



Serve Washington

Changing Communities. Changing Lives.

AMERICORPS PROGRAM HANDBOOK

A Resource for State Program Directors

June 2016

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Chapter 1: Introduction

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- ✓ Key Websites
- ✓ Laws, Regulations, Grant Terms and Conditions

Purpose of Handbook

The Serve Washington AmeriCorps Program Handbook (The Handbook) has been specifically designed by Serve Washington as a guide for those who administer AmeriCorps programs in Washington State. The Handbook has been developed to help those who are newcomers to their positions to gain a general understanding of the management functions for overseeing AmeriCorps programs/sites and work collaboratively with Serve Washington to make AmeriCorps programs more successful.

It is intended to:

- Provide a roadmap for AmeriCorps subgrantee/site management
- Lay out a typical administrator's general workload
- Illustrate legal requirements
- Show where there is both control and flexibility to shape each AmeriCorps program

Please note that the information contained in this manual does not include all the legal requirements of managing an AmeriCorps grant. It does not constitute the Corporation for National and Community Service's (CNCS) official interpretation of factual or legal questions.

Program directors or individuals with particular questions should consult the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12501 et seq.), the federal regulations issued under the Act (45 C.F.R. § 2500.1 et seq.), the CNCS Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants, the CNCS General Grant Terms and Conditions, AmeriCorps State and National Policy FAQs, Serve Washington Special Terms and Conditions, and relevant state law.

It is important that subgrantees become familiar with all the information contained in this handbook. The Handbook will be revised as needed. Notice of revisions will be sent to each Washington AmeriCorps Program Director and posted on Serve Washington's website.

Key Websites

The following websites contain an abundance of information. For your convenience, individual page links have been imbedded throughout The Handbook for easy reference.

[Corporation for National and Community Service](#)

[AmeriCorps](#)

[Serve Washington](#)

[National Service Knowledge Network: AmeriCorps Resources](#)

[National Service Knowledge Network: Focus Areas](#)

Laws, Regulations, Grant Conditions, and Special Terms

In the event there is an inconsistency in The Handbook, precedence is given in the following order:

- National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12501 et seq.)
- Code of Federal Regulations (45 C.F.R. § 2500.1 et seq.)
- CNCS Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants
- CNCS General Grant Terms and Conditions
- AmeriCorps State and National Policy FAQs
- Serve Washington Special Terms and Conditions

The National and Community Service Act of 1990 has been amended several times since its original passage in 1990, including by the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, and most recently by the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009. The Statute (or law) authorizes federal funding for AmeriCorps.

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs) are interpretations of the law.

CNCS Terms and Conditions are additional requirements. These are issued annually. Serve Washington has its own set of Special Terms and Conditions to define requirements for subgrantees of Serve Washington. These are also issued annually.

FAQs clarify policies relevant to AmeriCorps grants.

The first five items listed above can all be accessed on the [Managing AmeriCorps Grants](#) page of the AmeriCorps website. Subgrantees can search by key words in each individual document or conduct a larger search by key words using the compiled search document. [Serve Washington](#)

[Special Terms and Conditions](#) can be accessed on the Serve Washington website. Many of these documents are also included as hard copies in the subgrantee contract.

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) or Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for which your grant was awarded also contains important information. You will find it a helpful reference even after receiving an award. Programs should consult the NOFO/NOFA to which they applied.

Chapter 2: National Service and Washington State

- ✓ **History of National Service in Washington State**
- ✓ **Serve Washington Mission and Vision**
- ✓ **CNCS State Office and Serve Washington Collaboration**
- ✓ **National Days of Service**
- ✓ **Special Initiatives and Events**
- ✓ **Training and Technical Assistance**

History of National Service in Washington State

National service is not new in Washington State. The Civilian Conservation Corps was the most popular of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs during the Great Depression in the 1930's that put thousands of unemployed men to work throughout our state building trails and parks from Olympic National Park to the Spokane Indian Reservation. In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson helped create Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) to help fight the war on poverty in the U.S., and continued a long history of successful national service programs in our state. The early 1970's saw the creation of the ACTION agency that oversaw Senior Service, Peace Corps and VISTA. In 1973, the passage of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act created the RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program), Foster Grandparent, and Senior Companion Programs under the federal ACTION agency along with VISTA. By 1990, President George H. W. Bush helped sign the first National and Community Service Trust Act.

With the passage of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, it paved the way for AmeriCorps State and National programs to be developed all across the United States. This Act put all streams of service – excluding the Peace Corps – under one federal agency, the Corporation for National and Community Service. This included the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), VISTA, Senior Corps, and the newly created AmeriCorps program. For states to be in the position of applying for and managing new AmeriCorps State programs, part of the Act called for the creation of State Commissions.

On February 16, 1994, Governor Mike Lowry announced the creation of the Washington Commission for National and Community Service by Executive Order #94-03, along with 25-Commissioner positions to be appointed by the Governor. Most recently, Governor Jay Inslee signed Executive Order #14-06 which changed the name of the Washington Commission for National and Community Service to Serve Washington. In addition, the executive order

restructured membership composition and tasked Serve Washington with identifying new policies or practices that will lead to the expansion of national service opportunities in Washington and support the President's Task Force on Expanding National Service.

For a more detailed history of national service, please visit our [website](#). For more information on the CNCS and other streams of national service, please visit www.nationalservice.gov.

Serve Washington Mission and Vision

Mission Statement

Serve Washington advances national service, volunteerism and civic engagement to improve lives; expands opportunity to meet the local critical needs of residents of Washington; and strengthens community capacity while creating healthy and resilient communities.

Vision Statement

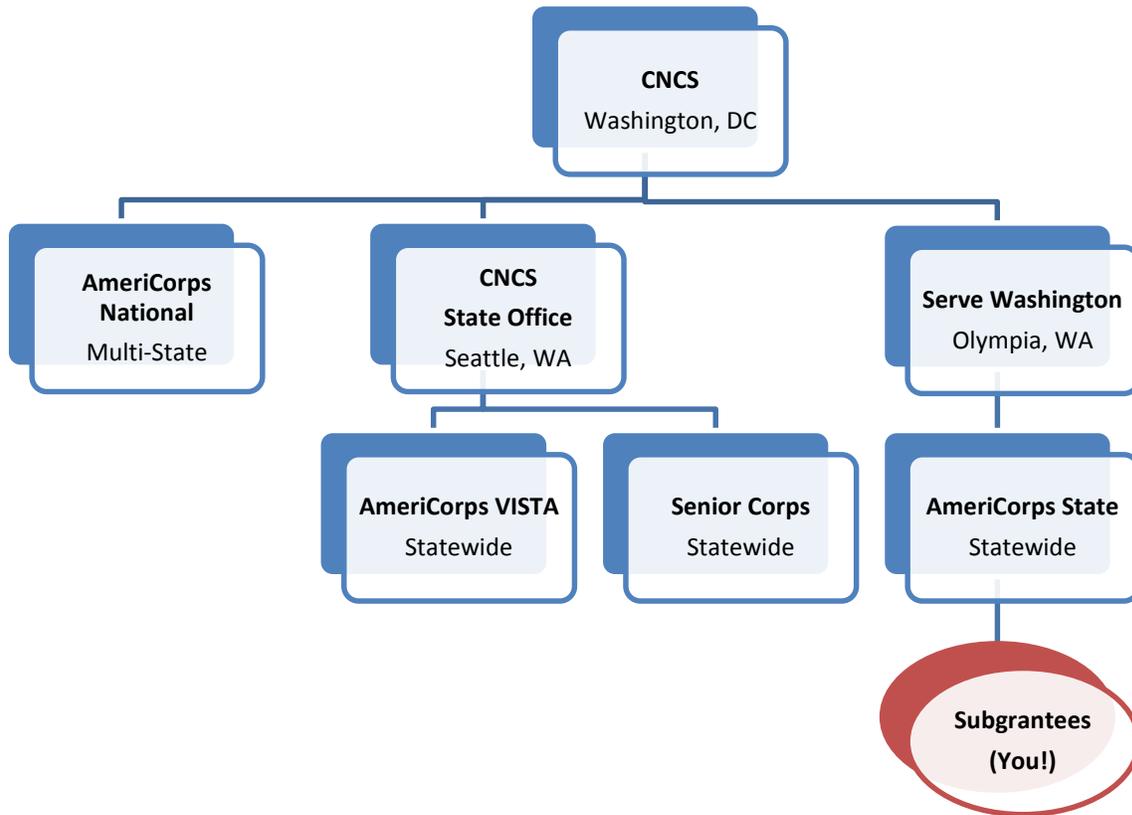
National service, volunteerism, and civic engagement are the foundation for caring communities and a thriving Washington.

