



Tennessee AmeriCorps State 2024

Notice of Funding Opportunity,

September 11, 2023

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE OF AMERICORPS FUNDING

Volunteer Tennessee is a 25-member, bipartisan commission appointed by the Governor with a mission to encourage volunteerism and community service in Tennessee as a means of problem-solving at the local level. Volunteer Tennessee pursues its mission through administration of grants, training, and collaborations and coalitions with public and private organizations interested in volunteerism and service. Volunteer Tennessee currently funds eighteen (18) AmeriCorps State programs across Tennessee. This Tennessee State AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity (*Notice*) will focus on grant-making for fiscal year 2024 in six areas: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, and Veterans and Military Families.

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

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations (see *Eligible Applicants* section) proposing 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](#) that they can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

Note that all funded programs will be required to prominently display the Volunteer Tennessee and AmeriCorps logos on printed and electronic materials related to the grant.

B. AMERICORPS INFORMATION, APPLICATION, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WEBINARS

Volunteer Tennessee will offer webinars to introduce potential applicants to AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee and to go into detail about the *Notice*. A detailed technical assistance webinar may be offered if there is sufficient interest.

Please visit our website (www.volunteertennessee.net) for more details about the webinars and to access recordings following each webinar.

Volunteer Tennessee strongly encourages new and re-competing applicants to attend the *Grant Information Session* webinar in this extremely competitive year.

C. IMPORTANT DATES

Timeline for Competitive and EAP Grant Applicants

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 10/23 | Draft Competitive (new, re-competing, and continuation) and EAP (new) Grant applications due to Volunteer Tennessee by 3:00 p.m. CT. |
| 11/21 | Second Draft Competitive (new, re-competing, and continuation) and EAP (new) Grant applications due to Volunteer Tennessee by 3:00 p.m. CT. Pre-Award Risk Assessment information and verification of SAM/CCR registration due from new AmeriCorps Competitive and EAP Applicants. |

12/20 Final draft of Competitive (new, re-competing, and continuation) and EAP (new) Grant applications to Volunteer Tennessee by 3:00 p.m. CT.
Verification of SAM/CCR registration due from new, re-competing, and continuation AmeriCorps Competitive and EAP Applicants.

2023-2024 Timeline for Formula Applicants (All New Applicants)

12/15 AmeriCorps Formula Notice of Intent due to Volunteer Tennessee

2/13/24 Formula applications due to Volunteer Tennessee by 3:00 p.m. CT.
Pre-Award Risk Assessment information due from new AmeriCorps Formula Applicants.
Verification of SAM/CCR registration due from AmeriCorps Formula Applicants.

5/6 Inform applicants of Formula funding decision and provide Application Feedback to funded programs.

5/10 Acceptance of funding due to Volunteer Tennessee via e-mail.

5/13 Formula Programs submit budget and performance measure corrections, if needed.
— Begin Formula contract development
Supplemental funding requests due to Volunteer Tennessee via e-mail.

SECTION II: NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Federal Agency Name: AmeriCorps
Funding Opportunity Title: Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 AmeriCorps State and National Grants
Announcement Type: Initial Announcement
CFDA Number: 94.006

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

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A.1. AmeriCorps Funding Priorities

AmeriCorps released its [2022-2026 Strategic Plan](#), which defines the agency's goals and objectives to advance the agency's mission to improve lives and strengthen communities. AmeriCorps will execute the following goals to better position the agency to respond to national and local needs and help the communities it serves prosper:

1. Partner with communities to alleviate poverty and advance racial equity.
2. Enhance the experience for AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.
3. Unite Americans by bringing them together in service.
4. Effectively steward federal resources.
5. Make AmeriCorps one of the best and most equitable places to work in the federal government.

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

AmeriCorps’ priorities for this funding opportunity are:

- Organizations leading service in communities with concentrated poverty, rural communities, tribal communities, and those organizations serving historically underrepresented and underserved individuals, including but not limited to communities of color, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, people who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, people with arrest and/or conviction records, and religious minorities;
- Evidence-based interventions on the [AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange](#) that are assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence. Please note that many of these interventions have demonstrated effectiveness in improving outcomes for individuals living in underserved communities and that the agency has committed resources to supporting grantees seeking to replicate and evaluate these interventions in similar communities;
- Veterans and Military Families, Caregivers, and Survivors - a program model that improves the quality of life of veterans and improves the well-being of military and veteran families, caregivers, and survivors;
- Faith-based organizations;
- Programs that provide additional 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.;
- Programs that create workforce pathways for AmeriCorps members, including deliberate training, certifications, and hiring preferences or support;
- Environmental Stewardship, including 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;
- Community-based programs that enhance and expand services to second chance youth and/or engage those youth as AmeriCorps members;
- Programs that support civic bridgebuilding programs and projects to reduce polarization and community divisions; and providing training in civic bridgebuilding skills and techniques to AmeriCorps members;
- Programs focused on implementing or expanding access to high-quality early learning and those that prepare AmeriCorps members to enter early learning careers.

A.2. Volunteer Tennessee Funding Priorities

In 2024, Volunteer Tennessee will prioritize the investment of national service resources in the following areas:

- Distressed Counties - programs that align with Governor Bill Lee’s priority to provide services to rural areas. To receive priority consideration, applicants must propose to serve in one or more of Tennessee’s 8 distressed counties or 27 at-risk counties identified here <https://www.tn.gov/transparenttn/state-financial-overview/open-eecd/openecd/tneecd-performance-metrics/openecd-long-term-objectives-quick-stats/distressed-counties.html>.

- Prisoner Mentorship - programs that align with Governor Lee’s priority to mentor incarcerated individuals to gain the skills needed for re-entry into society. Applicants for this priority should consider evidence-based interventions on the AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange <https://americorps.gov/evidence-exchange/A-Successful-Prisoner-Reentry-Program-Expands%3A-Lessons-from-the-Replication-of-the-Center-for-Employment-Opportunities>.
- Food Security - that recruit, train, and support AmeriCorps members in order to increase food security. Applicants for this priority should consider evidence-based interventions on the AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange <https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange>.
- Community Resilience and Public Safety - programs that directly recruit, train, and support AmeriCorps members to increase community resilience and public safety through community emergency preparedness education and facilitation of volunteer disaster response and recovery efforts. Applicants for this priority should consider evidence-based interventions on the AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange <https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange>.

