Washington Reading Corps Grant
Program Overview and Application Guidance
for
Early Learning Sites

Competitive Request for Application (RFA)
Early Learning Sites – Form Package 724

Program Year
2015–2016

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Funding Contingency

In the event funding for the Washington Reading Corps is reduced or eliminated, or if federal program requirements change, prior to or after the date of award, Washington Reading Corps partners may terminate or modify this agreement with 30 days written notification to the awarded site.

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Washington Reading Corps Mission and Priorities

Established in 1998, the Washington Reading Corps (WRC) program places members across Washington State to improve the foundational reading skills of children. WRC members serve as reading tutors in Early Learning Centers, elementary schools, and community – based sites. Within each site members tutor in one – on – one and small groups of no more than six PreK – 6th grade students who need extra tutoring to reach grade appropriate reading expectations. By supplementing classroom reading instruction, WRC members contribute to overall reading proficiency in the State.

Once a site is selected through this competitive application process, they become responsible for recruiting, selecting, enrolling, and mentoring each of their awarded WRC AmeriCorps members. In addition, each site is also responsible for submitting quarterly reports, Student Tracking Logs (STLs), professional development, site-based training, and member evaluations.

Washington Reading Corps Partners

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a U.S. federal government agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and other national service initiatives.[1] AmeriCorps, one initiative of CNCS, is a network of national service programs that engage more than 75,000 members in direct service each year to meet critical needs across the country. AmeriCorps members serve in nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith – based organizations. Since the program was founded in 1994, over 900,000 AmeriCorps members have contributed more than 1.2 billion hours of service.

Serve Washington, formerly known as the Washington State Commission for National and Community Service (WCNCS), was established by Governor Gary Locke in 1994. Serve Washington is the body responsible for implementing AmeriCorps programs in Washington State. This includes setting priorities for results-oriented community service programs, providing training and technical assistance, evaluating the efficacy and impact of programs, and leveraging federal program dollars with additional local, state, and private sector resources. Serve Washington is comprised of Commissioners appointed by the Governor to three year terms. [2] Serve Washington is the state commission responsible for allocating the federal AmeriCorps grant funding that supports the WRC.

The Washington Service Corps (WSC) was created by the Washington State Legislature in 1983 to provide individuals with opportunities to serve their communities. Administered by the Washington State Employment

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[1] Corporation for National and Community Service Website
[2] Serve Washington Website: http://www.ofm.wa.gov/servewa/about/

Security Department (ESD), the WSC assists nonprofits, public agencies, and community and faith – based organizations in addressing community needs. In 1994, the WSC became part of the AmeriCorps national service family. Currently, the WSC receives federal funding to support program costs. The WSC is the lead agency for administering the federal AmeriCorps grant the WRC received through Serve Washington. The WSC provides hands-on support to sites during recruitment and enrollment period. The WSC provides ongoing support for the AmeriCorps Members during their term of service.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instructions (OSPI) is the primary agency charged with overseeing K-12 education in Washington State. OSPI works with the state's 295 school districts to administer basic education programs and implement education reform on behalf of more than one million public school students. OSPI is the recipient of state funding that leverages the federal AmeriCorps to fund the statewide WRC program. OSPI's English language arts office, a unit of the Teaching and Learning Department, is responsible for providing academic technical assistance and content area support regarding the implementation of literacy initiatives in the state of Washington, including the WRC. OSPI is the lead organization that receives the state funding to support the overall administration and the program evaluation of the WRC.

Definitions

Early Learning Site: A site devoted to providing foundational reading programs and literacy engagement for young children, primarily those who are preparing to enter Kindergarten.

Enrollment: Once a member(s) is selected by the *Legal Applicant* and *Site Supervisor*, paperwork addressing AmeriCorps commitments, background checks, program design, and application references must be compiled and submitted to WRC in a timely manner with attention given to all process details. This paperwork is available upon request from the WRC.

Family Literacy Engagement: Special efforts made by the AmeriCorps WRC *Members* to involve students and family members in literacy activities. The selected sites are required to present at least one event, and that event can align with Title I family literacy events.

Legal Applicant: The person or organization identified on the application that is personally responsible for remaining in compliance with programmatic guidelines, disseminating information from WRC and partners to relevant parties, and ensuring fulfillment of program commitments. The duties of the legal applicant include coordinating site recruitment, enrollment, support, and retention of WRC AmeriCorps Members.

Member: A person chosen by the site through their own recruitment and enrollment process required to complete a *service term* of 10.5 months and 1700 hours at the site of placement.

