

**Digital Navigation Corps
AmeriCorps Host Site
Request for Proposals 2025-26**



OVERVIEW

Literacy Minnesota seeks proposals from organizations in select US states and territories interested in hosting one or more full-time AmeriCorps members with our Digital Navigation Corps program in the 2025-26 program year.

The Digital Navigation AmeriCorps project is a locally responsive, scalable solution to the digital equity crisis. This approach offers promise for achieving digital equity by positioning individual AmeriCorps members as Digital Navigators – digital social workers – in libraries, schools, nonprofits and public agencies to help digitally disenfranchised people with digital inclusion activities that address their unique needs, in much the same way as a traditional social worker may focus on housing, mental health resources and/or food insecurity. Simply put, the digital navigator will provide targeted assistance that addresses three identified barriers to digital equity: connectivity, device access and digital literacy.

A Digital Navigator enables your organization to launch, expand or improve digital literacy programs and services for low-income individuals and communities. This particular opportunity is focused on building digital literacy skills for workforce development (job readiness and secured employment).

At the same time, AmeriCorps members build their own leadership skills, explore career paths, pay for college and become lifelong advocates for the communities they serve due to the power of their experience. It is a unique opportunity to invest in, coach and mentor emerging leaders in the education and nonprofit fields.

As a host site, you provide the vision, project plan, day-to-day management of the project and on-site supervision of the AmeriCorps member. Literacy Minnesota provides training and technical assistance to you and the AmeriCorps member(s) at all stages of the project, and manages the AmeriCorps member's living allowance and benefits.

An AmeriCorps member serves full-time for 10-12 months (minimum 1,700 service hours) with the option to serve for multiple years.

We invite your organization to participate in this annual competitive selection process.

CONTACT

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LITERACY MINNESOTA'S NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

Literacy Minnesota currently operates three AmeriCorps programs: **Digital Navigation Corps**, **Literacy Leadership** and **Summer Reads**. Literacy Leadership is an AmeriCorps VISTA program that includes two tracks: Literacy for All (with a heavy focus on culturally responsive literacy education) and Digital Literacy. Members serve full-time for one year on capacity building projects. Literacy Leadership is national in scale, meaning organizations located anywhere in the United States are eligible to apply and host VISTAs. Summer Reads is a shorter program, where members serve full-time for 12 weeks over the summer in organizations throughout Minnesota to provide direct service as children's literacy mentors (grades K-5).

TIMELINE

Look for an email with dates for the live Supervisor Workshops or links for recorded workshops.

August 29, 2025	Deadline for proposals (submit online).
September 10	Sites notified of selection.
September 18	Attend Supervisor Orientation Part 1 – <i>Program Overview and Recruitment</i> .
September 26	Deadline for Site Agreement and first draft of Member Position Description – once approved, you may begin recruiting your member(s).
October – December	Digital Navigator Member recruitment, interviews and selection.
October 17	Deadline for initial \$1,000 cost-share payment.
November 7	Deadline for Organizational Assessment.
November 14	Attend Supervisor Workshop Part 2 – <i>Project Management and Member Supervision</i> .
December 5*	Deadline for Digital Navigator candidate selection, paperwork and remaining \$8,000 cost-share payment.
January 12, 2026*	Digital Navigator first day of service and national AmeriCorps Member Orientation (webinars/online coursework).
January 26 – 30, 2026	Digital Navigator Virtual Early Service Training with Literacy Minnesota (webinars/online coursework, 2 hours each day).
*Alternate start dates for members will be available on February 23 and March 30. Member selection deadlines are one month before the member service start date, and orientation dates differ for the later start dates.	

AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL

AmeriCorps is a National Service program funded by the federal government through the [AmeriCorps federal agency](#). The AmeriCorps network of programs began in 1993. Each year, tens of thousands of AmeriCorps members dedicate 10-12 months of full-time service to make change in communities across the country, and are provided a modest living allowance and benefits including an Education Award scholarship upon completion of service.

Literacy Minnesota has received a generous grant from AmeriCorps to sponsor and support AmeriCorps members to build capacity in nonprofit and public agencies that increase literacy access and success and/or digital equity for low-income individuals and communities. For more info about AmeriCorps, please visit americorps.gov.

LITERACY MINNESOTA

Literacy Minnesota works to build a more equitable society by making quality literacy education available to all. Literacy—the ability to read, communicate and access information—is critical for navigating the workforce, advocating for oneself and fulfilling basic needs. We envision a future where literacy eliminates injustice and strengthens communities, and our mission is to connect people to transformative learning, spark innovation in literacy and mobilize change.