In addition to the priority on distressed counties, prisoner mentorship, and community resilience and public safety, Volunteer Tennessee expects to invest a significant amount of available funding to programs working in the AmeriCorps Funding Priorities described in section A.1 above. Volunteer Tennessee will pursue a balanced portfolio across the Funding Priorities.

To receive priority consideration, applicants must show that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes and must include a high-quality program design. Proposing programs that receive priority consideration does not guarantee funding.

A.3. Performance Goals or Expected Outcomes

National Performance Measures: AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee expect applicants to use National Performance Measures as part of a comprehensive performance measurement strategy that relies on both performance and evaluation data to learn from their work and make tactical and strategic adjustments to achieve their goals.

Aligned Performance Measure: All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output and outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. This may be a National Performance Measure or an applicant-determined measure. For more information, please refer to the *National Performance Measure Instructions* in Attachment C.

A.4. Program Authority

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

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

B.1. Estimated Available Funds

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee expect a highly competitive AmeriCorps grant process. AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee 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.

B.2. Estimated Award Amount

Award amounts will vary as determined by the scope of the projects.

B.3. Project and Award Period

Volunteer Tennessee anticipates making three-year grants. Volunteer Tennessee generally makes an initial award for the first year of operation, based on a one-year project period. Applicants must submit a one-year budget. Continuation awards for subsequent years are not guaranteed; they depend upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance.

The project start date may not occur prior to the date AmeriCorps awards the grant and Volunteer Tennessee executes a sub-grantee contract. AmeriCorps members may not enroll or begin service prior to the start date of the award or the sub-grantee contract, which will not be prior to August 1, 2024. A program may not certify any hours a member performs prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period.

B.4. Type of Award

Volunteer Tennessee may award Operating Grants, including a Cost Reimbursement or a Fixed Amount grant, to any successful applicant, but the availability of a Full-Cost Fixed Amount grant is limited to certain applicants.

Professional Corps are not eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement grants. See the *Eligible Applicants* section and Attachment A: *Mandatory Supplemental Information* for more information. Volunteer Tennessee will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year.

| Grant Types | Cost Reimbursement | Fixed Amount | | | |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| | | Full-Cost | Education Award Program (EAP) | Professional Corps <i>See Mandatory Supplemental Information</i> for further requirements | No Cost Slots |
| Available Subtypes | Traditional | | | | |
| Maximum Cost per MSY* | \$25,000 | \$25,000 | \$800 or \$1,000** | \$1,000 | \$0 |
| Type of Slots in the National Service Trust*** | FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT | FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT | FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT | FT only | FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT |
| Budget Submission Required | Yes | No | | No | No |
| Availability of Funds Linked to Enrollment and Retention of Awarded MSYs | No | Yes | | | No |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|---|---|-----|
| Special Requirements | N/A | N/A | Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries and benefits must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in budget. | N/A |
| Financial Reporting Requirements | Yes | No | | |
| Available to New Applicants | Yes | Yes (if applying for State Formula funding) | Yes | |

* Member Service Year (MSY): One MSY is equivalent to a full-time AmeriCorps position (at least 1,700 service hours).

** Per [42 U.S.C. § 12581a](#), AmeriCorps may provide the operational support under this section for a program in an amount that is not more than \$800 per individual enrolled in an approved national service position, or not more than \$1,000 per such individual if at least 50 percent of the persons enrolled in the program are disadvantaged youth.

*** FT = Full Time, TQT = Three Quarter Time, HT = Half Time, RHT = Reduced Half Time, QT = Quarter Time, MT = Minimum Time, AT = Abbreviated Time.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1. Eligible Applicants

The following non-Federal entities (all of which are defined in [2 CFR 200.1](#) are eligible to apply:

- Indian Tribes
- Institutions of higher education
- Local governments, including school districts
- Nonprofit organizations
- Public health departments

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

Organizations that propose to operate solely within Tennessee must apply through Volunteer Tennessee. A single-state application submitted directly to AmeriCorps by the applicant rather than through Volunteer Tennessee will be considered noncompliant and will not be reviewed.

Organizations that propose to operate in more than one state may apply directly to AmeriCorps. See Attachment A: *Mandatory Supplemental Information* for descriptions of National Direct and Single-State applicants.

New Applicants

Volunteer Tennessee encourages organizations that have not received prior funding from AmeriCorps to apply. Volunteer Tennessee’s general practice is to award no more than 20 member positions (slots) to organizations receiving an AmeriCorps grant for the first time.

New Formula applicants are eligible to apply for either Cost Reimbursement or Fixed Amount grants.

Threshold Issues

Applications should reflect that they meet the following threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying.

- Professional Corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a Professional Corps by AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.
- If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: [45 CFR §2522.910-.940](#)), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.
- In order to be considered for funding, all applicants must propose program designs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. Applicants assessed as lower than the Preliminary evidence tier (i.e., Pre-Preliminary) must provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality review criteria.

**C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching
Fixed Amount Grants**

There is no cost share or match requirement for Fixed Amount grants. AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee do not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program; therefore, organizations should plan to raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.

Cost Reimbursement Grants

Applicants are required to match funds based on the chart below. 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. See Section *D.6. Funding Restrictions* for more information.

A first-time, successful applicant is required to match at 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in [45 CFR §2521.60](#) and below.

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| AmeriCorps Funding Year | 1, 2, 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ |
| Grantee Share Requirements | 24% | 26% | 30% | 34% | 38% | 42% | 46% | 50% |

Section 121(e)(5) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended (NCSA) [42 U.S.C. 12571\(e\)](#) requires programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant to report the amount and source of these funds to AmeriCorps on a Federal Financial Report. Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout.

Match Waiver

Please use the Match Waiver information for AmeriCorps State and National Grantees located on the [AmeriCorps.gov Manage Your Grant](#) webpage.

Alternative Match

Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in [45 CFR §2521.60\(b\)](#). To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Application Instructions. Applicants who plan to request an alternative match schedule must submit a request at the time the application is submitted. Programs applying through Volunteer Tennessee must submit requests for alternative match to Volunteer Tennessee, who will submit it to AmeriCorps on their behalf.

C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements

Under section 132A(b) of [the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended](#), organizations that have violated a Federal criminal statute may not receive assistance described in this *Notice*.

