



AmeriCorps
Climate Change Planning Grant
Notice of Funding Opportunity

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New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service

For Program Year 2022

Application Due Date: January 6, 2022

**NEW JERSEY COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AND
COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**P.O. Box 456
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-633-9627**

Funding provided by AmeriCorps

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SECTION I: NEW JERSEY COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE GRANT INFORMATION AND TIMELINE

DESCRIPTION OF THE GRANT PROGRAM

AmeriCorps is a national service network that provides full- and part-time opportunities for AmeriCorps members to serve their communities and build the capacity of organizations to meet local needs. In exchange for their service, AmeriCorps members are provided with a living allowance, training, and the ability to earn a Segal Education Award for eligible college tuition, cost of attendance, or eligible college loans.

The New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service (hereinafter, the NJ Commission), in partnership with AmeriCorps State and National, seeks single-state applicants to apply for this AmeriCorps Climate Change Planning Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The purpose of planning grants is to support the development of AmeriCorps programs, so applicants are better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle. Planning grants may not be used to support AmeriCorps members.

This planning grant NOFO seeks initiatives that will utilize the AmeriCorps model to increase civic engagement and improve New Jersey's communities of Bridgeton, Camden, Phillipsburg, and Trenton by deploying AmeriCorps members to provide services in the focus area of Environmental Stewardship and focusing on development of a Climate Change AmeriCorps operating program.

The planning grant will run from *February 1, 2022 to August 31, 2022*. During this period, the planning grantee will develop an AmeriCorps Operating application to be submitted in the Formula 2022 competition. If selected for funding, the awardee would then begin implementation of the operating grant on September 1, 2022. The operating grant would engage AmeriCorps members in an evidence-informed and evidence-based approach to providing a service intervention that will result in intended solutions to community problems resulting from climate change.

A. Application Submission Due Date: January 6, 2022.

B. Amount of Award: Applicants may apply for up to \$50,000. The NJ Commission anticipates funding up to 4 awards.

C. Matching Requirements: Match will not be required for this planning grant. However, operating programs beginning in September 2022 will need to provide a minimum of 24% cash or in-kind match. Match requirements may be offset in part by American Rescue Plan funds for the program years 2022/23 and 2023/24.

D. Timeline:

Date	Activity
Monday, November 29, 2021	Dissemination of NOFO announcing the 2022 AmeriCorps Climate Change Planning Grant NOFO goes live on the NJ DOS website. https://www.state.nj.us/state/volunteer-grant-opportunities.shtml
December 8, 2021	NOFO Technical Assistance Session via ZOOM. Live at 10:00 am. Register here to attend. REQUIRED. Session will be recorded & available: NJ Department of State AmeriCorps grants website .
December 13, 2021	Notice of Intent to Apply form due to Commission by end of day
January 6, 2022	Climate Change Planning Grant applications due to Commission
January 7, 2022	Staff review of applications and budgets are begun
January 14, 2022	Reader Arena Session via ZOOM. Arena scores and final rankings.
January 18, 2022	Commission Board vote on selected applications
January 19, 2022	Notification of selected applicants
February 1, 2022	Start date of Planning Grant

NOTE: Attendance at the NOFO General Technical Assistance Session is required in order to submit an application: [Register to attend 12/8 General Technical Assistance session](#)

AWARD INFORMATION

Awards from this AmeriCorps Climate Change Planning Grant NOFO will run from February 1, 2022 to August 31, 2022.

Types of Award

The NJ Commission will only accept planning grant applications for Formula funding.

ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY

Eligibility is open to public or private non-profit organizations. Organizations that have been convicted of a Federal crime are disqualified from receiving the assistance described in this NOFO. Pursuant to the [Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995](#), an organization described in Section 501 (c)(4), that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply.

Only applications that target one or more of the following areas in New Jersey will be considered for funding: Bridgeton, Camden, Phillipsburg and Trenton.

STATUTORY/REGULATORY SOURCE AND FUNDING

The applicant’s project must be designed and implemented in conformance with all applicable state and federal regulations. In addition to the program requirements outlined in this NOFO, applicants should refer to the new AmeriCorps regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520-2550 (www.americorps.gov/about/ac/ and [Federal Register notices | AmeriCorps](#))

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A General Technical Assistance Workshop will be held as listed in the Timelines section. There will be one live session which will be recorded and posted on the NJ Department of State website under AmeriCorps Funding Opportunities. <https://www.nj.gov/state/volunteer-grant-opportunities.shtml>

Only applications submitted by agencies that participate in the virtual General Technical Assistance listed in the timelines section will be accepted.

Pre-registration is required. Click [HERE](#) to register. This is a one-time live session, and the recording will be available on the [NJ Department of State](#) website

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

1. Notice of Intent to Apply

Submission of a Notice of Intent to Apply is requested and is due **Monday, December 13, 2021**. Please complete the online form: [Notice of Intent to Apply for FY'22 AmeriCorps Climate Change Planning Grant](#)

You will need to answer the following questions

- Organization Name
- Address
- Contact Name
- E-mail address
- Phone Number
- Environmental Stewardship Focus Area

The New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service, Department of State operates this grant program in strict conformance with procedures designed to ensure accountability and integrity in the use of public funds and, therefore, *will not accept late applications*. The responsibility for a timely submission resides with the applicant.

