Request for Proposals and Application Instructions
2024-25 AmeriCorps State Formula Planning Grant Funds

RFP #2425WNCSB-ACP

Issued by:

State of Wisconsin
Serve Wisconsin – Wisconsin National and Community Service Board

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A Notification of Intent to Apply is required for all applicants.

Access the Notification of Intent to Apply at
https://forms.gle/SDrk5RXwFPvYbF1a9

Notifications of Intent to Apply must be submitted by
Thursday, February 22, 2024 by 12:00pm midnight Central Time

All Proposals and Required Additional Documents must be received by
Tuesday, March 12, 2024 by 4:30pm Central Time

For further information regarding this RFP, contact ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov

All questions must be submitted via email.

Questions about this RFP will be accepted until Friday, March 8, 2024 at 12:00pm midnight

From the Executive Director

Thank you for your interest in starting a new AmeriCorps program by applying for an AmeriCorps Formula Planning Grant for the coming year. With the challenges we face across the state, we need to harness the power of service more than ever. Whether you are addressing the education gap, climate change, helping people access health care, improving public health, assisting the unhoused, or advancing racial equity, we look forward to the positive impact you will have across the state.

This Request for Proposal & Instructions (RFP) document will walk you through the application process and requirements. You can find additional resources, videos, and contact information on the [Serve Wisconsin](#) website.

Last year, we hosted 625 members across 24 programs and we look forward to growing and strengthening our programs across the state. We are committed to supporting greater diversity, equity, and inclusion within Serve Wisconsin, our programs, and our AmeriCorps members.

At Serve Wisconsin, we view all funded organizations as our partners in achieving our mission to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. We are here to support you through the application process and beyond; the coming year promises to help us achieve even more together.

We can't wait to learn more about you!

Jeanne Duffy
Executive Director, Serve Wisconsin
Serve Wisconsin
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Madison, WI 53703
ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov
www.servewisconsin.wi.gov

Application Dates and Deadlines

Date	Description
Monday, February 5	Request for Proposals released
Thursday, February 22	[Notification of Intent to Apply](#) due by midnight
Friday, March 8	Last day to email questions about the Request for Proposals
Monday, March 11	Final Questions & Answers from applicants posted online
Tuesday, March 12	Applications and additional documents due
Tuesday, March 12	Alternative Match Requests Due (if applicable)
Tuesday, April 2	Applications will be returned to applicants for revisions
Mid-April	Expected AmeriCorps Notification Date of Competitive awards
Thursday, April 18	Revisions due to Serve Wisconsin *There may be further revisions after this date*
Tuesday, April 30	Program Evaluation & Development Committee meeting at 101 E. Wilson, Madison, WI *All recommended applicants are required to present to committee*
Thursday, May 9	Wisconsin National and Community Service Board (WNCSB) Meeting 101 E. Wilson, Madison or virtual
Friday, May 17	Board-approved applications due to AmeriCorps

Meeting dates will be posted on the [Serve Wisconsin Formula Planning Grant Request for Proposals webpage](#), and all meetings are publicized as open meetings. Please check the website for up-to-date schedules. Email ServeWisconsin@wisconsin.gov with any questions.

Application Resources

Please use this document to apply for AmeriCorps Wisconsin State Formula Planning Grant funding for program year 2024-25.

These grants are awarded to organizations that plan to establish AmeriCorps State programs in Wisconsin after completing one Planning Grant year. Selected organizations will receive up to 12 months of funding to learn about AmeriCorps program grants, and to develop the infrastructure and receive the training needed to manage an AmeriCorps program.

Use this document in conjunction with the [AmeriCorps Regulations](#) (45 CFR § 2520–2550) and the AmeriCorps [Mandatory Supplemental Information](#) to complete an AmeriCorps Wisconsin Formula Planning grant proposal for program year 2024-25.

This AmeriCorps Wisconsin State Formula Planning Request for Proposals document, and other resources to help complete this application, can be found on the Serve Wisconsin webpage. Serve Wisconsin also offers access to [On3Learn](#) online workshops at no cost, which Serve Wisconsin encourages applicants to use in conjunction with writing the application. For details on how to access these, please email ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov.

