



NATIONAL SERVICE FUND GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES



Purpose

Over the last decade national service and volunteerism have increasingly been seen by policymakers, advocates, and practitioners as an effective tool for addressing diverse community challenges. National service encompasses AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps NCCC – FEMA Corps, and AmeriCorps Seniors, all programs supported AmeriCorps, a federal agency.

In Flint, the National Service Fund, established in 2011 through a grant from the C.S. Mott Foundation, supports Flint area nonprofits, schools, and government entities take better advantage of these national service resources. The Fund provides matching grants to eligible organizations for the purpose of supporting national service participants making an impact on issues of critical importance for the region including, but not limited to, education, public safety, health and the environment.

Eligibility

- The National Service Fund managed by the United Way of Genesee County makes grants to public charities or governmental units who have been in existence for a minimum of three years and meet UWGC due diligence requirements. UWGC makes most discretionary grants to organizations which are classified as publicly supported charities in the Internal Revenue Service Code, Section 170(b)(1)(A) and includes schools and universities, churches, synagogues and mosques, and governmental entities.
- Organizations applying for competitive grants must give evidence of non-discrimination in hiring and providing services.
- Organizations must be supporting, directly or indirectly, national service members, defined as AmeriCorps members, AmeriCorps VISTA members and/or AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps members. For more information about national service, please visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov/>.
- Organizations may either be Prime Grantees, meaning they have been awarded member slots directly from AmeriCorps or the Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC), or Sub-Grantees, meaning they have been awarded member slots through another national service program.
- The national service members must be serving with a project that directly benefits the Flint area defined as either the City of Flint or Genesee County. The host organization need not be based in Genesee County, but the service activities must take place primarily in the City of Flint or Genesee County, or primarily benefit those regions.

How to Apply

Competitive grant applications are accepted throughout the year and awarded on a rolling basis.

However, the funding year for the National Service Fund runs October 1 through September 30. Grant applications that come in after all grant funds have been expended may be asked to wait for the next funding year to begin.

STEP 1: COMPLETE ALL STEPS NECESSARY TO APPLY FOR (AND SECURE) NATIONAL SERVICE MEMBERS

The National Service Fund does not award member slots or national service programs; rather, the NSF helps off-set expenses associated with member slots or programs secured either through AmeriCorps or another national service program. Prior to applying to the NSF, applicants must first have completed all steps to secure a member slot or program. NSF funds will not be awarded until applicants have received confirmation that their slots or programs have been awarded. For technical assistance in securing member slots or national service programs, please contact the National Service Accelerator Civic Engagement Manager ([Katie de Araujo](#)).

STEP 2: CONTACT UWGC FOR PRE-APPLICATION INQUIRY

If this is an organization's first time applying to the fund, contact the Civic Engagement Manager at United Way of Genesee County to see if you qualify for a NSF grant.

STEP 3: COMPLETE THE APPLICATION

Once you have been completed the Pre-Application Inquiry, you will be sent the full grant application form. Components of a complete application include:

- Award letter from AmeriCorps or national service program confirming that member slot(s) have been awarded in Flint or Genesee County
- Documents outlining member goals and service activities
- Narratives explaining how the applicant will meet the grant requirements
- Budget
- Signatures of Executive Director and Board Chair

STEP 4: REVIEW OF GRANT APPLICATION

Your grant application will be reviewed by the Flint National Service Accelerator staff. During this process, additional information may also be requested. The review process can take up to several weeks to complete.

STEP 5: GRANT AWARD

Funded organizations will receive a letter from United Way of Genesee County notifying of the status of the funding request once your application has been reviewed. Your organization may receive full or partial funding, or in some cases we may decline to fund your project.

Application Evaluation:

Grant applications will be reviewed on how well they meet the grant requirements listed below.

- **Geographic Area:** 80% of the National Service Fund must support member endeavors specifically in the City of Flint; 20% may support endeavors in greater Genesee County
- **Focus Area:** 75% of the National Service Fund must support member endeavors specifically in the focus areas of Education, Economic Opportunity, Environment, and Healthy Futures; 25% may support endeavors that align with other CNCS focus areas
 - In education, priority will be given to members focusing on the goals of community education (graduation rates, 3rd grade literacy, school-community partnerships, and attendance)
 - In economic opportunity, healthy futures, and environment, priority will be given to members focusing on endeavors that are highlighted both by the Michigan Community Service Commission and the Flint Master Plan

- **Opportunity Youth:** priority will be given to programs that have an emphasis on opportunity youth, recruiting members from the Flint community, and positive member development
- **Sustainability:** priority will be given to organizations that demonstrate sustainability in activities and funding for national service members
- **National Service Accelerator Participation:** priority will be given to organizations that have demonstrated or commit to participate in the activities of the Flint National Service Accelerator including activities designed for members and host site organizations/supervisors

Budget Considerations:

When submitting a request, keep in mind:

- Budget requests up to \$1,000 less than the full amount for full-time service members and \$500 less for half-time members will be entertained (i.e. host sites are encouraged to contribute \$1,000 per full-time member and \$500 per half-time member that is not requested from the NSF).
 - This encouragement is not meant to deter any organizations from applying for funding, and exceptions can be made. However, organizations that are able to contribute a portion of their member match share and, therefore, demonstrate sustainability, are encouraged to do so.
- After disbursement of NSF funds, it's up to the host site/organization to ensure funds are spent appropriately and paid in a timely manner to the prime grantee or CNCS/MCSC.
- If a service member leaves service early, the host site/organization should inform the National Service Accelerator Director to have a conversation about potentially returning the funds.

Other Expectations:

In an effort to increase national service visibility and our ability to demonstrate national service impact:

- One month after the end of a funded member's service term, organizations will submit a grant report to the Flint National Service Accelerator outlining the member impacts and how the member/program contributed towards creating a culture of service in the community. The NSF reporting form can be obtained from the National Service Accelerator Director.
- Organizations will ensure that their AmeriCorps members attend all Accelerator monthly meetings and National Days of Service. Organizations will also encourage member participation in all other Accelerator events and trainings.
- Organizations will attend bimonthly Accelerator Partner Meetings to encourage collaboration and resource sharing across the Flint AmeriCorps network.