



Notice of Funds Available AmeriCorps*State Formula 2020-2021

Serve Connecticut is pleased to announce the availability of federal funds to support new and re-competing AmeriCorps*Connecticut programs to start in fall 2020.

What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps (pronounced *A-me-ri-core*; the “p” and the “s” are silent) is a national service program designed to strengthen citizenship and the ethic of service by engaging thousands of Americans on a full- or part-time basis to help communities to address their toughest challenges. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) administers AmeriCorps at the federal level and works in partnership with states to develop service programs and create a community-based national service network.

AmeriCorps is made up of three programs: AmeriCorps*State and National, AmeriCorps*VISTA, and AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC).

For nearly 55 years, [AmeriCorps*VISTA](#) members have been helping bring individuals and communities out of poverty. Members serve full-time for a year in nonprofits, public agencies and faith-based organizations throughout the country, working to fight illiteracy, improve health services, create businesses, increase housing opportunities, or bridge the digital divide.

[AmeriCorps*NCCC](#) is a 10-month, full-time residential program for men and women between the ages of 18 and 24. AmeriCorps*NCCC combines the best practices of civilian service with the best aspects of military service, including leadership and team building. Members serve in teams of 10 to 15 members. Priority is given to projects in public safety, public health and disaster relief. Teams are based at one of four campuses across the country but are sent to work on short-term projects in neighboring states.

What is AmeriCorps*State and National?

More than three-quarters of [AmeriCorps*State and National](#) grant funding goes to governor-appointed state commissions, which in turn distribute and monitor grants to local nonprofits and agencies. These are [AmeriCorps*State](#) programs. The other quarter goes to national nonprofits that operate in more than one state. These are [AmeriCorps*National Direct](#) programs. Organizations receiving AmeriCorps*State and National grants are responsible for recruiting, selecting, and supervising AmeriCorps members.

AmeriCorps provides full- and part-time opportunities for participants, called members, to serve their communities in a variety of ways, engaging the energy and idealism of citizens of all ages in meeting the most critical needs in our communities. AmeriCorps members in Connecticut have devoted themselves to improving the lives of people in their communities by tutoring, providing after-school programs for youth, increasing early childhood literacy and more.

AmeriCorps is open to U.S. citizens, nationals, or lawful permanent residents aged 17 or older. In exchange for their terms of service, members receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to pay educational expenses at eligible post-secondary institutions, including many technical schools and G. I. Bill approved programs, or to repay qualified student loans. The dollar amount of the education award is equal to the maximum amount of the U. S. Department of Education Pell Grant and may change year to year. The award is named after Eli Segal, a pioneer of national service and the first CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Since 1994, more than 15,000 Connecticut residents have served approximately 21 million hours and earned education awards totaling more than \$51.2 million.

Depending on the nature of the AmeriCorps program, AmeriCorps members may also receive a modest living allowance, health insurance, childcare, and student loan deferment. Members who serve part-time receive a partial education award and do not receive health insurance benefits. A living allowance is not required for part-time members.

What is Serve Connecticut?

Established in 1993, Serve Connecticut is the administrative agent for Connecticut’s AmeriCorps*State portfolio. Serve Connecticut funds and supports programs that encourage all Connecticut residents to volunteer and serve their communities.

Serve Connecticut is a 25-member nonpartisan board appointed by the Governor with a mission to strengthen Connecticut communities through national service resources, community engagement and volunteerism.

Serve Connecticut achieves its mission by:

- Securing and granting funds
- Selecting and training high-quality grantees
- Overseeing and monitoring grantee results
- Recognizing the success and effectiveness of volunteer programs and activities
- Developing and sharing resources
- Creating networks among volunteer organizations
- Serving as a bridge between the public and nonprofit sectors



Bring AmeriCorps to Your Community

Last year more than 2,100 Americans of all ages and backgrounds met local needs, strengthened communities, and expanded economic opportunity through national service in Connecticut. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) invested more than \$9.9 million to support cost-effective community solutions, working hand in hand with local partners to empower citizens to solve problems. AmeriCorps members are preparing today's students for tomorrow's jobs, reducing crime and reviving cities, connecting veterans to services, fighting the opioid epidemic, helping seniors live independently, and rebuilding communities after disasters. Service members served at more than 400 locations across Connecticut, including schools, food banks, homeless shelters, health clinics, youth centers, veteran's facilities, and other nonprofit and faith-based organizations.

What can AmeriCorps funding do for your community?

Serve Connecticut is currently seeking local programs to compete for AmeriCorps*State Formula funding at the state level. This **2020-2021 AmeriCorps*State Formula** notice will focus grant making in six focus areas: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, and Veterans and Military Families.