CNCS State Office and Serve Washington Collaboration

Serve Washington has partnered with the CNCS – Washington State Office in Seattle since 1994. While Serve Washington oversees AmeriCorps State programs, CNCS headquarters (Washington, DC) oversees AmeriCorps National programs, and the CNCS Washington State Office oversees AmeriCorps VISTA and Senior Corps programs in Washington. Even though our agencies oversee different streams of national service, we share the goal of expanding national opportunities for all Washington State residents, as well as promoting volunteerism and service as a means to addressing vital community needs in the communities that need this support the most.

The CNCS State Director has been an ex-officio member on our State Commission and is a key participant and advisor on the direction of AmeriCorps service in our state. AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and VISTA stakeholders often come together to plan and coordinate projects in various regions of our state. Our partners often work together on our State Service Plan, which is a three-year blueprint on the direction of volunteerism and national service initiatives in our state.

Flowchart of National Service in Washington State:



National Days of Service

Each year CNCS encourages AmeriCorps programs to participate in national days of service with specific focus on [Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service](#) and [9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance](#). National days of service present programs with a special opportunity to address unmet community needs, collaborate with other AmeriCorps programs, build AmeriCorps member morale and teamwork, promote volunteerism and service in local communities, and highlight the difference AmeriCorps members make across the nation.

➔ What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

Serve Washington has a high expectation that all programs participate in national days of service. Additionally, programs should develop days of service that allow the participation of community volunteers, Serve Washington Commissioners, and invited elected officials. Consult your Program Officer to discuss further.

Special Initiatives and Events

In addition to the national days of service, Serve Washington, often times in collaboration with the CNCS State Office, embarks on many special initiatives and events each year.

Notable events include:

- Washington State AmeriCorps LAUNCH (September or October)
- Leader Corps (February)
- AmeriCorps Week (March)
- Mayor, County, and Tribal Recognition Day of National Service (April)
- Volunteer Week (April)
- Governor's Volunteer Service Awards (April)
- Seattle Mariners Salute to Volunteers Night (April)



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

Dates are subject to change. Serve Washington will promote all initiatives and events as they occur.

Training and Technical Assistance

Beyond The Handbook, Serve Washington provides many opportunities for ongoing training and technical assistance. Each program is also assigned a Serve Washington Program Officer.

Notable opportunities include:

- Pre-Award Consultation (Varies)
- New Program Orientation (Varies)
- Subgrantee Calls/Webinars (January, April, October)
- Leadership Forum for National Services Executives (June – In State)
- Annual Subgrantee Meeting (July – In State)
- Pacific Cluster Learning Community Conference (Varies – Out of State)
- National Conference of Volunteering and Service (Varies – Out of State)

There are a number of good resources available to programs online, too. Online resources commonly used are imbedded in The Handbook where applicable.



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

Program participation is expected for all subgrantee calls/webinars, the annual in-state subgrantee meeting, and the annual out-of-state Pacific Cluster Regional Conference. Serve Washington expects programs to plan and budget accordingly. Consult your Program Officer for additional information or special requests.

Please also visit our [Calendar of Events](#) web page located on the Serve Washington website.

Chapter 3: Program and Member Management – Start-Up

- ✓ Prime Grantee vs. Subgrantee
- ✓ Competitive vs. Formula Subgrantees
- ✓ Cost-Reimbursement vs. Fixed-Amount Subgrantees
- ✓ Financial Management
- ✓ Program Policies and Procedures
- ✓ AmeriCorps Members vs. Employees
- ✓ Prohibited Activities
- ✓ Allowable Activities
- ✓ Tutoring Requirements
- ✓ Position Descriptions
- ✓ Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment
- ✓ Inclusion
- ✓ Member Eligibility
- ✓ Member Recruitment and Selection
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Prime Grantee vs. Subgrantee

Serve Washington is the prime grantee of CNCS for AmeriCorps State programs in Washington State. Your program is therefore referred to as a subgrantee of Serve Washington. It is important to know and understand each assigned number for financial and program reporting. Though it can be confusing, different circumstances require the use of different identification numbers.

Grant Identification Numbers

Serve Washington prime grants have a 10-character format. For example, 13ESHWA001. Subgrantee grants have a 14-character format. Subgrantee grant numbers don't always coincide with prime grant numbers. For example, 10ESHWA0010003.

Application Identification Number

Subgrantees are also assigned an application identification number at the time of application. Application numbers have a 10-character format. Once approved, application numbers can change when a revision or modification is done to an application in eGrants. For example, 15ES166920 and 15ES178712.

Contract Numbers

Subgrantee awards also have Washington State assigned contracts numbers. Contract numbers have a 4-character format and begin with the letter "K." For example, K1566.

Competitive vs. Formula Subgrantees

Serve Washington is the prime grantee for two types of AmeriCorps subgrants, *Competitive* grants and *Formula* grants. A program's grant type is determined upon application.

Competitive Subgrantees

Occurring in the fall each year, competitive grants are AmeriCorps program proposals that are put into a pool of applicants from across the country for a national grant review process.

Formula Subgrantees

Occurring in the spring each year, formula grants are AmeriCorps program proposals that are put into a pool of applicants at the state commission level for a decision on funding made by the state's commissioners.

Cost-Reimbursement vs. Fixed-Amount Subgrantees

Within both Competitive and Formula grants, Serve Washington is the prime grantee for two different types of financial grant agreements, *Cost-Reimbursement* grants and *Fixed-Amount* grants. A program's grant agreement is determined at the time of application.

Cost-Reimbursement Subgrantees

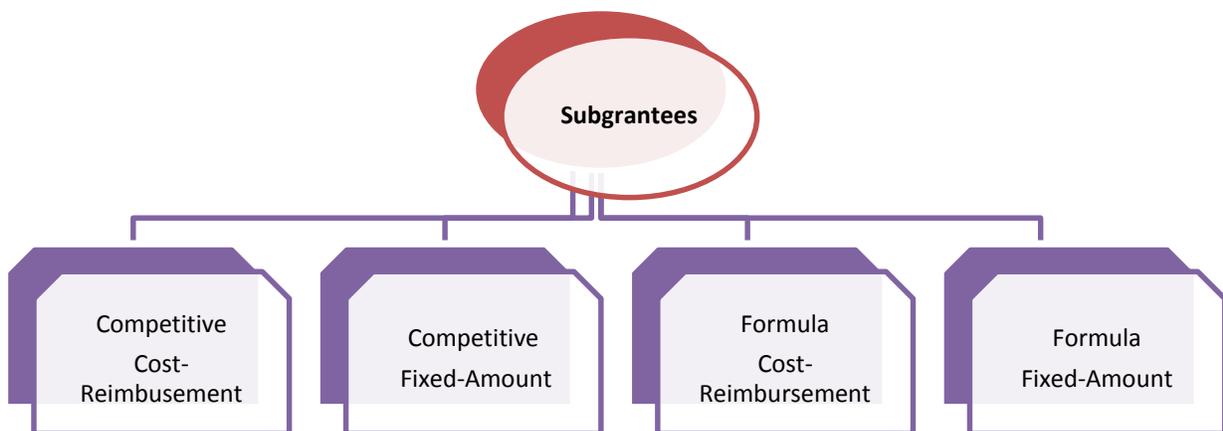
Recipients of cost-reimbursement grants have a minimum match requirement and must maintain documentation of all grant expenses. Under a cost-reimbursement grant, the grantee can access and retain all funds for legitimate and allowable costs.

