



**2025-2026 AmeriCorps Planning Grant Opportunity
OregonServes Commission (“OSC”)
Request for Applications (“RFA”) #25-161**

Date of Issue: 10/30/2025

Application Due Date: On a rolling basis, final deadline: 11/23/2025

Review Process and Timeline: Process/timeline listed below.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The State of Oregon, acting by and through its Higher Education Coordinating Commission, (“HECC”), is issuing this Request for Applications (“RFA”) for the OregonServes State Service Commission’s (“OSC”) 2025-2026 AmeriCorps Planning Grant Opportunity. The opportunity is to provide financial support to organizations that will develop an AmeriCorps program that will place AmeriCorps members in service solely within Oregon. OSC is an entity of the State of Oregon, housed within the Office of Workforce Investments, located within HECC.

The 2025-2026 AmeriCorps Planning Grant Opportunity will be funded at OSC’s discretion through AmeriCorps Formula Funds. Funding is dedicated to establishing new and expanding existing programs in OSC’s AmeriCorps Grant Program portfolio. If awarded, OSC would provide specialized training and technical assistance to Applicants in order to help them better prepare to apply for a full AmeriCorps program grant.

HECC is issuing this RFA pursuant to its authority under ORS 350.075 and ORS 660.515.

Disclosure: Publication of this RFA does not obligate HECC to award any specific number of grants or to obligate any particular amount of funding. HECC reserves the right to partially fund Applications in discrete portions or phases. HECC reserves the right to take funding requests into consideration when making awards, and reserves the right to prioritize funding existing awards over making new awards.

2. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this RFA, unless context requires otherwise, capitalized words have the following definitions. Capitalized terms not specifically defined in this document are defined in OAR 125-246-0110.

- **“Applicant”** means an entity that submits an Application in response to this Request for Applications.
- **“Application”** means a written response to this Request for Applications.
- **“AmeriCorps”** is the federal agency that funds programs that connect individuals and organizations to tackle the nation’s most pressing challenges.
- **“AmeriCorps Member”** means an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position and commit their time to address critical community needs like increasing academic achievement, mentoring youth, fighting poverty, sustaining public lands, preparing communities for disaster and more. For purposes of this RFA AmeriCorps Members may complete full- or part-time terms of service.
- **“Operational Grant”** means a three-year grant in which Grantee will operate an AmeriCorps program and place AmeriCorps Members. Grantees may apply for an Operational Grant when Grantee has completed its planning grant and applies for and receives a formula grant.

3. GRANT APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Step 1: Application Submission

Ongoing: HECC is accepting Applications until 11/23/2025 for 2025-2026 program year.

Step 2: Initial Screening

Within 2 Weeks: Upon receiving an Application, OSC will complete an initial review of the Application for completeness and adherence to basic guidelines. If an Application is incomplete or doesn't meet minimum requirements, OSC will notify the Applicant and provide an opportunity for revisions.

Step 3: Internal Evaluation

Ongoing: Applications that are complete and meet the minimum requirements will be sent to OSC's internal evaluation team for review. These evaluations are conducted as Applications are received using the criteria and scoring methodology described under Evaluation Criteria, below. OSC will notify Applicants by email if their Application is being moved forward to Step 4 or was not selected.

Step 4: AmeriCorps Review

Within 4-8 Weeks: If OSC's internal reviewers approve your Application and intend to make an award to the applicant, OSC will send the Application to AmeriCorps for final review and approval. OSC will notify Applicants and will provide instructions to complete the federal Application form through the online portal called eGrants.

Step 5: Notification

Ongoing: OSC will notify Applicants of the AmeriCorps funding decision on a rolling basis. Successful Applicants will receive funding offers shortly after the decision is made.

Please be aware that the duration of a typical planning grant falls within the range of 9 to 12 months. The timing of your Application submission may lead to variations in this timeline, which, in turn, could impact the schedule of your operational grant if you decide to proceed with an operational grant Application for a full program design. As such, Applicants could choose to create and apply for a full program design that is less than the maximum 12-months. HECC reserves the right to require a certain planning grant period depending on Applicants' experience. This will be discussed and negotiated with the Applicant.

A new RFA for the subsequent full grant cycles will be issued for those interested in applying for formula grants. The anticipated full 2026-2027 AmeriCorps State Grant cycle is as follows (new RFA will be issued for that Grant Cycle):

- RFA Released: February/March 2026
- Applications Due: April/May 2026
- Programs Begin: August/September 2026

For questions, clarifications, or if this material is needed in a different format, please contact OregonServes at oregon.serves@hecc.oregon.gov.

4. OVERVIEW

The mission of OSC is to promote and enhance the culture of service, volunteerism, and civic engagement across communities throughout Oregon. OSC promotes activities that instill a lifelong commitment to service, and lead to personal, educational, and career achievements.

OSC works with partners to increase resources and programs that meet needs in education, environmental stewardship, emergency response, community capacity and resiliency, economic opportunity, workforce development, civic and community engagement, service learning, and youth, senior, and veteran services.