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What basic qualifications must an AmeriCorps member have to serve as a tutor?	45 CFR §2522.900-2522.950
Who must comply with matching requirements?	45 CFR §2521.35-2521.90
What financial benefits do AmeriCorps participants serving in approved AmeriCorps positions receive?	45 CFR §2522.240-2522.250
How do I calculate my program's budgeted Corporation cost per member service year (MSY)?	45 CFR §2522.485
May I use the Corporation's program grant funds for performance measurement and evaluation?	45 CFR §2522.500-2522.650
Evaluation Programs: Requirements and Procedures	45 CFR §2522.500-2522.540 and §2522.700-2522.740
What process does AmeriCorps use to select new grantees?	45 CFR §2522.400-2522.475

If there is any inconsistency between the AmeriCorps federal regulations and this RFP, the regulations take precedence.

I.   Program Description

The mission of AmeriCorps is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. AmeriCorps has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

AmeriCorps Grants are awarded to eligible organizations (see Eligible Applicants section below) proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions/practices to strengthen communities. AmeriCorps Planning Grants are awarded to eligible organizations proposing to operate an AmeriCorps program but would benefit from a year to plan before launching the new program.

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 can be used to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans. AmeriCorps Planning Grants do not have AmeriCorps members, or AmeriCorps member related expenses, included in the application or budget.

The purpose of this document is to provide interested parties with information to enable them to prepare and submit a proposal for an AmeriCorps Planning Grant.

About Serve Wisconsin

Serve Wisconsin is Wisconsin's National and Community Service Board. Our mission is to promote service, provide training, and allocate resources to programs that enrich lives and communities through service and volunteerism. We achieve this mission primarily through our work with AmeriCorps programs and AmeriCorps members throughout the state of Wisconsin. We are governed by a 21-member citizen board that is appointed by the Governor.

AmeriCorps is a federal agency that funds organizations to make a positive impact in communities. To support the placement of AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in communities, AmeriCorps provides more than $800 million in grants every year.

Federal Award Information

1.   Estimated Available Funds

Serve Wisconsin expects a highly competitive grant competition. Serve Wisconsin and the AmeriCorps federal agency reserve the right to prioritize providing funding to existing

awards over making new awards. The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

2.   Estimated Award Amount

Award amounts will vary but will not exceed $75,000.

3.   Period of Performance

The project period is generally one year: August 15, 2024-August 14, 2025 or September 1, 2024-August 31, 2025.

4.   Types of Funding Awards Available

There are three types of Serve Wisconsin funding awards for AmeriCorps programs available for the 2024-25 program year.

This Request for Proposal & Instructions (RFP) document provides information to prepare and submit a proposal for AmeriCorps Wisconsin Formula Planning Grant funding for organizations to begin developing their plans to manage a new AmeriCorps program.

a)   AmeriCorps Wisconsin Formula Planning Grants

AmeriCorps State Formula Planning grants of up to $75,000 are awarded on a competitive basis to allow organizations to begin developing their plans to manage an AmeriCorps program. Planning grant activities may involve work to establish a new program in Wisconsin or to replicate a successful existing program model in unserved or underserved areas of the state. Organizations use planning grants to become better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the subsequent grant cycle. Planning grants may not be used to support AmeriCorps members and costs associated with writing an AmeriCorps application may not be charged as direct costs to the grant.

b)   AmeriCorps State Formula Program (Operational) Grants

Formula Program Grants are awarded to fund a portion of program costs and AmeriCorps members' living allowance. Serve Wisconsin determines which applications receive AmeriCorps State Formula Program Grants in the State of Wisconsin. To apply for an AmeriCorps Wisconsin Formula Program Grant, please click here to see the Request for Proposals for Formula Program Grants.

c)   AmeriCorps Wisconsin Competitive Program (Operational) Grants

These grants are awarded to fund a portion of program costs and AmeriCorps members' living allowance. AmeriCorps State Competitive applications are submitted to Serve Wisconsin through a separate RFP process. Eligible applications are reviewed at the state level and then sent to the AmeriCorps federal agency where they are selected for funding

or returned to the state for further consideration under the Formula grant process. Serve Wisconsin is not currently accepting applications for Competitive Program Grants.

This Request for Proposals & Instructions (RFP) document is only for AmeriCorps Wisconsin Formula Planning grants.

Planning Grants are cost reimbursement grants. On a quarterly basis, organizations will submit a Periodic Expense Report, requesting reimbursement for allowable costs within that quarter.

5. Cost Sharing or Matching

A successful AmeriCorps Wisconsin State Formula Planning grant application is required to match 24 percent of the budget. The match can be non-AmeriCorps cash and/or in-kind contributions. The applicant organization must indicate whether the match is proposed or has already been secured. The applicant must demonstrate the ability to meet the match requirement at the time of application submission.