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

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

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

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

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

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

This *Notice* should be read together with the AmeriCorps regulations, Application Instructions, Performance Measure Instructions, and Mandatory Supplemental Information, which are incorporated by reference. These documents can be found at <https://www.tn.gov/volunteer-tennessee/vt-funds/vt-funding-opportunities.html>. The full Regulations are available online at [AmeriCorps. Gov Statutes and Regulations webpage](#).

D.1. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants should refer to the [Volunteer Tennessee Funding Opportunities](#) page at www.volunteertennessee.net to obtain the necessary information to apply. Applicants can also send an email to volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov for a printed copy of the application materials.

D.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

D.2.a. Application Content

Complete applications must include the following elements:

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: Automatically generated when applicants complete the data elements in the eGrants system.
- Narrative Sections
 - Executive Summary
 - Program Design
 - Organizational Capability
 - Cost Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy
 - Evaluation Summary/Plan
- Logic Model
- Performance Measures
- Standard Form 424A Budget: Automatically generated when applicants complete the Budget Section in the eGrants system.
- Continuation Changes (Continuation programs only)
- Clarification (if applicable)
- Authorization, [Assurances](#), and [Certifications](#)

D.2.b. Page Limits

Volunteer Tennessee will consider the number of pages only as they print out from the “Review” tab in AmeriCorps’ web-based management system, eGrants, (where you will see the “View/Print your application” heading) when determining compliance for page limits. Volunteer Tennessee will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods in determining whether an application complies with the applicable page limits. **Volunteer Tennessee strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the “Review” tab prior to submission to check that the application does not exceed the page limits.**

Please note the length of a document in word processing document may be different than what will print out in eGrants. The character limits in eGrants do not align with page limits set in the Notice. Reviewers will not consider any submitted material that exceeds the page limits in the printed report, even if eGrants allows applicants to enter and submit additional text. Also, note that the system will not prevent an applicant from entering text that will exceed page limitations. This applies to both the Narrative page limit and the Logic Model page limit.

There are page limits for the Narrative and Logic Model Narrative:

- Narratives:
 - Applications must not exceed 10 double-spaced pages for the Narratives as the pages print out from eGrants. The application sections that count towards the page limit include:
 - SF-424 Face Sheet
 - Executive Summary
 - Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy narratives.
 - The application page limit does not include the Evaluation Summary/Plan, Clarification Summary, Continuation Changes, Budget, Performance Measures, or any required additional documents.
- Logic Model:
 - The Logic Model may not exceed eight pages when printed with the application from the “Review” tab in eGrants.

D.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

All applicants **must** register with the [System for Award Management](#) (SAM) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete, and if a grant is awarded, throughout the life of the award. See the [SAM Quick Guide for Grantees](#) for more information.

SAM registration must be renewed annually. Volunteer Tennessee suggests finalizing a new registration or renewing an existing one at least three weeks before the application deadline to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise. **Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and physical address on all grant applications submitted to Volunteer Tennessee. The legal applicant's name and physical address in eGrants must match exactly the applicant's SAM-registered information.**

Volunteer Tennessee will not make awards to entities that do not have a valid SAM registration and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee are ready to make the grant award, AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a grant award to another applicant.

- Applications must include an Employer Identification Number.
- Applications must include a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), which is generated as part of the SAM registration process.

D.4. Submission Dates and Times

D.4.a. Notice of Intent to Apply

Applicants intending to apply for a new or re-competing Formula programs are **REQUIRED** to send an e-mail by **3:00 p.m. CT on December 15, 2023** to volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov with a Notice of Intent to Apply. The subject of the e-mail must read: *Tennessee AmeriCorps Formula Notice of Intent*. In the body of the e-mail, include: organization name, mailing address, contact person, and phone number. Applicants should state the type of grant for which they intend to apply (cost reimbursement or fixed amount) and the focus area the application will address. **Failure to submit a Notice of Intent to Apply will render an applicant ineligible to apply.** All Notices of Intent to Apply will receive an e-mail response acknowledging receipt. **Continuation grantees are not required to submit a notice of intent.** Submission of a Notice of Intent to Apply is not an obligation to apply.

D.4.b. Application Submission Deadline

The due date for applications is **3:00 p.m. CDT on October 23, 2023** for Competitive and **February 13, 2024** for Formula applications. Volunteer Tennessee will not consider applications received after the due date, except as noted in Section *D.4.d. Late Applications*. Volunteer Tennessee reserves the right to extend the submission due date, and any notice of such extended due date(s) will be posted on the Volunteer Tennessee website. These due dates apply to continuation grantees, as well as new and re-competing applicants.

D.4.c. Additional Documents Deadline

Any required additional documents are due on the application deadline in *D.4.b. Application Submission Deadline*. See *D.7.b. Submission of Additional Documents* section for more information on required additional documents.

D.4.d. Late Applications

All applications received after the submission deadline published in the *Notice* are presumed to be non-compliant. To overcome this presumption, the applicant must:

- Submit a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that caused the delay, including:

- o Timing and specific cause(s) of the delay;
- o Ticket number if a request for assistance was submitted to the AmeriCorps Hotline;
- o Any information provided to the applicant by the AmeriCorps Hotline; and
- o Any other documentation or evidence that supports the justification;
- Ensure that Volunteer Tennessee receives the justification and any other evidence that substantiates the claimed extenuating circumstance(s) via email to volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov no later than one business day after the application deadline stated in the *Notice*.

Communication with Volunteer Tennessee staff is not a substitute for the written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance that caused the delay as outlined above.

Applicants are also required to continue working in eGrants, [AmeriCorps' web-based application system](#), and with the AmeriCorps Hotline to submit the application as soon possible after the deadline. Volunteer Tennessee will determine whether to accept a late application on a case-by-case basis. Applicants that do not submit a justification or any other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the published timeframe will not be reviewed or selected for award.

Please note: Volunteer Tennessee will not consider an advance request to submit a late application. Applicants are encouraged to continue working on their application until it is submitted. If you are experiencing technical difficulties, please carefully review and follow the guidance listed above.

D.5. Intergovernmental Review

This *Notice* is not subject to [Executive Order 12372](#), "[Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs](#)."