OSC advances national and community service in Oregon by:

- Establishing and implementing a statewide vision for volunteerism, national service, and civic engagement.
- Promoting initiatives for expansion of service opportunities and impacts.
- Introducing policy and supporting legislation that furthers the OSC's service goals.
- Acting as a central hub for the national service network in the state and administering funding to AmeriCorps State programs to make impactful contributions in local communities.
- Championing greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in Oregon's service and volunteer opportunities.
- Coordinating national and community service resources to ensure communities are equipped to prepare, respond, and recover from disaster.

5. GRANT INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

PLANNING GRANT INFORMATION

This RFA will result in the award of planning grants that support the development of AmeriCorps programs, so Applicants are better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in following grant cycles. **Planning grants may not be used to support AmeriCorps members.**

Successful Applicants must provide 24% of the total project costs in match. Match may be cash or in-kind. Section 121(e)(5) of National and Community Service Act ("NCSA") (42 USC 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 OSC on an AmeriCorps Financial Report. Applicants must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout.

Successful Applicants must retain all grant records, including adequate documentation of each transaction, for a period of 6 years, as required by applicable law, after the expiration date indicated in the grant agreement.

6. FUNDING PRIORITIES

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. To ensure robust programming and promote AmeriCorps Focus Areas opportunities in the state of Oregon, funding will be awarded based on project needs, OSC funding priorities, and available resources. Applicants should clearly indicate their funding needs in the Application.

OSC will place priority on new and continuing programs focusing on Youth Mental Health Corps, Healthy Futures, and Economic Opportunity (see details in each focus areas below).

A. New Program Focus Areas

All new program planning grants must propose a program design that aligns with one of the following six AmeriCorps identified focus areas:

1. **Disaster Services:** Grants will provide support to increase and improve disaster services for individuals and communities to prepare and adapt to disasters. Grants will provide support to improve readiness to respond to disasters, support recovery efforts from disasters, and assist in the implementation of pre-disaster mitigation and adaptation measures. Grants will support communities and individuals in planning for disasters, in particular, engaging disadvantaged communities in the planning process.
2. **Economic Opportunity & Education:** Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people. Grants will help economically disadvantaged people to have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy, transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing, and/or have improved employability & education outcomes leading to increased success in becoming employed.
3. **Environmental Stewardship:** Grants will support responsible stewardship of the environment, while preparing communities for challenging climate and environmental circumstances and helping Americans respond to and recover from disruptive events. Grants will include programs that conserve natural habitats; protect clean air and water; maintain public lands, support wildland fire mitigation and sustainable forest management, cultivate individual and community resilience, and provide reforestation services after floods or fires, such as nature-based solutions.
4. **Healthy Futures:** Grants will provide support for activities that will address the opioid crisis, increase seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible, increase physical activity and improve nutrition with the purpose of reducing obesity, and/or supports youth mental health in schools and communities while giving young adults on-ramps into behavioral health careers (YMHC).

5. **The Youth Mental Health Corps' ("YMHC"):** Oregon's YMHC focuses on three pathways: school-based stackable certification/higher education credit, community health worker state certification, and Peer Support Specialist state certification

MHC goals are to meet youth where they are: in schools, afterschool programs, community health centers, or youth-centered organizations by:

- Offering young people interested in addressing our nation's youth mental health crisis with an opportunity to provide peer support while obtaining quality training, skills, experience, and credentials to start a career in behavioral health.
- Increasing the capacity of schools, community-based organizations, community health clinics, and behavioral health organizations to respond to the growing youth mental health crisis and provide support for the most vulnerable youth.
- Sharing best practices on healthy social media use, digital safety and wellbeing, and online safety with youth, school and community-based organizational staff, parents/care providers, and community members.

More information about Oregon's partnership in the Youth Mental Health Corps can be found here-<https://www.youthmentalhealthcorps.org/>.

Applicants should provide an explanation of how their intended AmeriCorps program model aligns with the Youth Mental Health Corps' mission, vision, and goals.

6. **Veterans and Military Families:** Grants will improve the quality of life of veterans and improve military family well-being, increase the number of veterans, wounded warriors, military service members, and their caregivers, families, and survivors served by AmeriCorps programs, and/or increase the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through AmeriCorps programs.

B. Current AmeriCorps Program Expansion Focus Areas

Current AmeriCorps programs can apply for planning grants that will help to expand their programming to a new focus area or priority focus area of OSC, new geographic region, or create new member development initiatives.

In addition to the above priorities, OSC is particularly interested in programs that aim to:

- Expand AmeriCorps opportunities in Oregon by providing access to AmeriCorps members for small organizations, and rural communities through intermediary programs.
- Serve historically underserved and/or underrepresented communities within Oregon and recruit AmeriCorps members from the communities in which they serve.

- Provide additional benefits to their members through the development of workforce or education pathways, for example: course for credit, certifications, apprenticeship co-enrollment.

7. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

To be considered for this Planning Grant funding, an Applicant must meet all criteria under this *Eligibility Information* section:

- a) Applicants must propose AmeriCorps program designs that will operate **solely** within the State of Oregon.
- b) Applications must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an Employer Identification Number.
- c) All Applicants must register with the [System for Award Management \(“SAM”\)](https://sam.gov/content/home) found here: <https://sam.gov/content/home> and maintain an active SAM registration until the Application process is complete and, if a grant is awarded, throughout the life of the award. SAM registration must be renewed annually. **Applicants must use their SAM-registered name and address on all grant Applications to OSC.**
- d) The following Non-Federal Entities (as defined in 2 CFR §200.69) who have UEI numbers and are registered in SAM are eligible to apply:
 - i. Indian Tribes (2 CFR §200.54)
 - ii. Institutions of Higher Education (2 CFR §200.54)
 - iii. Local Governments (2 CFR §200.64)
 - iv. Nonprofit Organizations (2 CFR §200.70)
- e) Applicants must submit their 2024 or 2025 Single Audit or an Independent Financial Audit (not required of Institutions of Higher Education). If the Applicant has not previously been audited, unaudited financial statements may be submitted.
- f) Organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime are not eligible to receive an award under this RFA (see 132A(b) of the NCSA).
- g) Organizations that have any unpaid Federal tax liability which 1) has been assessed, 2) for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and 3) that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability are not eligible to receive an award under this RFA (see section 745 of Title VII, Division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016). However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has made a determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interest of the federal government.
- h) Organizations that engage in lobbying activities are not eligible for an award under this RFA (See the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995).

8. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Via SM Apply:

Applicants must submit their Applications and the following documents through SM Apply:

- a) Exhibit A: OSC Planning Grant Budget

- b) Current indirect cost rate agreement, if applicable and used to claim administrative/indirect costs.
- c) Organizational Chart: The Organizational Chart must clearly show where the AmeriCorps program would be within the Organization.
- d) Exhibit B: Application Certification Form
- e) And one of the following (not required for Institutions of Higher Education):
 - 2024 or 2025 Independent Financial Statement or Audit
 - 2024 or 2025 Single Audit (if applicable)
 - 2024 or 2025 Independent Financial Statements if Applicant's organization has never been audited.

Do not submit items not requested in this RFA. OSC will not review or return them.

Instructions to submit via SM Apply:

- Go to: https://oregonhecc.smapply.us/prog/2025-2026_oregonseves_ameriCorps_planning_grant_Application/
- Click Apply.
- If you already have an account, log in, or register for an account.
- Click Start Application
- If you encounter any issues with SM Apply, please email oregon.serves@hecc.oregon.gov

9. APPLICATION CRITERIA

Each Applicant must describe a plan to develop a project that will deploy AmeriCorps members to support solutions addressing a systemic community problem. OSC urges Applicants to submit high-quality Applications that carefully follow the guidance in this RFA. The quality of an Application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization receives funding. Applications will only be considered for review if each of the following sections is complete:

A. APPLICANT INFO

Enter information specific to the Applicant organization and the proposed AmeriCorps program as follows:

- Organization Name
- Employer Identification Number
- Unique Entity Number
- Contact Name
- Contact Phone Number
- Contact Email
- Requested Project Start Date
- Requested Project End Date
- Total amount of funds requested

B. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Enter information specific to the proposed AmeriCorps program as follows:

- Choose which focus area(s) your program will focus on.
- Provide a summary of the proposed project.
- Describe who will benefit from the member activities.
- What geographic locations will member activities take place?
- Once the planning grant concludes and you apply for, and receive, a full operational grant, how many AmeriCorps members will be engaged?

C. RATIONALE AND APPROACH/PROGRAM DESIGN

- Describe the community need(s) the organization is hoping to address. Provide information about the scope/significance/cause of the problem in the community(ies) where your organization will focus its efforts. Use reputable/current/local data.
- AmeriCorps Members as an Effective Tool: describe why your organization believes that AmeriCorps Members could potentially be an effective tool for addressing the community need that is described in the Need Section.
- Interventions: describe what activities you see AmeriCorps Members engaging in and how such interventions may lead to positive outcomes.
- Timeline: describe your timeline for planning activities (considering the typical start of operational grants being August/September).
- Capacity: describe how you will use the planning period to develop your capacity to manage an AmeriCorps program.

D. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

- Organizational Background and Staffing: describe how your organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure necessary to plan and implement the proposed project.
- Culturally Responsive: describe how your organization is culturally responsive of staff, beneficiaries, and community.

E. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- Describe your organization's experience in securing outside cash and in-kind contributions.
- Describe your match resources (Grantee Share) that is listed on your budget form and indicate the source of those funds (i.e., state, federal, etc.)
- Describe if your match is secured or proposed, and cash or in-kind.

F. SOURCE OF COST SHARE FUNDS

AmeriCorps Planning Grants are required to include match/cost share at 24% of total program costs. The acceptable sources of matching funds are federal, state, local, private sector, and/or other funds in accordance with applicable AmeriCorps requirements.