42 USC §12571(e) requires that grantees that use other federal funds as matchings funds for an AmeriCorps grant must report the amounts and sources of these funds to AmeriCorps in a Federal Financial Report found in 42 USC §12571(e). Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout. Match can be non-AmeriCorps cash and/or in-kind contributions.

6. Funding Restrictions

- *Religious use*. AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to provide religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any form of proselytization.
- *Political activity*. AmeriCorps assistance may not be used by program participants or staff to assist, promote, or deter union organizing; or finance, directly or indirectly, any activity designed to influence the outcome of a Federal, State or local election to public office.
- *Contracts or collective bargaining agreements*. AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to impair existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements.
- *Supplantation*. AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to replace State and local public funds that had been used to support programs of the type eligible to receive AmeriCorps support.
- *Nonduplication*. Corporation assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program. And AmeriCorps assistance will not be provided to a private nonprofit entity to conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities currently provided.

- *Nondisplacement.*
  - An employer may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the use by such employer of a participant in a program receiving AmeriCorps assistance.
  - An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving AmeriCorps assistance.
  - A service opportunity will not be created under this chapter that will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual.
  - A participant in a program receiving AmeriCorps assistance may not perform any services or duties or engage in activities that would otherwise be performed by an employee as part of the assigned duties of such employee.
  - A participant in any program receiving AmeriCorps assistance may not perform any services or duties, or engage in activities, that—
    - Will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or
    - Are services, duties, or activities with respect to which an individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures.
  - A participant in any program receiving assistance may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any—
    - Presently employed worker;
    - Employee who recently resigned or was discharged;
    - Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures;
    - Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick); or
    - Employee who is on strike or who is being locked out.
- *Prohibited Activities.* See Appendix 4: Glossary for full text.

II. Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants

In order to be eligible for Formula Planning Grant funding through the Serve Wisconsin/Wisconsin National and Community Service Board, an applicant organization shall be one of the following at the time of application for a Formula Program grant:

1. one of the following if its governing body operates within the state of Wisconsin:
   a. a federally recognized Indian tribe,

b. a public or private nonprofit organization (organized as a tax-exempt entity under the federal IRS Code, including religious organizations and labor organizations), or
c. an institution of higher education as defined in Wisconsin Statute 118.55(1).
or
2. Wisconsin state or local government entity.

The only exception to this policy would be for an annual Formula Program grant process in which all other possible Formula Program grant funding options have been considered and Formula Program grant funding remains unallocated. In cases where Formula Program grant funds would otherwise remain unallocated, those funds could be provided to an entity that does not meet the requirements of this Eligibility Policy

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

Other Eligibility Requirements

- Under Section 132A(b) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (as amended), as amended, organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this RFP.
- 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 –
    o that has been assessed
    o for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed
    o that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability –
  that the corporation is not eligible for an award under this RFP. However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has made a determination 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.

III. Application and Submission Information

This document should be used together with the [AmeriCorps Regulations](#) and [Mandatory Supplemental Information](#).

How to Apply

- Submit a mandatory [Notification of Intent to Apply](#) by Thursday, February 22, 2024 by 12:00pm midnight Central Time
- Register the applicant organization (or renew the organization's registration) with the System for Award Management
- Write a high-quality proposal that is responsive to this RFP
- Submit application and required additional documents to ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov by

1. Notification of Intent to Apply

All planning grant applicants must submit a Notification of Intent to Apply via the online form at: https://forms.gle/SDrk5RXwFPvYbF1a9 by Thursday, February 22, 2024 by 12:00pm midnight Central Time.

Organizations that submit a Notification of Intent to Apply will receive a confirmation email from Serve Wisconsin within 24 hours. Send a message to ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov if encountering technical difficulties that preventing submission a Notification of Intent to Apply.

Submitting a Notification of Intent to Apply by Thursday, February 22, 2024 by 12:00pm midnight Central Time, is mandatory. Applications submitted by applicants who have not submitted a Notification of Intent to Apply by the deadline may not be considered for funding. Submitting a Notification of Intent to Apply does not mean the organization is obligated to apply.

2. System for Award Management (SAM) and Unique Entity Identifier

All applicants must register with the [System for Award Management (SAM)](#) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If the applicant organization is awarded a grant, the applicant organization must maintain an active SAM registration throughout the life of the award.

Serve Wisconsin and AmeriCorps will not make grant awards to entities that do not have an active SAM registration and Unique Entity Identifier. If the applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time AmeriCorps is ready to make a federal

award, AmeriCorps may determine that an applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

Serve Wisconsin suggests that applicant organizations 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. The applicant organization's name and address in eGrants must be identical to the organization's name and address at SAM.gov.