Fixed-Amount Subgrantees

Recipients of fixed-amount grants do not have minimum match requirements, are not required to maintain documentation of the match that is raised in support of the AmeriCorps program, and have fewer fiscal reporting requirements than cost-reimbursement grants. While fixed-amount grants do not have a specified minimum match requirement, the amount provided by CNCS does not cover the full cost of operating a program. The maximum cost per MSY for a fixed-amount grant is typically lower than for a cost-reimbursement grant. Under a fixed-amount grant, grantees may receive funds based on the enrollment of members for Education Award Program (EAP) grants or for the enrollment and hours served for stipended full-time and Professional Corps fixed-amount grants.

See [Chapter 5](#) for details on fiscal reporting requirements.

Overall Grant Types:



Financial Management

Under CNCS regulations, grantees must maintain financial management systems that provide accurate, complete, and current disclosure of AmeriCorps grant finances. Subgrantees must adhere to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Guidance.

Components of a financial management system include:

- Adequate practices that address regulatory requirements
- Written policies and procedures
- Documentation of expenses
- Cash management systems
- An efficient accounting system
- Budget controls
- Time AND activity documentation
- Documentation of matching requirements AND in-kind contributions
- Timely, complete, and accurate reporting
- Internal controls

The following are several important financial management facts for new subgrantees:

- Each AmeriCorps grant must be tracked separately from other grants and programs.
- Staff identified on the AmeriCorps grant budget – whether paid with CNCS funds or match (called “Grantee Share” in the eGrants budget), must maintain timesheets that document the actual amount of time spent on the AmeriCorps grant and on other activities.
- If a subgrantee is found to be out of compliance with grant requirements, CNCS and Serve Washington will hold the subgrantee liable for disallowed costs.

Please note that there are companies that offer training on federal grants management. Such courses would be especially helpful for subgrantee organizations that have no or minimal experience with federal grants management. While these trainings do not focus on the specifics of managing finances for an AmeriCorps program, they provide general guidance on federal requirements and setting up sound accounting practices. It is the subgrantee’s responsibility to ensure that adequate financial systems and well-trained staff are in place to manage the AmeriCorps resources.

[Financial Management](#) resources can also be found on the National Service Knowledge Network. [Uniform Guidance](#) (aka Omni Circular/Super Circular) resources are also available.

Program Policies and Procedures

During the start-up period, you should develop and document policies and procedures that lay the framework for how your program will be managed. A well-written and comprehensive set of policies and procedures will help your program run more efficiently and effectively, while also ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements. Some policies are mandated by grant requirements, but you will want to create other policies as well that are tailored to your program and your organization.

Your program policies must ensure compliance with grant requirements, including, but not limited to:

- Non-Discrimination
- Prohibited Activities
- Reasonable Accommodation
- Drug-free Workplace
- Grievance procedures
- National Service Criminal History Check
- AmeriCorps member safety “safeguards”
- Site selection criteria and process
- Recordkeeping
- Member eligibility documentation
- Member information confidentiality

Other key policies and procedures may include:

- Member leave
- Member selection, evaluation, and termination
- Standards of member conduct, attendance requirements, and dress codes
- Requirements of sites for progress reporting, raising and documenting match and promoting AmeriCorps identity
- Communication hierarchies, etc.

The above-mentioned policies that you develop will serve as the basis for your site and member agreements, which will be discussed later in this document. These policies should be included in any program manual or handbook that you distribute to sites and members. Throughout the life of your program, it is a good idea to continue to develop and refine policies and procedures that guide your program implementation.

AmeriCorps Members vs. Employees

AmeriCorps Members

[AmeriCorps members are NOT employees.](#) By law, an AmeriCorps member is defined as a “participant” in an approved national service position. By rule, “a participant shall not be considered to be an employee of the organization receiving assistance under the national service laws through which the participant is engaging in service.” (42 USC 12511 30B) Furthermore, the US Department of Labor has clarified that an AmeriCorps participant is not an employee of the program for purposes of the Fair Labor Standards Act and is ineligible for unemployment insurance.

Non-Duplication and Non-Displacement

AmeriCorps is not intended to duplicate activities already available in the locality of a program. Additionally, an organization may not displace or supplant an employee position with an AmeriCorps member position.

See the federal regulation in its entirety: [45 CFR 2540.100](#).



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

Whenever possible, programs should refrain from using terms such as “work” or “working” in a “job” when referring to AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps members. Instead, AmeriCorps members “serve” or “perform service” in a “national service position.”

Prohibited Activities

The Corporation acknowledges that religious and political activities play a positive role in healthy communities, that religion and politics are defining characteristics of many community organizations (faith-based and secular), and that religious and political belief and action are central to many AmeriCorps members’ lives.

However, it is important that AmeriCorps programs and their members do not appear to be taking sides religiously or politically. Consequently, a number of limitations on the activities that AmeriCorps programs can support and in which members can engage while earning service hours, or when otherwise, representing AmeriCorps must be imposed.

Due to the importance of this regulation, we have cited the language in its entirety. See also: [45 CFR 2520.65](#).

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, members accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or the Corporation, staff and members may not engage in the following activities, and the grantee may not use grant funds to support the following activities.

- a. Attempting to influence legislation;
- b. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- c. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
- d. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- e. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- f. 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;
- g. 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;
- h. Providing a direct benefit to—
 - i. A business organized for profit;
 - ii. A labor union;
 - iii. A partisan political organization;
 - iv. 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 9 provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
 - v. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (g.) above, unless CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
- i. Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
- j. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
- k. Such other activities as CNCS may prohibit.

AmeriCorps members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-CNCS funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.

Allowable Activities

After reading the list of prohibited activities there may be questions about allowable service activities.

The most important piece of information to relay is that at least 70% of member time must be spent doing direct service. A maximum of 20% of program time can be dedicated to education/training and a maximum of 10% of each member's time can be dedicated to fundraising.

Direct service addresses human need or the environment in one form or another. It is engaging directly with people to support change, or performing service that is involved in creating community impact. Administrative tasks necessary to perform direct service are inherent. However, programs should caution against excessive administrative tasks or administrative tasks unrelated to direct service. Direct service that members perform must be outlined in an awarded grant and further defined in member Position Descriptions.

Indirect service, defined as education/training and fundraising, is limited.

See the federal regulations on education/training in its entirety: [45 CFR 2520.50](#).

See the federal regulations on fundraising in its entirety: [45 CFR 2520.40](#) and [2520.45](#).



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

All AmeriCorps service activities will take place within the State of Washington only, unless otherwise approved. If you have questions about prohibited or allowable activities contact your Program Officer.

Tutoring Requirements

Any program whose primary goal is to increase academic achievement in reading or other core subjects through planned, consistent, one-to-one or small-group sessions and activities that build on the academic strengths of students in kindergarten through 12th grade and target their academic needs must comply with tutoring requirements.

See the federal regulations on tutoring in its entirety: [45 CFR 2522.900](#), [2522.910](#), [2522.920](#) and [2522.940](#).

Any program focusing on supplemental academic support other than tutoring (as defined) is not subject to such requirements.

See the federal regulation on academic support activities in its entirety: [45 CFR 2522.950](#).

Position Descriptions

Every AmeriCorps member must have a Position Description. The Position Description is developed at the program level and is either imbedded into the Member Service Agreement or maintained as an independent document referenced in the Member Service Agreement.

Single-focused programs in which AmeriCorps members all have the same Position Description find it easiest to place the Position Description directly in the Member Service Agreement. While multi-focused programs in which AmeriCorps members have differing Position Descriptions find it easiest to maintain individual Position Descriptions referenced as addendums in Member Service Agreements.

