

UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS: STATE SERVICE COMMISSIONS



State Service Commissions subgrant federal national service funds, as well as funding from state, local and philanthropic sources, to support service and volunteerism. These commissions are governor-led or appointed public agencies or private nonprofit organizations leading the nation's philanthropic and service movement. Beyond administering federal funding, they are often charged with encouraging volunteering in their states and administering special volunteer initiatives. Currently, 49 states, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and Guam have state service commissions.

WHAT IS AMERICORPS?

AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism, improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. 200,000 AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve in thousands of locations across the country. In any given year, approximately 50% of AmeriCorps funding supports education-related service.

State service commissions provide AmeriCorps funding to AmeriCorps state programs through annual grant competitions. Grants are made either directly to an organization or through an intermediary group that handles the distribution of grant funding.



This resource was created by the National Partnership for Student Success Hub at the Johns Hopkins Everyone Graduates Center.

WHAT IS AMERICORPS?

- [**AmeriCorps State and National**](#) provides grants to organizations that will utilize AmeriCorps members to provide direct services (e.g., tutoring students 1:1) and capacity building support (e.g., developing partnerships with school districts). If an organization operates in only one state, it should seek AmeriCorps funding through its State Service Commission. If an organization wishes to operate an AmeriCorps program across states, it should seek funding through the federal agency.
- [**AmeriCorps VISTA**](#) is a program for nonprofit organizations and public agencies to help build capacity to lift communities out of poverty. Nonprofit organizations can apply to the federal agency to become a VISTA project sponsor which allows them to direct the project, supervise the AmeriCorps VISTA members, and provide necessary administrative support to complete the objectives of the project.
- [**AmeriCorps NCCC**](#) is a full-time, team-based residential service program for 18 – 26-year-olds. Organizations can [**apply to sponsor**](#) an NCCC service project for 3 to 13 weeks. Projects must provide full-time service opportunities to effectively engage a team of 8-12 AmeriCorps NCCC members. Project sponsors are responsible for providing lodging, including meals or kitchen access, for the team.
- AmeriCorps Seniors (including [**RSVP**](#), [**Foster Grandparent Program**](#), [**Senior Companion**](#)) competitively provides grants to organizations to engage Americans 55 years and older in volunteer service. Nonprofit organizations can apply to the federal agency for funding, when available, or can [**identify local AmeriCorps Seniors programs**](#) that could provide volunteers to support your program.
- [**The Volunteer Generation Fund**](#) focuses on investments in volunteer management practices that increase both volunteer recruitment and retention.
- [**AmeriCorps leads two federal days of service:**](#) 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance and Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. Nonprofit organizations can access resources through the federal agency and partner with state service commissions to execute service activities.

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WHAT FUNDING DO STATE SERVICE COMMISSIONS PROVIDE?

In addition to sub-granting federal resources, many state service commissions offer AmeriCorps state planning grants to support nonprofit organizations to develop new AmeriCorps State projects. Planning grants are often \$25,000-240,000 and support staff/consultant time to develop your AmeriCorps State program design, explore partnerships, and participate in training to increase your organizational readiness and capacity.

WHY CONTACT YOUR STATE SERVICE COMMISSION?

- Discuss whether AmeriCorps funding could support your program and to help you apply for or manage AmeriCorps funding.
- See if there are state or local resources (e.g., grants, training materials) available to implement or expand your program.
- Identify potential areas where you can collaborate with existing volunteer efforts in your state.

[Find your state service commission here.](#) Want to learn more? Check out the America's Service Commissions **[National Service 101: A Toolkit for Afterschool Programs.](#)**



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