# AmeriCorps Utah

# Getting Things Done for Utah

AmeriCorps Funding Opportunities
2024-2025 Grant Applications

# Introductions

In the chat please type your:

- Name
- Organization
- Title/Position
- Geographic Area Served

# UServeUtah Mission

The mission of the Utah Commission on Service and Volunteerism (UServeUtah) is to engage all Utahns in solving community needs through national service, volunteerism, and community engagement.

As the state's central coordinating body for service and volunteerism, UServeUtah is responsible for developing, implementing, and sustaining a vision and culture of national service and community engagement within the state.

# AmeriCorps Purpose and Goals

"Improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering."

**AmeriCorps Pledge**

I will get things done for America to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier. I will bring Americans together to strengthen our communities. Faced with apathy, I will take action. Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground. Faced with adversity, I will persevere. I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond. **I am an AmeriCorps member and I will Get Things Done!**

# The AmeriCorps Agency (formerly CNCS)

Federal agency that administers all National Service Programs

- AmeriCorps (VISTA, NCCC, State & National)
- AmeriCorps Seniors (Senior Companions, Foster Grandparents, RSVP)
- Special Initiatives (Mayor's Day of Recognition, National Service Safety Stand-down, etc.)
- National Days of Service (MLK Day of Service & 9/11 Day of Service)

**www.americorps.gov**

# AmeriCorps Seniors

- Service opportunities specifically for individuals 55 and older.

- Three programs:

  - Foster Grandparent Program

    - Volunteers mentor and guide students to higher academic achievement.

  - RSVP

    - Volunteers use their specific skills and talents to serve in a variety of volunteer activities.

  - Senior Companion Program

    - Volunteers serve as friends and companions by providing assistance and friendship to seniors to keep them independent longer and provide respite to family caregivers.

# AmeriCorps VISTA

Volunteers In Service to America

- Helps community organizations implement grassroots solutions to alleviate poverty
- Members serve full time for a year
- Funding comes directly from the federal agency, through a regional office
  - UServeUtah also has limited VISTA positions available for economic development.
- Behind the scenes, capacity-building (recruiting volunteers, raising funds, managing projects, etc.)

# AmeriCorps NCCC

National Civilian Community Corps

- Program for men & women ages 18 – 24

- Members serve full-time for 10 months

- Serve in teams of 10-14

- Based out of four regional campuses across the country

- Take on 6 – 8 week projects across their region relative to conservation, revitalization, homeland security, disaster preparedness, and more

# AmeriCorps State and National

- Largest branch of AmeriCorps – Over 80,000 members serving annually
- State (single state) & National (multi-state)
- Most of the funding is administered by Governor-appointed state service commissions
  - e.g. UServeUtah
- Provides grant funding to schools, nonprofits, government agencies, and faith-based organizations to operate AmeriCorps programs
- Members engage in direct service and capacity building to address compelling community needs
- Projects must enhance an organization's mission
  - Cannot duplicate pre-existing activities/positions,
  - Cannot displace staff or volunteers
  - Cannot supplant state or local funds
- Should focus on at least one of the six AmeriCorps focus areas
- 10 member service year (MSY) minimum

# Eligibility for an AmeriCorps Grant

- Nonprofit Organizations
  - Community/Regional/Statewide
  - Faith-Based
  - Secular

- Government agencies
  - State/County/Local

- Education
  - School Districts
  - Nonprofit Private
  - Nonprofit & Public Higher Ed Institutions

# AmeriCorps State Grant Opportunities

- **Cost Reimbursement Grant** – Program design based upon an approved budget with a match requirement that adheres to program rules.
- **Fixed Amount** – Grantees awarded a specific amount per MSY with no match requirement or approved budget. Reimbursement based on member hours served.
- **Education Award Program (EAP)** – Grantees are awarded a small amount of funding and use their own organizations resources for member living allowances and program costs.
- **Professional Corps** – Grantees are awarded a small amount of funding. Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries and benefits must be paid by the organization where the member serves and not included in the budget.
- **Planning Grant** – one year award for an organization to plan how they will manage and utilize an AmeriCorps program.