AmeriCorps permits the use of non-AmeriCorps federal funds as match for the Applicant's share of the budget. Please discuss your intention of using federal funds to match an AmeriCorps grant with the other agency prior to submitting your Application. Section 121(e)(5) of the National Community Service Act requires that Applicants that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant report the amount and source of these funds to AmeriCorps. If you use other federal funds as match, you must ensure you can meet the requirements and purpose of both grants. Applicants that use federal funds as match will be required to report the sources and amounts on the AmeriCorps Federal Financial Report.

G. Budget:

The proposed budget should be sufficient to allow the Applicant to perform the tasks described in your narrative. Using Attachment A, Budgets must:

- Define the use of all requested funds for a particular purpose. Miscellaneous, contingency, or other undefined budget amounts are not permitted.
- Itemize each cost and present the basis for all calculations in the form of an equation.
- Not include unallowable expenses, e.g., entertainment costs (which include food and beverage costs) unless they are justified as an essential component of an activity where technical information is presented.
- Not include fractional amounts (cents).
- Comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and the requirements of the Uniform Grants Guidance. Please refer to the Uniform Grants Guidance (UGG) (2 CFR Part 200) for allowable, allocable, and reasonable cost information, as well as audit requirements. The UGG can be found online at <http://www.ecfr.gov/>.
- Be submitted without mathematical errors and proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award.
- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget is in compliance with the budget instructions.
- 24% Match is submitted.
- The amount requested is clearly identified and is in alignment with the scope of the proposed project.
- Contain Applicant's current indirect cost rate if used to claim indirect/administrative costs.
- Identify the non-AmeriCorps funding and resources necessary to support the project.

10. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. Criteria: The assessment of Applications involves a wide range of factors and considerations. OSC staff will apply their experience and expertise in evaluating Applications. The review and

selection process will produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and selection factors described in this RFA.

- B. Eligibility Review:** OSC staff will review all submitted Applications to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completeness requirements. Applicants will be notified of initial intake eligibility within approximately two weeks of submission of an Application.
- C. Committee Review:** OSC staff will assess the entire Application. Some Applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information and/or make changes to their Application including changes to the budget. Applications may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked clarification questions. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to requests for additional information in a timely manner may result in the removal of an Application from consideration.
- D. Risk Assessment Evaluation:** OSC staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each Applicant, including conducting due diligence to ensure an Applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the Applicant's eligibility for funding or the quality of its Application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If OSC determines that an award will be made, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award. In evaluating risk, OSC may consider the following:
- Financial stability.
 - Quality of financial management systems and ability to meet the administrative standards prescribed in applicable Office of Management and Budget's ("OMB") guidance.
 - History of performance as reflected in the Applicant's record in managing previous OSC awards (if applicable), including:
 - Timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements, and
 - If applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards.
 - Information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualifications or financial integrity information, such as System for Award Management (SAM.gov)
 - Reports and findings from single audits performed under 2 CFR 200 Subpart F (Single Audit) and findings of any other available audits.
 - IRS Tax Form 990.
 - An Applicant organization's annual report.
 - Publicly available information including information from an Applicant organization's website; and The Applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.
- E. Selection for Funding:** With a goal of a diversified portfolio based on the RFA priorities and strategic considerations, the staff will provide Applications to OSC for funding consideration. AmeriCorps is responsible for all final funding decisions under this RFA.
- F. Feedback to Applicants:** Each Applicant may request the results of the review pertaining to their 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 clarification questions, if any.

11. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AmeriCorps Regulations

Grant Recipients will be required to comply with the requirements of applicable sections of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 and other applicable statutes. The full regulations are available online at www.ecfr.gov. In addition to being thoroughly familiar with the regulations, Applicants should read Application guidelines carefully as well as the regulations published in the Federal Register on July 8, 2005 (45 C.F.R. §§ 2520-2550). As with all federally funded programs, it is the responsibility of each AmeriCorps recipient to ensure appropriate stewardship of federal funds entrusted to them.

It is important to make sure that all staff, sites, and partners are familiar with the federal rules and regulations. The 2025-2026 Terms and Conditions can be found here: <https://www.americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/FY2025-General-Terms-and-Conditions.pdf>

B. Federal Award Notices

OSC will notify all applicants of funding decisions via email. Notification will be sent to the individual listed in the Application narrative as the person with whom communication regarding this Application may be shared. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The executed Grant Agreement is the authorizing document for beginning grant activities. An awardee may not expend federal funds until the start of the Budget Period identified on the executed Grant Agreement.

C. Point of Contact

OSC requires that all recipients designate appropriate staff members to serve as the primary and secondary program and fiscal staff contacts. The primary contacts will have the primary responsibility to manage the AmeriCorps program from both a programmatic and fiscal perspective. These people will serve as the primary contacts between the organization and OSC throughout the duration of the AmeriCorps program.