Applications must also include the applicant organization's federal Employer Identification Number.

Application Content

3.   Application Fields

In a word processing document, applicants will establish the following sections of a proposal:

- Executive Summary
- Program Design
- Organizational Capability
- Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

4.   Page Limits

Proposals must use Arial or Times New Roman 12-point font, and 1" margins or larger. Applications may not exceed 8 pages for the: Executive Summary, Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy. This page limit does not apply to the separate budget template.

Reviewers will not consider submitted material that is over the page limit. Please do not submit other items that are not requested in the RFP, as they also will not be reviewed. If an applicant passes the initial review process, instructions for entering their proposal in eGrants, the online grant application and management system, will be provided.

5.   Late Applications

Submitting an application after the deadline may result in disqualification of the application.

IV. Writing A Planning Grant Application

Narratives

The narrative section of the application is the applicant's opportunity to convince reviewers that the proposed project meets the selection criteria as outlined in the RFP. Below are some general recommendations to help applicants present the proposed project in a way the reviewers will find compelling and persuasive.

- **Lead from the proposed program's strengths and be explicit**. Do not make the mistake of trying to stretch the proposed program description to fit funding priorities and special considerations articulated in the regulations or RFP.
- **Be clear and succinct**. Do not use jargon, boilerplate, rhetoric, or exaggeration. Describe clearly what the proposed project intends to do and how the proposed project responds to the selection criteria.
- **Avoid circular reasoning**. The problem described should not be defined as the lack of the solution that is proposed.
- **Explain how**. Avoid simply stating that the criteria will be met. Explicitly describe how the proposed project will meet the criteria.
- **Don't make assumptions**. Even if the applicant organization has received funding from AmeriCorps in the past, do not assume that reviewers know anything about the organization, the proposed program, the partners, or the beneficiaries. Avoid overuse of acronyms.
- **Use an impartial proofreader**. Before submitting an application, let someone who is completely unfamiliar with the proposed project read and critique the project narrative.
- **Follow the instructions and discuss each criterion in the order they are presented in this Request for Proposals**. Include the section headings in all capital letters to differentiate narrative sections by criterion.

Table 2. Application Section Point Values

Category or Subcategory	Points
Executive Summary	0
Program Design	
• Need	10
• Program Model	30
• Planning Process	30
Organizational Capability	20
Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	
• Cost Effectiveness	5
• Budget Template	5
Total	**100**

Narrative Sections and Selection Criteria

1.   Executive Summary (0 points)

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] proposes to develop an AmeriCorps program serving in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will serve]. The AmeriCorps investment of will be matched with $[total amount of projected match], $[amount of local, state, and federal funds] in public funding and $[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding. No AmeriCorps members will be needed to execute this plan.

2.   Program Design

This section should clearly explain the proposed planning grant activities. Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value. For Serve Wisconsin's scoring criteria, please see Appendix 2: Planning Grant Review Form.

a)   Need (10 points)
- Describe the community need that the future AmeriCorps program will address and provide evidence that the need exists.
- Describe why the applicant organization is applying for a planning grant, why a planning grant is needed to address the previously described need, and what the organization hope to achieve during the one-year planning period.

b)   Program Model (30 points)

Applicants are to describe what their currently imagined AmeriCorps program plans to achieve once operational. While the planning grant will help to determine specifics of the program, applicants should include as much information as possible about the potential AmeriCorps program as they currently imagine it. More information about how the applicant will determine the criteria below should be included in the Planning Process section.

- Describe where future AmeriCorps members are expected to serve, as well as how AmeriCorps members would be supervised.
- Describe the activities in which future AmeriCorps members will be engaged and how those activities will connect to the identified community need(s).
- Provide an estimate of how many future AmeriCorps members the program would include and whether they would serve on a full-time or part-time bases. Note: Serve Wisconsin prefers to fund programs that engage at least 10 members each year.
- Explain how AmeriCorps members are a highly effective means to solve this community problem.
- Explain how AmeriCorps members will be addressing an unmet need and will not be duplicating or displacing any current staff, volunteers, or other services.

c)   Planning Process (30 points)

Provide a description of the proposed planning process with a timeline and benchmarks for planning activities. Explain how the applicant organization will use the planning period to develop its capacity to effectively manage an AmeriCorps program.