# AmeriCorps Focus Areas

- **Education** - Improve school readiness, education and behavioral outcomes, and preparation for successful post-secondary degree attainment for economically disadvantaged youth.
- **Environmental Stewardship –** Support increase citizen behavioral changes in environmental stewardship, including: Increased energy and water efficiency, renewable energy use, or improving at-risk ecosystems.
- **Veterans and Military Families –** Engage Veterans in service and support the needs of veterans, active duty personnel, and family of deployed military personnel.
- **Healthy Futures –** Address health care needs within communities, including: access to health care, aging in place, and addressing childhood obesity.
- **Economic Opportunity –** Promote and foster economic opportunity for economically disadvantaged individuals within communities through financial literacy, housing assistance and job training.
- **Disaster Services** - Increase resiliency and capacity of communities and individuals to prepare for, respond to, recover from disasters.

# Compelling Community Needs

AmeriCorps programs address critical community needs including, but not limited to:

- Improving graduation and degree attainment rates (education)
- Reducing youth obesity rates (healthy futures)
- Invasive weed removal (environmental stewardship)
- Improving school performance (education)
- Helping homeless individuals/families secure safe & affordable housing (economic opportunity)
- Disaster and first-aid education (disaster preparedness)
- Providing counseling for veterans (veteran & military families)

# 2024-2025 State of Utah Priority Areas

- Efforts to **promote physical, mental, and behavioral health.** Including projects that assist local communities to address social media concerns for minors, and/or prevent interpersonal and community harm.  [Utah Home 1.3, 1.4, 1.6]

- Efforts that actively engage in **expanding opportunity for all Utahns**, including programming that expands AmeriCorps services to underserved populations including those in rural areas of the state.  [Utah Home 1.5, 2.6]

- Efforts to **provide support for vulnerable families** so children have better opportunities for success, **expand access to housing, and/or manage homelessness.** [Utah Home 1.7, 2.2, 2.3]

- Efforts that **respond to drought, and prepare for Utah's water future.** [Utah Home 2.1]

# Who is an AmeriCorps Member?

- An individual enrolled for an intensive term of service (100-1700 hours per year)
  - Focuses on direct service and/or capacity building, and
  - volunteer recruitment
- U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States
- At least 17 years of age (no upper age limit)
- Not replacing a volunteer or a staff person
- AmeriCorps members earn an Education Award for a successful term of service
- Most members receive a modest living allowance
- Full-time members are eligible for:
  - Health insurance
  - Childcare (eligibility requirements apply)
- Passes a National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC)

# AmeriCorps Member Activities

Example member activities:

- Tutoring/mentoring elementary students
- Connecting families to adequate healthcare
- Assisting families with securing safe/affordable housing
- Assisting veterans with seeking employment
- Providing educational enrichment programs for youth
- Developing and conducting environmental education
- Conducting community awareness programs
- Implementing nutrition and physical activity programs
- Capacity building projects in a nonprofit or government agency

# AmeriCorps Member Limitations

- Cannot duplicate other services or displace employees or volunteers
- 80% of service hours must be direct service or capacity building
- Member development up to 20% of hours
- Fund-raising is limited to raising funds for the AmeriCorps program and limited to 10% of the member's hours
- Service member - **not an employee**
- Must follow a clearly defined service position description
- Must pass a National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC)
- Must not participate in prohibited activities during service

# AmeriCorps Member Prohibited Activities

1. Attempting to influence legislation;
2. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
3. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
4. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
5. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
6. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
7. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;

# AmeriCorps Member Prohibited Activities

8. Providing a direct benefit to

a. A business organized for profit;

b. A labor union;

c. A partisan political organization;

d. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and

e. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph C. 7. above, unless AmeriCorps assistance is not used to support those religious activities;