In either case, a Position Description should include the following:

- Organization/Program
- Operating Site (if different than the program)
- Supervisor
- Position Title
- Days/Hours of Service
- Program/Site Overview
- Description of Position
- Responsibilities and Related Tasks
- Required/Desired Qualifications
- Reference to AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities

Additionally:

- It is recommended that programs use Position Descriptions to reflect whether or not the position serves vulnerable populations and if a corresponding 2-part or 3-part criminal history check is required
- Include AmeriCorps and organization/program logos
- Use “serve” instead of “work” and “position” instead of “job”
- Avoid language such as “other duties as assigned” (all Position Descriptions should be specific, removing any perception of prohibited activities)

A Position Description template can be found in The Handbook [Appendix](#).

Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment

AmeriCorps is available to all, without regard to race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, political affiliation, or, in most instances, religion. By legislation or design, some programs are tailored to particular age groups.

CNCS has zero tolerance for the harassment of any individual or group of individuals for any reason.

See the [CNCS General Grant Terms and Conditions](#), section II.K., page 8, and the CNCS policy attachment, last page of the General Grant Terms and Conditions.

Inclusion

AmeriCorps is committed to promoting inclusion of people of all abilities in National Service Programs. For [Disability Inclusion](#) resources consult the National Service Knowledge Network.

Reasonable Accommodation

Programs and activities must be accessible to persons with disabilities, and the subgrantee must provide reasonable accommodation to the known mental or physical disabilities of otherwise qualified members, service recipients, applicants, and staff. All selections and project assignments must be made without regard to the need to provide reasonable accommodation.

Accommodation Requests

The vast majority of accommodations are inexpensive. For those cases where reasonable accommodations are more costly, there is a limited amount of money available through CNCS. Contact your Program Officer for instructions on requesting disability accommodation funds.

Member Eligibility

An AmeriCorps member must:

- Be at least 17 years of age at the commencement of service; or under special circumstances be an out-of school youth 16 years of age at the commencement of service.
- Have a high school diploma or GED or agree to obtain prior to using the education award; or under special circumstances obtain a waiver.
- Be a citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States.
- Satisfy the National Service Criminal History Check eligibility criteria.

See the federal regulation in its entirety: [45 CFR 2522.200](#).

How does a program document age?

Passports, government issued birth certificates, and driver's licenses, are the most common examples of documents that confirm a member is old enough to serve. For members under age 18, parental consent is required.

How does a program document educational attainment?

Enrolling in the My AmeriCorps portal requires members to certify their high school status. Such certification fulfills the subgrantee's verification requirement.

How does a program document citizenship?

Passports, government issued birth certificates, certificates of naturalization, and INS Forms I-551 are the most common examples of documents that confirm citizenship.

Do individuals under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) meet citizenship requirements?

No, not at this time.

Can programs use I-9 forms for eligibility?

No. Applicants must produce the original of one of the forms listed in the regulations. I-9 forms, used to document eligibility for employment, are not sufficient to document eligibility for AmeriCorps. Organization may choose to use the I-9 for internal requirements but are not considered primary documentation for AmeriCorps compliance.



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

Government issued photo identification required.

This requirement directly pertains to performing Criminal History Checks, but should be routinely collected with eligibility documentation.

Washington State Enhanced Driver's License/Enhanced Identification Card are acceptable for documenting citizenship.

Serve Washington has written approval from CNCS to use the Washington State Enhanced Driver's License (EDL) and the Washington State Enhanced Identification Card (EDI) as an acceptable document to prove citizenship. The EDL/EDI is not currently listed in the federal regulation. If a program would like to use this alternate method for proving citizenship, they should contact their Program Officer for a copy of the CNCS approval letter and retain with their records.

The Washington State EDL/EDI differs from a standard driver's license or identification card. Programs should take caution when screening these documents. A standard driver's license or identification card is NOT an eligible document proving citizenship.

Copies of eligibility documentation are required by Serve Washington.

Serve Washington requires programs to maintain copies of all eligibility documentation in the member file for monitoring purposes.

Member Recruitment and Selection

A successful recruitment strategy is the foundation to a thriving AmeriCorps program and the initial step necessary for programs to reach their desired community impact goals. AmeriCorps members are the face of any program; selection and placement of members is crucial to the overall health of AmeriCorps at the national, state, and local level. Being up front about both the benefits and challenges can help place members who are more likely to complete their service term.

AmeriCorps recruits for diversity. Programs must be accessible to all persons with or without reasonable accommodation. CNCS embraces both a non-discrimination and non-harassment policy.

For strategies on [recruitment](#), please visit the National Service Knowledge Network.

How do I recruit nationally?

In eGrants via the My AmeriCorps portal, programs can create “service opportunity” listings. This will connect the program to the national recruitment effort and will provide a one stop shop for programs to search for applicants (and applicants to find programs).

See [Chapter 4](#) for details on online member management and eGrants/My AmeriCorps functionality.

How do I recruit locally?

Successful local recruitment may look different in each community. Here are some general suggestions:

- Newspapers or Online Sources such as Craigslist
- Organization’s Website
- High Schools and Colleges
- Career and Volunteer Fairs
- Word of Mouth – Members and Alumni

May I charge an application fee?

No. Charging an application fee is not allowed.



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

Programs must develop their own selection process (i.e. screening and interviewing) and implement the process consistently. To document recruitment and selection, at a minimum the program should retain an application or resume and two references.

National Service Criminal History Checks

The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. Since November 23, 2007, CNCS has had regulations setting requirements for subgrantees to perform a NSCHC on individuals with recurring access to a vulnerable population. On October 1, 2009, regulations went into effect implementing Section 189D of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act, expanding the positions subject to the NSCHC to include any individual receiving a living allowance, stipend, national service education award, or salary through a program receiving assistance under the national service laws, regardless of their level of contact with a vulnerable population.

See the federal regulation in its entirety: [45 CFR 2522 and 2540](#).

A [NSCHC E-Course](#) can be found on the National Service Knowledge Network. Staff identified as having a role or responsibility in conducting and documenting NSCHCs must complete this training **annually**.

Who does this apply to?

All covered positions. A “covered position” is one in which an individual serving or employed receives a living allowance, stipend, education award, or salary, through either the federal share or grantee share of a national service program. For example, common covered positions include, but are not limited to, AmeriCorps members and program staff.

What checks are required for covered positions?

Individuals WITHOUT recurring access to vulnerable populations require two components:

*National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) **AND either** a State(s) Check **OR** FBI Check as defined below.*

1. A nationwide name-based check of the NSOPW, which consists of a web-based check of a centralized system that identifies individuals who are registered as sex offenders in States, territories, or with many federally recognized Tribes; **and**
2. Either a name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the candidate's State of residence and in the State where the individual will serve or work; **OR** a fingerprint-based FBI check.

Individuals WITH recurring access to vulnerable populations require a heightened check with three components:

*National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) **AND** a State(s) Check **AND** FBI Check as defined below.*

1. A nationwide name-based check of the NSOPW, which consists of a web-based check of a centralized system which identifies individuals who are registered as sex offenders in States, territories, or with many federally recognized Tribes; **and**
2. Either a name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the candidate's State of residence and in the State where the individual will serve or work;
3. **AND** a fingerprint-based FBI check.

	Covered Positions	Covered Positions <u>with</u> Recurring Access to Vulnerable Populations
Type of Check:		
National Sex Offender Public Website	X	X
State of Service (Washington)	X	X
State of Residence (if applicant is applying from out of Washington)	X	X
FBI		X

What is the definition of vulnerable populations?

Vulnerable populations include:

- Children age 17 or younger;
- Persons age 60 or older; and
- Persons with disabilities.

Additionally, the NSCHC three component requirement for people with recurring access to vulnerable populations applies to the person providing **service to** vulnerable populations, not providing **service with** vulnerable populations.

What is the definition of recurring access to vulnerable populations?

Recurring access is defined as “the ability on more than one occasion to approach, observe, or communicate with, and individual, through physical proximity or other means, including but not limited to, electronic or telephonic communication.”

When must checks be completed?

The NSOPW must be performed and reviewed before the start of service/employment. In all cases, service/employment cannot begin before the NSOPW is complete.

