KANSAS VOLUNTEER COMMISSION

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2027 – 2028 AmeriCorps Kansas
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Planning Grant

Deadline for Application Submission:
January 29, 2027
Via email to: americorps@ksde.gov

For more information contact:
Kansas Volunteer Commission
785-368-7436
americorps@ksde.gov

AmeriCorps Kansas

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NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Federal Agency Name: AmeriCorps
Issuing Agency Name: Kansas Volunteer Commission
Funding Opportunity Title: AmeriCorps Kansas Planning Grant 2027-2028
Issue Date: October 9, 2026

This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is for applicants interested in a 12-month planning period to develop an AmeriCorps Kansas program.

Applicants who review this NOFO and determine they would prefer an operational grant that includes AmeriCorps members, should refer to the AmeriCorps Kansas Operational Grant NOFO available at: AmeriCorps Kansas Operational Grant.

Disclosure: Publication of this NOFO does not obligate AmeriCorps or the Commission to award any specific number of grants or to commit any particular amount of funding. Kansas Volunteer Commission reserves the right to re-focus program dollars for this competition in the event of disaster or other compelling needs.

Date	Activity
October 9, 2026	AmeriCorps Kansas Planning Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) released
January 29, 2027	**Application due to Commission**
February 26, 2027	Applicants receive clarification questions
March 15, 2027	Clarification question responses due to Commission
April 6, 2027	Kansas Volunteer Commission votes on AmeriCorps portfolio
May 11, 2027	Kansas State Board of Education votes on AmeriCorps portfolio
July 31, 2027	Official AmeriCorps Kansas grant award notifications
September 1, 2027	Program start date

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A.1 Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding

AmeriCorps planning grants enable organizations to plan a proposed AmeriCorps program and develop (or replicate) systems for successful implementation of an AmeriCorps operational grant application. Organizations use planning grants to become better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the subsequent grant cycle.

Given the complexity of drafting an AmeriCorps budget, **budgets are not required** until an organization's planning grant application is approved. Once approved, the organization will work closely with the Commission to draft a budget that aligns with the organization's plan while also being in compliance with various state and federal rules.

Planning grants MAY NOT be used for costs associated with writing an AmeriCorps grant application. Planning grants DO NOT receive/provide AmeriCorps members.

Examples of planning activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Hire a consultant, determined by the Commission, to help with the planning process (required at 25% of total budget).
- Participate in required training and technical assistance in order to plan and develop an effective, compliant AmeriCorps program.
- Determine the AmeriCorps member activities needed to address the identified community need.
- Determine the desired characteristics of AmeriCorps members and develop a recruitment strategy.
- Develop a data collection system, and explore performance measures, to ensure that accurate, timely, and reliable data is gathered to demonstrate impact.
- Research evidence-based program models and determine which is most appropriate for this AmeriCorps program design.
- Create a process for selecting host sites (if applicable).

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is the federal grantmaking organization for all AmeriCorps programming nationally. AmeriCorps brings people together to tackle some of the country's most pressing challenges through national service and volunteering. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities. AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions/practices to strengthen communities.

Kansas Volunteer Commission

The vision of the Commission is to empower all Kansans to meet community needs through service. The Commission, a program of the Kansas State Department of Education, directs

effective national service programs, supports statewide mentoring efforts, and leads volunteer engagement training opportunities. AmeriCorps Kansas programs are funded from federal resources allocated to the Commission according to a formula based on state population. Each year, AmeriCorps notifies the Commission of the amount of formula funding available. In most years, the Commission does not have adequate funding to cover all requests.

A.2 Funding Priorities

The Commission's priorities for this grant competition are:

- **Education**: Efforts that support improved educational and behavioral outcomes, school readiness, and/or preparation for success in postsecondary educational institutions.
- **Youth Development & Mentoring**: Efforts that empower youth through opportunities and support, positive relationships, and leadership development, particularly among youth in foster care.

To receive priority consideration, applicants must show that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes. Programs that receive priority consideration are not guaranteed funding.

A.3 Technical Assistance

Applicants may request one-on-one consultation and technical assistance from Commission staff by emailing americorps@ksde.gov before the application due date.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

B.1 Estimated Available Funds

The Commission expects a highly competitive AmeriCorps grant competition. Awards for planning grants may not exceed $100,000. Award amounts will vary, as determined by the scope of the projects.

Planning grants are awarded on a cost-reimbursement basis only. If awarded, subgrantees will submit monthly invoices, after expenses are incurred, as requests for reimbursement to the Commission. Only those expenses incurred after the grant starts are eligible for reimbursement. Subgrantees are required to match at 24 percent, either through cash or in-kind contributions.

B.2 Project and Award Period

The project period is September 1, 2027 – August 31, 2028. During the planning grant period, applicants will be notified of operational grant funding opportunities. The Commission will work with the applicant to determine competitions to apply for. Applying for an operational grant is not required, but applicants will be encouraged to move in that direction and coached on feasibility.

