



2010-2011

**AmeriCorps
NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR
NEVADA APPLICANTS**

ALL APPLICATIONS ARE DUE IN EGRANTS BY MARCH 26, 2010

NEVADA VOLUNTEERS
FORMERLY NEVADA COMMISSION FOR NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE, INC.
639 Isbell Road #220
Reno, Nevada 89509
(775) 825.1900 phone (775) 825.1901 fax
www.nevadavolunteers.org



January 2, 2010

Dear Potential AmeriCorps Applicants,

Nevada Volunteers, the Governor's Commission for National & Community Service promotes volunteerism throughout our state and provided over \$1.5 million dollars in AmeriCorps funding in 2009. We are committed to uniting individuals in service to their communities and achieving demonstrable results by funding AmeriCorps programs that address Nevada's unmet human, educational, public safety, homeland security and environmental needs. We are pleased to announce our Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for 2010-2011.

This year, 249 Nevadans are serving in AmeriCorps programs in both our urban and rural neighborhoods. AmeriCorps members get amazing things done and continue to make a significant difference in the lives of so many Nevadans. We are proud of what AmeriCorps has accomplished in Nevada.

Through this NOFO, nonprofit organizations and faith-based communities; educational institutions and governmental agencies throughout Nevada can compete for funding to create high-impact national service opportunities for AmeriCorps members in their communities.

Our 2010 NOFO contains 5 documents:

- 1. *Does AmeriCorps Fit My Organization?***
- 2. *2010 AmeriCorps NOFO Announcement***
- 3. *2010 AmeriCorps Application Instructions***
- 4. *2010 Instructions for Nevada Applicants***
- 5. *2010 Nevada Statewide Common Performance Measures Packet***

For 2010, we will consider applications for new and continuing AmeriCorps programs that offer members living allowances and education awards. We will also consider applications for AmeriCorps programs that offer education awards only and for AmeriCorps planning grants. Choose the option that best meets your organization's needs. We strongly encourage you to collaborate and reach out to new partners as you consider applying for AmeriCorps funding. Be visionary in the way AmeriCorps service can provide solutions in your community. We fund innovative collaborations that meet Nevada's local needs.

Please read all application instructions carefully and completely. *We require that all applicants participate in one of our AmeriCorps NOFO Technical Assistance Videoconferences.*

Videoconferences will be conducted on:

FEBRUARY 2, 2010 9:00 am – noon

or

FEBRUARY 3, 2010 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

AT TWO LOCATIONS ONLY:

**Carson City – Capital – 101 North Carson Street, Carson City – Governor’s
Conference Room**

OR

**Las Vegas – Grant Sawyer Building - 555 E. Washington Avenue, Las Vegas -
Governor’s Conference Room on the 5th Floor**

**Please download all 4 NOFO documents from our website and bring the documents with
you to the videoconference. Please email bryan@nevadavolunteers.org to make a
videoconference reservation.**

**ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE ENTERED INTO eGRANTS NO LATER THAN 5:00 p.m. on
MARCH 26, 2010. THIS NOFO DOES NOT USE PAPER APPLICATIONS.**

Nevada Volunteers is committed to providing the best resources and technical assistance you
need to create an extraordinary grant application. Please let us know how we can help. This
year, we are particularly interested in funding new collaborations and expanding AmeriCorps’
presence in Southern Nevada.

Thank you for your interest in AmeriCorps in Nevada.

Sincerely,



SHAWN LECKER-POMAVILLE
Chief Executive Officer

**Nevada Volunteers prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion,
national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a disabled or
Vietnam era veteran.**

1. What is Nevada Volunteers?

Nevada Volunteers, formerly known as Nevada Commission for National and Community Service, is dedicated to uniting individuals in service to their communities and achieving demonstrable results by addressing Nevada's unmet human, educational, environmental, public safety, and disaster preparedness needs. Our goals are to:

- Encourage Nevada's strong ethic of civic responsibility and rich tradition of community involvement;
- Ensure a serious role for service and volunteerism in meeting Nevada's educational, environmental, health, public safety and disaster preparedness challenges;
- Connect Nevadans from diverse backgrounds and experiences to find solutions to problems together; and,
- Nurture the growth and emergence of Nevada's next generation of community and professional leaders.