The State(s) and/or FBI checks must be initiated before the individual starts service/employment. If/While the State(s) and FBI check(s) are pending, accompaniment must be performed. For individuals in covered positions for whom a NSCHC requires both State(s) and FBI components, the program may elect to cease accompaniment of the individual when it has received results clearing the individual through either the State component(s) or the FBI component.

For further information on accompaniment, please see the CNCS [NSCHC FAQ](#) 7.16, 7.17, and 7.18.

What are the minimum steps necessary when performing checks?

CNCS has created a [NSCHC Checklist](#).

What results would prohibit an individual from service or employment?

- Anyone listed, or required to be listed, on a sex offender registry is ineligible to serve.
- Anyone convicted of murder is ineligible to serve.
- Anyone refusing to undergo required checks is ineligible to serve.
- Anyone who makes a false statement regarding their criminal record is ineligible to serve.
- Programs may develop additional criteria.



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

Serve Washington requires all programs to have a policy/procedure on Criminal History Checks, including the roles and responsibilities of staff conducting and documenting NSCHCs.

Serve Washington encourages programs to perform and complete ALL required checks prior to service/employment. Programs should use checks in collaboration with recruitment strategies when making the final selection of members/staff. This can also help avoid having to document accompaniment.

At minimum the NSOPW should be completed before an offer to serve/work is made. (The NSOPW is a US Government website which does not require consent of the individual prior to performing a search.) Once an offer is made and accepted, consent should be quickly obtained and additional required checks should be initiated as soon as possible.

Serve Washington strongly encourages programs to thoroughly read the federal register and associated documents found on the National Service Criminal History Resource page, and consult with their Program Officer to ensure compliance.

National Service Criminal History Check Resources, including FAQs:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/criminal-history-check>

NSOPW Website:

<http://www.nsopr.gov>

Check is free of charge.

Washington Access To Criminal History Website (WATCH):

<https://fortress.wa.gov/wsp/watch/>

Registered non-profit organizations that have established an account are exempt from payment requirements; otherwise the name/date of birth based check is \$10.

Out of State Check Resources:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/resource/table-of-designated-state-repositories-and-alternates-04-04-16.pdf>

Refer to the most recent list of approved State repositories for associated costs.

FBI Check:

Costs vary depending on methodology.

The preferred method of obtaining the FBI check is through the CNCS designated State repository. The Washington State Patrol (WSP) is the Washington State repository. CNCS requires alternative methods be pre-approved through an Alternative Search Procedure (ASP) request.

In Washington, non-profit organizations are prohibited by state law from accessing FBI checks through WSP. Only a few government organizations are allowed by state law to access FBI checks through WSP. [Fieldprint](#) is widely used by subgrantees. Consult with your Program Officer to determine the most appropriate means to conduct an FBI check.

Member Service Agreement

Member Service Agreements are a critical part of administering AmeriCorps programs. Member Service Agreements provide the legal basis or contract by which the terms, conditions and rules regarding participation are delineated. This contract between the program and member is the legal document which would be used to resolve any issues between the program and a member.

CNCS outlines the minimum requirements in the [CNCS Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants](#), section V.B., page 7. Programs should consult with their organization in collaboration with the requirements to fully meet the needs of the program.

To ensure members understand their rights and responsibilities, members are required to sign the agreement on or before the first day of service.

A Member Service Agreement template can be found in The Handbook [Appendix](#).

Grievance Procedure

Grievance procedures are required as part of the Member Service Agreement and overall organizational policy. Specific procedures are outlined in federal regulation.

See the federal regulation in its entirety: [45 CFR 2540.230](#).

Member Benefits

Living Allowance

Programs must provide a living allowance to full-time members. Providing a living allowance to less than full-time members is optional. If a program opts to provide a living allowance to less than full-time members it should do so equitably for all members.

The minimum and maximum living allowance is determined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) or Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for which your grant was awarded.

Segal AmeriCorps Education Award

The amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award depends on the member's term of service as determined annually in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) or Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for which your grant was awarded.

There is an abundance of information on the [Segal AmeriCorps Education Award](#) on the CNCS website.

Health Care

Programs must provide or make available health care insurance to full-time members. Health care requirements are outlined annually in the [CNCS Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants](#), section VIII.D, page 13. CNCS also provides information about [Health Care Options](#) on their website. Programs are required to develop and document the enrollment and/or waiver of member health care.

A health care enrollment/waiver template can be found in *The Handbook* [Appendix](#).



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

Serve Washington does not endorse any one provider or plan; however, over time we have discovered a majority of our subgrantees have opted to use The Corps Network plan, underwritten by CIGNA and arranged by Willis. Serve Washington is a member of The Corps Network and subsequently our programs are eligible to obtain health insurance through this partnership. The Corps Network plan meets minimum essential coverage and the essential health benefits as prescribed in the Affordable Care Act. For more information on The Corps Network plan, please contact:

Chris Rooney
Vice President
Willis of Seattle
(206) 386-7428
chris.rooney@willis.com

AmeriCorps members interested in purchasing an individual plan should contact the [Washington Health Plan Finder](#) via the Washington Health Benefit Exchange. In Washington State, AmeriCorps is a qualifying life event for special enrollment outside qualified health plan open enrollment periods. Beginning service in (enrollment) or losing coverage through (exit) AmeriCorps can initiate the special enrollment period. This is especially important when AmeriCorps members transition away from national service.

Washington Health Plan Finder Special Enrollment FAQs and an Example Form can be found in The Handbook [Appendix](#).

Child Care

The [AmeriCorps Child Care Benefit Program](#) is available for eligible, active, full-time AmeriCorps members who need the benefit to serve.

Student Loan Forbearance and Interest Accrual

Individuals who are serving in a term of service in an approved AmeriCorps position may be eligible to temporarily postpone the repayment of their qualified student loans through an action called loan forbearance. Individuals who have successfully completed a term of service in AmeriCorps are also eligible to have the National Service Trust pay as much as 100% of the

interest that accrued on their qualified student loan during their service. This is in addition to the Education Award.

For eligibility and instruction, please see [Postponing Student Loan Payments and Getting Interest Paid](#) on the CNCS website.

Program Defined Member Benefits

Programs may provide other member benefits if the treatment of such benefits is equitable for all members or a defined subset of members, is defined in policy, is an allowable federal expenditure, and follows basic OMB cost principles. Program should consult with their Program Officer before determining such benefits.

Some common examples are:

- Mileage reimbursement for all members traveling to/from required events.
- Increased living allowance for returning members in leadership positions.

Member Time Tracking and Timesheets

The subgrantee is required to ensure that time and attendance recordkeeping is conducted by the AmeriCorps member's supervisor. This time and attendance record is used to document member eligibility for in-service and post-service benefits. Time and attendance records must be signed and dated both by the member and his/her supervisor before the program counts or "certifies" the hours in the year to date total.

A member timesheet template and a program time tracking tool can be found in [The Handbook Appendix](#).



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

Are lunch breaks counted as service time?

No. You will notice on the Position Description template a note encouraging programs to incorporate a minimum 30 minute break in the member's service day. "Lunch breaks" are not counted as service time. Please take this into consideration when tracking member time and developing timesheets.

Can a program use an online timesheet system?

Yes. Serve Washington does not endorse any one vendor; however, programs have found [America Learns](#) to offer a compliant and AmeriCorps friendly time system.

Affiliation with AmeriCorps: Using the AmeriCorps Brand

CNCS outlines its policy on AmeriCorps affiliation in the [CNCS Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants](#), section III., page 3. Serve Washington expands on this language in the [Serve Washington Special Terms and Conditions](#), section VIII., page 7.

Service Gear

Providing members and staff with appropriate service gear is required. Programs can opt to create their own apparel, but must use the AmeriCorps Washington logo when doing so. AmeriCorps gear and apparel is also manufactured by two vendors: [Good Deed](#) and [National Service Gear](#).

The AmeriCorps Washington logo(s) can be found in The Handbook [Appendix](#).

