



# HOW TO APPLY FOR NATIONAL SERVICE RESOURCES

## NEW TO NATIONAL SERVICE?

The national service funding landscape can feel complicated. Let's break down the opportunities to leverage service years so you can take the right steps for your community.

Most service year opportunities are funded in part through the federal AmeriCorps agency, formerly known as the Corporation for National and Community Service. AmeriCorps programs include AmeriCorps State & National, AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps, and three distinct programs under the umbrella of AmeriCorps Seniors. This resource will focus on AmeriCorps State & National and VISTA, as these are the most common ways to secure full-time, long-term national service resources for your community.

### KEY TERMS

**Capacity Building Service:** Rather than providing a service directly to an individual, group, or community, corps members provide indirect service that broadly assists with meeting a community need. For example, data collection, research, developing new programming, etc.

**Cost-Share:** Service year programs that place corps members with a specific agency or organization typically require those host site partners to contribute towards the cost of supporting that corps member position.

**Direct Service:** Direct service activities generally refer to activities that provide a direct, measurable benefit to an individual, a group, or community. For example, providing energy conservation education to a homeowner.

**AmeriCorps State and National** is the largest AmeriCorps program, with grants available for public, private, tribal, and faith-based nonprofit organizations, and local and state agencies. These grants provide a portion of the funding necessary to implement an AmeriCorps program and recruit, train, and support individuals – called AmeriCorps members – to deliver services to meet community needs. The primary intention of AmeriCorps State and National programs are to engage AmeriCorps members in direct service activities; however, it is allowable for corps members to engage in capacity building services if they are intended to enable direct service to occur. Corps members can serve in full- or part-time positions.

With an AmeriCorps State and National grant, an organization implements a multi-corps member AmeriCorps program, which it expects to run for several years. An organization should have experience managing and supporting young people, expertise meeting community needs, and the knowledge and capacity to manage a federal grant and complex regulations. These grants require local matching funds and staff to recruit, train, supervise, and support a team of AmeriCorps members. Grantees are responsible for administrative activities such as corps member payroll, insurance, and more.

“State and National” refers to the two types of grants available. An organization that is proposing to provide services in two or more states or territories applies to the federal AmeriCorps agency for AmeriCorps National funding. An organization that is proposing a service year program that will operate in only one state or territory applies to its state service commission for AmeriCorps State funding. Requirements and deadlines will vary between State and National and across different state service commissions.

To learn more, visit [AmeriCorps State & National: How it Works](#) or contact your [state or territory service commission here](#).



**AmeriCorps VISTA** "(Volunteers In Service To America) is an anti-poverty program designed to provide needed resources to nonprofit organizations and public agencies to increase their capacity to lift communities out of poverty. [AmeriCorps VISTA](#) provides opportunities for Americans 18 years or older from a diverse range of backgrounds to dedicate a year of full-time service with an organization ("sponsor") to create or expand programs designed to empower individuals and communities in overcoming poverty."

Generally speaking, AmeriCorps VISTA is not a grant program; sponsor organizations do not receive funding but receive the opportunity to engage a full-time individual in service, with benefits for the AmeriCorps member paid directly to the member by the federal AmeriCorps agency. In some cases, sponsor organizations provide a cost-share to the AmeriCorps agency to offset the cost of the AmeriCorps member.

AmeriCorps VISTA sponsors develop clear goals and objectives for a service project that address the needs of low-income communities, engage corps members in capacity building services, and meet the AmeriCorps agency's expectations. Interested organizations should first submit a concept paper; they may then be asked to submit a complete application. Concept papers and applications are reviewed by staff of local AmeriCorps Regional Offices; and they may be available for questions or technical assistance.

[Learn more and access concept paper instructions here.](#)

## ADDITIONAL NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMMING TO CONSIDER

**YouthBuild USA** is a national organization that "partner[s] with opportunity youth to build the skill sets and mindsets that lead to lifelong learning, livelihood, and leadership." YouthBuild programs are developed with youth voice at the center and look different in different communities. However, all YouthBuild programs prioritize these core elements: education, construction, and other career pathways, support services, leadership development, and alumni success. Organizations can apply to be licensed through the YouthBuild USA Affiliate Network; and/or can apply to receive a YouthBuild grant from the U.S. Department of Labor.

[Learn more about YouthBuild and review the process to become a YouthBuild program here.](#)

