




An introduction to AmeriCorps State in Virginia



Getting Things Done with AmeriCorps



Welcome to AmeriCorps! We hope this presentation will provide more information about AmeriCorps in Virginia, specifically to better understand how AmeriCorps State funding could help your organization have an even greater impact.

This presentation was created by the Virginia Service Commission, the state service commission responsible for supporting public and nonprofit organizations in sponsoring national service programs throughout Virginia. These organizations include faith-based and community organizations, higher education institutions, and public agencies. AmeriCorps programs focus on critical community needs in education, economic opportunity, veteran and military family services, health, the environment, and disaster services across Virginia. We will cover the different elements of “AmeriCorps” and national service, and focus on AmeriCorps State opportunities for organizations across the Commonwealth of Virginia. We will discuss what AmeriCorps is and why the program is beneficial to organizations and communities, and then go into some of the more detailed aspects of how to apply and next steps for interested organizations.



program that connects over 270,000 individuals with opportunities for community service across the country.

What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is national service

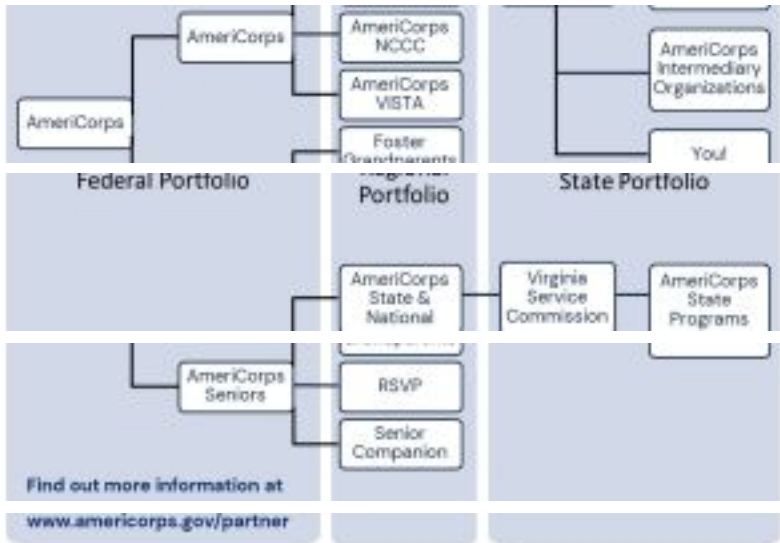
As a program, AmeriCorps "brings out the best of America" through community service and volunteerism.



AmeriCorps is a federal agency tasked with elevating service and volunteerism in America. The agency sends 'people power' and funding to communities across the country, connecting individuals and organizations to help communities tackle their 'toughest challenges'. AmeriCorps (the agency) partners with organizations and state service commissions to provide support for the AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors programs. These programs offer the opportunity to engage local community members in unique service opportunities through eligible organizations.



AmeriCorps 101



based national and community service.

AmeriCorps VISTA: AmeriCorps VISTA provides full-time members to community organizations and public agencies to create and expand programs that build capacity and ultimately bring low-income individuals and

AmeriCorps NCCC: The AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps is a full-time program for men and women, ages 18-26, that strengthens communities while developing leaders through direct, short-term, team-

communities out of poverty.

AmeriCorps State: AmeriCorps State provides funding to community organizations and public agencies to create and expand programs that engage AmeriCorps members in direct service to create a significant impact.

There are different streams of AmeriCorps, some you might be more familiar with than others. Many organizations have hosted or worked with AmeriCorps VISTA members. These national service members serve for a full year at a time, and are focused on projects at community organizations that are often more focused on

organizational or program capacity building to help families increase self-sufficiency and address poverty. These members may engage in activities like fundraising or volunteer management as their core tasks, among other activities provided by the organization.

AmeriCorps State is a little different. Organizations can create member service terms that range from 100 hours (roughly full time for about 3) to 1700 hours (full time for about 10-12 months). AmeriCorps State members are focused on direct service delivery. While we will get more into some of the details about AmeriCorps State program design, it is important to note that AmeriCorps State members are meant to primarily engage in direct service delivery, like providing services or engaging directly with service recipients, instead of more traditional capacity building activities.

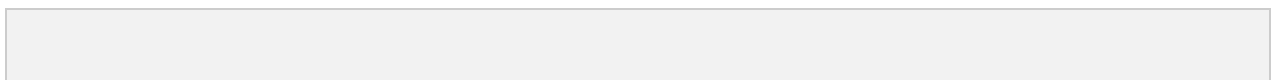


AmeriCorps programs focus on activities aligned with one or more of the identified focus areas. Programs may also fall under specific funding priorities (listed on the left).