Literacy Minnesota is a comprehensive literacy resource, providing free classes for adults and children; supporting literacy organizations through volunteer recruitment, training and teaching tools; and creating new pathways for groups and individuals to reach their full potential. We are recognized as a local and national leader and a driving force behind the latest developments in literacy learning. Our strong roots in the state of Minnesota bolster our broader leadership. We do our work by partnering with other organizations across the nation.

Current programs and services:

IN MINNESOTA

- **Open Door Learning Centers** – Six Twin Cities sites offer English, GED, computer, citizenship, job-readiness and other basic-skills classes for adults. Our Arlington Hills location in Saint Paul also has a preschool program for children of adult students.
- **Parenting Program** – Provides families with tools to break through inequitable power structures and create a more just education system.
- **Adult Literacy Hotline** – Online and phone referral service to adult literacy programs across Minnesota.
- **Summer Reads (National Service)** – Provides literacy tutors and mentors for children entering grades K-5 across Minnesota.
- **Tutor Training** – Pre-service and in-service workshops for literacy volunteers and educators.
- **Volunteer Recruitment** – Recruits and places volunteers into service organizations across Minnesota.

NATIONAL

- **Digital Navigation Corps (AmeriCorps State and National)** – Engages AmeriCorps members to provide direct service to learners seeking to learn digital literacy skills and access affordable connectivity resources.
- **Literacy Leadership (AmeriCorps VISTA)** – Engages AmeriCorps members to design and carry out literacy initiatives for pre-K through adults or to build digital literacy programs and services for youth or adults in partnership with schools, public agencies, community organizations and Tribal Nations.

- **Northstar Digital Literacy** – Assesses digital skills through online modules and provides classroom curriculum and self-directed online learning.
- **Advocacy** – Mobilizes to influence policy and legislation around the literacy cause.
- **Curriculum & Resources** – Searchable online library of literacy curriculum and teaching tools.
- **Journeys** – An anthology of adult student writing with accompanying classroom resources.
- **Literacy Strategies** – Consulting services to help organizations launch and develop literacy programming.
- **Open Door Collective** – Combats poverty through literacy education, policy and research.

Visit our website for more information: literacymn.org.

DIGITAL NAVIGATION CORPS: OUR GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND CORE PRINCIPLES

We partner with communities anywhere in the United States to collaboratively build digital equity that enables individuals and communities to access digital literacy resources, and we support change-makers in cultivating leadership, exploring career paths and becoming lifelong advocates for literacy and digital equity.

OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

- **Anti-poverty focus:** supporting community efforts to overcome poverty.
- **Direct service:** navigators are trusted community members who provide consistent, holistic, individualized support through repeated interactions.
- **Capacity-building:** strengthening and supporting efforts that focus on literacy and/or digital literacy by building infrastructure, expanding community partnerships, engaging volunteers and securing long-term resources.
- **Community voice:** valuing the inherent strengths and resources of the community and involving those who are most affected in the planning, development and implementation of projects.
- **Sustainable solutions:** providing short-term resources to help organizations achieve lasting solutions to poverty.
- **Service:** providing individuals with the opportunity to serve the community and participate in community change efforts.

Literacy Minnesota provides your organization with a full-time, qualified and dependable Digital Navigator dedicated to realizing your digital navigation project's goals.

ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS

Nonprofit organizations, government agencies and Tribal Nations located anywhere in the United States that provide – or wish to newly provide – literacy or digital literacy services to low-income individuals and communities may apply for a **Digital Navigation Corps member**. With regard to nonprofit organizations, hosting AmeriCorps members is not limited to those designated by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) specifically as 501(c)(3). Nonprofits with other IRS-designated 501(c) statuses that focus on anti-poverty outcomes are eligible to apply. Organizations that focus solely on advocacy or lobbying are **not** eligible.

DIGITAL EQUITY: PROJECT EXAMPLE AND DEFINITIONS

How do we define digital equity?

When we talk about digital equity, we come from a framework that digital equity involves three interrelated elements: equitable access to devices, equitable access to internet service, *and* equitable access to education and skills to make use of these tools.

Why digital equity?

Digital equity is a fundamental right. Without digital equity, people cannot fully participate in civic life or fully access education, employment or health care. The COVID-19 pandemic has only amplified ways that digital exclusion reinforces inequities, especially for populations marginalized because of race, language, poverty or disabilities, and given greater urgency to the need to bring collective solutions and voice to ensuring equitable access to digital skills and technology in the immediate term and as we move toward post-pandemic life.

From K-12 students lacking home access to the internet to participate in school to newly unemployed adults whose access is limited to a mobile device for completing online job applications, the United States is at a critical juncture. We know there are a range of common barriers that compromise digital equity, not limited to poverty, geography or educational attainment. Barriers are structural and systemic (e.g., availability of a broadband infrastructure) as well as personal, like a lack of digital literacy materials in languages other than English.