To meet these goals, we select and administer AmeriCorps grants under the provisions of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 and the Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009. In Nevada, 249 AmeriCorps members serve annually under the sponsorship of public-private partnerships to meet critical state needs. Since its inception, Nevada Volunteers has secured and disseminated over \$12.2 million in AmeriCorps funding from the federal Corporation for National and Community Service to local and statewide public and nonprofit agencies that have created opportunities for over 1400 AmeriCorps members to serve Nevada. Nevada Volunteers provides AmeriCorps programs with extensive training and ongoing technical assistance to support the development of high quality AmeriCorps programs. Each program works closely with a program officer to ensure progress towards program objectives, a meaningful service experience for AmeriCorps members, and compliance with applicable regulations.

Beyond its grant making responsibilities, we also seek to promote volunteerism, service learning and youth development initiatives throughout the state and honor those who serve its communities. Further, Nevada Volunteers recognizes individuals and groups who are making a difference in Nevada through their service activities. Nominations are accepted annually and awards are presented at the Points of Light Awards each year.

For more information about Nevada Volunteers please visit our website at www.nevadavolunteers.org.

2. What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is a national service network that provides full and part-time opportunities for participants, called members, to serve their communities and build the capacity of nonprofit organizations, school districts, higher education institutions and state and local governments to meet local educational, environmental, public safety, disaster preparedness or other human needs. Within these five issue areas, programs may submit proposals that address specific problems of local communities. In other words, local needs drive AmeriCorps.

The AmeriCorps national service network is funded by Congress through the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and includes AmeriCorps*State and National programs, Indian Tribe and U.S. Territories programs, Education Awards Program, AmeriCorps*VISTA, and AmeriCorps*NCCC. Through service with local organizations and agencies, in communities large and small throughout America, AmeriCorps members serve their Nation.

In the short time since AmeriCorps' inception in 1993, its members have achieved impressive results. This year, 75,000 AmeriCorps members will serve communities throughout the country.

3. What are Nevada's AmeriCorps Funding Priorities for 2010-2011?

This year, we are particularly interested in funding new programs and expanding AmeriCorps' presence in southern Nevada. Priorities include:

- **Ensure a brighter future for all Nevada's youth** by engaging them in service and volunteering, connecting them with caring adults such as mentors or tutors and supporting positive youth development programs.
- **Harness the talents and experience of baby boomers** to meet Nevada's critical social challenges by recruiting them to volunteer.
- **Mobilize more volunteers** through grantees and support programs that build or strengthen volunteering infrastructure and generate volunteers.
- **Engage students in communities and support service learning education** initiatives that promote an ethic of service among Nevada's K-University students.
- **Encourage innovative collaborations and partnerships** to create new solutions for local unmet needs.

- **Support disaster preparedness initiatives** statewide.
- **Create opportunities for ALL Nevadans including persons with disabilities to volunteer or provide community service.**

4. How do I design an AmeriCorps program?

Nevada Volunteers funds and supports high-quality programs that:

- develop an ethic of civic responsibility in those who participate
- build and strengthen the local community
- through direct service help address unmet educational, environmental, disaster preparedness, public safety and other human needs

Your program should provide opportunities for your community to define and solve its problems. Successful applicants are able to demonstrate that their program or service provides a benefit that the community values and builds the capacity of volunteers and nonprofit organizations to meet community needs.

AmeriCorps provides a variety of specific and identifiable services to communities. For example, your program may use AmeriCorps members to organize volunteers to renovate low-income housing or build a playground in a vacant lot. You might engage members in human service projects such as tutoring or mentoring and recruit local volunteers to do so. Members may clean up streams or restore urban parks along side community residents. AmeriCorps members might help recruit, support, and manage community volunteers who support disaster preparedness initiatives. Members may perform a wide variety of activities to enhance the capacity of the nonprofit organization in which they serve to meet community needs, including raising funds for approved projects, conducting research to maximize the impact of the organization and providing support to staff in carrying out critical functions. You need to demonstrate the relationship of the proposed activity with AmeriCorps members to the objectives you hope to accomplish. Please be advised that federal regulations prohibit AmeriCorps members from displacing paid staff or unpaid volunteers.

All AmeriCorps programs have three fundamental components. AmeriCorps programs are engaged in meeting needs and providing service activities. AmeriCorps programs provide participant development opportunities. AmeriCorps programs strengthen local communities.