Examples of planning activities include:

- Identifying and hiring a consultant to help with the planning process, or, how the organization will obtain the necessary training and technical assistance needed in order to plan and manage an effective, compliant AmeriCorps program.
- Determining the most appropriate AmeriCorps member activities to address the identified community need.
- Determining the desired characteristics of AmeriCorps members and developing a recruitment strategy.
- Developing a data collection or performance measurement system to ensure that reliable data is gathered to demonstrate impact on the communities served.
- Describing how the applicant will identify or develop an evidence-based program model.
- Creating a process for selecting operating and host sites (if applicable) that will ensure the most appropriate and capable organizations are selected.

3. Organizational Capability (20 points)

Describe the applicant organization's ability to successfully plan an AmeriCorps program, including but not limited to:

- Primary and secondary contacts for the grant application and their current role and experience.
- The amount of time staff member(s) will support the program during the planning grant, including the amount of time the organization plans to have staff member(s) support the implementation of the program the following year.
- Prior experience administering federal funds.
- Prior experience in the proposed area of programming.
- The management and staff structure and the roles the board of directors, administrators, and staff will play in the planning process.
- Systems and processes for sound programmatic and fiscal oversight or plans to develop this capacity.
- Identify any existing partners and plans to engage community members and partner organizations in the planning process.

4. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (10 points)

a) Cost Effectiveness (5 points)

- Describe the amount and sources of match secured to date, and any plans to secure additional match by the project start date if needed.
- Describe plans to develop a cost-effective program, including how the organization will develop diverse resources that will support the future AmeriCorps program implementation and sustainability.
- Discuss the adequacy of the budget to support the planning process, including the required match.

b) Budget Template (5 points)

Follow the detailed budget instructions in Appendix 1 and enter the budget into Attachment A: Planning Grant Budget Worksheet.

- Planning Grant applications may request up to a maximum of $75,000, must prepare detailed budgets and meet matching requirements.
- Planning grant applicants may not request funding for any member or include AmeriCorps grant writing related expenses as a direct cost.
- The proposed budget:
  - should be sufficient to allow the applicant organization to perform the tasks described in the narrative,
  - should be free from mathematical errors,

- should only include proposed costs that are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award, and
- should also contain adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- All amounts requested 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.
  - Example: 1 staff x 100 miles/month x 12 months x $0.51/mile = $612
- Do not include unallowable expenses, e.g. entertainment costs (which include food and beverage costs) until they are justified as an essential component of an activity.
- Do not include fractional amounts (cents).
- In the Source of Funds section, list each match source separately. Identify if the match is
  - Secured or Proposed
  - Cash or In-Kind; and
  - the Source Type (Private, State/Local, or Federal).
  Do this for each line of the entire match amount. The total amount in the Source of Funds field should match the grand total amount in the Grantee Share budget exactly.
- To determine how much grantee match the applicant organization must provide (in-kind and/or cash), use the following equation:

  CNCS (federal) request ÷ 0.76 = TOTAL AWARD

  TOTAL AWARD – CNCS Request = Grantee Share (24%)

- Planning Grants are not required to have a National Service Criminal History Check completed on covered staff. Serve Wisconsin strongly encourages planning grants to complete the Truescreen portion of the NSCHC during the planning grant year as a best practice.
- Serve Wisconsin retains a 2% share of the 5% federal funds available to programs for administrative costs and this needs to be identified within the budget. See Appendix 1 for more details.
- Applicants must comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and the requirements of the Uniform Guidance. Please refer to the Uniform Guidance, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200) for allowable, allocable, and reasonable cost information, as well as audit requirements, including the need to provide audits to the Clearinghouse if expending over $750,000 in federal funds, as required in the Uniform Guidance.
- A completed Budget Worksheet must accompany the AmeriCorps Planning Grant proposal and required additional documents submission by the deadline.

c) **Additional Documents**

In addition to the application, applicant organizations are required to submit all the required additional documents.