Member Recruitment: The active process of disseminating information to people who may be interested in WRC AmeriCorps service. The *Legal Applicant* and *Site Supervisor* are responsible for ensuring awarded positions are filled in a timely manner with well – informed participants agreeing to a full – term of service.

Cross-age Tutors: Students selected from upper elementary grades to assist with WRC early learning reading activities that are supervised by either the site supervisor or Member

Service Term: 10.5 months and a minimum of 1700 hours of service.

Site: Any school, Early Learning center, or community organization awarded members through the competitive Request for Application (RFA) process. Early learning sites are specifically devoted to providing foundational reading programs and literacy engagement for young children, primarily those who are preparing to enter Kindergarten.

Site Supervisor: The person, identified by the *Legal Applicant* responsible for mentoring and managing each site's awarded WRC AmeriCorps member(s) and program. The primary duties of the site supervisor include, but are not limited to: recruiting, enrolling, and retaining WRC AmeriCorps Members. Other duties include, but are not limited to: submitting quarterly reports, ensuring appropriate professional development, providing site-based training, conducting member evaluations, and collecting required data. In addition, the site supervisor is required to include WRC AmeriCorps member(s) in all lesson planning and professional development opportunities related to literacy and reading skill development.

Student Tracking Log (STL): The data collection tool that must be collaboratively compiled between the Site supervisor and the members. The completed Excel document needs to be uploaded to OSPI through the Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) three times during each *program year*.

Volunteer Recruitment: Required of all WRC AmeriCorps members and sites. Members must reach out to existing pools of volunteers at each of their service sites or work towards the creation and recruitment of community volunteers.

Required Site Responsibilities

Recruitment and Enrollment of WRC AmeriCorps Members
- Conduct all AmeriCorps member(s) recruitment, interviews, and selection.
- Comply with WSC criminal history background check requirements as identified in guidance including, but not limited to: WSC Guide to Criminal History Background Checks and the WSC Criminal History Background Check Policies & Procedures. Please note: AmeriCorps members must pass criminal history background checks prior to their start date and cannot be listed on the National Sex Offender Registry.
- Comply with other criminal background check requirements that may be developed and required throughout the program year to maintain CNCS compliance.
- Complete and submit all required Member enrollment paperwork.
- Attend mandatory recruitment and enrollment trainings.

Site–Based Training for all Members must include:
- An orientation including an introduction to the site culture; expectations for dress, attendance, and behavior; safety plans and procedures; and communication protocols;
- An introduction to behavior management plans and programs;
- Site-specific information about current curriculums and tutoring strategies;
- Site-specific information about intervention strategies, critical components of reading, connecting with core classroom instruction, and strategies for reaching diverse learners;
- General training regarding reading foundations and the implementation of tutoring models;
- Introduction to community service programs and leaders (both on and off-site);
- Family literacy engagement activity planning;
- Volunteer recruitment, training, and management processes.

WRC Provided Professional Learning Support to Members:
- Washington Reading Corps Training Institute (Fall 2015)
- Life After AmeriCorps training
- Behavior management training (i.e. Positive Behavior Intervention Systems)
- Equity or culturally responsive strategies for supporting students of all backgrounds and abilities

Program Application Components

Theory of Action
In each Request for Application (RFA), applicants should provide a Theory of Action (TOA) that supports their application for WRC members. The applicant should be prepared to explain the ways in which Members will be an integral part of reading improvement for the Early Learning site. Applicants should be prepared to describe the direct and indirect services that the member will provide, the plan for the member(s)' schedules,, the process for identification of participating students, the specific reading intervention curriculum and instructional materials that will be used, the use of progress monitoring when determining movement within the program, and the specifics around integration of the member(s) into daily activities. The TOA can be revised throughout the project term and should support the Early Learning site's efforts around the implementation of WRC goals.

Sustainability Plan
A key component to lasting, significant change is the capacity to implement a program and maintain the structures in order to make an impact. Along with the TOA, WRC Early Learning sites are also selected based on the thoughtfulness about sustaining the program. This plan for sustainability must be outlined in the application.

For WRC programs, sustainability includes the recruitment of volunteers, the design and implementation of family literacy events, and the building of organizational capacity. In order for the WRC to be sustainable there must be collaboration among each site's Leadership. This includes the Site Supervisor, Legal Applicant, and the AmeriCorps Member(s). Sites awarded WRC AmeriCorps members through the competitive application process must make provisions for the member to accomplish these sustainability – related goals. Site supervisors can ensure that volunteer recruitment and family literacy nights are carried out by including time in each member's schedule and by connecting the Member with any existing network of outreach coordinators such as the Volunteer Coordinator or the local Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)/Parent Teacher Association (PTA) president.