D. National Service Criminal History Check Requirements

The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. The law requires recipients to conduct and document NSCHCs on any person (including award-funded staff) receiving a salary through a cost reimbursement AmeriCorps award. An individual is ineligible to serve in a position that receives such AmeriCorps funding if the individual is registered, or required to be registered, as a sex offender or has been convicted of murder. The cost of conducting NSCHCs is an allowable expense under the award.

E. Use of Materials

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

F. Reporting

Recipients are required to submit a variety of reports which are due at specific times during the life cycle of an award. All reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time. Recipients are required to provide end of year progress reports and semi-annual financial reports. Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the recipient's ability to secure future AmeriCorps funding.

G. Records Retention

All financial records, supporting documentation, statistical records, evaluation and performance data, member information, and personnel records must be retained for six years after the close of the Oregon AmeriCorps grant from AmeriCorps under which your organization's Application is funded.

12. SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

A. Taxpayer Identification Number

A successful Applicant shall provide its Taxpayer Identification Number on a completed W-9 form (which can be found here: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>). A successful Applicant must provide its backup withholding status on the W-9 form if either of the following applies:

- When requested by HECC (normally in an intent to award notice), or
- When the backup withholding status or any other information of Applicant has changed since the last submitted W-9 form, if any.

HECC will not make any payment until HECC has received a properly completed W-9.

B. Business Registry

If selected for award, Applicant must be duly authorized by the State of Oregon to transact business in the State of Oregon before executing the Grant Agreement. The selected Applicant shall submit a current Oregon Secretary of State Business Registry number, or an explanation if not applicable.

All corporations and other business entities (domestic and foreign) must have a Registered Agent in Oregon. See requirements and exceptions regarding Registered Agents. For more information, see Oregon Business Guide, How to Start a Business in Oregon and Laws and Rules. The titles in this subsection are available at the following Internet site: <http://www.filinginoregon.com/index.htm>.

13. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each section of the Application will be scored using a rating system of 1-4. Applicants must receive a minimum 75% of possible points to be considered for funding. Applications will be reviewed and considered in the order in which they are received.

Explanation	Score	Criteria
EXCELLENT	4 (no issues)	High quality response, exceeds the standard in almost all instances. Identified strengths were substantial and solid with no weaknesses identified, or an identified weakness has a minimal effect on the overall quality of the response.
GOOD	3 (minor issues)	A quality response, addresses all criteria of the standard and may exceed requirements in some instances. Identified strengths are substantial, and identified weaknesses are minimal in quantity and effect on the overall quality of the response.
FAIR	2 (moderate issues)	A fair rating indicates that the section of the proposed program is below standard, especially in ability, skill, or quality; indicating that this element of the program will most likely not succeed as described.
POOR	1 (major issues)	A poor rating reflects that the section of the proposed program inconsistently or poorly responds to the requested criteria and has no potential for success as described.

Section I: Application Information

Not scored

Section II: Executive Summary

Not scored

Section III: Rationale and Approach/Program Design (50 points)

Rating system is as follows for this section:

1=12.5 points 2=25 points 3=37.5 points 4=50 points

- Applicant clearly describes the problem they plan to solve with the AmeriCorps program (community need).
- Applicant clearly describes and provides evidence that the need exists.
- Applicant clearly describes what AmeriCorps members would do to meet the need and why AmeriCorps members would be an effective tool.
- Applicant clearly describes the target community(ies) the program would serve.

- e. Applicant has provided a detailed description of their proposed planning process.
- f. Applicant has provided a timeline for planning activities.
- g. Applicant has described how they will use the planning period to develop their capacity to effectively manage an AmeriCorps program including, but not limited to:
 - Determining the most appropriate AmeriCorps member activities to address the identified community need.
 - Determining the desired characteristics of AmeriCorps members and designing a recruitment strategy.
 - Developing a performance measurement system to ensure that reliable data is gathered to demonstrate impact on the communities to be served.
 - Creating a process for selecting operating and service sites (if applicable) that will ensure the most appropriate and capable organizations are selected.
 - Planning orientation and training for operating and service sites (if applicable).
 - Planning orientation and training for AmeriCorps members.
 - The ability to provide or secure effective technical assistance (if applicable).
 - The applicant has indicated which National Performance Measures their AmeriCorps program would seek to address. They have identified at least one output/outcome.

Section IV: Organizational Capability (25 points)

Rating system is as follows for this section:

1=6.25 points 2=12.5 points 3=18.75 points 4=25 points

The applicant has described their ability to successfully plan an AmeriCorps program, including but not limited to:

- Record of accomplishment.
- Prior experience administering federal funds.
- Prior experience in the proposed area of programming.
- The management and staff structure and the role the board of directors, administrators and staff will play in the planning process.
- Systems and processes for sound programmatic and fiscal oversight or plans to develop this capacity.

Section V: Resource Development (25 points)

Rating system is as follows for this section:

1=6.25 points 2=12.5 points 3=18.75 points 4=25 points

- Applicant has described their plans to develop a cost-effective program including how they will develop diverse resources to support the program implementation and sustainability.
- Applicant has discussed the adequacy of the budget to support the planning process including the match.
- Applicant has described how they will secure any additional commitments needed for the planning grant.