Table 3. Required Additional Documents

Document	Description
1. Audit and Management Letter	• Most recent audit for the applicant organization, or other financial statements if the organization have not had an audit. • If a management letter was provided as part of that audit, it must be included with the audit submitted. • Wisconsin state agencies and universities do not need to provide the State audit.
2. Federally-approved Indirect Cost Agreement *(if applicable)*	Applicants that include a federally approved indirect cost rate amount in their budget must send this as an additional document.
3. Delinquent Federal Debt *(if applicable)*	Any applicant with federal debt delinquency must submit a complete explanation in Word or PDF format.
4. Organizational Chart	Submit the organizational chart of the applicant's organization. Ensure the proposed AmeriCorps planning staff are designated as such.
5. IRS Letter of Determination *(if applicable)*	Letter reflecting approval or denial of tax-exempt status required for 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations; Include any amendments.
6. Cost Allocation Plan *(if applicable)*	
7. Permission to Use Federal Funds as Match *(if applicable)*	If using other federal funds for match, provide a copy of documentation from the other federal entity showing that those federal funds are permitted to be used as match on an AmeriCorps grant
8. Budget Worksheet	This is Attachment A. The Budget Template must be completed and submitted as an additional document by the deadline. Please use the RFP and Appendix 1 to complete.
9. Additional Documents Checklists	This is Attachment B. The Additional Document Checklist should be submitted, but failure to include it will not disqualify the application.
10. Assurances and Certifications	This is Attachment C. Please review and sign the last page, then submit with the rest of the Additional Documents by the deadline.

11. Serve Wisconsin Financial Management Survey	This is Attachment D. Submit this, and all associated documents, with the rest of the Additional Documents.
12. AmeriCorps Operational and Financial Management Survey	This is Attachment E. Submit this with the rest of the Additional Documents.

Submission Instructions for Application and Additional Documents

For each document submitted, please (1) clearly title each document, and (2) include a header or title that includes the legal applicant's name on the first page of each document. Please do not combine additional documents into one large document.

Additional documents should be submitted via email. Submit all additional required documents as individual attachments via email to ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov with the subject line:

2024-25 AmeriCorps Proposal – [Organization Name**] [**AmeriCorps Program Name**]**

If an alternate submission method is required, please contact ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov by Tuesday, February 27, 2024.

All applications and additional documents must be received by Serve Wisconsin by the deadline of Tuesday, March 12, 2024 by 4:30pm.

Timely submission of emailed document packets will be determined by the date and time the email was received by Serve Wisconsin. If additional information and/or clarifications are needed, it is the applicant's organization's responsibility to reply to emails from ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov in a timely manner. Occasionally, emails with many attachments can take significant time to send and receive. Please take this into consideration when sending additional documents in enough time for Serve Wisconsin to receive by the Tuesday, March 12, 2024 by 4:30pm deadline.

d) Review, Authorize, and Submit

Applicants must submit common federal government-wide Representations and Certifications through SAM.gov.

As planning grant applicants submit their initial application in a word processing document, the Assurances and Certifications are included as Attachment FC. Please review and sign, then submit as an Additional Document.

The following information is only applicable if/when the applicant organizaiton is eligible to submit the application in eGrants at a later date.

Read the Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications carefully. The person who authorizes the application must be the applicant's Authorized Representative or

their designee and must have an active eGrants account to sign these documents electronically. An Authorized Representative is the person in the applicant organization authorized to accept and commit funds on behalf of the organization. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Be sure to check the entire application prior to submission to ensure that there are no errors. When verifying the application, eGrants will also generate a list of errors if there are sections that need to be corrected prior to submission. If someone else is acting in the role of the applicant's Authorized Representative, that person must log into their eGrants account and proceed with Authorize and Submit. After signing off on the Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications, their name will override any previous signatory that may appear and show on the application as the Authorized Representative.

Note: Anyone within the applicant organization who will be entering information in the application at any point during application preparation and submission in the eGrants system must have their own eGrants account. Individuals may establish a new account by visiting the [eGrants](#) webpage, then selecting "Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account."

Please direct all questions about these Application Instructions and Attachments in writing to Serve Wisconsin at ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov.

V.   Proposal Selection and Award Process

Procuring and Contracting Agency

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued by the Wisconsin National and Community Service Board/Serve Wisconsin, which is the sole point of contact for the State of Wisconsin during the selection process. The person responsible for managing the RFP process is Élysse Chay, RFP Manager and AmeriCorps Program Officer. All contracts resulting from this RFP will be administered by Serve Wisconsin.

Serve Wisconsin selects applications using a multi-stage review and selection process. This process includes the Serve Wisconsin Board, staff and peer review and evaluation of pre-determined performance indicators.

Initial Application Compliance and Eligibility Review

Serve Wisconsin will conduct an initial Eligibility Review to determine if an application meets the eligibility requirements as detailed in this RFP and advances to the next stage of the review process.

An application is compliant if the applicant:
- Is an eligible organization
- Is eligible to submit to Serve Wisconsin
- Submitted an application by the submission deadline

Reviewing for eligibility is intended to ensure that only those applications that are eligible for award are further reviewed. However, a determination of eligibility can take place at any point during the application review and selection process. Applicants that are determined to be non-compliant and ineligible will not receive an award.