D.6. Funding Restrictions

D.6.a. Award Funding Requirements

1. Member Living Allowance

A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage. Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time terms of service. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time member, it must comply with the maximum limits in the table below. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either AmeriCorps or grantee share. Exceptions are noted below.

While Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to submit detailed budgets, they are still required to provide a living allowance to members that complies with the minimum and maximum requirements. Exceptions are noted below. Fixed Amount grant applicants should indicate that amount in the application.

Table: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance

| Service Term | Minimum # of Hours | Minimum Living Allowance | Maximum Total Living Allowance |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Full-time | 1,700 | \$18,700 | \$37,400 |
| Three Quarter-time | 1,200 | n/a | \$26,180 |
| Half-time | 900 | n/a | \$18,700 |
| Reduced Half-time | 675 | n/a | \$14,212 |
| Quarter-time | 450 | n/a | \$9,724 |

| | | | |
|------------------|-----|-----|---------|
| Minimum-time | 300 | n/a | \$7,854 |
| Abbreviated-time | 100 | n/a | \$2,244 |

Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements

i. Programs existing prior to September 21, 1993 are not required to offer a living allowance. If such an applicant chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement, but not the maximum requirement set forth in the Living Allowance table above.

ii. Education Award Program (EAP) Grantees are not required to provide a living allowance, but if a living allowance is provided, it must comply with the maximum requirements set forth in the Living Allowance Table above.

iii. Professional Corps Grantees must provide members a living allowance or salary, which must meet the minimum, but may exceed the maximum living allowance set in the Living Allowance Table above. Professional Corps member salaries and benefits, including childcare, are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve and are not included in the budget request to AmeriCorps (federal or matching share.)

2. Maximum Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)

The AmeriCorps cost per MSY is determined by dividing the AmeriCorps share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested. It does not include childcare or the value of the education award a member may earn. The maximum amount an applicant may request from AmeriCorps per MSY is determined on an annual basis.

New and recompeting Volunteer Tennessee sub-grantees/applicants will be held to the maximum cost per MSY for their grant type.

Table: Maximum Cost per MSY

| Grant Program | Maximum |
|--|--------------------|
| Cost Reimbursement Grant | \$25,000 |
| Professional Corps Grant (Fixed Amount) | \$1,000* |
| Education Award Program (EAP) Grant (Fixed Amount) | \$800 or \$1,000** |
| Full-Cost Fixed Amount Grant | \$25,000 |

*AmeriCorps requires **Professional Corps** programs to cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non-AmeriCorps resources. AmeriCorps will only consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate significant organizational financial need.

**Per [42 U.S.C. 12581a](#), AmeriCorps may provide the operational support under this section for a program in an amount that is not more than \$800 per individual enrolled in an approved national service position, or not more than \$1,000 per such individual if at least 50 percent of the persons enrolled in the program are disadvantaged youth.

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee reserve the right to 1) treat an applicant that meets the statutory requirements of a Professional Corps as such, whether or not they submitted their application as a professional corps program; and 2) determine whether an applicant has demonstrated inability to effectively operate in the absence of AmeriCorps operating funds.

3. Segal AmeriCorps Education Award

AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service will be eligible for an Education Award from the National Service Trust. The amount of the Education Award is linked to the value of the Pell Grant. A member has up to seven years after their term of service to use the Education Award. Use the [Segal AmeriCorps Education Award](#) webpage for more information.

D.6.b. Indirect Costs

Application budgets may include indirect costs. Based on qualifying factors, applicants may either use a Federally approved indirect cost rate or a 10 percent *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly, as outlined in [2 CFR 200.4133](#) 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 that 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 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.

D.7. Other Submission Requirements

D.7.a. Electronic Application Submission in eGrants

Applicants must submit applications electronically via [eGrants, AmeriCorps' web-based application system](#). AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee recommend that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word processing document, then copy and paste the text into the appropriate eGrants field no later than 10 days before the deadline.

The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must use their own eGrants account to sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Applicants should contact the [AmeriCorps Hotline](#) at (800) 942-2677 if they have a problem when they create an account, prepare, or submit the application. Information about the AmeriCorps Hotline hours is also posted on the [AmeriCorps Hotline webpage](#).

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

If extenuating circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit in eGrants, applicants may send an electronic copy of the application via e-mail to volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov. Applicants must

include a written explanation and any other documentation or evidence that support their inability to submit their application electronically.

Requests to e-mail applications must be approved in advance by Volunteer Tennessee. All deadlines and requirements in this *Notice* also apply to e-mailed applications. E-mailed applications must include a cover letter detailing the circumstances that make it impossible to submit via eGrants. Volunteer Tennessee will not accept applications submitted via fax or mail/overnight carrier.

D.7.b. Submission of Additional Documents

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

- Evaluation briefs, reports, studies. Please refer to the *Evidence Base* section below and Attachment A: *Mandatory Supplemental Information* for detailed instructions by evidence tier. If multiple evaluation briefs/reports/studies are submitted by the applicant, the most recent (as measured by the date of completion or publication) will be reviewed first, and any documents submitted beyond the allowable number will not be reviewed.
- Labor union concurrence (if applicable)
- All applicants regardless of funding level are required to submit an **Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS)**. Please submit the OFMS as a Word document.. Forms submitted as a PDF, or any other document format may not be accepted.

Recompete applicants who have previously received **three or more years** of funding for the same project being proposed must also submit:

- Evaluation plan. Please use the evaluation plan template available on the Volunteer Tennessee website. Evaluation plans are not scored and will not be reviewed until after funding decisions are made.

Recompete applicants who have previously received **six or more years** of Competitive funding for the same project being proposed must also submit:

- Evaluation report. Please submit in Microsoft Word. The evaluation report should include a title page with the AmeriCorps grant number for the project that was evaluated, the name of the project, and the date of completion of the report. If any of this required information is missing, the applicant may not receive credit for meeting their evaluation requirements.

Additional documents must be emailed to volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov with the labels outlined below. Emails should include the following information:

- Subject line: [Legal Applicant Name] - [Application ID number]
If the size of an applicant's files requires multiple emails, please also include an ordering system in the subject line, such as "(1 of 3)".
- Body of the email should identify:
 - the legal applicant name and its point of contact information
 - the application ID number
 - a list of documents that are attached to the email
- Attachments to emails should include:
 - individually saved files that are clearly labeled. **Please do not send all documents as one combined file.**
 - the legal applicant name and application ID number within the file name and heading of each document.

