



Announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity

Commission Name: Hawai'i Commission for National & Community Service (HCNCS)

Federal Agency Name: AmeriCorps

Funding Opportunity Title: Fiscal Year (FY25) 2025-2026 AmeriCorps State and National Formula Grants

Assistance Listing Number: 94.006

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

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

AmeriCorps Hawai'i State Planning Grants: AmeriCorps state planning grant 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 Hawai'i. 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 cost associated with writing an AmeriCorps application may not be charged as direct costs to the grant. Planning grants are cost reimbursement grants.

AMERICORPS FOCUS AREAS

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

Disaster Services

Helping individuals and communities prepare for, respond to, recover from,

and mitigate the effects of disasters and increase community resiliency.

Economic Opportunity

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

Education

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

Environmental Stewardship

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

Healthy Futures

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

Veterans and Military Families

Improving the quality of life of veterans, military families, caregivers, and survivors.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

AmeriCorps recently released its [2022-2026 Strategic Plan](#) which defines the agency's goals, objectives, and strategies to meet and exceed our mission to improve lives and strengthen communities. As AmeriCorps invests in community impact; the agency commits to continuous improvement and high standards of performance. AmeriCorps prioritizes operational accountability and ensures that its resources are used appropriately to assist individuals and communities across the nation. Our efforts to increase the maturity of the strategic plan and the agency's performance management are of the utmost priority and will continue to drive our implementation to "get things done" for America.

Serve Communities

- Serve communities with concentrated poverty, rural communities, tribal communities, and historically underrepresented and underserved individuals. These may include people of color, immigrants, refugees, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, people with arrest or conviction records, religious minorities, etc.;

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

Benefit AmeriCorps Members

- Provide benefits to AmeriCorps members aimed at enhancing member experience and bolstering member recruitment and retention such as paying more than the minimum living allowance, transportation, housing, food, etc.;
- Create workforce pathways for AmeriCorps members, including deliberate training, certifications, and hiring preferences or support;
- Enhance and expand services to second chance youth and/or engage those youth as AmeriCorps members; and
- Develop and train the next generation of diverse public health leaders through service while addressing pressing community health challenges. Review Public Health AmeriCorps Priority in the Mandatory Supplemental Information for eligibility information.

Use Evidence

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

Faith-Based

- Organizations that are faith-based.

American Climate Corps

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

- The position has verifiable climate or environmental impact.
- The position is temporary (term-limited), and the term length is at least 300 hours.

- The position includes skills-based training as part of the program and provides a pathway to employment.
- The position must receive a living allowance and, in some cases, may receive additional member benefits.

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

2025-2026 AmeriCorps Hawai'i Planning Grant Dates and Deadlines:

March 3rd, 2025: Applications and Budget due to AmeriCorps Hawai'i

May 2025: Notice of Selection (tentative)

August 2025: Issue of Awards (tentative)

September 2025: Planning Grant Period Begins

August 31st 2026: Planning Grant Period Ends

Applicant Information

Name of Organization:

Organization Address:

Employer ID Number/TAX ID:

DUNS Number:

SAM Registered (yes or no):

Name & Title of Primary Grant Contact:

Phone:

Email:

Name & Title of Fiscal Grant Contact:

Phone:

Email:

Application and Submission Instructions:

This is a working template designed to assist you in the input of the grant proposal into eGrants, the AmeriCorps Grants Management Portal. If an applicant passes the initial review process, instructions for entering into eGrants will be provided.

<https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp>

Please use this word processing document to apply for AmeriCorps Hawai'i Planning Grant funding for program year 2024-2025. Applicants will establish the following three main categories of a proposal:

- I. Program Design: Rational and Approach,
- II. Organizational Capacity
- III. Project Budget

Instructions are provided above each review category. Response may be extended to allow for additional text to be entered; however, applicants are not to exceed the character limit listed.

*In order to streamline the application process, some narrative sections have been pre-populated. These sections require only that the applicants provide organization-specific information.

I. Program Design: Rational and Approach

A. Problem/Need Statement:

This section should clearly explain your proposed planning grant.

- Describe the need you plan to address with your AmeriCorps program and provide information about the extent/severity of the need in the community(ies) where your organization will focus its efforts. Cite specific relevant data.
- Describe why you are applying for a planning grant, why a planning grant is needed to address the previously described need, and what you hope to achieve during the one-year planning period.

(6,500 character limit, with spaces)

B. AmeriCorps Members as an Effective Tool

Organizations that will host an AmeriCorps Program recruit individuals both locally and nationally to serve as AmeriCorps Members. AmeriCorps Members agree to serve between 100 and 1700 hours with the program and implement direct service interventions to address a community need.

