

- Organizations should demonstrate knowledge of how the climate crisis affects vulnerable communities and showcase a commitment to creating climate equity in Washington DC.

Note: Organizations who focus on a priority area will receive an additional 10 points during the grant review process, however, all interested organizations are encouraged to apply.

Grant Activities & Requirements

Grantees, during the planning period will work in partnership with Serve DC to develop operations, access trainings, create or conceptualize AmeriCorps standards and policies, develop a staff oversight plan and other program specific needs to manage an AmeriCorps program and members, in order to effectively move from the planning grant period to develop and apply for funding for an AmeriCorps program.

Funding requested should support the yearlong planning phase to develop materials required to submit an application for an AmeriCorps State program through the Washington D.C. Formula Competition.

Additional requirements include:

- Grantee participation in the Federal Grants Management training, provided in partnership by America's Service Commissions
- Attendance at monthly meetings with Serve DC staff throughout the duration of the grant
- At least one (1) dedicated staff person allocated to the grant (*see budget information below*)

Planning Grant Performance Measure and Match Requirements

All planning grant applications must include one applicant-determined performance measure that corresponds to the primary focus area of the project being planned (for projects being planned in the Capacity Building focus area, the performance measure should be entered under Other Community Priorities). The applicant-determined performance measure must consist of the specific title, output, and outcome listed in the instructions below, and should use target values of 1 for the output and outcome. No MSYs or members should be associated with the performance measure.

Planning grant applicants are **required to match 24% of funds requested**. The applicant's match can be non-AmeriCorps cash and/or in-kind contributions. Applicants must indicate

whether the match is proposed or secured. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet the match requirement at the time of application submission.

Program requirements, including requirements on match, are located in the AmeriCorps regulations (see 45 CFR §§ 2521.35–2521.90 for the specific regulations). In the “Source of Funds” field that appears at the end of Budget Section III, enter a brief description of the match. Identify each match source separately. Identify if the match is secured or proposed. Include a dollar amount, the match classification (cash or in-kind), and the source type (Private, State/Local, or Federal) for your entire match. (The total amount in the Source of Funds field must match the total amount in the budget narrative exactly).

Grant Payment

Serve DC Planning Grants shall be awarded in installments, with 75% offered at the beginning of the planning period and 25% after receipt of a mid-year point. Reporting expectations will be outlined in the notice of grant award, and a mid-year report will be required of the grantee in order to continue the planning period.

Application Content

Applications for a Serve DC planning grant must contain the following:

Executive Summary

The application should include an executive summary describing the amount of funding requested, how the applicant will utilize the funding and what the broad goals for the planning grant period are. The summary should also mention the priority area(s) the applicant focuses on.

The executive summary should follow the below template, applications that deviate from the templated executive summary will not be considered for funding.

<p>[ORGANIZATION NAME] requests a planning grant in the amount of [REQUESTED FUNDS] to support its [BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMMATIC PRIORITIES]. Throughout the grant period, [ORGANIZATION NAME] will use funding provided by Serve DC to [DETAIL SPECIFIC OUTPUTS THAT FUNDING WILL SUPPORT] in support of [ORGANIZATION NAME]’s goal to enact an AmeriCorps program in [UPCOMING GRANT YEAR].</p>

Narrative

The narrative should include a problem statement and provide a brief description of your current organization’s activities. The application should also describe how AmeriCorps members would be used to advance the goals of your organization, identifying potential outputs and outcomes, and describe development goals and objectives for the organization during the planning period.

The application should also describe:

- A staffing plan for the proposed project/planning activities
- Prior experience administering federal or other grant funds
- Organizational experience with or knowledge of problem area
- Programmatic needs, i.e. personnel, trainings, equipment

Organizational and Financial Capacity

The application should include a description of your current organization structure, as well as the name(s) and title(s) of all staff members who will be working on the planning grant project and activities. This should also include a description of the roles and responsibilities of staff members associated with the specific activities associated with the project.