9. Conducting a voter registration drive or using AmeriCorps funds to conduct a voter registration drive;

10. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and

11. Such other activities as AmeriCorps may prohibit.

# 2024-2025 AmeriCorps Member Benefits

| Service Term | Minimum # of Hours | MSY | Minimum Living Allowance | Maximum Living Allowance | Education Award |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Full-time | 1,700 | 1.0 | $18,700 | $37,400 | $7,395.00 |
| Three Quarter Time | 1,200 | .70 | n/a | $26,180 | $5,176.50 |
| Half-time | 900 | .50 | n/a | $18,700 | $3,697.50 |
| Reduced Half-time | 675 | .381 | n/a | $14,212 | $2,817.14 |
| Quarter-time | 450 | .265 | n/a | $9,724 | $1,956.35 |
| Minimum-time | 300 | .212 | n/a | $7,854 | $1,565.08 |
| Abbreviated time | 100 | .056 | n/a | $2,244 | $416.17 |

# AmeriCorps State Program Requirements

- Grants provide **partial** funding for organizations to operate an AmeriCorps program
- 10 Member Service Year (MSY) Minimum
- Program staff:
  - One dedicated FTE (equivalent) to manage the program
- 3-year funding cycle, with a continuation application each year
- Cost reimbursement programs must meet minimum match requirements
  - Cash and/or In-Kind
  - Other Federal Funds with approval from the funding agency
  - Match requirement increases over time
- $25,000 Maximum Cost per MSY
- Max/Min Living Allowance requirements

# Minimum Match Requirement

Overall Minimum Program Match Requirement
(Cost Reimbursement Grants Only)

|  | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Minimum Overall Share** | 24% | 24% | 24% | 26% | 30% | 34% | 38% | 42% | 46% | 50% |

# AmeriCorps State Program Requirements

- Funds are for the program not general organizational expenses.
- Funds are for program expenses only:
  - Member living allowance
  - Benefits
  - Member & staff training
  - Supplies
  - Etc.
- Organizations that receive grants are responsible for recruiting, selecting, and supervising members to serve in their programs.

# Operational Budget Example

- 10 MSY Operational Program
  - 10 MSY x $25,000 Max. Cost/MSY = $250,000
  - USeerveUtah retains 2% for administrative costs
    - Total grant ~$245,000
  - 24% Match = $78,950
  - Total budget available = $323,950

- Full time members at minimum living allowance:
  - 10 MSY x $18,700 = $187,000 grant funds
  - $136,950 remaining  ($58,000 in grant).
  - Cost of program staff, healthcare, other operating costs?
  - Can I recruit at minimum living allowance?

# Performance Measurement & Data Collection

- Must identify one or more aligned output and outcome
    - National Performance Measure or Applicant Determined
    - Follow 2024 AmeriCorps Performance Measure Instructions
    - Example: Education Focused Program
        - Output Measure: ED1A: Number of individuals served
        - Outcome Measure: ED5A Number of students with improved academic performance
- Must have accurate data collection processes that avoid duplication
- Must have effective data collection tools
    - E.g. Standardized testing, pre-post surveys, etc.
- Data must be available to you and reported on a quarterly basis

# Benefits of an AmeriCorps Grant

- Expands organizational capacity to meet critical community needs
- Provides funds to support program administration
- Gives access to training & technical resources
- National network of organizations
- Skilled AmeriCorps members are often later hired by their host organizations
- Members and volunteers gain a better understanding of community needs/challenges and how to solve them.
- Member benefits covered by AmeriCorps/USServeUtah
  - Education Award, Child Care, Member Assistance Program

# Is AmeriCorps a Good Fit?

- Does my organization address a compelling need in an AmeriCorps focus area?
- Would the program support my organization's mission and strategic plan?
- Will AmeriCorps members create a documentable positive impact?
- Will the program provide services not already offered in the community?
- **Will my agency have the organizational, technological, and fiscal capacity to manage a federal grant program with at least 10 MSY?**

# 2024-2025 Application Process

UServeUtah uses a multi-step application process.