NEEDS AND SERVICE ACTIVITIES

In meeting local needs, AmeriCorps grants support a wide variety of service activities in the areas of education, environment, public safety, disaster preparedness and other human needs. Children and youth are a priority that cuts across our programs and activities. In the past, performing direct service activities such as tutoring children, building houses, or delivering meals to homebound seniors has been the

primary focus of AmeriCorps members' service. However, AmeriCorps continues to increase its emphasis on capacity-building activities such as volunteer recruitment and management, which also play an important role in addressing community needs and ensuring the sustainability of activities that AmeriCorps supports. Direct service and capacity building activities are both integral strategies for effective national service programs.

PARTICIPANT DEVELOPMENT

AmeriCorps members can develop marketable skills, gain valuable experience and receive education awards to repay qualified school loans or for future education. To help ensure that members are prepared for and benefit from their service, applicants are required to include plans for member recruitment and training in their applications. To ensure that your program has a positive impact on members, you should address elements such as civic education, skills training related to service activities, leadership opportunities, and other relevant personal development courses and activities. Training uses service-learning principles and reflects the unique nature of your program. Training must be appropriate for the age, skill level, and other differences in the backgrounds of the members. By the end of their term of service, AmeriCorps members should:

- understand and participate effectively in American democracy;
- discuss and explore their community and people, processes, and institutions most effective in improving community conditions;
- help plan effective community service projects that respond to real community needs and emergencies;
- foster within themselves and others, positive attitudes regarding the value of lifelong citizenship and service for the common good;
- have new or increased existing life and/or employment skills; and
- gain a greater appreciation and understanding of what it means to be an American, including an appreciation and understanding of those of different backgrounds.

Grantees are responsible for recruiting their own members. The Corporation has developed and implemented an on-line recruitment system to assist grantees. You are required to supplement your recruitment efforts by using this nationwide on-line recruitment system so as to maximize opportunities for Americans who want to participate in national and community service. The Corporation has expanded training resources available to help programs provide training and development for their AmeriCorps members. Check www.nationalservicerresources.org for more information.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

AmeriCorps strengthens communities by involving citizens directly in serving community needs. AmeriCorps members help bring individuals and groups from

different backgrounds together to cooperate in achieving constructive change and to solve critical community problems. A fundamental purpose of AmeriCorps is to help recruit, support, and manage vast networks of volunteers working to meet community needs. By creating volunteer opportunities and helping organizations to effectively engage volunteers, AmeriCorps programs multiply their impact, build organizational capacity, and support the development of sustainable programs. AmeriCorps has made volunteer recruitment and management a major focus of its efforts.

Successful applicants will be those that address how their AmeriCorps program will effectively engage and support volunteers in meeting community needs. You can deploy AmeriCorps members in a wide variety of ways to support volunteer recruitment and management. Members may be responsible for enlisting, training, or coordinating volunteers. They may help write helpful and comprehensive volunteer policy and procedure manuals and develop effective volunteer management systems that include position descriptions and effective screening techniques. AmeriCorps members may promote retention of volunteers by planning recognition events or providing ongoing support and follow up to ensure that volunteers have a high quality experience. They may assist an organization and encourage volunteerism by reaching out to individuals and communities of different backgrounds, thus ensuring that a breadth of experiences and expertise is represented in service activities.

The involvement of volunteers should enhance or build upon any direct service goals of the program or organization of which the AmeriCorps members are a part. For example, you may decide that a few members in a program should be devoted entirely to some aspect of volunteer recruitment and management. Or, you may determine that all members will spend a portion of their time supporting volunteers. Members may also create volunteer opportunities which engage the beneficiaries of their service as participants.

All AmeriCorps grants also have requirements concerning capacity building and sustainability and community involvement and consultation.

Capacity Building and Sustainability

Effective capacity building is a process that enhances the mission, strategy, skills, and culture, as well as systems, infrastructure and resources of an organization. Often organizations view capacity building as only “technical assistance,” such as improving systems, infrastructure, and/or human resources functions. However, it also refers to an organization’s relationship with other organizations, people, and institutions that can provide critical information and resources which lead to the sustainability of the organization and its programs.