Failure to submit the required additional documents by the deadline may have a negative effect on the assessment of your application.

Do not submit any other items not requested in this Notice or Application Instructions. Volunteer Tennessee will not review or return them.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1. Application Selection Criteria

Each applicant must describe a project that will deploy AmeriCorps members effectively to solve a significant community problem. AmeriCorps urges applicants to submit high quality applications that carefully follow the guidance in this Notice and in the *Application Instructions*. The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization will receive funding.

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

| Categories/Subcategories | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| Executive Summary | 0 |
| Program Design | 50 |
| • Community and Logic Model | 24 |
| • Evidence Tier | 12 |
| • Evidence Quality | 8 |
| • Notice Priority | 0 |
| • Member Experience | 6 |
| Organizational Capability | 25 |
| • Organizational Background and Staffing | 15 |
| • Member Supervision | 6 |
| • Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility | 4 |
| Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy | 25 |
| • Member Recruitment | 7 |
| • Member Retention | 8 |
| • Data Collection | 7 |
| • Budget Alignment to Program Design | 3 |

E.1.a. Executive Summary (0 percent)

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

“The [Name of the organization] will have [Number of] AmeriCorps members who will [service activities the members will be doing] in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will serve]. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing].

The AmeriCorps investment will be matched with \$[amount of projected match], \$[amount of local, state, and Federal Funds] in public funding and \$[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.”

Fixed-Amount grant applicants (EAP, Full-Cost Fixed, No Cost Slots) should list their Other Revenue (see Attachment A. *Mandatory Supplemental Information*) in the Executive Summary, because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still raise significant additional resources to operate the program.

E.1.b. Program Design (50 percent)

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application’s response to the criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value. Please ensure the Community and Logic Model incorporates the funding priorities listed above, for example supporting communities historically excluded and/or underserved from government services, addressing structural and institutional inequities, or increasing opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities.

i. Community and Logic Model (24 points)

The applicant will provide a detailed summary of the community problem, including:

- The role current or historical inequities faced by underserved communities may play in contributing to the problem.
- The community need as it relates to the [CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index](#) and to communicate the severity and prevalence of the problem.

The applicant’s intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the organization’s Logic Model. No narrative is needed other than what is contained within the logic model.

The applicant will depict in the Logic Model:

- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:
 - Locations or sites in which members will provide services;
 - Context in which the intervention is delivered (e.g., the setting where the intervention is delivered);
 - Number of AmeriCorps members who will deliver the intervention;
 - Characteristics of AmeriCorps members, including specific knowledge, skills, and abilities required to implement the intervention.
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
 - Duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions, or months of the intervention);
 - Dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week);
 - Target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level);
- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e., number of beneficiaries served, types and number of activities conducted, equity gaps closed). If applicable, identify which **National Performance Measures** will be used as output indicators.
- Outcomes that demonstrate meaningful changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. If applicable, identify which **National Performance Measures** will be used as outcome indicators.

Note: The Logic Model is a visual representation of the applicant's Theory of Change. Programs should include short, medium, or long-term outcomes in the Logic Model. Applicants are not required to measure all components of their Logic Model. The applicant's performance measures should be consistent with the program's Logic Model and should represent significant program activities.

Rationales and justifications should be informed by the organization's performance data (e.g., program data observed over time suggests targets are reasonable), relevant research (e.g., targets documented by organizations running similar programs with similar populations), or prior program evaluation findings.

Applicants with multiple interventions should complete one Logic Model chart that incorporates each intervention. Logic Model content that exceeds eight pages will not be reviewed.

ii. Evidence Base (20 points)

The assessment of an applicant's evidence base has two parts. First, the applicant will be assigned to an evidence tier (see the *Mandatory Supplemental Information*). Second, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the degree to which it supports the proposed program design, including program aligned with the priority areas (use the *Funding Priorities* section above), will be assessed and scored.

Evidence Tier (12 points):

An evidence tier will be assessed for each applicant for the purpose of understanding the relative strength of each applicant's evidence base and the likelihood that the proposed intervention will lead to outcomes identified in the Logic Model.

In 2023, the evidence tiers of successful AmeriCorps State and National applicants that were competing were as follows: Strong 25 percent, Moderate 12 percent, Preliminary 20 percent, and Pre-Preliminary 43 percent. As these figures indicate, AmeriCorps values and funds programs at all points along the evidence continuum and expects programs to progress along the evidence continuum over time. Thus, **applicants should not be deterred from applying for funding due to their current evidence level.**

Applicants who have outcome or impact evaluation reports of the same intervention described in the application and Logic Model (see Attachment A: *Mandatory Supplemental Information* for a definition of "same intervention") may submit up to two of those reports, plus (if applicable) the evaluation report from their last three-year grant cycle, to qualify for the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tier. In order to qualify for consideration, the intervention evaluated in the submitted report(s) must match the intervention proposed by the applicant in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the Community and Logic Model sections of the application:

- Characteristics of the beneficiary population, including evidence of current or historic inequities facing the population;
- Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention;
- Dosage (frequency and duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities;
- The context in which the intervention is delivered; and
- Outcome of the intervention.

Submitted reports that do not sufficiently match the intervention proposed by the applicant in all of these areas will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points.

Submission of additional documents that are not consistent with the guidance and requirements described in the *Notice* (e.g., advocacy pieces, policy briefs, other narratives that are not research studies or program evaluations) will not be reviewed.

In the Evidence Tier section of the application narrative, applicants must (1) summarize the study design and key findings of any outcome or impact evaluation report(s) submitted and (2) describe any other evidence that supports their program, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies that inform their program design. Applicants who submit evaluation reports for consideration must also describe in the *Evidence Base* section of the application narrative how the intervention described in the submitted reports is the same as the intervention described in the application (see Attachment A: *Mandatory Supplemental Information*).

Applicants should provide citations for the studies they describe, if applicable; however, reviewers will not review any documents external to the application other than evaluation report(s) submitted in accordance with the *Notice* instructions.

Applicants must meet all requirements of an evidence tier in order to be considered for that tier.

If the evaluation reports submitted by the applicant do not meet the definitions in the *Mandatory Supplemental Information*, the applicant may be considered for a lower evidence tier.