- The initial application allows organizations an opportunity to:
  - Explain the proposed program,
  - Demonstrate potential community impact, and
  - Show the capacity needed to manage an AmeriCorps program
- AmeriCorps Utah committee and peer review process
- If selected to submit a full application:
  - Applications are revised for submission to the AmeriCorps agency
  - Clarifying program details for AmeriCorps compliance
  - Submission of full applications in the eGrants system

# 2024-2025 Continuation Applicants

- **Continuation applicants:**
  - **Must submit an application.**
  - **Are not required to submit a full program narrative in Qualtrics unless:**
    - The program is requesting an increase in total funding or MSY.
  - **NEW: A required Continuation Changes section was added to the fillable PDF to record (3 page limit):**
    - Changes in MSY or Slot Types;
    - Changes in operating sites;
    - Significant changes in program scope or design;
    - Changes to performance measures including targets;
    - Significant changes to monitoring structures or staffing;
    - Budget revisions
      - e.g. adjustments for FT minimum living allowance requirements.
    - Right-sizing

# NEW: Continuation Right Sizing Policy

- Programs that did not meet 100% enrollment in the most recent program year with a closed enrollment period must:
  - Critically assess their continuation request for MSY/slots
  - Request only what can be realistically filled
- These programs may:
  - Request a higher cost per MSY if:
    - Tied to recruitment related expenses or higher living allowances
    - The request adheres to Max Cost/MSY and Min/Max Living Allowance
- Programs can do so through the continuation changes narrative if there is no increase to the total grant request
- The Commission reserves the right to decline any proposed changes.
- The Commission also reserves the right to review, adjust, and/or decline funding for programs that have significant compliance issues as identified by UServeUtah staff.

# 2024-2025 Application Timeline

- March 5-7, 2024: Applicant information sessions
- March 7, 2024: Application materials available
- March 19, 2024: Intent to apply due
- April 12, 2024 by 5:00 PM: Application deadline
- April - May 2024: Formula grant review period
- Mid-May 2024: Applicants notified of decision
- Mid-May 2024: Successful applicants submit full applications
- Programs begin operation:
  - August 1, 2024,
  - October 1, 2024, or
  - January 1, 2025

# AmeriCorps Application Components

- Applicants must submit an application with the following components:
    - Title Page (1 page)
    - Executive Summary (1 page – 3,000 characters max)
    - Logic Model Worksheet (2 pages max)
    - Performance Measurement Worksheet (2 pages)
    - Program Narrative - (Qualtrics survey format)
    - Budget Proposal Worksheet (varies)
    - Continuation Changes Narrative (existing programs)
    - Other Required Documents
        - See items listed in the application instructions

# AmeriCorps Application Criteria

**Program Design (60% of overall score)**

- Community Need (30% of program design)
  - Clearly describe the need
  - Why was it chosen?
  - Data justifying resources for the community need
  - Describe target community
  - Why was it chosen?

# AmeriCorps Application Criteria

**Program Design (60%)**
- Member Utilization (25% of program design)
  - What activities will the member perform?
  - Why do you need AmeriCorps members?
  - What is the number of members requested? (Minimum of 10 MSY)
  - What types of member slots & why?

# AmeriCorps Application Criteria

**Program Design (60%)**

- Program Impact (30% of program design)
  - Expected change in attitude, behavior, condition, or skill
  - Evidence based intervention(s)
  - What will be measured
  - What measurement tools will be used
  - Evaluation

# AmeriCorps Application Criteria

**Program Design (60%)**
- Member Experience (15% of program design)
  - Powerful service experience
  - Increase in lifelong civic engagement
  - Connectivity with other AmeriCorps members
  - AmeriCorps identity

# AmeriCorps Application Criteria

**Program Design (60%)**
- Other items to consider
  - Volunteer Generation
    - Recruiting and maintaining volunteers
  - How does your program link outcomes to the need?
    - Theory of Change Model
    - Logic Model Worksheet

# Theory of Change Model

## Community Problem/Need
What is the issue you are addressing? Why is it important? Why does it need to be addressed now?