The application should describe the applicant's experience with receiving federal, local or foundation funds/grants, including a brief overview of previously received funding and a description of how the applicant will manage the funds over the course of the planning grant period. Applicants will enter all expenses related to the application through a budget workbook made available at time of application, and applicants will also be asked to submit their organization-wide budget for the full year in which they are applying.

In this section the applicant should consider the following criteria:

- The applicant describes how it has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan the proposed program.
- The applicant describes its plans to engage community members and partner organizations in the planning process.
- The applicant has sufficient policies, procedures, and controls in place to prevent, detect, and mitigate the risk of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, such as appropriate segregation of duties, internal oversight activities, measures to prevent timekeeping fraud, etc.
- The applicant's (organizations or institution's) definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility demonstrate the organization is engaged in related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This can include the inclusion of diversity on the Board of Directors, agency staff and leadership, and/or volunteers.
- The applicant describes the extent to which the organization has 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.

Budget

Your proposed budget should be sufficient to allow you to perform the tasks described in your narrative. Reviewers will consider the information you provide in this section in their assessment of the Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy selection criterion. Follow the detailed budget instructions in the Attachments to prepare your budget. We recommend that you prepare your budget using the templated budget worksheet found in the attachments section below. Prior to submission be sure to review the budget checklist to ensure your budget is compliant.

As you prepare your budget:

- All the amounts you request must be defined for a particular purpose. Do not include miscellaneous, contingency, or other undefined budget amounts.
- Itemize each cost and present the basis for all calculations in the form of an equation.
- Do not include unallowable expenses, e.g., entertainment costs (which include food and beverage costs) unless they are justified as an essential component of an activity.
- Do not include fractional amounts (cents)

Budget's must include the following sections:

SECTION I: PROGRAM OPERATING COSTS

This should include the following subcategories:

- **Personnel**
 - This section should include each staff member whose time will be charged to the planning grant. Applicants should list individual staff positions, provide the annual salary (or total salary costs planned for the duration of the grant), as well as the percentage of full-time equivalent devoted to this award. Each staff position listed in the budget **must** be described in the application narrative. **Applicants MUST include at least one staff person in the budget at a minimum of 75% (30 hours per week) FTE in order to be considered for the planning grant.** The staff person listed should be the anticipated lead for the AmeriCorps program.
- **Personnel Fringe Costs**
 - This section should detail the types of fringe benefits to be covered and the costs associated with said benefits. Allowable fringe benefits typically include FICA, workers' compensation, retirement, unemployment, health and life insurance, IRA, and 401K. You may provide a calculation for total benefits as a percentage of the salaries to which they apply or list each benefit as a separate item. If a fringe benefit amount is over 30%, please list the covered items separately and justify the higher relative cost. Holidays, leave, and other similar vacation benefits are not included in the fringe benefit rates but are absorbed into the personnel

expense line items.

- **Travel**
 - Describe the purpose for which the program staff will travel. Provide a calculation that includes itemized costs for air fair, transportation, lodging, per diem, and other travel-related expenses multiplied by the corresponding unit (trips, staff, etc...) Only domestic travel is allowable.
- **Equipment**
 - Equipment is defined in the Uniform Guidance in section 200.33 as tangible, non-expendable personal property having a useful life of more than one year AND an acquisition cost of **\$5,000 or more per unit** including accessories, attachments, and modifications. Any item that does not meet this definition should be included in the following section. **Equipment costs may not be more than 10% of the grant total.**
- **Supplies**
- **Contractual and Consultant Services**
 - This section should include costs for consultants related to the project's operations, except training or evaluation consultants which are to be listed in the Evaluation budget section.
- **Training**
 - This section may include costs associated with staff training. Costs may include registration fees and conference attendance fees. **Applicants are required to include \$2000 for the Federal Grants Training Membership through Feldesman, Tucker, Leifer, and Fidell, in order to be considered.** At least one staff member should plan to attend the three-day training as a part of the grant responsibilities. More information on the training membership can be found at: <https://learning.ftlf.com/products/content/federal-grants-training-membership-1>
- **Evaluation**
 - Not applicable to planning grants
- **Other**
 - All costs that are not explicitly represented in other sections should be included here.