Evidence Quality (8 points)

After the applicant's evidence tier has been assessed, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the extent to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored.

Applicants who are assessed as being in the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tiers, reviewers will score the submitted evaluation reports using the following standards:

- The submitted reports are of satisfactory methodological quality and rigor for the type of evaluation conducted (e.g., adequate sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, appropriate use of control or comparison groups, etc.);
- The submitted reports describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years;
- The submitted reports show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries or AmeriCorps members in at least one key outcome of interest.

Applicants that are assessed as being in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier, reviewers will score the narrative provided in the Evidence Base section of the application using the following standards:

- The applicant uses relevant evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies, to inform their proposed program design;
- The described evidence is relatively recent, preferably from the last six years;
- The evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries or AmeriCorps members in at least one key outcome of interest.

Applicants assessed in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier that do not provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality standards will not meet the threshold requirements for this *Notice* and will not be considered for funding.

iii. Notice Priority (0 points)

- The applicant proposed program fits within one or more of the AmeriCorps funding priorities and meets all of the requirements within that bullet/section as outlined in the *Funding Priorities*

sections A.1 and A.2 and more fully described in Attachment A: *Mandatory Supplemental Information*.

iv. Member Experience (6 points)

- The applicant details how AmeriCorps members will be provided an opportunity to be leaders and gain skills during their term of service that will be valued by future employers (e.g., workforce pathways, increasing levels of responsibility and leadership roles for members).
- The applicant details how AmeriCorps members will be provided a high-quality orientation to the community they will serve in that is from an asset-based frame and guided and informed by the community.

E.1.c. Organizational Capability (25 percent)

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

i. Organizational Background and Staffing (15 points)

- The applicant details the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing, providing oversight, and monitoring the program.
- The applicant has facilitated, partnered, or participated in educational or workforce development programs (i.e., pre-apprenticeship/registered apprenticeship, work experience and job training programs, etc.).
- The applicant describes their organization’s mission and relevant experience in areas such as volunteer recruitment and management, community outreach, overcoming project implementation challenges, etc.

ii. Member Supervision (6 points)

- The applicant details how AmeriCorps members will receive sufficient guidance and support from their supervisor to provide effective service (e.g., structure for member supervision: cadence and format of supervisor/AmeriCorps member check-ins, member and supervisor opportunities to assess strengths and opportunities for growth, member training plan, etc.).
- The applicant details how AmeriCorps supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations (e.g., structure for support of supervisors, training plan for supervisors related to supervision and AmeriCorps rules and regulations, cadence and format of AmeriCorps supervisors/their supervisors check ins, opportunities to assess strengths and opportunities for growth of supervisors, etc.).

iii. Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (4 points)

- The leadership and staff of the organization have similar lived experience as the beneficiary population and/or community being served.
- The applicant’s definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility is demonstrated by the organization (e.g., diversity on the Board of Directors, agency staff and leadership, and/or volunteers) and the organization upholds a supportive and safe environment for individuals of diverse backgrounds.

E.1.d. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)

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

(i) 1. Member Recruitment (7 points)

- The applicant provides a description of budget expenses to support successful recruitment of AmeriCorps members best suited to serve the community, for example from geographic or demographic communities in which the program operates.

(ii) 2. Member Retention (8 points)

- The applicant provides a description of budget expenses to support retention of AmeriCorps members (e.g., additional member benefits such as increasing above the minimum living allowance, supporting workforce pathways, certifications, coaching for members, resume building, individual benefit as well as community building, network building, member recognition, alumni programming, etc.).

(iii) 3. Data Collection (7 points)

- The applicant provides a description of budget expenses to support data collection, continuous improvement activities, and evaluation in service to evaluating the interventions and impact on the community and the member experience).

(iv) 4. Budget Alignment to Program Design (3 points)

- The applicant’s budget is aligned to the program design outlined in the narrative, meaning activities discussed in the narrative are incorporated in the budget in the AmeriCorps or applicant share.

E.1.e. Evaluation Plan (Required for re-competing applicants - 0 percent)

If the applicant has previously received three or more years of competitive funding for the same project being proposed (see Attachment A: *Mandatory Supplemental Information* for the AmeriCorps definition of “same project”), the applicant must submit an evaluation plan as an attachment (see the D.7.b *Submission of Additional Documents* section). If the applicant has previously received six or more years of competitive funding for the same project being proposed, the applicant must submit both an evaluation plan and an evaluation report as attachments.

Applicants should use the evaluation plan template available on Volunteer Tennessee’s [website](#) to craft their evaluation plans. The template document provides detailed information about the AmeriCorps evaluation requirements ([45 CFR 2522.700-710](#)) and specifies the information that must be provided for the evaluation plan to be approved by AmeriCorps. The evaluation plan will not be scored and will not be reviewed until after funding decisions have been made.

All applicants should enter “N/A” in the “Evaluation Summary or Plan” field of the Narrative. Any other text entered in this field will not be reviewed.

E.1.f. Amendment Justification (0 percent)

Enter N/A. This field will be used if the applicant is awarded a grant and needs to amend it.

E.1.g. Clarification Information (0 percent)

Enter N/A.

E.1.h. Continuation Changes (0 percent)

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter changes in the application narratives in continuation requests.

E.2. Review and Selection Process

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee will engage External and Staff Reviewers with relevant knowledge and expertise to assess and provide input on the eligible applications. The review and selection process is intended to produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that represent the

priorities and strategic considerations described in this *Notice*. The determinations made by reviewers may be different from what the applicant self-determined upon submission of its application.

The stages of the review and selection process follow:

E.2.a. Initial Application Compliance and Eligibility Review

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee staff will conduct a Compliance Review to determine if an application meets the compliance requirements published in this *Notice* and advances to the next stage of the review process.

An application is compliant if the applicant:

- Is an eligible organization;
- Submits an application by the submission deadline; and
- Submits an application that is complete, in that it contains all required elements and follows the instructions provided in this *Notice*.

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.

E.2.b. Application Review

Reviewers will evaluate applications based on applications based on the Program Design, Organizational Capability, Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy, and Evidence Selection Criteria.