**Applications must be submitted in a Word document along with the budget and budget detail in Excel (check [DOS](#) website for sample template) to NJAmeriCorps@sos.nj.gov
NO LATER THAN 4:00 PM ON Thursday, January 6, 2022.**

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

Submission of Additional Documents:

All documents that are requested need to be sent to the NJ Commission. These will include the following:

- Copy of Certificate of [NJ Charities Registration](#)
- [Financial Management Survey](#)

Additional Documents may be e-mailed to NJAmeriCorps@sos.nj.gov with the following subject line: [Legal Applicant Name]– [Application ID number].

Emails should include the following information:

- the legal applicant name and its point of contact information
- a list of documents that should be attached to the email
- files that include the legal applicant name within the body of each document.

Do not submit other items not requested in this *Notice* or Application Instructions. The NJ Commission will not review or return them.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Applicants must have a valid SAM registration and DUNS and/or Unique Entity Identifier to receive an award.

All applicants **must** register with the System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/> and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If an applicant is awarded a grant, it must maintain an active SAM registration throughout the life of the award. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees at: [SAM.gov Guidance for Federal Assistance Applicants.pdf](#)

SAM registration must be renewed annually. AmeriCorps suggests that applicants finalize a new registration or renew an existing one at least three weeks before the application deadline, to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise. **Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and address on all grant applications to AmeriCorps.**

AmeriCorps will not make awards to entities that do not have a valid SAM registration and DUNS or Unique Entity Identifier. If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time AmeriCorps is ready to make a Federal award, AmeriCorps may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Applications must include an Employer Identification Number.

Applications must include a DUNS number. Applicants can obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online at the [DUNS Request Service](#). AmeriCorps recommends registering at least 30 days before the application due date.

The Federal government is implementing Unique Entity Identifiers (UEI) as part of the SAM registration process to eventually replace DUNS numbers. AmeriCorps may ask applicants to add the UEI to their

application as part of the clarification or pre-award process. AmeriCorps is adding a field to capture the UEI in eGrants. If you already have a UEI and the UEI field is available in eGrants, you can enter it at the time you submit your application.

Criminal History Checks:

All staff listed on the grant must agree to a [three-part criminal history](#) check per the NJ Commission’s requirements and must be cleared by the NJ Commission *prior* to their first day on the grant.

Reporting Requirements:

Planning Grantees will be required to submit progress and fiscal reports at regular intervals:

REPORTING PERIOD Progress Report and Fiscal Report	REPORTING DUE DATES
Feb 1 – Mar 31 2022	April 10
Apr 1 – June 30 2022	July 10
July 1 – Aug 31 2022	Oct 10

Upon execution of the contract, the grantee will receive 25% of the grant. Subsequent payments will be made on a reimbursement basis each quarter.

State Commission Trainings and Events:

All AmeriCorps Programs and Planning Grant staff must participate in the following Commission-sponsored events:

A. Program Manager Trainings and Meetings

All program managers must attend a three-day orientation known as Starting Strong held in the last week or so in July 2022, and any other training (e.g., site supervisor training) developed for project directors during the contract period. Project directors are also required to participate in all monthly conference calls or meetings.

In constructing the budget, figure in the cost for transportation, meals, and possible overnight accommodations related to all AmeriCorps State and National or NJ Commission training sessions.

B. Statewide AmeriCorps Member Trainings and Events

All Americorps members and project directors are required to attend the following trainings/events:

- AmeriCorps Launch – Fall 2022
- End-of-the-Year Training – Spring 2022
- Other statewide training such as Career Day or Disaster Preparedness

In addition to the State Commission Trainings and Events, all program managers/staff are required to send at least one person to the ASC Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference which is being held this year in Burlington Vermont during the first week of June, 2022

In constructing the budget, figure in the cost of transportation to all of the training sessions even though some or all may be conducted virtually.

EVALUATION OF NEW AND RECOMPETING APPLICATIONS

State-level Review Process

All applications for AmeriCorps grants are evaluated and rated by a panel of three readers. The evaluation panel typically consists of one reader from the originating office, one from another office within the NJ Department of State, and one reader external to the NJ Department of State who is knowledgeable in the content area. Readers of grant applications for the NJ Department of State certify that no conflict of interest exists that would create an undue advantage or disadvantage for any applicant in the application evaluation and scoring process.

Applications are evaluated on the basis of quality, comprehensiveness, completeness, accuracy and appropriateness of response to the guidelines and requirements of the governing NOFO. Applicants may request information about their evaluation scores by writing to the NJ Commission on National and Community Service. The Commission reserves the right to withdraw from consideration any application that does not include each and every component to be evaluated and scored in the evaluation process.