Examples of direct service functions include, but are not limited to: tutoring, mentoring, recruiting volunteers, assisting clients with financial stability services, building/ repairing homes, restoring parks/wilderness areas, facilitating after school programming, assisting in career readiness/job placement services, assisting individuals to transition to stable housing.

AmeriCorps programs are able to offer their members a living allowance to help cover basic expenses during the members' term of service. Members serving in a 1700hr term are required to receive a minimum Living Allowance of \$20,400 (subject to change annually) that is funded under the AmeriCorps grant award. Prorated living allowances are also typically provided by the grant to members serving in a part-time capacity. 1700hr members are also eligible to receive grant-supported healthcare coverage and child care assistance.

The average AmeriCorps program hosts between 8 and 25 AmeriCorps members who are either directly managed by the organization or are placed at service sites where the members are supervised by staff of partner agencies.

Applicants are to describe what their currently imagined AmeriCorps program plans

to achieve once operational. While the planning grant will help to determine specific of the program, applicants should include as much information as possible about the potential AmeriCorps programs as they currently imagine it.

- Describe why your organization believes that AmeriCorps Members could potentially be an effective tool for addressing the community need that is described in section A.
- Describe where you expect AmeriCorps members to serve, as well as how AmeriCorps members would be supervised.
- Describe the activities in which you propose to engage AmeriCorps members and how those activities will connect to the identified community need(s).
- Provide an estimate of how many AmeriCorps members your program would support and whether they would serve a full time or part time basis.
- Explain how AmeriCorps members are highly effective mean to solve this community problem.
- Explain how AmeriCorps members will be addressing unmet need and will not be duplicating or displace any current staff, volunteers or other service.

(6,500 character limit, with spaces.)

C. Planning Grant Approach and Timeline

The planning process with a timeline and benchmarks have been pre-entered below. Applicants may add additional activities such as conducting needs assessments, facilitating additional feedback sessions, etc.; however, the applicants should highlight any additional activities in **yellow**.

The AmeriCorps planning grant will provide resources and guidance to design a high-quality AmeriCorps program to serve the target communities selected by the organization. During the one-year grant period, the organization will identify critical issues affecting the target communities; develop a plan to deliver solutions; establish effective partnerships; and develop data collection systems that will be used for reporting, learning, and continuous improvement. The process will begin with research and training; with time dedicated to becoming familiar with AmeriCorps grant provisions, regulations, and resources available for new grantees.

Throughout the planning process, the organization will work closely with AmeriCorps Hawai'i Staff or commission assigned consultants to ensure that the training needs of the organization are being met and that the planning process is adequately implemented.

An advisory committee may also be created to include a variety of community stakeholders. The Advisory Committee will assist in crafting the overall program design by clarifying which community needs to address; identifying AmeriCorps members' service activities and sites; developing stakeholder roles, and outlining budget needs and sources of match funding.

Through the planning process, documentation of the community needs and plans for recruitment, training, and implementation will be used to structure a competitive AmeriCorps Program grant application that will be anticipated to be used submitted for the following funding opportunity” A competitive application will demonstrate the organization’s capacity to effectively manage an AmeriCorps program and will:

- Develop a strong performance measurement system that ensures collection of reliable data to exhibit the program's impact on the community being served.
- Create a process to select service sites;
- Design a recruitment strategy that aligns with the desired and required characteristics/skills for AmeriCorps members;
- Create policies, procedures, and forms to be used in anticipation of hosting an AmeriCorps program.
- Develop curriculum to be used in training members; and
- Create an effective orientation, training, and monitoring plan that includes applicable technical assistance.

The tentative timeline for the planning process follows and is not inclusive of all planning activities.

2025-2026 PLANNING GRANT TIMELINE

September 2025

- Read through the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), Application Instructions, and Program Director’s Manual.
- Read the New Program Start-up Guide and the Guidance for Planning Grantees.
- Read the AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions.
- Attend Hawai’i State Commissions Two-day Program Directors Training (TBD virtual or in -person)
- Start to become familiar with the tools available through the National Resource Center.
- Have a one-on-one session with Staff/Commission Consultant – on Evidence.
- Begin meeting with an advisory committee of stakeholders to get input on the planning process.

October 2025

- Check in with the State Commissions Staff at least once a month.
- Attend 3-month ASC Planning Grant Training Series (Virtual)
- Begin contacting current AmeriCorps grantees to learn about their programs.
- Have a one-on-one session with Staff/Commission Consultant – on Theory of Change & Logic Model.
- Clarify the community needs to be addressed by the program through service activities of AmeriCorps members.
- Start to identify potential community partners and service

sites, or at least the criteria by which they will be selected.