Upon submission to AmeriCorps by Volunteer Tennessee, **Competitive applications** will be assessed by AmeriCorps staff. External reviewers will review and assess the evidence criteria in the *Notice*. **Formula applications** will be reviewed by Volunteer Tennessee staff and external reviewers. All reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

E.2.c. Applicant Clarification

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

E.2.d. Pre-Award Risk Assessment

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee staff will assess the risks to the program posed by each applicant, including conducting due diligence to ensure an applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This assessment is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding and the quality of its application on the basis of the Application Selection Criteria. Results from this assessment will inform funding decisions. If AmeriCorps or Volunteer Tennessee determine that an award will be made to an applicant with assessed risks, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award. Applications may not be selected for funding if AmeriCorps or Volunteer Tennessee determine that the applicant's risks cannot be mitigated.

In assessing risks, AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee may consider the following criteria:

i. Due Diligence:

- Federal debt delinquency
- Suspension and debarment

- Information available through Office of Management and Budget (OMB) - designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as:
 - [U.S. Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services](#)
 - [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#)
 - “Do Not Pay”
- Reports and findings from single audits performed under Uniform Administrative Guidance and findings of any other available audits or investigations
- IRS Tax Form 990
- [Oversight.gov](#)
- Public Litigation Records

ii. Operational and Financial Management:

- Financial stability
- Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS)

iii. Past Performance:

- Applicant’s record in managing previous AmeriCorps awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
 - Timely of compliance with applicable reporting requirements
 - Accuracy of data reported
 - Validity of Performance Measure data reported
 - Attainment of Performance Measures
 - Conformity to the terms and conditions of previous Federal awards
 - Ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on award recipients
 - Timely closeout of other awards
 - Meeting matching requirements
 - Extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
 - Enrollment and retention
 - Monitoring findings
 - National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) compliance. See section F.2.d. *National Criminal History Check Requirements* and the [NSCHC webpage](#) for more information

iv. Other Programmatic Risks, Financial, Organizational, Compliance, and Fraud including:

- Publicly available information, including from the applicant organization's website
- Amount of funding requested by the organization
- Other elements, such as keyword searches for prohibited activities

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

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

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

Any applicant may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).

AmeriCorps may consider comments by any applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing its review of risk posed by the applicant under the E.2.d *Pre-Award Risk Assessment* section of this *Notice*.

E.2.f. Selection for Funding

The review and selection process is designed to:

- Identify how well eligible applications are aligned with the E.1 *Application Selection Criteria*
- Build a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:
 - AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee Funding Priorities (See *Sections A.1. and A.2. Funding Priorities*).
 - Meaningful representation of: rural communities, innovative community strategies.
 - Volunteer Tennessee Commission discretion to advance strategic goals.

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee will assess an applicant's strategic considerations. Applicants must check the relevant boxes in the *Program Information* tab in AmeriCorps' web-based management system. Applicants should only check the boxes if the strategic consideration is a significant and intentional part of their program design and if implementation strategies are described in the application.

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee reserve the right to prioritize funding existing awards over making new awards.

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

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee reserve the right to adjust or make changes to the review process, if unforeseen challenges or urgent circumstances make it impossible, impractical or inefficient to conduct the review process as planned. Any such adjustments or changes will not affect the Application Selection Criteria (E.1.) that will be used to assess applications submitted in response to this Notice.

E.2.g. Applicant Resolution

AmeriCorps or Volunteer Tennessee may ask an applicant for information after notification of competition results to resolve any issues prior to award. AmeriCorps will ask all grantees for a written compliance implementation plan that includes notification of waste, fraud, and abuse to the agency's OIG. An applicant's failure to respond adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of its application from the award process.

E.3. Feedback to Applicants

Each compliant applicant will receive feedback from the External Review of its application. Feedback will be based on the review of the original application and will not reflect any information that may have been provided in response to applicant clarification, if any.

E.4. Transparency in Grantmaking

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee are committed to transparency in grant-making. A list of all approved applications for new and re-competing Competitive applications will be published on [AmeriCorps Funded Grants](#) website within 90 business days after all grants are awarded.

Submitted program narratives, executive summaries, a blank template of the external review worksheet, and a list of all external reviewers who completed the review process for successful applications will be available upon request via email to volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov.

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

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1. Award Notices

AmeriCorps will make Competitive awards following the selection announcement. AmeriCorps anticipates announcing the results of the Competitive funding process by notifying applicants **by mid-April 2024**, contingent on the availability of Congressional appropriations. All Competitive applicants, successful or not, will be notified of funding decisions via email. Notification of an award is not an authorization to begin grant activities. An executed subcontract with Volunteer Tennessee is the only document authorizing awardees to commence grant activities.

Volunteer Tennessee anticipates announcing the results of the Formula process by notifying applicants **no later than May 6, 2024**, contingent on timely full year appropriations and notification of Competitive grant selections. All Formula applicants, successful or not, will be notified of funding decisions via email. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The executed contract with Volunteer Tennessee is the authorizing document for grant activities.

An awardee may not obligate or expend Federal funds until the start of the Project Period identified on the executed subcontract.

F.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

F.2.a. Uniform Guidance

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

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

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

F.2.c. AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions

All awards made under this *Notice* will be subject to the FY 2024 AmeriCorps General Terms and Conditions, and the FY 2024 AmeriCorps Program-Specific Terms and Conditions. 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 are available on the [AmeriCorps Manage Your Grant](#) webpage.

F.2.d. National Service Criminal History Check Requirements

The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a specific screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. We encourage grantees to minimize barriers to service without putting their program beneficiaries at genuine risk. The law requires grantees to conduct and document NSCHCs on persons (including award-funded staff, national service participants, or volunteers) receiving a salary, living allowance, stipend, or education award through a program receiving AmeriCorps funds. This includes staff that receive part of their salary through a subgrant.

- Award recipients and subrecipients must conduct an NSCHC for AmeriCorps members and staff funded under, or whose salary is reflected as match on, the award. Limited exceptions are described in [45 CFR 2540.201](#).
- AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee strongly encourage applicants to:
 - Review the regulations and additional guidance to fully understand how to comply with the requirements. See the NSCHC regulations and guidance: <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check>.
 - Utilize the two AmeriCorps-approved vendors to conduct the required NSCHCs: <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check>.
- The cost of conducting NSCHC is an allowable expense under the award and the individual subject to the NSCHC must not be required to cover the cost.
- Failure to fully comply with all NSCHC requirements will result in significant disallowed costs.