OSC staff will review and score the Applications using the above criteria and point system. After combining the scores, staff will discuss the Applications as a group and come to agreement on which Applications to move forward for AmeriCorps review and approval.

14. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PUBLIC RECORDS

All information and records submitted to HECC are subject to the Public Records Law, [ORS 192.311 to 192.478](#), and may be subject to disclosure. If Applicant believes that any information or records it submits to HECC may be a trade secret under [ORS 192.345\(2\)](#), or otherwise is exempt from disclosure under the Oregon Public Records Law, Applicant must identify such information with particularity and include the following statement:

“This data is exempt from disclosure under the Oregon Public Records Law pursuant to ORS 192.311 through 192.478, and is not to be disclosed except in accordance with the Oregon Public Records Law, ORS 192.311 through 192.478.”

If Applicant fails to identify with particularity the portions of such information that Applicant believes are exempt from disclosure, Applicant is deemed to waive any future claim of non-disclosure of that information.

GOVERNING LAW AND REGULATIONS

This RFA is governed by the laws of the State of Oregon. Venue for any administrative or judicial action relating to this RFA, evaluation and award is the Circuit Court of Marion County for the State of Oregon; provided, however, if a proceeding must be brought in a federal forum, then it must be brought and conducted solely and exclusively within the United States District Court for the District of Oregon. In no event shall this Section be construed as a waiver by the State of Oregon of any form of defense or immunity, whether sovereign immunity, governmental immunity, immunity based on the Eleventh Amendment to the Constitution of the United States or otherwise, to or from any claim or from the jurisdiction of any court.

Applicant must not be in violation of any tax laws of the state or a political subdivision of the state, including, without limitation, [ORS 305.620](#) and [ORS chapters 316, 317 and 318](#).

Applicant understands that any statement or representation it makes, in response to this RFA, if determined to be false or fraudulent, a misrepresentation, or inaccurate because of the omission of material information could result in a “claim” (as defined by the [Oregon False Claims Act, ORS 180.750\(1\)](#)), made under Contract being a “false claim” ([ORS 180.750\(2\)](#)) subject to the [Oregon False Claims Act, ORS 180.750 to 180.785](#), and to any liabilities or penalties associated with the making of a false claim under that Act.

Applicant certifies that will comply with the Pay Equity law, [ORS 652.220](#), if applicable, during the term of any grant agreement it enters into as a result of this RFA.

Applicant certifies that it does not, and will not, during the term of any grant agreement it enters into as a result of this RFA, discriminate in its employment practices with regard to race, creed, age, religious affiliation, gender, disability, sexual orientation, national origin. When awarding subcontracts, if HECC allows, except as allowed by ORS 659A.006, Applicant does not discriminate in its employment practices with regard to race, creed, age, religious affiliation, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or national origin. When awarding

subcontracts, if HECC allows, Applicant does not discriminate against any business certified under [ORS 200.055](#) as a disadvantaged business enterprise, a minority-owned business, a woman-owned business, a business that a service-disabled veteran owns or an emerging small business. If applicable, Applicant has, or will have prior to contract execution, a written policy and practice, that meets the requirements described in [ORS 279A.112](#), of preventing sexual harassment, sexual assault and discrimination against employees who are members of a protected class. HECC may not enter into a contract with an anticipated contract price of \$150,000 or more with an Applicant that does not certify it has such a policy and practice. See <https://www.oregon.gov/DAS/Procurement/Pages/hb3060.aspx> for additional information and sample policy template. If applicable, Applicant has, or will have prior to contract execution, a written policy and practice, that meets the requirements described in [ORS 279A.112](#), of preventing sexual harassment, sexual assault and discrimination against employees who are members of a protected class. HECC may not enter into a contract with an anticipated contract price of \$150,000 or more with an Applicant that does not certify it has such a policy and practice. See <https://www.oregon.gov/DAS/Procurement/Pages/hb3060.aspx> for additional information and sample policy template.

HECC will not fund lobbying activities.

HECC reserves all rights, including but not limited to the right, at its sole discretion, to:

- Amend, cancel, or modify the RFA prior to the closing date.
- To amend the deadline for submitting Applications.
- To determine whether an Application does or does not comply with the requirements of this RFA.
- To waive any minor irregularity, informality, or nonconformance with this RFA as so determined by HECC.
- To obtain from and/or provide to other public agencies, upon request, references regarding the Applicant's performance.
- To issue additional awards under this RFA. These additional awards may not require further competition. Any additional award will be made in accordance with the terms of this RFA and HECC policy.
- To amend the grant agreements for amount and activities related to the scope of services and related support described in this RFA.
- To reopen the RFA as necessary at any point or solicit programs if not enough Applications are received, and/or do not align with HECC priorities, and/or ineligible Applications were submitted.
- To seek clarification on or further information about any or all Applications.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Budget Instructions

ATTACHMENT B: Application Certification Sheet

ATTACHMENT A

BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS

Section I. Program Operating Costs

A. Personnel Expenses

Under “Position/Title Description” on the Application form, list each staff position separately and provide salary and percentage of effort as percentage of Full-Time Employee devoted to this award. Each staff person’s role listed in the budget must be described in the Application narrative and each staff person mentioned in the narrative must be listed in the budget as either AmeriCorps or Applicant share. Because the purpose of this grant is to enable and stimulate volunteer community service, do not include the value of direct community services performed by volunteers. However, you may include the value of volunteer services contributed to the organization for organizational functions such as accounting, audit work, or training of staff.