All applicants should be aware that it is prohibited for any Commission funded project to start activities prior to the award of the grant and signed agreements.

B.3 Program Authority

Awards under this NOFO are authorized by the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1 Eligible Applicants

Receiving funding previously from AmeriCorps or another Federal agency is not a prerequisite to apply under this NOFO. The following entities are eligible to apply:

- Public or private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations;
- Federally Recognized Tribes;
- Institutions of higher education and school districts; and
- Government entities within the state (e.g., cities and counties).

C.2 System for Award Management (SAM)

All applicants **must** register with the System for Award Management (SAM) at https://www.sam.gov/SAM/ to receive a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). The applicant must have an active SAM registration throughout the duration of the award, and it must be renewed on an annual basis.

The Commission suggests that applicants finalize a new registration or renew an existing one **at least six 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 the Commission. The Commission will not make awards to entities that do not have a valid SAM registration. If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time the Commission is ready to make an award, the Commission may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

C.3 Other Eligibility Requirements

Under Section 132A(b) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this NOFO. Applications that propose to engage in activities that are prohibited or unallowable under AmeriCorps's statutes, regulations, or the terms and conditions of its awards are not eligible to receive Commission funding (see Section I). Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(4), that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for Commission funding.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

This NOFO should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR 2520–2550 and the Budget instructions, which are incorporated by reference. These documents can be found on AmeriCorps Kansas Planning Grant web page. The full regulations are available online at www.ecfr.gov.

D.1 Application Deadline

All application materials are **due no later than January 29, 2027** via email to americorps@ksde.gov. The Commission will not accept applications that are late, mailed or faxed.

The Commission encourages applicants to be concise but thorough. Applicants should also avoid usage of styling formatting features included but not limited to bold, underline, tabs, outlines, bulleted lists, smart quotes, and hyperlinks. The Commission reserves the right to extend submission deadline and any notice of such extended deadline will be posted to apply to all applicants.

D.2 Application Content

Narratives (written in a word document):

- Program Design
- Organizational Review
- Budget Narrative

Attachments:

- Cover Letter Worksheet
- Budget Worksheet will be completed after approval

D.3 Application Page Limits

Applications **may not exceed 6 pages** for the narratives. In determining whether an application complies with page limits, the Commission will count the following as narrative:

- Program Design
- Organizational Review
- Budget Narrative

D.4 Submission of Additional Documents

Applicants are required to submit the following additional documents by the application submission deadline by emailing americorps@ksde.gov.

- Most recent single audit (entities subject to 2 CFR 200 Subpart F) OR most recent audited financial statements OR an explanation as to why neither are available; and
- W-9 form.

Entities applying on behalf of a Federally Recognized Tribe

- Tribal organization eligibility documentation

E. APPLICATION FIELDS

The Commission urges applicants to submit high-quality applications that carefully follow the guidance in this NOFO. The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization will receive funding.

Categories/Subcategories	Percentage
Program Design	**70**
Funding Priority	5
Need	15
Program Model	25
Planning Process	25
Organizational Review	**20**
Organization Capacity	10
Fiscal Oversight	10
Budget Narrative	**10**

E.1 Program Design (70 points)

Funding Priority (5 points)

1. Describe how the proposed program ties into one or more funding priority areas (leave blank if not applicable).

Need (15 points)

1. Describe in detail the community need and target population the proposed program will address. Provide a brief summary of specific evidence to support the need for your proposed AmeriCorps program. Cite sources within the last five years from your local community.

Program Model (25 points)

Describe your plans for an operational AmeriCorps program. While the planning grant will help to determine specifics of the program, applicants should include as much information as possible about the potential AmeriCorps program as they currently imagine it.

1. Explain how AmeriCorps members are a highly effective means to solve the identified community problem.
2. Describe where you expect AmeriCorps members to serve (list the counties as well as specific organizations, if known).
3. Describe the activities that AmeriCorps members will be engaged in (the intervention) and how those activities will connect to the identified community need(s).
4. Describe how the AmeriCorps members will be supervised.
5. Describe how the AmeriCorps members will be supported by the organization and the skills they will obtain during service.
6. Provide an estimate of how many AmeriCorps members your program would support and whether they would serve on a full-time or part-time basis.

Planning Process (25 points)

1. Describe the planning process with timeline and benchmarks for planning activities and how you will use the planning period to develop your capacity to effectively manage an AmeriCorps program.
2. Describe how the planning period will be used to engage community members, organizations, stakeholders, and potential partners in the planning grant process.

E.2 Organizational Review (20 Points)

Organization Capacity (10 Points)

1. Indicate who will be the lead staff managing this initiative and explain why they are qualified to lead the organization through this project.
2. Describe the infrastructure that the program has developed to ensure effective project oversight.
3. Provide examples of your organization's prior experience administering similar projects or programs.
4. Discuss the level of buy-in or organizational commitment your executive leadership and community partners have for this project.