Marketing and Media Resources

CNCS has an abundance of online information, including a [CNCS Ordering System](#) for free publications and a [Marketing and Media](#) resource page. The most recent of which is the [AmeriCorps Branding and Messaging Guidance](#) handbook.

Chapter 4: Program and Member Management - Ongoing

- ✓ **Online Member Management (eGrants/My AmeriCorps Portal)**
- ✓ **Member Files**
- ✓ **Member Enrollment and Exit**
- ✓ **Service Locations**
- ✓ **Member Orientation and Training**
- ✓ **Member Supervision**
- ✓ **Member Performance Reviews**
- ✓ **Conditions for Early Release**
- ✓ **Slot Refills and Slot Conversions**
- ✓ **Program Performance Measurement**
- ✓ **Program Evaluation**
- ✓ **Records Retention**

Online Member Management

Subgrantees are required to use an online member management system known as My AmeriCorps. The portal to My AmeriCorps is found via [eGrants](#). A series of tutorials has been developed to train and assist programs in learning the My AmeriCorps requirements and functionality. These tutorials and other resources can be found on the National Service Knowledge Network [My AmeriCorps Support](#) page.

Member Files

AmeriCorps member files are similar to personnel files and should be treated as secure documents. Subgrantees are required to keep individual files on all members. Member files may contain many program related documents, but at minimum are required to have the following information:

- Application and/or Resume
- W-4 (for members receiving a living allowance)
- Government-Issued Photo Identification (example: driver's license, passport, etc.)
- Proof of Citizenship and Age (example: passport, birth certificate, I-151, etc.)
- Criminal History Checks (may be kept in central filing system in lieu of member file)

- Member Service Agreement
- Position Description (if separate from the member service agreement)
- Media Release (if separate from the member service agreement)
- Health Insurance Enrollment or Waiver Form
- Performance Reviews
- Timesheets (may be kept in central filing system in lieu of member file)
- Documentation of Personal and Compelling Circumstances (if applicable)
- Parental Consent Form (if applicable)

While not required, Serve Washington also suggests including:

- File Checklist (suggested)
- Two References (suggested)



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

What if a member returns for an additional service term?

Each year a member serves, that member should have a new and separate file. Member files are considered grant records and will be maintained with each associated grant following a records retention schedule. Programs are allowed to make copies of pertinent member documents and move them forward to create a new member file. Each member file should remain whole and compliant.

Note: National Service Criminal History Checks from the previous member service year may only be moved forward if the break in service is less than 120 days.

Member Enrollment and Exit

CNCS requires programs to enroll and exit members electronically in eGrants/My AmeriCorps within **30 days** of the member start date and end date.

Using eGrants/My AmeriCorps, the program initiates the process in the system and members are electronically notified to complete their portion of enrollment. Once the member completes their portion, program staff finalize the process electronically. Programs should regularly check the status of member completion in order to ensure compliance with CNCS timeliness standards.

In rare cases, such as a member's limited computer/internet access or skill-based barriers, program staff can utilize the CNCS paper copies of enrollment and exit forms. This should not

be common practice. When using paper copies, members and program staff will complete one form. Program staff will then need to transfer that information electronically into eGrants/My AmeriCorps. Once enrolled electronically, save the paper copy in the member file.

Paper copies of the CNCS enrollment/exit forms can be found in The Handbook [Appendix](#).

Service Locations

Assigning each member to a service location is also required upon enrollment within **30 days** of the member start date. CNCS provides additional instructions on [creating, editing, and assigning service locations](#) in My AmeriCorps. If a member is serving at multiple service locations, the program must assign the one where the member serves a majority of his or her hours, however, all service locations must be created and listed in the portal.

Member Supervision

Subgrantees must provide members with adequate supervision by qualified supervisors consistent with the approved grant application.

Member Orientation and Training

The subgrantee must conduct an orientation for members. Orientation begins the on boarding process for members and ongoing training reinforces it. A Member Orientation and Training Plan provides valuable information on important requirements, pieces of information they will use throughout the service year, and other useful knowledge, skills, and abilities they will need to conduct themselves properly and have a successful year.

A good Member Orientation and Training Plan lays the foundation for providing information that will be used by the member throughout the year. At this point and time in the service year, members are trying to determine their place in the program and are developing their understanding of what this year is about. They need to clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, prohibited activities, as well as have an understanding of national service and AmeriCorps.

Examples of [Member Development](#) resources can be found on the National Service Knowledge Network.



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

Serve Washington acknowledges orientation can lead to “information overload.” Keep in mind different learning styles and incorporate activities such as team-building exercises, small group work, teach-back sessions, and service projects. Programs report increased interaction helps to increase retention of knowledge.

Member Performance Reviews

Subgrantees must conduct and keep a record of at least a midterm and an end-of-term written evaluation of each member’s performance for Full and Half-Time members and an end-of-term written evaluation for less than Half-time members. The end-of-term evaluation should address, at a minimum, the following factors:

- Whether the member has completed the required number of hours;
- Whether the member has satisfactorily completed assignments; and
- Whether the member has met other performance criteria that were clearly communicated at the beginning of the term of service.



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

Does the program create the performance review tool?

Yes. Programs should develop a tool that best suits their member development goals and program design goals.

Programs can either incorporate the required language into their tool or use the Serve Washington End-of-Term Evaluation Addendum.

Who should sign the performance review?

Signatures are not required; however, Serve Washington believes it is best practice to have the member and supervisor sign the performance review in acknowledgement of (not necessarily agreement with) the process. If the program develops a form that contains signature lines, signatures are needed.

The Serve Washington End-of-Term Evaluation Addendum can be found in [The Handbook Appendix](#).

Conditions for Early Release

Programs new to this process should consult with their Program Officer.

Release for Compelling Personal Circumstances

A member that has performed satisfactorily, has completed at least 15% of the required term of service, and meets the conditions for compelling personal circumstances, may be awarded a pro-rated education award. A member awarded a pro-rated educational award is considered a positive exit and does not negatively affect retention rates. Programs may not refill positions that are exited with award.

Compelling personal circumstances do not include leaving a program to enroll in school or to obtain employment (other than in moving from welfare to work or in leaving a program that includes in its approved performance measures the promotion of employment among its members).

Release for Cause

A release for cause encompasses any circumstance other than compelling personal circumstances. Members released for cause are not eligible for a pro-rated education award. However, it is possible for a member to receive a satisfactory performance review and be released for cause. A satisfactory performance review allows an individual to serve again in the future. When a member is released for cause a program's retention rate declines. Under certain circumstances, a program can refill the member position.

CNCS outlines its policy on Release From Participation in the [CNCS Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants](#), section VII., page 11.

See the federal regulation in its entirety: [45 CFR 2522.230](#).

Slot Refills and Slot Conversions

Programs new to this process should consult with their Program Officer.

Slot Refills

Programs that have fully enrolled their awarded member slots are allowed to replace any member who is released for cause provided that the member was released prior to completing 30% of their term and provided that the program year stills allows for adequate time to support the completion of a new service term. Programs may not refill the same slot more than once.

Slot Conversions

Programs have the ability to convert slot types. For example, a program with one unfilled full-time position finds it no longer has enough time in the service year to support a single member serving 1700 hours. This program can, however, support two members serving 900 hours simultaneously. In this case, the program may choose to convert one full-time position into two half-time positions.

CNCS outlines the policy on Program Slots in the [CNCS Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants](#), section VI., page 9.

Program Performance Measurement

The National Service Knowledge Network has multiple resources in this area. Please refer to the [CNCS Performance Measurement Framework](#) page for information on how priority measures link with the Corporations focus areas and overall strategic plan. Online courses ranging from Performance Measurement Basics to Theory of Change to Data Collection and Instruments can also be found on the [Performance Measurement Core Curriculum](#) page.

Program Evaluation

The National Service Knowledge Network also has multiple resources in this area. Please visit the [Evaluation Resources](#) landing page for more information, guidance, and online courses.



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

Evaluation requirements for Competitive programs mandate any program awarded over \$500,000 must arrange for an *independent* (also known as an *external*) program evaluation. Competitive programs awarded less than \$500,000 are allowed to conduct an *internal* program evaluation.