OSC **requires** that new programs include the cost for a staff person who will be the Primary Program contact for a future AmeriCorps State grant. This person may be a Program Manager, Program Director, etc. The expectation is that this person would spend at least 75% of their time on the Planning Grant and 100% of their time on a future AmeriCorps state grant.

B. Personnel Fringe Benefits

Under “Purpose/Description” on the Application form, identify the types of fringe benefits to be covered and the costs of benefit(s) for each staff position. Allowable fringe benefits typically include Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA), Worker’s Compensation, Retirement, State Unemployment Tax (SUTA), Health and Life Insurance, and employer paid retirement plan contribution. You may provide a calculation for total benefits as a percentage of the salaries to which they apply or list each benefit as a separate item. If a fringe benefit amount is over 30%, please list covered items separately and justify the high cost. Holidays, leave, and other similar vacation benefits are not included in the fringe benefit rates but are absorbed into the personnel expenses (salary) budget line item.

C. Staff Travel

Describe the purpose for which program staff will travel. Provide a calculation that includes itemized costs for airfare, transportation, lodging, per diem, and other travel related expenses, multiplied by the number of trips/staff. Where applicable, identify the current standard reimbursement rate(s) of the organization for mileage, daily per diem, and similar supporting information. Reimbursement should not exceed the federal mileage rate unless as a result of Applicant policy and justified in the budget narrative. Only domestic travel is allowable.

OSC strongly encourages Applicants to include costs for travel to the America’s Service Commissions (ASC) National Service Training. This event is typically held once per year and out-of-state. More information can be found at: <https://www.nationalservicetraining.org/>.

D. Supplies

Include the amount of funds to purchase consumable supplies and materials. You must individually list any single item costing \$1,000 or more.

E. Contractual and Consultant Services

Include costs for consultants related to the project's operations, except training or evaluation consultants, who will be listed in Section G., below. There is not a maximum daily rate. OSC strongly recommends that Applicants consider utilizing consultants during the planning process to assist with areas such as member recruitment and retention, host site management, policy development, developing or reviewing internal controls, data collection systems, etc.

OSC recommends that Applicants allocate at least \$6,000 of the planning grant funds to work with consultants. Here is a link to a list of quality consultants with experience in the national service field:

<https://statecommissions.notion.site/698c8b7de622420e8caf0b65e7c86f0b?v=373440c43a3c4d848b951b2ecbc3db9b>.

F. Staff Training

Include the costs associated with training staff on project requirements and training to enhance the skills staff need for effective project implementation, i.e., project or financial management, team building, etc. If using a consultant(s) for training, indicate the estimated daily rate. There is not a maximum daily rate.

G. Other Operating Costs

Allowable Other Operating Costs should include when applicable:

1. Three-part National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHCs) (including FBI fingerprint checks) for all employees or other individuals who receive a salary, or stipend or similar payment from the grant (federal or non-federal share). **Please include the cost for these checks for staff or explain how your program will be covering the cost.** More information on National Service Criminal History Checks can be found on AmeriCorps' criminal history check page: <https://americorps.gov/granteessponsors/history-check>.
2. Office space rental for projects operating without an approved indirect cost rate agreement that covers office space. If space is budgeted and it is shared with other projects or activities, the costs must be equitably pro-rated and allocated between the activities or projects.
3. Utilities, telephone, internet, and similar expenses that are specifically used for AmeriCorps project staff and are not part of the organization's indirect cost allocation pool. If such expenses are budgeted and shared with other projects or activities, the costs must be equitably pro-rated and allocated between the activities or projects.
4. Gifts and/or food in an entertainment/event setting are not allowable costs as either AmeriCorps or Applicant share.

Section II: Administrative/Indirect Costs

Administrative costs are general or centralized expenses of the overall administration of an organization that receives AmeriCorps funds and do not include particular project costs. These costs may include administrative staff positions. For organizations that have an established indirect cost rate for federal awards, administrative costs mean those costs that are included in the organization's indirect cost rate agreement. Such costs are generally identified with the organization's overall operation and are further described in Office of Management and Budget Omni Circulars.