- Consider the number of AmeriCorps members needed, and their profiles in terms of experience and skill sets.
- Outline a tentative operational program budget.
- Identify potential in-kind and cash donors.

November 2025

- Continue to have sessions with the Staff/Commission Consultant – on Performance Measures.
- Continue to attend ASC Planning Grant Training Series (Virtual)
- Check in with the State Commissions Staff at least once a month.
- Continue meeting with stakeholders for planning input.
- Define stakeholder roles for program implementation.
- Complete documentation of the community needs to be addressed by program.
- Determine staffing needs for the program.
- Develop member recruitment, selection, orientation, training, supervision, support and retention plans.
- Develop a "volunteer generation" plan, if volunteer participation is practicable. Develop a plan to enhance the capacity of community organizations through the AmeriCorps Program.
- If funds are available, attend the Pacific Regional National Service Conference

December 2025

- Continue to have sessions with the Staff/Commission Consultant – Data Collection Plan.
- Continue to attend ASC Planning Grant Training Series (Virtual)
- Have two more check-in calls with Commission Support Staff.
- Secure cash and in-kind donations.
- Develop plans for organizational capacity, service site training plans, monitoring and oversight plans, and program evaluation.
- Make significant progress towards identifying program operating sites and partner service sites where members will serve, taking care to create a process for selecting these sites that will ensure that the most appropriate and capable organizations are selected.
- Develop plans to demonstrate cost-effectiveness.
- Develop a performance measurement system to ensure that reliable data is gathered to demonstrate impact on communities to be served.

January 2026

- Continue to have sessions with the Staff/Commission Consultant – Data Collection Tools.
- Have at least two more check-in calls with the Commission Support Staff.

- Develop an updated operational grant program budget.
- Complete a community needs statement and the documentation of needs.
- Determine member activities and roles and how they align with unmet community needs.
- Complete the member recruitment, training and support plan.
- Complete a plan detailing how and where diverse resources will be obtained to assure program sustainability.

February 2026

- Continue to have sessions with the Staff/Commission Consultant – Evaluation.
- Have at least two more check-in calls with the Commissioner Support Staff.
- Finalize operational and service site selections.
- Complete a service site training plan.
- Finalize all program plans.
- Make significant progress in securing matching funds required by the operational program.
- Ensure that the program will have the ability to secure computer and other communications and information technology support, if and as needed.
- Complete at least one draft of the program grant application.

March 2026

- Complete session with the Staff/Commission Consultant – Evaluation.
- Receive feedback on the draft grant application from stakeholders.
- Complete at least one revised draft of the program grant application.
- Have at least two more check-in calls with the Commission Support Staff.
- Begin to input the grant application into eGrants for the next round of funding (<http://www.eGrants.cns.gov>).

April 2026

- Finalize grant application, complete its input into eGrants, and submit prior to the State Commission deadline.
- Begin working on forms and templates to support program implementation (e.g., member contract, member timesheets, eligibility form, memo of agreement with service sites, etc.).
- Begin working to prepare all support systems for program implementation (payroll, financial management, time tracking, monitoring and oversight tools, program evaluation tools, etc.).
- Begin working on an AmeriCorps policies and procedures manual
- Develop detailed member orientation and training curricula.

May 2026

- Participate in the hiring process as to persons to work on program/operational grant.

- Continue to pursue unfinished tasks, as practicable.

June 2026

- If applicable, attend the National Conference on Volunteering and Service.

July 2026

- Complete Grant close-out.
- If applicable, begin the member recruitment process.

II. Organizational Capacity:

A. Organization Capacity

Describe your organization's ability to successfully plan an AmeriCorps program.

- Describe how the organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure necessary to plan and implement the proposed project.
- Describe the organization's prior experience administering private, local, state, and/or federal funds.
- Describe the organization's financial management structure and what financial systems are used to manage funds. If the organization has already identified a potential applicant for the Grant Coordinator position, please include the individual's name and qualifications as part of this section.

(6,500-character limit, with spaces.)

B. Resource and Development

Please discuss the organization's experience in securing outside financial and in-kind contributions. What resources could potentially be utilized/secured to assist the organization in supporting a full AmeriCorps program in FY26-27?

(3,000-character limit, with spaces)

III. Project Budget:

A planning grant budget instructions and template has been provided. See attached documents.

- Maximum request of \$75,000.
- NO member- affiliated costs
- Match is required. Project budget must indicate a minimum grantee match amount of 24% of the total cost of facilitating the planning grant process.
 - Grantee match can come from cash and/or in-kind sources
 - Must be documented. Except under special permission, may not come from Federal sources.

****AmeriCorps Hawai'i is not obligated to fund grant proposals in their entirety and reserves the right to request applicants to make revisions to any portion of their organization's proposal.**