CNCS requires State Commissions to dictate evaluation requirements for Formula programs. Serve Washington adheres to the same expectations for both Competitive and Formula programs.

In either case, Competitive or Formula, external or internal evaluations, Serve Washington encourages programs to conduct the most robust evaluation possible.

Records Retention

For subgrantees of Serve Washington, the records retention policy is outlined in the [Serve Washington Special Terms and Conditions](#).

Subgrantees are required to retain and maintain copies of all documentation associated with the grant in accordance to Washington State Law RCW 40.14.060, which requires official public records or office files and memoranda to be retained for a period of **six years** following the formal closeout of the **prime** Serve Washington grant. Because state law is more restrictive than the federal law, subgrantees of Serve Washington must retain records for the longer period of time.

Serve Washington will provide a formal notice to each affected subgrantee when the closeout of a **prime** grant occurs. This notice will include which subgrant agreements are included and when to begin the retention period.

Chapter 5: Program and Fiscal Reporting

- ✓ General Overview
- ✓ Quick Reference Table
- ✓ Monthly Reporting
- ✓ Semi-Annual Reporting
- ✓ Budget Modifications
- ✓ Budget Reconciliation
- ✓ Close-Out Forms

General Overview

Subgrantees are expected to comply with reporting requirements in order to access grant funds. Reporting requirements are outlined annually in the [Serve Washington Special Terms and Conditions](#). Programs should consult their current grant award for full reporting requirements; including how to submit monthly invoice packages, monthly reporting forms, and semi-annual reporting forms.

Monthly invoice packages are **due on or before the 10th each month** for the previous month's reporting period. If this date presents a problem, an alternative frequency should be approved by your Program Officer. Submit the full invoice package by email to your Program Officer and OFM Fiscal Grants Officer. Any documents requiring signature should be a scanned original.

The monthly status report is **due on or before the 15th each month** for the previous month's reporting period. Submit the report by email to your Program Officer.

Due dates for semi-annual reports change annually. Refer to the Serve Washington Special Terms and Conditions.

Program reporting forms can be found in The Handbook [Appendix](#). Fiscal reporting forms will be updated annually and sent directly to programs.

Quick Reference Table

	Fixed-Amount Grants	Cost-Reimbursement Grants
Monthly:		
A-19 Invoice	X	X
Periodic Expense Report (PER)		X
Program Income Report		X
Member Roster	X	X
Certification of Eligibility (only months new members are enrolled or new staff hired)	X	X
Monthly Status Report	X	X
Semi-Annually or Other:		
Federal Financial Report (FFR)		X
Other Federal Funds		X
Semi-Annual Progress Report	X	X

Monthly Reporting

A-19

The A-19 invoice simply reflects the request for monthly award payments.

Periodic Expense Report

Cost-Reimbursement grants only. The Periodic Expense Report (PER) is a detailed line item budget reflecting the grant award budget, the current monthly expenditures, and the total expenditures to date.

Program Income Report

Cost-Reimbursement grants only. The Program Income Report consolidates the subgrantee's revenue (cash and in-kind) received on a monthly basis. It documents the contribution source, source type, amount, and a brief description.

Member Roster

All invoices packages must include a copy of the member roster found in the online member management system known as My AmeriCorps (via eGrants).

Certification of Staff and Member Eligibility Form

The Certification of Staff and Member Eligibility form is included in the invoice package during any month in which a new staff is hired or a new member is enrolled. The form, along with the member roster (when applicable), certifies the program has verified each staff/member is eligible to work/serve and corresponding eligibility documents are on file.

Monthly Status Reports

The Monthly Status Report provides Serve Washington with a quick snapshot of program recruitment/retention, successes, challenges, needed training and/or technical assistance, and highlights of great stories. Each section should be fully completed, even if the response is simply, for example, “we have no training and technical assistance needs at this time.” Pictures, especially those reflecting the AmeriCorps logo, are highly recommended to accompany great stories and should be submitted electronically in .jpeg formats. The Monthly Status report should not exceed 2-3 pages.

Semi-Annual Reporting

Semi-Annual Progress Reports

The Semi-Annual Progress Report occurs near the mid-year point and the end-of-year point based on the Serve Washington prime CNCS grant and not the subgrantee service year. In this case, programs may be at different points in their service year when reporting.

The Semi-Annual Progress Report is considerably larger in both length and content to the Monthly Status report. New programs and/or new staff should review the Semi-Annual Progress Report template to understand what the requirements of the report are and begin to implement necessary data tracking procedures well before the report is due.

The major focus areas of the Semi-Annual Progress Report are:

- Member Information
- Demographic Information
- Performance Measurement Reporting
- Program Narratives

Pictures, especially those reflecting the AmeriCorps logo, are required to accompany this report and should be submitted electronically in .jpeg formats. The length of the Semi-Annual Progress

Report is dependent on the number of performance measures awarded. Expectations for narrative lengths can be found within the report instructions.

Submit the report by email to your Program Officer.

Federal Financial Report

Cost-Reimbursement grants only. The Federal Financial Report reflects the cumulative actual federal funds, unliquidated obligations incurred, local matching contributions and the unobligated balance of federal funds. The FFR also includes the Other Federal Funds worksheet.

Submit the report by email to your Program Officer and OFM Fiscal Grants Officer. Any documents requiring signature should be a scanned original.

Budget Modifications

Cost-Reimbursement grants only. Subgrantees may transfer funds among approved line items when the cumulative amount of such transfers does not exceed 10% of the total budget. Line items may reflect under-spending or over-spending as long as the budget total remains positive. Significant over-spending in any one line item requires notification to and approval from your Program Officer via email. Formal budget modifications are only required when the cumulative amount of such transfers exceeds 10% of the total budget. Such an occurrence is rare and should be discussed with your Program Officer.

Budget Reconciliation

Fixed-Amount grants only. At the end of each month, subgrantees should request reimbursement for actively enrolled members only. During the final month, subgrantees should notify their Program Officer via email when all members have been officially exited in eGrants. At that time, your Program Officer will perform a reconciliation of payments based on retention of members to determine final payment. Once final payment is determined, this amount will be requested by the program using the same monthly invoice package process.

Close-Out Forms

Serve Washington will notify each affected subgrantee when the closeout of a prime grant occurs and what documentation is required.

Close-Out forms include:

- Equipment Inventory
- Inventory of Residual Supplies
- Certification of Sub Grant Closeout

Chapter 6: Program and Fiscal Monitoring

- ✓ **General Overview**
- ✓ **Risk-Based Assessment**
- ✓ **On-Site Visit – Program**
- ✓ **On-Site Visit – Fiscal**
- ✓ **Desk Review – Program**
- ✓ **Desk Review – Fiscal**
- ✓ **Random Selection Process**
- ✓ **Quarterly Compliance Reviews**

General Overview

As stewards of public funding, Serve Washington has developed robust monitoring practices to ensure CNCS-funded organizations comply with federal compliance requirements and seeks to improve overall operations.

Serve Washington views its management obligations as a positive force to:

- Maximize the benefits provided to communities where members serve; and
- To provide assurances that the experience of AmeriCorps members and volunteers meets or exceeds the expectations of the public and private stakeholders who support national service.

Serve Washington goals include:

- To be supportive of programs so they can achieve the highest standards of program and fiscal accountability and effectiveness;
- To identify and remedy problems before they lead to larger unallowable costs; and
- To work collaboratively with all programs to improve management systems.

Example monitoring tools can be found in The Handbook [Appendix](#). Tools are subject to change without notice. Tools are completed by Serve Washington staff and should not be completed by the program.

Risk-Based Assessment

Using a risk-based assessment, Serve Washington will conduct an annual review of all subgrantees resulting in an assigned risk level of high, medium, or low. The assessment focuses on four major areas:

- Organizational Effectiveness
- Member Management
- Program Compliance
- Financial Management

An associated monitoring plan is then developed based on the following risk level guidance.