National Service Exposure
National Service Exposure is a key component of the AmeriCorps member's term of service. Sites that are awarded WRC AmeriCorps members will be required to allow time in Members' schedule for planning, organizing, and completing local community service projects. Projects can range from family engagement nights complete with literacy activities, site assemblies, community projects, to any other acts of service that contribute to building strong reading foundations.

Additionally, *AmeriCorps Gear* is issued to all members by WRC staff which includes jackets, t-shirts, and lapel pins. WRC program guidelines require that at least one item should be worn by the member(s) each day. Sites are also expected to exhibit National Service pride by prominently displaying WRC posters in highly visible areas.

School Data
Successful applicants will be awarded WRC AmeriCorps members based on submitted application information. Careful consideration is given for sites that have high percentages of special populations, including but not limited to: the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch, the percentage of migrant and bilingual students, the number of students who are reported as homeless, students of color, and military families.

Application Resources

Content of WRC literacy support is grounded in Washington State's K-12 State Learning Standards for English Language Arts (the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (CCSS)). The CCSS-ELA were developed through collaborative, public processes led by curriculum associations across the state and nationwide. Washington State's standards for English language arts were adopted in 2011. These standards ensure all students are held to consistent and high expectations regardless of where they live, provide clear and focused guideposts for all students, families, and teachers, and prepare students to be college and career ready.

The OSPI Comprehensive Literacy Plan (CLP) provides information on integrating literacy instruction with the Washington State Learning Standards and the latest information about literacy development. It offers ideas and links to resources to help teachers, parents and caregivers play an active role in promoting literacy.

The Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines (2012) provides a framework of expectations for Early Learning sites. Developed in partnership with OSPI, the Department of Early Learning, and Thrive by Five, the Guidelines document "describes behaviors and skills that children may demonstrate birth through grade 3 and how… early learning professional[s] can support their healthy development".[3] For more information regarding the Early Learning and development Guidelines or their alignment with The Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS), please click on the appropriate hyperlinks. In 2014, the ELA Menu of Best Practices and Strategies was released by OSPI. This document was developed by a panel of experts in literacy who researched and compiled research-based practices to meet the needs and improve the performance of diverse students in ELA.

The Student Tracking Log (STL), issued to members by WRC staff, is the program's required data collection tool. The STL is used to track each participating student's rate of improvement or responsiveness to WRC tutoring services. Progress monitoring is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of and a student's responsiveness to classroom instruction. The WRC does not collect progress monitoring data but encourages the use of sound, reliable progress monitoring tools. (NCRTI, 2014). All early learning sites must sign and upload a consent form for sharing the data with OSPI.

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[3] http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/development/docs/guidelines.pdf

Timeline and Application Process

- Interested applicants may submit a Request for Application (RFA) through iGrants that will be available on **Wednesday, March 4, 2015**.

- An informational webinar will be hosted on **Wednesday, March 11, 2015 from 3:30 to 4:30pm** to answer questions regarding the application process. This webinar will be recorded and posted to OSPI's Washington Reading Corps webpage.

- All proposals must be submitted through iGrants by **4:00 PM** on **Thursday, April 16, 2015**.

- Questions regarding the RFA process or applications should be directed to: amy.ripley@k12.wa.us.

- Questions regarding the Washington Reading Corps program requirements and/or logistics should be directed to: tjack@esd.wa.gov.

- Eligible proposals will be reviewed by a review panel during the weeks of **April 20 – May 1, 2015**. During this time, applicants should be prepared to provide timely clarification on application components.

- Awards will be announced on **Monday, May 4, 2015**.

- Site supervisors will be required to attend a one day regional training during the weeks of **May 18 – 22 or May 26 – 29, 2015**. Dates and locations will be listed in the award letter.

- Project Period (for successful applicants): **May 2015 - August 2016**.

- Member service will begin **September 2015 and run through August 2016**.

APPLICATION REVIEW COMPONENTS

Review Category	Possible Points	
Completed Assurances, Contact Information, District Consent Form Uploaded	5	
Section I: THEORY OF ACTION - MEMBER UTILIZATION	15	
Section II: CURRICULUM and ASSESSMENT	11	
Section III: PROGRAM GOALS	11	
Section IV: MEMBER TRAINING and PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	7	
Section V: VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT and PLANNING	7	
Section VI: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLANNING	7	
Section VII: PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY	3	
Circle Areas of Special Population Considerations: *Free and Reduced Lunch, Migrant, Bilingual, Homeless, Students of Color, Military Families*	Yes	No
Previous WRC Grantee	Yes	No
Final Score:	**66**	