Fiscal Oversight (10 points)

1. Describe the experience your organization has in managing grants.

2. Describe the infrastructure that your organization has developed to ensure effective fiscal oversight.
3. Describe what experience your organization has in managing federal and non-federal grants
4. Explain how your organization will ensure compliance with the grant requirements.

E.3 Budget Narrative (10 Points)

1. Describe the amount and sources of match that have been secured to date, and any plans to secure additional match by the project start date if needed.
2. Describe your plans to develop a cost-effective program, including how you will develop diverse resources that will support the implementation and sustainability of your program.

E.4 Performance Measures

Performance measures are NOT required for planning grants. Planning subgrantees will be expected to follow AmeriCorps Kansas guidance and reach benchmarks throughout the project/award period. If selected, subgrantees will receive training and technical assistance opportunities throughout the project/award period.

F. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

The assessment of applications involves a wide range of factors and considerations. The Commission will engage external reviewers to provide insight and input with respect to eligible applications. In addition, Commission staff will apply their experience and expertise in evaluating applications. In the end, the review and selection process will produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and strategic consideration described in this NOFO. Applicants will be selected based upon quality of application and demonstrated need.

F.1 Federal Award Notices

The Commission will make awards following the grant selection announcement. Kansas Volunteer Commission anticipates announcing the results of this competition by **July 31, 2027**, contingent on the availability of congressional appropriations. All applicants, successful or not, will be notified of funding decisions via email. Notification of an award is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The Subgrant Agreement is the authorizing document for grant activities. An awardee may not expend federal funds until the start of the Project Period identified on the Subgrant Agreement.

G. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

G.1 Uniform Guidance

All awards made under this NOFO will be subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 2205.

G.2 AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions

All awards made under this NOFO will be subject to the FY 2026 AmeriCorps General Terms and Conditions and the FY 2026 AmeriCorps Program Specific Terms and Conditions. These Terms and Conditions contain detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the AmeriCorps General and Program Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available at State subgrantees | AmeriCorps.

G.3 National Service Criminal History Check Requirements

Planning grants are not required to complete National Service Criminal History Checks.

G.4 Official Guidance

All AmeriCorps active guidance is available on the agency's Guidance webpage, Grantees and Sponsors | AmeriCorps. The contents of these documents do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way unless incorporated into a contract or grant agreement. These documents are intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

G.5 Reporting

Award recipients are required to submit a variety of reports which are due at specific times during the life cycle of an award. All reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time. Award recipients are also required to attend scheduled progress calls and participate fully in any state-sponsored training and leadership events regarding the AmeriCorps Program.

H. CONTACT INFORMATION

Please submit questions relating to this NOFO to AmeriCorps Kansas at americorps@ksde.gov.

I. PROHIBITED AND UNALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES

Prohibited Activities

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or AmeriCorps, staff and members may not engage in the following activities (see 45 CFR § 2520.65):

(1) Attempting to influence legislation;
(2) Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
(3) Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
(4) Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
(5) Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
(6) Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
(7) Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
(8) Providing a direct benefit to— a. a business organized for profit; b. a labor union; c. a partisan political organization; d. a nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and e. an organization engaged in the religious activities described in bulleted item # 7 above, unless AmeriCorps assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
(9) Conducting a voter registration drive or using AmeriCorps funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
(10) Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
(11) Such other activities as AmeriCorps may be prohibited.

AmeriCorps members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their own initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non- AmeriCorps funds.

Unallowable Activities
In addition to the *Prohibited Activities*, the following restrictions also apply to the service of AmeriCorps members:

- **Nonduplication**:
  AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program. AmeriCorps assistance will not be provided to a private nonprofit entity to conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities provided by a State or local government agency in which such entity resides unless the entity complies with the following “nondisplacement” requirements.

- **Nondisplacement:**
  (1) An employer may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the use by such employer of a participant in a program receiving AmeriCorps assistance.
  (2) An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving AmeriCorps assistance.
  (3) A service opportunity will not be created under this chapter that will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual.
  (4) A participant in a program receiving AmeriCorps assistance may not perform any services or duties or engage in activities that would otherwise be performed by an employee as part of the assigned duties of such employee.
  (5) A participant in any program receiving assistance may not perform any services or duties, or engage in activities, that—
    (i) Will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or
    (ii) Are services, duties, or activities with respect to which an individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures.
  (6) A participant in any program receiving assistance may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any—
    (i) Presently employed worker;
    (ii) Employee who recently resigned or was discharged;
    (iii) Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures;
    (iv) Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick); or
    (v) Employee who is on strike or who is being locked out.

An Equal Employment/Educational Opportunity Agency:
The Kansas State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: KSDE General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, KSDE, Landon State Office Building, 900 S.W. Jackson, Suite 102, Topeka, KS 66612, (785) 296-3201.