The Focus Areas include:

Disaster recovery and response
Promoting healthy futures
Economic Opportunity
Military families and veterans
Education
Environmental stewardship

While focus areas stay the same, the funding priorities may be updated annually by AmeriCorps. More information about what activities may be included in each focus area can be found in the annual Notice of Funding Opportunity.



AmeriCorps State is unique from other grant opportunities:

AmeriCorps is not just a funding source, it is a program that uses meaningful service to

address a need and make an impact. Whether you are planning on incorporating AmeriCorps into an existing program or offering new activities with the support of AmeriCorps members, you should consider why AmeriCorps specifically is a part of the solution, and where other funding will be sourced to support program activities.

Members are not employees, they are specifically serving as a part of a larger movement. Often AmeriCorps members are not only interested in providing direct services to folks in their communities, but also building experience and investing in community engagement in a new way. Programs often offer professional development and civic engagement opportunities to their members as a part of their service.

Service activities must be measurable—as a part of national movement, evaluation and performance measurement is important! It is important that the need you identify and the activities you plan are able to be measured and reported as a part of your program design.



The Virginia Service Commission manages the portfolio of AmeriCorps State offered by our subgrantees (AmeriCorps programs) are listed above. For more Our subgrantees include community-based and local nonprofit organizations of programs within the Commonwealth. Some examples of the program activities information, please see our website at virginiасervice.virginia.gov.

various sizes, public school districts, higher education institutions, and state and local government entities. AmeriCorps members serve in both urban and rural contexts, vary in background and experience, and each contribute to the fabric of the national service movement in Virginia. AmeriCorps members served over 278,000 hours at 121 service sites across the state. Through their commitment to service and the innovative solutions designed by organizations, individuals and families benefit from new or expanded services while members develop new skills and earn an education award.





The benefits of AmeriCorps are not only seen through the impact of “people power”, but through the lasting change created.

For organizations, AmeriCorps can be the answer to how to bring new services and programs to your community. AmeriCorps members can also help expand the reach or impact of existing programs by bridging gaps in existing services, enhancing the services available, or reaching new target audiences new opportunities.

For members, AmeriCorps offers the opportunity to serve the community while developing new skills and gaining experience. Members also earn a modest living allowance to assist with living expenses, and an education award that can be used for a variety of higher education and vocational training programs. For partners, AmeriCorps members can help bridge the gaps between existing services, and serve as connectors or advocates for clients as they navigate systems and partnerships.

For communities, AmeriCorps brings sustainable and meaningful change, to address the community’s most critical and unmet needs.





To begin thinking about what this may look like for your organization or

1. Is your organization eligible? If your organization is listed above, we highly 2. What community need will your program address? Whether or not you are community, we recommend starting with these basic steps:

recommend completing the VSC Readiness Self Assessment found on our 3. Who will your members be? What does volunteerism look like in your area?

website to see if your organization is ready to take on an AmeriCorps application and program, or if you might want to find other partners or resources to assist in the process.

ready to take on a full AmeriCorps program, consider what unmet needs exist in your community, and if they could be part of an AmeriCorps program.

Are there groups of individuals that you think might be interested in serving as AmeriCorps members?





Planning grants are a good fit for organizations that are interested in AmeriCorps to meet needs in their community, but don't have an existing program model.

Organizations should have the capacity to take on an AmeriCorps program, but need technical assistance to develop the program model and design program components. Planning grants are awarded for a maximum of \$50,000, with a 24% match requirement for new organizations.

these grants, requested funds cover the value of member living allowances, Organizations work with Virginia Service Commission staff for 10 months to while match funds generally cover a program director (more than 5 members

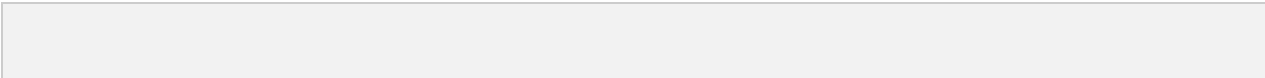
design their program, starting with the AmeriCorps program design through to member and service site management.

Operational grants are a good fit for organizations that have programs developed and are ready for AmeriCorps members to serve. Organizations should be ready to take on the management of the program and reporting, and to start their program within about 6 months of grant award notification. Operational grant awards are based on the number of members requested. For

usually requires a full time program director) and other program costs. 9



These examples illustrate how organizations at different points might start their AmeriCorps journey. If you have any questions about what stage of readiness your organization is in, please feel free to reach out to our staff. We also have a “Readiness Self-Assessment” available on our website, at virginiasservice.virginia.gov.



timeline is subject to change, but provides an overview of the anticipated annual timeline for AmeriCorps State grantmaking. For more current and most up to date information, please see our website at virginiastate.virginiaservice.virginia.gov. All funding opportunities will be posted on eva.virginia.gov.