Serve Wisconsin Application Review

1.   Internal Review

Serve Wisconsin will establish a review panel to review planning grant proposals. The review panel will consist of Serve Wisconsin staff and/or outside peer reviewers. The review panel will use the assessment criteria in the RFP as well as Appendix 2 to select proposals that will be submitted to AmeriCorps for funding consideration.

Serve Wisconsin staff will prepare funding recommendations to the Board based on the results of this review. All reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

2. Post-Review Quality Control

After the initial review process is complete, Serve Wisconsin staff will review the results for fairness and consistency. Some applications may be selected for a Quality Control assessment. This additional level of review may be used to assess applications for which there are significant reviewer anomalies.

3. Pre-Award Financial Review

Serve Wisconsin staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant to assess an applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to the assessment of the applicant's eligibility and the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If Serve Wisconsin determines that an award will be made to an applicant with assessed risks, additional monitoring activities and training that correspond to the degree of assessed risk may be applied to the award. Additionally, if Serve Wisconsin concludes that the reasons for applicants having poor risk assessment are not likely to be mitigated, those applications may not be selected for funding.

4. Applicant Clarification

Serve Wisconsin may ask an applicant for clarifying information which is used to make funding recommendations. A request for clarification does not guarantee an award. Applicants may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked for clarifying information. 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 consideration.

5. Feedback to Applicants

Following the application reviews, applicants will receive summary feedback from the Internal Review Panel of their compliant applications. This feedback will be based on the review of the original application and will not reflect any information provided during clarification.

6. Program Evaluation & Development Committee Meeting

If an application passes the initial review, the application will be considered at the Wisconsin National Community Service Board's Program Evaluation & Development Committee Meeting. Each applicant organization needs to have at least one representative present at this meeting to give a brief presentation to Committee members and to answer any questions. More details about this meeting will be available to qualified applicants.

7. Wisconsin National Community Service Board Meeting

The applications that the Program Evaluation & Development Committee recommends for funding then make their way to the full Board for consideration. This meeting is not required to attend for applicants, but it is recommended in case Board members have questions. More details about this meeting will be available to qualified applicants.

Transparency in Grantmaking

AmeriCorps is committed to transparency in grant-making. Information about funded grants and subgrants is also available at USASpending.gov. Submitted program narratives and a summary of external reviewer comments for successful applications will be available upon request via email to OGAGarp@cns.gov.

Appeal of Grant Decision

Applicants can only protest or appeal violation of procedures to the Board that are outlined in this RFP or fall within the grant selection process.

- Ranking and scoring by reviewers is not subject to protest or appeal.
- Notice of intent to protest and any protests must be made in writing.
- Any written notice of intent to protest must be filed with the Board and received in no later than five (5) working days after the notices of intent to award are issued.
- Any written protest must be received within ten (10) working days after the notice of intent to award is issued. Email the Board Chair, Wisconsin National & Community Service Board at ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov.
- Individuals should make their protests as specific as possible and should fully identify the procedural issue being contested.

The appeal will be reviewed by the Program Evaluation & Development Committee of the Board and a recommendation will be forwarded to the Board for consideration. The decision of the Board may be appealed to the Secretary of the Department of Administration within five (5) working days of issuance. A copy of such appeal must also be filed with Board. The appeal must allege a violation of a Wisconsin statute or a section of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.

VI. Award Administration Information

Federal Award Notices

AmeriCorps will make awards following the grant selection announcement. All applicants, successful or not, will be notified of funding via email.

Notification of an award is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The Notice of Grant Award is the authorizing document for grant activities. An awardee may not expend federal funds until the start of the Project Period identified on the Notice of Grant Award unless it has received a written pre-award cost approval from AmeriCorps.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Uniform Guidance

All awards under the criteria in this RFP are subject to the [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) 2 CFR 200](#) and 2205.

2. Requests for Improper Payment Information

AmeriCorps may request documentation from recipients in order to monitor the award or to comply with other legal requirements, such as 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.

3. AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions

All awards made under the criteria in this RFP will be subject to the [2024 AmeriCorps General Terms and Conditions](#), and the 2024 AmeriCorps State and National Program Specific Terms and Conditions (not yet available). 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 the AmeriCorps website's [Manage Your Grant page](#).

4. National Service Criminal History Check Requirements

Planning Grants are not required to have a National Service Criminal History Check completed on covered staff. Serve Wisconsin strongly encourages planning grants to complete the Truescreen portion of the NSCHC during the planning grant year as a best practice.