## Specific Intervention
What will you do to achieve your intended outcome? What tools and resources are needed? How will you implement this intervention?

## Intended Outcome
What do you expect the community change to be? How will you measure and monitor it?

## Statistics
What figures do you have that define the community problem/need?

## Evidence
- Guides choice of specific intervention
- Results from specific intervention
- Supports cause-effect relationship

# AmeriCorps Application Criteria

**Organizational Capacity (25% of overall score)**

- Sound Organizational Structure
- Success in Securing Community Support
- Compliance & Accountability

# AmeriCorps Application Criteria

**Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (15% of overall score)**

- Clear, reasonable and cost-effective
- Budget aligns with application narrative
- Ability to meet minimum match requirement

# Application Information

- When submitting intent to apply please specify:
  - Cost Reimbursement, Fixed Amount, EAP, or Planning Grant

- Cost Reimbursement, Fixed Amount, and EAP Programs:
  - Same Application Instructions
  - Separate Fillable PDFs
  - Narrative (survey format)

- Planning Grants:
  - Separate Application Instructions
  - Separate Fillable PDF
  - Narrative (survey format)

# Completing the Budget

- Detailed instructions are provided in application instructions
- Budget reminders:
  - Health insurance must be provided for full-time members
  - You are accountable to meet the match % shown on the application budget
  - Some grant funding can be moved - up to 10% of the total program budget
    - If there is a chance you will need to spend in a specific category budget funds there
  - Unemployment insurance – No employer/employee relationship
  - General liability insurance requirements
    - $1,000,000 per occurrence and $3,000,000 for the life of the policy
    - State as additional insured party
  - Equipment: Single items over $5,000 (other items are supplies)
- UServeUtah retains 2% of grant funds for administrative costs
  - Cost reimbursement and planning grants: Commission Fixed Amount line
  - Fixed grants: Taken out from the contract

# Budgeting for a New Cost-Reimbursement Program

1. Proposed MSY x Maximum Cost Per MSY ($25,000)
   a. 10 MSY x $25,000 = $250,000 (Max grant funding that can be requested)
2. Determine the total budget needed for operating and member costs
   a. What will the program actually cost?
3. Decide where to place the requested grant funding
   a. Ensure you meet minimum match requirements
      ■ Year 1 through 3 – Match must be 24% or more of the total budget
   b. Ensure your total requested grant funds are less than the max cost per MSY
4. Complete the administrative costs section based on the application instructions
   a. Corporation Fixed Rate is Most Common
      ■ 5% of the total grant portion can be applied to administrative costs
         ● **2% is withheld by UServeUtah**
         ● 3% is available for sub-grantee administrative costs
5. Re-adjust grant funding as needed and re-check total cost

# Reminders

- Application materials will be available by March 7, 2024
  - **Posted to the application web page.**
- Notice of Intent to apply must be emailed to UServeUtah by March 19, 2024
  - Include the name of your organization
  - One paragraph explanation of the type of program you are proposing
  - If you are applying for a cost reimbursement, fixed-cost, EAP, or planning grant.
- Application due April 12, 2024 by 5:00 PM
- Notification to applicants – Mid-May 2024
- Successful applicants submit full online applications – Mid-May 2024
- Programs begin operation in August, October, or January
- Continuation applicants – Continuation Changes vs Full Narrative

# For More Information

- **Web:**
  - **https://userve.utah.gov/americorps-grant-application-information/**
- **Staff Contact**
  - Greg Bates
  - gregbates@utah.gov
  - 801-979-3358
- **@userveutah on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn**

# Questions?