



Overview

Operation AmeriCorps is a new program created by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to use national service as the transformative catalyst to address a community's most pressing local problem. Through Operation AmeriCorps, tribal and local leaders will identify a high priority local challenge which AmeriCorps members can holistically address in a relatively short period of time (no more than two years). The competition is open exclusively to tribal and local governments, including counties, cities, towns, and school districts; and state service commissions. The proposed solution may be a new initiative, or it may use national service to scale up an existing successful effort. In either case AmeriCorps must be the additive ingredient to achieve holistic change at the local level.

Operation AmeriCorps Competition



- **Notice of Intent to Apply Due Date:** December 29, 2014
- **Application Due Date:** January 13, 2015
- **Eligible Applicants:** Tribal and local governments, including counties, cities, towns, and school districts; and state service commissions
- **Resources Available:** AmeriCorps State and National grants, AmeriCorps VISTA members, AmeriCorps NCCC teams
- **Focus:** Projects that engage AmeriCorps members to holistically solve a community's most pressing local challenge with a focus on quick results and measurable outcomes
- **More Information:** Visit NationalService.gov/Operation-AmeriCorps

Funding Priorities

The FY15 Operation AmeriCorps competition has two funding priorities. Applicants may choose to apply to either of the priorities. The first priority focuses on specific post-secondary outcomes for students. The second priority allows localities to identify their most pressing challenge. In each case, the most important element is choosing a project that will be a game-changer for the local community and ensuring that there are clear outcomes to measure success.

Priority one applications will propose a transformational project that uses a national service to ensure that every high school senior has a career or educational opportunity upon graduation. Using AmeriCorps as the catalyst to engage the whole community, the goal is for every graduating high school senior to participate in one of the following five options after graduation: further education; military service; national service in AmeriCorps or the Peace Corps; employment; or a paid internship, a registered apprenticeship, or job training program.

Under priority one, applicants must design an AmeriCorps intervention to ensure that each high school senior in their community has one of these options. Priority one applications will receive higher preference for funding than priority two applications.

Priority two applicants may propose transformational projects that address any of CNCS's six focus areas: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, or veterans and military families. Examples include projects that use national service resources to ensure every third grader is reading on grade level, greatly increase energy efficiency, or end veterans' homelessness. Applicants will be responsible for determining the specific design and outcomes for any priority two projects they propose.

What Makes this Competition Different from Other AmeriCorps Competitions?

- **Single Application for Multiple Programs:** For the first time, applicants may request AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC resources in a single application.
- **Focus on Transformational Impact:** Successful applicants will propose how AmeriCorps members will be an essential part of the solution to achieve a dramatic and measurable improvement in a two-year period.
- **Two Step Application Process:** In Step 1, applicants will submit a concept paper of 10 pages or less that describes the program design. The subset of applicants selected for Step 2 will receive technical assistance and be asked to submit a full application.

What Will Successful Applicants Do?

- Effectively engage AmeriCorps members to achieve a transformative goal in their community.
- Coordinate with the state service commission in their state, and other AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and Volunteer Generation Fund grantees in their communities.
- Leverage significant community support for the transformative effort. Applications that include evidence of community support and funding will receive preference. Applications submitted by Promise Zone or Strong Cities, Strong Communities designees will also be given preference.

Which AmeriCorps Resources Are Available?

Below is a brief description of each of the AmeriCorps programs available through Operation AmeriCorps. As part of their application, each tribal or local leader must articulate how they will use one, two, or all three of these AmeriCorps programs to achieve their desired goal.

- **AmeriCorps State and National** provides grant funds to nonprofits or public agencies to engage AmeriCorps members in direct service or capacity building. Members serve as mentors, tutors, home builders, counselors, and community liaisons, among other roles. Grants funds can also support supervision, administration, and oversight.
- **AmeriCorps VISTA** is designed specifically to fight poverty by engaging members in a year of full-time service with nonprofits or public agency to create or expand programs. AmeriCorps VISTA members serve with organizations that improve literacy, expand job opportunities, reduce homelessness, and improve health services. Members build capacity by managing projects, writing grants, and mobilizing volunteers.
- **AmeriCorps NCCC** is a full-time, team-based residential program for young people age 18-24. AmeriCorps NCCC members serve in teams performing short-term direct service projects that provide human capital surge capacity for infrastructure, education, environmental, and other projects. Teams serve with nonprofits and public agencies, which are responsible for providing project oversight and housing.