The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a specific screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. The law requires grantees to conduct and document NSCHCs on persons (including award-funded staff, national service participants/AmeriCorps members, or volunteers) receiving a salary, living allowance, stipend or education award through a program receiving AmeriCorps funds. This includes staff who receive part of their salary through a subgrant.

The cost of conducting NSCHCs is an allowable expense under the award. Grantees must utilize the two vendors AmeriCorps has engaged to conduct the required NSCHCs.

Failure to conduct a compliant NSCHC may result in significant disallowed costs.

A NSCHC consists of a check of the:

- National Sex Offender Public website (through Truescreen);
- State criminal history record repository or agency-designated alternative for the individual's State of residence AND State of service (both through Truescreen); and
- Fingerprint-based check of the FBI criminal history record database (through Fieldprint)

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 sec offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry or
- Has been convicted of murder

See 45 CFR 2540.200 – 2540.207 and AmeriCorps' National Service Criminal History Check Resources for complete information and FAQs.

5. Official Guidance

All AmeriCorps active Guidance is available on the AmeriCorps Official Guidance webpage.

6. Use of Material

To ensure that materials generated with AmeriCorps funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, 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).

7. Re-Focusing of Funding

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

Technical Assistance

Serve Wisconsin intends to provide technical assistance to ensure that strong proposals are developed. The following policies will be followed as a fair process for the provision of technical assistance:

- Technical Assistance will be equally available to all prospective applicants.
- Staff will only respond to applicants who have reviewed the available written materials and have a specific question to be answered. For fairness and transparency, questions may only be submitted in writing.
- Staff will only provide answers to specific questions and make general comments regarding the Regulations and RFP, as opposed to providing specific programmatic suggestions for a particular applicant.
- Staff will not review proposal drafts.
- In compliance with federal regulations regarding conflict of interest, WNCSB Board members will not provide any form of technical assistance to a potential grant applicant. Instead, they will refer applicants to the RFP Manager.
- Serve Wisconsin will provide applicants with technical assistance on entering and submitting proposals in AmeriCorps' web-based grants management system and will provide guidance on how to access assistance from the AmeriCorps Hotline.

Notices

These application instructions conform to AmeriCorps's online grant application system, eGrants. All funding announcements by AmeriCorps are posted on AmeriCorps.gov and grants.gov.

1. 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 CFR §1320.5(b)(2)(i)](5 CFR §1320.5(b)(2)(i))) This collection is approved under OMB Control #: 3045-0047, Application Instructions, State and National Competitive, New and Continuation, Expiration Date: September 30, 2023.

2. Privacy Act Notice

The Privacy Act of 1974 ([5 USC §552a](5 USC §552a)) requires that we notify applicant organizations that the information requested under this Notice of Funding is collected pursuant to [42 USC](42 USC)

§12592 and §12615 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended, and 42 USC §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.

3.   Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act

Grant recipients will be required to report to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) all subawards over $30,000 and may be required to report on executive compensation for recipients and subrecipients. Recipients 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.

4.   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 §200.4133](#), 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, or will be using the 10% de minimis rate, must enter that information in the Organization section in eGrants. However, 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](#), no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps State and National grants.

Use the [AmeriCorps eGrants Indirect Cost Rate (IDCR) User Instructions](#) for how to enter the organization's indirect cost rate. 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. The applicant may also obtain instructions and additional information by contacting the email address above.

5.   Universal Entity Identifier

Applicants must include a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) in eGrants at the time of submission. Applicants must obtain their UEI and register their entity through the System for Award Management. All grant recipients are required to maintain a valid registration, which must be renewed annually.

VII. Appendices and Attachments

The Appendices listed below are for reference.

The Attachments listed below are to be sent as Additional Documents via email by Tuesday, March 12, 2024 by 4:30pm. Please review specific instructions in the [Documents](#) section.

Appendices are for reference

- Appendix 1: Planning Grant Budget Instructions
- Appendix 2: Planning Grant Review Form
- Appendix 3: Alternative Match Request Instructions
- Appendix 4: Glossary

Attachments must be submitted

- Attachment A: Planning Grant Budget Worksheet
- Attachment B: Planning Grant Additional Documents Checklist
- Attachment C: Assurances & Certifications
- Attachment D: Serve Wisconsin Financial Management Survey
    - This requires additional items to be submitted in conjunction with the survey.
- Attachment E: AmeriCorps Operational and Financial Management Survey

All additional documents can be found on the Serve Wisconsin [Formula Planning Grant RFP](#) website.