Capacity building is a process that helps an organization gain greater independence and sustainability. We see our program grants as investments expected to yield a set of self-sustaining activities over time. Our view is that an organization is achieving its sustainability goals if the activities supported enhance the capacity of the organization

to meet community needs absent federal funding. But because organizations, and the challenges they face, differ, we do not have a philosophy that limits our funding to a maximum period (e.g., three years). Achieving sustainability enables programs to continue national and community service activities beyond the life of a Corporation grant. Some examples of sustainability include:

- *Diversification of Revenue Sources:* Multiple sources of funds to support and operate national and community service programs is a good measure of whether or not a program is sustainable. In contrast, organizations that depend on a single source of funds (including Corporation funds) to support and operate national and community service programs are inherently less sustainable;
- *Earned Income:* Organizations that diversify revenue structures for national and community service programs by generating revenue through fees or other kinds of earnings, consistent with OMB rules on project income, can lead to more sustainable programs;
- *Other Public (state and local) and Private Funding:* Organizations that diversify revenue for national and community service programs by building relationships with other public and private funding organizations, as well as businesses, can lead to more sustainable programs, including receipt of support (incash and in-kind) from local and state government, community foundations, national foundations, and businesses;
- *Program Quality and Efficiencies:* Organizations that demonstrate an increased Level of productivity with flat or declining levels of federal support demonstrate effective models of sustainability. While these programs may not be totally independent of federal sources of revenue, the reduction of overhead costs and increased efficiencies in the means by which services are delivered can help make the program's efforts sustainable in a community in the long term;
- *Volunteer Recruitment and Management:* Organizations that recruit large numbers of volunteers as part of their AmeriCorps program can use the volunteers to conduct a wider range of community service activities;
- *Sustained Activities:* In communities where AmeriCorps programs have collaborated with a number of partners, the partners can agree to divide the national and community service activities among themselves such that the actual service continues without a grant from the Corporation; and
- *Corporate Organizations' Role:* AmeriCorps members work to establish community service programs for which corporations can commit their employees as volunteers on an ongoing basis for an extended period of time.

We view sustainability as vital to meeting the needs of communities across Nevada. In order to ensure that AmeriCorps programs are sustainable, applications should include specific information that demonstrates how an organization intends to improve capacity and move towards sustainability, ensuring that its national and community service program can continue in the absence of federal funding. We will use plans and progress towards achieving sustainability as a criterion in making new and continuation grant awards.

As a means of achieving sustainability and assisting organizations in meeting community needs, AmeriCorps members may assist grantee organizations in capacity building activities. For example, members may recruit and manage other volunteers. They can write training materials used to instruct the public about disaster preparedness. They may assist in raising funds and securing resources to support service activities by writing nonfederal grants. They may conduct outreach to expand the number of individuals served by the nonprofit organization. Members may also develop community partnerships that are intended to strengthen communities. Achieving sustainability is a complex undertaking; Nevada Volunteers is committed to working with programs to accomplish this goal.

Community Involvement and Consultation

Local involvement and input is vital to the development of high-quality service programs that sustain and build communities. Successful programs use extensive, broad-based local input to design, implement, and evaluate their projects. This includes consultation with:

- representatives from the communities you serve;
- members (or potential members) in your program; and
- appropriate community agencies (secular and faith-based), businesses, foundations, local labor organizations representing employees of service sponsors, and local government.

Partnerships with community groups help to enhance organizational capacity and strengthen communities. They afford opportunities to collaborate and share technical expertise and resources.

5. What are examples of types of AmeriCorps Programs?

You have great flexibility to design a program that develops the citizenship and skills of members, strengthens nonprofit organizations, and addresses local needs. You may assign members to individual projects or organize them in teams. Similarly, you may determine whether a full-time or part-time schedule is more appropriate to your program's goals. You may find that your program fits more than one type because program characteristics overlap in some areas. Some examples of types of programs are:

- programs that recruit, train and supervise hundreds of college volunteers to help at-risk children master reading and math skills in after-school programs;
- programs where members provide domestic violence prevention
- programs where members might respond to disasters, recruit and train disaster responders or teach public safety classes;
- faith-based programs that provide food and clothing bank services for low-income families;
- programs where members mentor kids at risk for gang activities

- programs where members recruit volunteers to help restore and revitalize degraded urban watersheds;
- programs that teach adult ESL and reading skills at the library.

We encourages applicants to plan innovative grant applications that provide service activities through collaborations that are replicable. To learn about a number of programs focusing on different issue areas, visit www.americorps.org.

6. What are the specific requirements for Nevada applicants?

A. DOCUMENT SUBMISSION

Applicants are required to submit the following documents by U.S. Mail to Nevada Volunteers' Office in Reno by March 26, 2010:

- **Current organizational chart**
- **Current strategic plan**
- **Either your organization's most recent A-133 audit (including management letter)**
or
your organization's financial audit (including management letter)
or
if your organization has not recently has an independent audit, submit recent financial statements.

