

Funding Opportunities in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the Serve America Act

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Two recent laws, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (“ARRA,” commonly known as the stimulus package) and the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, provide funding opportunities for nonprofits and social entrepreneurs to expand their services and accommodate additional volunteers. Organizations can apply for ARRA funds immediately. While funding for the Serve America Act will depend upon the 2010 federal budget, organizations may wish to assess their needs now in anticipation of the Act going into effect on October 1, 2009.

Volunteer and funding opportunities under ARRA

ARRA aims to promote economic recovery by assisting those in need and by investing in infrastructure and technology that will increase economic efficiency. It will fund approximately 13,000 additional AmeriCorps volunteers and will provide grants to nonprofits in areas including the following:

- Arts. \$50 million from the National Endowment for the Arts for “arts projects and activities which preserve jobs in the nonprofit arts sector.”
- Community Development. \$1 billion from the Department of Housing and Human Development for innovative programs that address the needs of low-income communities under the Community Service Block Grant Act.
- Education. Up to \$650 million from the Innovation Fund, administered by the Department of Education, for partnerships between nonprofits and educational agencies or consortia of schools that focus on closing the achievement gap among groups of students.
- Employment. \$120 million from the Administration on Aging for part-time community service positions for low-income adults over age 55 who have poor employment prospects.
- Energy. \$5 billion from the Department of Energy for weatherization assistance for residential buildings, benefiting low-income and moderate-income people.
- Health Care. \$1 billion from the Department of Health and Human Services for prevention and wellness programs aimed at preventable diseases and conditions.
- Homelessness Prevention. \$1.5 billion from the Department of Housing and Urban Development for rental assistance, housing relocation and stabilization services, and other homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing activities.
- Housing. \$4.25 billion from the Department of Housing and Urban Development for affordable housing and rehabilitation of abandoned and foreclosed homes.
- Job Training. \$3.95 billion from the Department of Labor, including \$1.25 billion for youth programs and summer employment, \$1.45 billion for employment and training activities for dislocated workers, and \$750 million for training and placement in “high growth and emerging industry sectors.”
- Nutrition Assistance. \$150 million from the Emergency Food Assistance Program, administered by the Department of Agriculture, for nonprofit programs aimed at relieving situations of emergency or distress.
- Technology Access. \$4.7 billion for the Broadband Technologies Opportunity Program, established by the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, to expand broadband access for underserved areas and for public institutions such as schools and libraries.

Detailed information about ARRA grants is available [here](#). Organizations can apply directly to the source of funding listed in ARRA or can [apply online here](#). Organizations should act quickly, as grant applications are currently being accepted and some funds have already been allocated.

Volunteer and funding opportunities under the Serve America Act

The Serve America Act triples the number of AmeriCorps volunteers from approximately 75,000 today to 250,000 by 2017. The Act identifies and focuses its resources on five areas of national need, creating a new Service Corps within AmeriCorps for each area.

- **Education Corps.** Activities include tutoring and mentoring, providing music and art education, and working with schools to extend the school day or provide service opportunities for students in economically disadvantaged communities.
- **Healthy Futures Corps.** Activities include assisting underserved individuals in obtaining access to health services, improving health literacy, and addressing the health needs of rural communities.
- **Clean Energy Service Corps.** Activities include building, weatherizing, and retrofitting low-income housing for energy efficiency; educating youth about energy efficiency; providing clean energy-related services to meet the needs of rural communities; and renewing and cleaning national and state parks, forests, and rivers.
- **Veterans Corps.** Activities include recruiting veterans into service opportunities, assisting military families whose members are or have recently been deployed, helping veterans receive benefits, and assisting veterans who are unemployed or have disabilities.
- **Opportunity Corps.** Activities include providing financial literacy education, assistance in accessing food, housing, and benefits, and assistance with job placement and training to economically disadvantaged individuals and communities.

The Serve America Act also provides for several new grants, including:

- **Social Innovation Funds Pilot Program.** Designed to promote social entrepreneurship, this program provides five-year renewable grants of \$1,000,000 to \$10,000,000 per year for existing grantmaking institutions who develop “innovative and effective solutions to national and local challenges.” Grantees must match the federal funds to make subgrants of at least \$100,000 per year to community organizations serving low-income communities.
- **Volunteer Generation Fund.** Nonprofit organizations receiving grants from this fund may use the grants to develop and carry out volunteer programs, or may make subgrants to support and create new local community-based entities that recruit, manage, or train volunteers. Organizations receiving a Volunteer Generation Fund grant must submit annual reports containing data on the size and performance of their volunteer programs to the Corporation for National and Community Service.
- **Nonprofit Capacity Building Program.** Intermediary nonprofits, meaning those that provide support for the organizational development and capacity building of other nonprofits, may apply for grants of \$200,000 or more. Grantees must match the grant funds and should focus on supporting organizations in financial need.
- **Training and Technical Assistance.** Nonprofits participating in national service programs may seek grants or other assistance for, among other things, leadership development, technical assistance, management or budgetary assistance, and training and overseeing volunteers.

In planning its strategy for implementing these grant opportunities should funds become available, the Corporation for National and Community Service is currently holding a series of public sessions around the country. For details on how you can attend these sessions and provide input, visit the Corporation’s Serve America Act website.

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