High Risk

A minimum of two programmatic or fiscal on-site visits; the first occurring within 3 months of the program start date and the second occurring 6-8 months into the program year.

Medium Risk

A minimum of one programmatic on-site visit occurring within 6 months of the program start date. Additional visits may be conducted if warranted, including a fiscal on-site visit.

Low Risk

A minimum of one programmatic review to be completed via desk monitoring within 8 months of the program start date. On-site visits may be conducted if warranted, including a fiscal on-site visit.



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

How will I know my organization's level of risk and associated monitoring plan?

At the beginning of each service year, Program Officers will notify organizations of their risk level and monitoring plan.

Will new subgrantees be treated differently?

Yes. All new subgrantees will receive a minimum of two on-site visits during year one, and one on-site visit during years two and three, regardless of their assigned risk level.

Will low risk subgrantees ever receive an on-site visit?

Yes. Subgrantees in subsequent grant cycles will receive a minimum of one on-site visit in a three-year project period, even if continually rated low-risk.

Is fiscal monitoring different for fixed-amount subgrantees?

Fixed-amount grant awards do not require fiscal monitoring. However, should a subgrantees fiscal practices become of concern, Serve Washington holds the right to perform an on-site review of financial systems.

On-Site Visit – Program

Approximately one month in advance, a site-visit will be scheduled on a mutually convenient date between applicable program staff and the Serve Washington Program Officer assigned to the organization.

Once a date is established, the organization will receive formal instructions, including, but not limited to:

- Confirmation of Site-Visit Date
- Notification of Files To Be Reviewed
- Requests for Advanced Documentation
- Examples of Serve Washington Monitoring Tools for Preparation

On the day(s) of the visit, typical site visit activities include, but are not limited to:

- Member File Review
- Member Timesheet Review
- Member and Staff Criminal History Check Review
- Program Staff Interview(s)
- Service Location Visit(s)
- Observation of Member Activity/Member Interview(s)

Once the visit is complete, the program can expect to receive the following items within 30 calendar days:

- Monitoring Report (with any applicable Findings, Concerns, or Recommendations)
- Monitoring Tools
- Letter of Transmittal (requesting any applicable program responses)
- Letter of Resolution (once any applicable issues are resolved)



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

How should I prepare for an on-site visit?

Follow the formal instructions provided. Be sure a mutually convenient day is scheduled that provides all applicable program staff time and availability throughout the visit. It is a good idea to review the Serve Washington monitoring tools to better prepare for what Program Officers are looking for. Be prepared to present all requested documentation, secure a quiet and adequate space for the review, pull and organize documentation ahead of time. Above all, ask questions!

On-Site Visit – Fiscal

Approximately two weeks in advance, a site-visit will be scheduled on a mutually convenient date between applicable program staff and the OFM/Serve Washington Fiscal Grants Officer.

Once a date is established, the organization will receive formal instructions, including, but not limited to:

- Confirmation of Site-Visit Date
- Requests for Advanced Documentation

On the day(s) of the visit, typical site visit activities include, but are not limited to:

- Source Documentation Review
- Program Staff Interview(s)

Once the visit is complete, the program can expect to receive the following items within 30 calendar days:

- Monitoring Report (with any applicable Findings, Concerns, or Recommendations)
- Monitoring Tools
- Letter of Transmittal (requesting any applicable program responses)
- Letter of Resolution (once any applicable issues are resolved)

Desk Review – Program

Approximately two weeks in advance, the Serve Washington Program Officer assigned to the organization will send formal instruction, including, but not limited to:

- Selected Due Date (for submission of records)
- Documentation To Be Reviewed

During a desk review, Program Officers determine documentation to be reviewed and the best course of action to do so. Program Officers take into consideration previous monitoring findings, concerns, and recommendations, as well as, current knowledge of program operations and current national trends in audit findings. Typical documentation to be reviewed includes, but is not limited to:

- Member Timesheets
- Data Tracking/Data Collection
- Review of Program Successes and Challenges

Optional documentation reviewed includes, but is not limited to:

- Criminal History Checks
- Member Position Descriptions
- Member Service Agreement
- Member Training Plan
- Program Evaluation Plan
- Previous Year-End Closeout Documents
- Anything else deemed worthy by the Program Officer

Once the desk review is complete, the program can expect to receive the following items within 30 calendar days:

- Monitoring Report (with any applicable Findings, Concerns, or Recommendations)
- Monitoring Tools
- Letter of Transmittal (requesting any applicable program responses)
- Letter of Resolution (once any applicable issues are resolved)



What additional guidance does Serve Washington have?

How should I prepare for a desk review?

Follow the formal instructions provided. Send documentation well-organized and only in the format requested. Above all, ask questions!

Desk Review – Fiscal

The OFM/Serve Washington Fiscal Grants Officer reviews and tracks monthly invoice packages on an ongoing basis.

Random Selection Process

During either a site-visit or a desk review, the number of member files and/or associated member documents to be reviewed will be determined using a random selection process of enrolled member positions.

- 0-30 Enrolled Slots = 100%
- 31-50 Enrolled Slots = 50%
- 51-100 Enrolled Slots = 25%
- 101-249 Enrolled Slots = 20%
- 250+ Enrolled Slots = 10%

Quarterly Compliance Reviews

Serve Washington also conducts quarterly compliance reviews in the following areas:

- Timeliness of Enrollments
- Timeliness of Exits

- Enrollment Rate
- Retention Rate

Program Officers send notices of compliance during the months of January, April, July, and October. If a program is found to be out of compliance, an improvement plan will be requested.

Resource Links – Full Web Addresses

Listed in alphabetical order. Included are the home pages for the main websites cited in *The Handbook*. Links in *The Handbook* may be much more intricate depending on where the landing page lies within the main website.

9/11 Website

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/days-service/september-11th-national-day-service-and-remembrance>

America Learns

https://www.americlearns.net/index.php/ptype_services/the-amicorps-impact-suite/

AmeriCorps

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps>

AmeriCorps Child Care: GAP Solutions

<https://www.americorpschildcare.com/>

AmeriCorps Gear: Good Deed

<http://gooddeed.org/>

AmeriCorps Gear: National Service Gear

<http://www.nationalservicegear.org/>

Corporation for National and Community Service

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/>

eGrants

<https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp>

Electronic Code of Federal Regulation Website: Title 45, Chapter XXV 2500-2599

<http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse>

Managing AmeriCorps Grants

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/managing-amicorps-grants>

MLK Website

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/mlkday2015>

National Service Knowledge Network: AmeriCorps Resources

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/amicorps>

National Service Knowledge Network: Focus Areas

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources>

Serve Washington

<http://www.ofm.wa.gov/servewa/>

Serve Washington Special Terms and Conditions

http://www.ofm.wa.gov/servewa/grantees/handbook/SpecialConditions_2016-17.pdf

Washington Health Plan Finder

<https://www.wahealthplanfinder.org>

Appendix

Listed in alphabetical order.

[AmeriCorps Enrollment Form](#)

[AmeriCorps Exit Form](#)

AmeriCorps Washington Logos:

[.eps format](#)

[.jpg format](#)

[.png format](#)

[Close-Out Form](#)

[Eligibility Certification Form](#)

[Eligibility Certification Form Example \(Filled Out\)](#)

[End-of-Term Member Evaluation Addendum](#)

[Health Care Enrollment/Waiver Template](#)

[Member Service Agreement Template](#)

[Member Timesheet Template](#)

[Monthly Status Report Form](#)

[Monthly Status Report Form Example \(Filled Out\)](#)

[Position Description Template](#)

[Program Time Tracking Tool](#)

[Semi-Annual Progress Report Form](#)

Serve Washington Example Monitoring Tools:

[Fiscal Monitoring Tool](#)

[Member File Review Checklist – Current Year](#)

[Member File Review Checklist – Prior Year](#)

[Member Timesheet Checklist](#)

[Monitoring Report Template](#)

[WA Health Plan Finder Special Enrollment FAQs](#)

[WA Health Plan Finder Special Enrollment Example Form](#)