SECTION II: ADMINISTRATIVE / INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs are defined in the Uniform Guidance in section 200.56 as costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily to the cost

objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. These costs may include administrative staff positions, rent, utilities, etc. For organizations that have a Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate, administrative costs mean those costs that are included in the organization's indirect cost rate agreement. Such costs are generally identified with the organization's overall operation and are further described in the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance.

Options for Calculating Administrative/Indirect Costs (*choose A, B, or C*)

A. AmeriCorps Five/Ten (5/10%) Fixed Percentage Method

- The AmeriCorps Five/Ten fixed percentage rate method allows applicants to charge indirect costs up to a cap of 5% of expended direct cost expenses without a federally approved indirect cost rate to AmeriCorps and 10% of the total direct expenses to the grantee share (or matching costs). In summary, the five/ten percent method places caps of 5% to be charged to AmeriCorps and 10% to be counted toward matching costs.

B. Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate

- If the applicant has a federally approved indirect cost rate, this method **must** be used. If the negotiated rate exceeds 5%, there is still a 5% cap on what can be applied to AmeriCorps, any amount exceeding 5% will be placed in the Grantee Share with the cap being the negotiated rate. If using this method, the approved Negotiated Rate must be submitted at the time of application. AmeriCorps and Serve DC do not restrict the overall indirect cost rate claimed. It is at your discretion whether or not to claim your entire indirect cost rate to calculate administrative costs.

C. De Minimis Rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs (*not commonly used*)

- Organizations who have never, at any points in time, held a federally negotiated indirect cost rate (except for those non-federal entities described in Appendix VII to CFR Part 200 – States and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, paragraph (d)(1)(B) and who receive less than \$35 million in direct federal funding, may indefinitely use a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). Additional information regarding what is included in MTDC and use of this option can be found at 2 CFR 200.414(f) and 200.68. If this option is elected, it must be consistently used across all federal awards.

SECTION III: SOURCE OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING

The Source of Additional Funding section is where the applicant should detail all relevant and non-confidential sources of funding for the organization. This section will be used to determine the source of **match funds required from all planning grantees**. Additionally, this information will be reviewed in an effort to determine the financial health of an organization. AmeriCorps

funding is **not enough** to run a fully functioning program and it is crucial that organizations building an AmeriCorps program identify other source of funding.

Applicants must submit their budgets using the [Budget Worksheet](#), do not deviate from this form.

Disclaimers

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

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

Privacy Act Notice: The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C § 552a) requires that the following notice be provided to you: The information requested on the AmeriCorps Application Instructions is collected pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§ 12581 - 12585 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 - 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 Department contractors that have a need to know the information for the purpose of assisting the Department's efforts 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. Executive Summaries of all compliant applications received and applications of successful applicants will be published on the AmeriCorps website as part of ongoing efforts to increase transparency in grantmaking. This is described in more detail in the Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity. The information will not otherwise be disclosed to entities outside of AmeriCorps without prior written permission. Effects of Nondisclosure - The information requested is mandatory in order to receive benefits.

Indirect Cost Rates: AmeriCorps allows applicants to include indirect costs in application budgets. Based on qualifying factors, applicants have the option of using a federally approved indirect cost rate, a 10% de minimis rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly as outlined in 2 CFR § 200.413 Direct costs. Applicants who hold a federal negotiated indirect cost rate must use that rate in lieu of the AmeriCorps 5/10% allocation of administrative costs. Applicants who hold a state or federal negotiated indirect cost rate or will be using the 10% de minimis rate must enter that information in the Organization section in eGrants (See Attachment J).

Universal Identifier: Applicants must include a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and/or a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) depending on which field(s) are required in eGrants at the time of submission. Applicants must obtain their UEI and register their entity through the System for Award Management (SAM.gov). All grant recipients are required to maintain a valid registration, which must be renewed annually.

Disclosures: This Request for Applications (RFA) does not commit Serve DC to make an award. Serve DC reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications. Serve DC reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments or to rescind this RFA.