Recipients must complete the following criminal history checks:

1. National Sex Offender Public website through [NSOPW.gov](#) (nationwide check);
2. State criminal history record repository or agency-designated alternative for the individual's State of residence *and* State of service; and
3. Fingerprint-based check of the FBI criminal history record database through the State criminal history record repository or agency-approved vendor.

All checks must be conducted, reviewed, and an eligibility determination made before the individual begins work or service.

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

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

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

F.2.e. Official Guidance

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

F.3. Use of Material

To ensure that materials generated with AmeriCorps funding are available to the public and readily

accessible to grantees and non-grantees, AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee reserve a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so ([2 CFR §200.315](#)).

F.4. Reporting

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

Volunteer Tennessee sub-grantees are required to provide mid-year and end of year progress reports, quarterly financial reports, and an evaluation report as required by the AmeriCorps regulations [45 CFR §§2522.500-2522.540](#) and [§§2522.700-2522.740](#). A final financial report is due at the end of the grant.

Award recipients will be required to report [at Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Subaward Reporting System](#) (FSRS) on all subawards over \$30,000 and may be required to report on executive compensation for your organization and for your subgrantees. Recipients and subrecipients must have the necessary systems in place to collect and report this information. See [2 CFR Part 170](#) for more information and to determine how these requirements apply.

Once the grant is awarded, recipients will be expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices in place that provide reasonable assurance that they are providing AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee with high quality programmatic and financial data. At a minimum, sub-grantees should have policies and practices that address the following five aspects of data quality for themselves and for sub-sites (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; and
- Grantee actively reviews data for accuracy prior to submission.

In addition to semi-annual reporting of progress toward the grant's approved performance measure outputs and outcomes, additional performance data and narrative data must be reported annually (as applicable), including the number of applicants for AmeriCorps positions and the number of volunteers recruited and/or supported by AmeriCorps members (both episodic and ongoing volunteers).

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

F.5. Continuation Funding Information and Requirements

Organizations that have current AmeriCorps State awards that will be in program Year 2 or Year 3 in FY 2024 are considered continuation applicants. Continuation applicants must submit an application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the FY 2024 program year. Continuation applicants must follow the requirements for continuation application content as outlined in the *Application Instructions*.

Please see *Attachment B Application Instructions* for how to request use of unexpended funds.

Requests by existing continuation applicants for increases in the level of funding or number of positions will be assessed using the E.1. *Application Selection Criteria* published in this Notice.

Continuation application review will also be based on progress reports, the financial reports, evaluation plans, and AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee staff's knowledge of the grant program. To be approved for continuation funding, recipients must demonstrate satisfactory performance with respect to key program goals and requirements, as well as compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant.

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

G. AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT

This Notice is available at <https://www.tn.gov/volunteer-tennessee/vt-funds.html>. For further information or for a printed copy of this Notice, send an email to volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov or call (615) 253-6313.

Volunteer Tennessee's mailing address is:

Volunteer Tennessee
William R. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue, 18th Floor
Nashville, TN 37243-1102

For technical questions and problems with the eGrants system, call the AmeriCorps Hotline at (800) 942-2677. AmeriCorps Hotline hours are posted at <https://questions.americorps.gov/>. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the name of the Notice to which the organization is applying.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

H.1. Technical Assistance

In addition to consulting the *Application Instructions*, *Mandatory Supplemental Information*, *Performance Measure Instructions*, and AmeriCorps regulations as directed in this Notice, applicants are encouraged also to consult the Volunteer Tennessee web site <https://www.tn.gov/volunteer-tennessee/vt-funds/vt-funding-opportunities.html> for a schedule of technical assistance webinars.

H.2. Reallocation of Funding

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee reserve the right to reallocate funding under this Notice in the event of disaster or other compelling need for service.

I. IMPORTANT NOTICES

I.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 C.F.R. 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.

I.2. Privacy Act Statement: The Privacy Act of 1974 ([5 U.S.C 552a](#)) requires that we notify you that the information requested under this Notice is collected pursuant to [42 U.S.C. 12592](#) and [12615](#) of the

National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended, and [42 U.S.C. 4953](#) of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 as amended.

- Purposes and Uses
 - The information requested is collected for the purposes of reviewing grant applications and granting funding requests.
 - Routine uses may include disclosure of the information to Federal, state, or local agencies pursuant to lawfully authorized requests. In some programs, the information may also be provided to Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to determine the existence of any prior criminal convictions.
 - The information may also be provided to appropriate Federal agencies and contractors that have a need to know the information for the purpose of assisting the government to respond to a suspected or confirmed breach of the security or confidentiality or information maintained in this system of records, and the information disclosed is relevant and unnecessary for the assistance.
- Effects of Nondisclosure - The information requested is voluntary; however, to be a recipient of this grant program, disclosure of personal or sensitive information is required to receive Federal benefits.

SECTION III: IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

OBLIGATORY APPLICATION ATTACHMENTS

This Notice is **NOT** of a higher priority than the following attachments, they should be read together with the documents listed below, this includes but is not limited to the AmeriCorps regulations, Application Instructions, Performance Measure Instructions, and Mandatory Supplemental Information. These documents are available online at [Volunteer Tennessee's Funding opportunities webpage](#).

A. ATTACHMENT DESCRIPTIONS

ATTACHMENT A: Mandatory Supplemental Information

The AmeriCorps State & National Mandatory Supplemental Information is intended to provide applicants with additional information for the preparation of their applications under the AmeriCorps State and National Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity. The Supplemental Information provides both detailed definitions of certain terms included in the *Notice*, as well as additional details regarding how to properly file an application under the *Notice*. This Supplemental Information is incorporated by reference in the *Notice*, and applicants must comply with any requirements stated in this Supplemental Information.

ATTACHMENT B: Application Instructions

The 2024 AmeriCorps Application Instructions conform to AmeriCorps' online grant application system, [eGrants](#). This document contains important information and resources for new and continuing requests to successfully submit an AmeriCorps funding application on eGrants.

ATTACHMENT C: Performance Measures

All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output paired with outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. This document reviews performance measure requirements and selection rules.

ATTACHMENT D: eGrants Indirect Cost Rate User Instructions

The instructions for how to enter the organization's indirect cost rate into eGrants.

Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS)

This survey is intended to collect information about the capacity of applicants to manage federal grant funds.