In order to maximize the impact of the public investment in national service, Serve Connecticut will provide grants to programs that demonstrate that they will engage AmeriCorps members in an evidence-based or evidence-informed approach to providing a service intervention that will result in intended solutions to community problems (e.g., based on proposed program's performance and evaluation data or research demonstrating the effectiveness of a similar intervention). Applicants will be awarded points for providing evidence that their proposed intervention will lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change (logic model). Applicants shall provide evidence that the proposed intervention is effective for the proposed population and community challenge.

Upon receipt of the proposals, Serve Connecticut will determine which applications to forward to Peer Review; final decisions are made by late June. Serve Connecticut supports high-quality community service programs with measurable outcomes and cost effective community impact.

Is your organization eligible for AmeriCorps?

Educational institutions (local school districts, intermediate school districts, colleges and universities, etc.), local government entities, tribes, state agencies, faith-based organizations and non-profit organizations that have their 501(c)3 status and have been in existence for at least three years are eligible to apply for Connecticut AmeriCorps*State Formula funding. AmeriCorps programs must engage a corps of AmeriCorps members in full- part-time service activities.

What types of grants are available?

Serve Connecticut funds operating grants that support fully developed plans to establish a new Connecticut AmeriCorps program or to support, expand, or replicate an existing program. Grant awards will cover a period that includes one year of operation with an initial start-up phase for new programs. Grants may be renewed for two additional years, subject to annual review and the availability of federal appropriations.

Is your organization ready for AmeriCorps?

You should begin your application process by answering the following questions:

- What critical needs does your program address? How?
- How will your program recruit, train, and engage AmeriCorps members?
- Who are your potential community partners in collaboration with your program?
- How will you meet the matching requirements for federal program dollars?
- How will you measure direct and demonstrable results of your program?

Once you have a clear vision of these guidelines, you should be ready to address the more specific aspects of the **2020-2021 AmeriCorps*State Formula** application.

How many members can your project support?

Your program should be large enough to make a significant difference in your community using a corps-based national service approach. Programs must achieve a demonstrable impact on the community served. While the actual size of each program may vary depending on the size of the community in which it operates, the design of the program, and other factors, **applicants are required to apply for at least ten (10) full-time equivalent AmeriCorps members.** Applicants should evaluate their present infrastructure and capacity when considering program size. You may seek support for a program that enrolls fewer than 10 full-time equivalent AmeriCorps members, particularly in rural areas. In that case, you should demonstrate why a smaller program is appropriate. In cases where you desire one member or a few members, you may want to consider applying to host an

AmeriCorps*VISTA. For more information, visit <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps-programs/ameri-corps-vista/sponsor-vista-member>.

Grant requests may vary in size depending on the type and scope of a proposed program. Applicants are allowed flexibility in developing their budgets, within federal limitations.

How will your members be placed?

Programs should partner with other agencies or nonprofit organizations to support member placements. Such partners might include schools, volunteer centers, service organizations, or colleges/universities. As you design your program, make sure to think about what organizations in your community may want to host AmeriCorps members.

What are the components of the grant application?

We recommend that applicants immediately start doing the groundwork to identify needs, build partnerships, and plan for success. The most competitive AmeriCorps proposals share the following common elements:

- **Identified Community Needs** - Proposals must show that AmeriCorps members will be utilized to address community needs through direct services to community members.
- **Objectives that Measure Program Impacts** - AmeriCorps programs must demonstrate measurable impacts on service recipients, communities, and AmeriCorps members. Strong objectives are critical in the selection and funding of AmeriCorps proposals.
- **Partnerships** - The strongest applications are the result of local area service partnerships that bring many stakeholders to the table in placing members and providing other programmatic support.
- **Capacity to Leverage Matching Funds** - AmeriCorps programs must provide a non-federal cash and/or in-kind match. Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to raise these resources.
- **Demonstrated Fiscal/Administrative Capacity** - Both fiscally and programmatically, AmeriCorps programs can be challenging to administer. Your organization or group must demonstrate experience in administering a similar type of volunteer or service program.

What are the responsibilities of operating an AmeriCorps program in Connecticut?

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Recruiting, selecting, placing, training and supervising members.
- Designating a full-time coordinator to run the program.
- Submitting fiscal and program reports to the Commission.
- Participating in monthly meetings for program directors.
- Participating in statewide member events and activities.

Important Dates/Deadlines

Week of January 20, 2020

2020-2021 AmeriCorps*State Formula Guidelines and Application Instructions available on-line at <http://servect.org/funding/formula/>. Please download the guidelines and application instructions. Copies will not be mailed or faxed.

January 28, 2020 and February 11, 2020

Technical Assistance Workshop for prospective applicants held at 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT.

Attendance and pre-requisite online coursework required.

March 4, 2020

Applications due in eGrants.

Week of June 22, 2020

Notification to applicants whether proposal selected.