Applications must receive a score of at least 75 points out of 100 and include all required components to be eligible for funding. Eligible applications are ranked and funded in descending order, from highest to lowest score. In the event of a tied score at or above the NJ Department of State's cutoff score of 75, the NJ Department of State will select the applicant with the highest combined score for the Program Design section.

This concludes Section I. Please see also Section II and Section III.

SECTION II: CRITERIA, NARRATIVES AND BUDGET

This planning grant will be responsive to the AmeriCorps Focus Area of Environmental Stewardship as defined here:

Environmental Stewardship

Grants will support responsible stewardship of the environment, while preparing communities for challenging climate and environmental circumstances and helping Americans respond to and recover from disruptive events; programs that conserve natural habitats; protect clean air and water; maintain public lands; support wildland fire mitigation and sustainable forest management; cultivate individual and community resilience; and/or provide reforestation services after floods or fires, such as nature based solutions.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Review Criteria

Each applicant must describe a planning grant project that will develop an infrastructure that will lead to submission of an AmeriCorps Operating Program for program year 2022. The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization will receive funding.

Categories/Subcategories	Percentage
Executive Summary	0
Program Design	50
Problem to Be Addressed	10
Theory of Change Statement	15
Future Use of AmeriCorps Members in an Operating Grant's Intervention	10
Planning Activities Timeline	15
Organizational Capability	25
Organizational Background and Staffing	20
Commitment to AmeriCorps Requirements	5
Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	25

I. Program Design (50 percent)

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

I.a. Problem to Be Addressed (10 points)

- The problem is prevalent and severe in communities where the program plans to serve.
- The applicant has cited relevant studies and data supporting the problem.
- The applicant has identified causes of the problem including the role current or historical inequities faced by underserved communities may play in contributing to the problem.

I.b. Theory of Change Statement (15 points)

- The applicant has identified an initial Theory of Change that includes the Problem, Intervention and Anticipated Outcomes.
- The proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community problem.
- The applicant's intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's Theory of Change.
- The expected outcomes articulated in the application narrative represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem identified by the applicant.

I.c. Future Use of AmeriCorps Members in an Operating Grant's Intervention (10 points)

- The applicant identifies the roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) leveraged volunteers.
- The rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention(s) is reasonable.
- The service role of AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.
- The applicant identifies the estimated number of AmeriCorps members who will deliver the intervention.

I.d. Planning Activities Timeline (15 points)

- The applicant identifies a timeline of activities it will undertake to develop an infrastructure for a future application and operating program. Elements of the timeline should include at a minimum the following elements. These elements do not need to be developed at the time of planning grant submission, just during the planning grant phase:
 - A finalized Theory of Change and Logic Model. Include time to be spent flushing out these elements with the Commission's contracted Center for Research and Evaluation in Education and Human Services ([CREEHS](#)) at Montclair State University.
 - Evidence-based core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
 - The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions, or months of the intervention)
 - The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
 - The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level)
 - Identification of Performance Measures as a strategy to measure program impact.
 - A plan for data collection to report progress in performance measures.
 - Plan for creating an advisory board or stakeholders who will provide input on the planning process.

- Plan for identification of potential community partners and service sites, or at least the criteria by which they will be selected.
- Plan for organizational capacity, site supervisor training, oversight and program evaluation.
- Plan for recruitment, selection, orientation, content training, supervision, support and retention of members.
- Plan for inclusion and diversity in members and beneficiaries including participation in the Commission’s Diversity Council or development of a host agency diversity council.
- Plan for career building and leadership development of members.
- Creation of an operating budget and detail.
- Plan for development of forms and templates to support program operations (member service agreement, site agreement, AmeriCorps policies and procedures.
- Completion of draft application for the 2022/23 Formula NOFO or the 2023/24 Competitive NOFO--including plan for securing Match.
- The applicant incorporates the following in their planning timeline:
 - Monthly check-in calls with Commission staff
 - Monthly Program Manager calls with the Commission
 - Commission and ASC trainings and Events as outlined in the NOFO.
- Timelines for activities are reasonable and feasible.

II. Organizational Capability (25 points)

II.a. Organizational Background and Staffing (20 points)

- The organization details the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing the AmeriCorps planning grant as well as providing for its oversight and management.
- The agency has the experience and expertise in climate change issues to produce an AmeriCorps Operating Program application.
- The organization has the required SAM registrations, DUNS numbers, and NJ Charities Registrations, and Financial Management Survey in place to enable it to enter into a contract with the NJ Department of State.

II.b. Commitment to AmeriCorps Requirements (5 points)

- The organization agrees to adhere to all AmeriCorps rules and regulations included in the AmeriCorps Terms and Commitments, Prohibited Activities and Criminal History Check policies.

III. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 points)

- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors.
- Proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award.
- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget does not include costs for AmeriCorps members.
- Budget includes costs for all NJ Commission and ASC required meetings and events.

This concludes Section II.

Please see Section III: [**APPLICANT OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SURVEY**](#)