For organizations that do not have an established state or federal indirect cost rate,

administrative costs include:

- Costs for financial, accounting, auditing, contracting or general legal services, except in unusual cases where they are specifically approved in writing by AmeriCorps as project costs.
- Costs for internal evaluation, including the organization's overall management improvement costs (except for independent evaluations and internal evaluations of a program or project).
- Costs for general liability insurance that protects the organization(s) responsible for operating a program or project, other than insurance costs solely attributable to the project.
- Costs of space, base utilities, and communication (telephone, fax, and Internet) that support administrative personnel.
- Administrative costs may also include that portion of salaries and benefits of the project's director and other administrative staff not attributable to the time spent in support of a specific project. The principles that pertain to the allocation and documentation of personnel costs are stated in the OMB circulars that are incorporated in AmeriCorps regulations (See 45 CFR 2541.220(b)).

Administrative costs do not include the following allowable expenses directly related to a project (including their operations and objectives), such as:

- Costs for staff (including salary, benefits, training, and travel) who recruit, train, place or supervise members or who develop materials used in such activities, if the purpose is for a specific project objective.
- Costs for independent evaluations and any internal evaluations to the extent that the evaluations cover only the funded program or project.
- Costs, excluding those already covered in an organization's indirect cost rate, attributable to staff that work in a direct program or project support, operational, or oversight capacity, including, but not limited to: support staff whose functions directly support program or project activities; and staff who review, disseminate and implement AmeriCorps guidance and policies directly relating to a project.
- Space, facility and communications costs for program or project operations and other costs that primarily support program or project operations, and are specifically allocable thereto, excluding those costs that are already covered by an organization's indirect costs rate.
- Other allowable costs, excluding those costs that are already covered by an organization's indirect cost rate, specifically approved by AmeriCorps as directly attributable to a program or project.

Options for Calculating Administrative/Indirect Costs

Applicants can choose to use one of three methods to calculate allowable administrative costs: (1) an AmeriCorps fixed percentage rate method or (2) a state or federally approved indirect cost rate method, or (3) a de minimis method. Regardless of the option chosen, the AmeriCorps share of administrative costs is limited to 5% of the total AmeriCorps funds **actually expended for project activities** under this grant. Do not create additional lines in this category.

ATTACHMENT B

APPLICATION CERTIFICATION SHEET

Legal Name of Applicant: _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

State of Incorporation: _____ Entity Type: _____

Contact Name: _____ Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Any individual signing below hereby certifies they are an authorized representative of Applicant and that:

1. If awarded a Contract, Applicant agrees to perform the scope of work and meet the performance standards set forth in the final negotiated scope of work of the resulting Contract.
2. I have knowledge regarding Applicant's payment of taxes and by signing below I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, Applicant is not in violation of any tax laws of the state or a political subdivision of the state, including, without limitation, ORS 305.620 and ORS chapters 316, 317 and 318.
3. Applicant does not discriminate in its employment practices with regard to race, creed, age, religious affiliation, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or national origin. When awarding subcontracts, Applicant does not discriminate against any business certified under ORS 200.055 as a disadvantaged business enterprise, a minority-owned business, a woman-owned business, a business that a service-disabled veteran owns or an emerging small business. If applicable, Applicant has, or will have prior to contract execution, a written policy and practice, that meets the requirements described in ORS 279A.112, of preventing sexual harassment, sexual assault and discrimination against employees who are members of a protected class. HECC may not enter into a contract with an anticipated contract price of \$150,000 or more with a Applicant that does not certify it has such a policy and practice. See <https://www.oregon.gov/DAS/Procurement/Pages/hb3060.aspx> for additional information and sample policy template.
4. Applicant and Applicant's employees, agents, and subcontractors are not included on:
 - A. the "Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons" list maintained by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the United States Department of the Treasury found at: <https://www.treasury.gov/ofac/downloads/sdnlist.pdf>, or
 - B. the government-wide exclusions lists in the System for Award Management found at: <https://www.sam.gov/SAM>
5. Applicant certifies that, to the best of its knowledge, there exists no actual or potential conflict between the business or economic interests of Applicant, its employees, or its agents, on the one hand, and the business or economic interests of the State, on the other hand, arising out of, or relating in any way to, the subject matter of the RFA. If any changes occur with respect to Applicant's status regarding conflict of interest, Applicant shall promptly notify the State in writing.
6. Applicant certifies that all contents of the Application (including any other forms or documentation, if required under this RFA) and this Application Certification Sheet are truthful and accurate and have been prepared independently from all other Applicants, and without collusion, fraud, or other dishonesty.

7. Applicant understands that any statement or representation it makes, in response to this RFA, if determined to be false or fraudulent, a misrepresentation, or inaccurate because of the omission of material information could result in a "claim" (as defined by the Oregon False Claims Act, ORS 180.750(1)), made under Contract being a "false claim" (ORS 180.750(2)) subject to the Oregon False Claims Act, ORS 180.750 to 180.785, and to any liabilities or penalties associated with the making of a false claim under that Act.
8. Applicant certifies it will comply with the Pay Equity law, ORS 652.220, if applicable.
9. Applicant is registered in the State's electronic procurement system, OregonBuys, found here: <https://oregonbuys.gov/bso/>. (Registration is free by clicking the blue "Register" button on the top right corner of the webpage.)

Authorized Signature

Date

(Printed Name and Title)