When submitting this information, please attach a hard copy of your grant application's SF424 Facesheet to the front of the documents so we can correctly connect your documents to the appropriate application. Send all documents to:

**Nevada Volunteers
639 Isbell Road
Reno, Nevada 89509**

In eGrants, applicants must change the status of the audit documents at the end of the application from the default "Not Sent" to the applicable status (Sent or Already on File at CNCS. ("Not Applicable" is not an option for Nevada applicants).

B. SPECIAL COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS

Programs are required to help plan and implement 3 special community service projects that generate community volunteers to address a specific local need:

**Make A Difference Day (fourth Saturday in October)
Martin Luther King Holiday (third Monday in January)**

National Volunteer Week (third week in April)

C. ENROLLMENT and RETENTION RATES

APPLICANTS WHO ARE CURRENT AMERICORPS GRANTEES ONLY:

Nevada Volunteers and the Corporation reviews enrollment and retention rates (in percentages) annually. Provide an explanation in the narrative if your enrollment and retention rates are less than 100% and describe your plans for improving these rates. The approved formula appears below. No other enrollment or retention rate formulae may be employed:

Enrollment Rate = Number of Slots Filled/Number of Slots Awarded Retention Rate = Number of Slots Completing/Number of Slots Awarded

D. COMMON PERFORMANCE MEASURES

ALL NEVADA APPLICATIONS MUST INCLUDE AT LEAST ONE PERFORMANCE MEASURE FOR EACH MEMBER SERVICE ACTIVITY

Programs are required to employ **statewide common performance measures in the participant development and community strengthening** portions of the grant. Common measures enable NCNCS to measure and evaluate the impact of programs on local communities and increases accountability. Common performance measures allow all programs to measure the same variables across Nevada.

Nevada applicants should ONLY complete NEEDS and SERVICE ACTIVITIES performance measures. AmeriCorps Rules require that at least one Need and Service Activity performance measure must be aligned.

Therefore, applicants must create at least one aligned set of performance measures:

- 1. One Output Needs and Service Activities Performance Measure**
- 2. One Intermediate Outcome Needs and Service Activities Performance Measure**
- 3. One End Outcome Needs and Service Activities Performance Measure**

Creating meaningful performance measures is a critical part of AmeriCorps program design and program success. Applicants should:

- think through each of the different activities AmeriCorps members will engage in;
- identify the likely impact or change that will result from those activities; and,

- determine how to best measure those results.

We encourage your organization to plan and develop a comprehensive performance measurement program based upon the Logic Model. After mapping out your grant design, decide what needs to be measured and create the measurement methods.

PROGRAMS ARE REQUIRED TO MEASURE ALL SERVICE ACTIVITIES THAT MEMBERS ENGAGE IN.

Decide on what you will measure by focusing attention on key needs and service activities that make sense for your organization and its mission. Use the Logic Model plan and performance measurement worksheets early in the process of completing your application, as **experience indicates well-constructed performance measures are essential to a quality application.**

ALL NEW AMERICORPS PROGRAM APPLICANTS WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE 2010 NATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES PILOT. FURTHER INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE VIDEOCONFERENCES.

E. EDUCATION AWARD PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

Applicants interested in applying for an Education Award Program should contact bryan@nevadavolunteer.org for consultation and special technical assistance as such grants have specific administrative cost limitations and are historically more difficult to manage.

F. FIXED-PRICE GRANTS

For the 2010 grant year, AmeriCorps State Fixed-Priced grants are NOT available to Nevada applicants.

7. What Technical Assistance is available to Nevada applicants?

We provide special technical assistance to applicants by providing two video-conferences. Each conference reviews the basics of AmeriCorps national service and the key elements of completing an AmeriCorps grant application. Attend one or the other at either location:

FEBRUARY 2, 2010 9:00 am – noon or FEBRUARY 3, 2010 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

WE ONLY ACCEPT GRANT APPLICATIONS FROM APPLICANTS WHO HAVE ATTENDED A VIDEOCONFERENCE.

**PLEASE DOWNLOAD ALL 5 NOFO DOCUMENTS FROM:
www.nevadavolunteers.org.**

**PRINT THE DOCUMENTS AND BRING THEM WITH YOU TO THE
VIDEOCONFERENCE.**

**Please register to attend a videoconference by email:
bryan@nevadavolunteers.org or call 702.808.4020.**