Digital Navigation projects will build the capacity of host sites to either help low-income individuals and communities improve digital literacy skills, connectivity and/or device access. The primary focus is digital literacy **skills development** and **referrals** for the purpose of **preparing learners for employment**. Secondary outcome areas are also allowed, such as healthy futures, school readiness and success, adult literacy, and civic or social opportunity.

EXAMPLE

- **Rural digital literacy project:** Digital Navigators will help screen learners for digital access needs and equitably distribute and train learners on computer/hotspot devices for learning, identify local partnerships for referrals, and expand languages of digital learning resources for adult learners in rural communities in three counties, where many people face multiple barriers to digital inclusion. This project will enable more learners to access services, which will as a result lead to **improved employment**, increased involvement with their children's teachers, improved communication skills and ultimately self-sufficiency that creates pathways out of poverty.

HOW DOES AMERICORPS AND THE DIGITAL NAVIGATION CORPS PROGRAM WORK?

Literacy Minnesota receives a grant from the AmeriCorps federal agency to manage and distribute AmeriCorps resources to eligible agencies. The host site provides the project vision, day-to-day management, progress reporting and supervision of the AmeriCorps member (Digital Navigator). Literacy Minnesota provides training, technical assistance, support and resources to the host site

and Digital Navigators through every stage of the project and pays the AmeriCorps members' living allowance and other benefits.

HOST SITE RESPONSIBILITIES

Digital Navigator member supervision

Site supervisors are expected to be actively and regularly involved in the AmeriCorps member's work. Expect that your site's Digital Navigator supervisor will spend an average of **10–12 hours per month** on supervision and project oversight. Please take this into careful consideration when choosing a staff member for the supervisor position.

****Site supervisor involvement is the key determinant of a successful AmeriCorps Digital Navigator member placement.***

Supervisors must make time to **meet regularly with Digital Navigators** (at least once per week) to provide support, feedback, guidance, training and mentoring and to assess progress toward project goals.

Site supervisors attend **multiple training workshops annually**: before beginning member recruitment for the next program year; an orientation on designing annual work plans and recruiting and supervising AmeriCorps members; and a joint workshop with members after they begin service on communication and work styles. Additional joint training or conferences may be offered for supervisors, and regular (typically twice monthly) training will be required for the Digital Navigators.

Project planning

Host sites work with Literacy Minnesota to develop an annual Member Position Description workplan. This document must be approved by the federal AmeriCorps agency.

Project management

Host sites oversee the day-to-day management of the project, including direct supervision of Digital Navigator(s), reporting and evaluation, and ensuring members have sufficient resources and on-site support to fulfill their project responsibilities. This involves **budgeting adequate staff time** for direct supervision of the Digital Navigators and of the project. Host sites are also responsible for providing the necessary administrative support to design and complete the goals and objectives of the Digital Navigator project and ensure sustainability.

Digital Navigator member recruitment and selection

Host sites **recruit, interview and check references** for their AmeriCorps applicants. Literacy Minnesota will assist you in this process by providing training and technical assistance, placing your position description on the AmeriCorps online recruitment website, phone screening all applicants and conducting general recruitment activities. The primary responsibility for filling the position, however, rests with the host site.

Digital Navigator member training and professional development

Host sites must arrange for initial **site orientation and training** in the Navigator's first weeks, and ongoing training and professional development throughout the year as needed for their members. Additionally, sites must ensure Navigators attend a mandatory national AmeriCorps Member

Orientation (virtual) on their first day of service, an Early Service Training orientation with Literacy Minnesota during their first month of service (virtual) and monthly in-service trainings with Literacy Minnesota (virtual). Literacy Minnesota may also provide members with optional professional development and networking events, small group professional learning and support opportunities, and individual professional development funds. Training and professional development is considered a part of the member's full-time service and is not "extra."

Project evaluation and progress reporting

Host sites track and report data related to the project and the Digital Navigator's activities (for example, number of individuals served, number of volunteers recruited, number of volunteers trained, amount of donations leveraged, etc.). Site supervisors (with input from Digital Navigators) complete **four formal online progress reports** and an **Organizational Assessment** each year to share progress on project goals and impact.

Communication with Literacy Minnesota

Host sites are expected to *maintain regular communication* with Literacy Minnesota national service staff about the project and AmeriCorps member. Host sites should notify Literacy Minnesota immediately regarding changes to the project workplan; any issues that arise with member performance; unscheduled termination of an AmeriCorps member or unscheduled changes of status and conditions of an AmeriCorps member such as arrest, hospitalization, or unapproved absences; or anything else impacting the completion of the Digital Navigator project.

Financial & in-kind match

Host sites are expected to provide a financial and in-kind match toward the costs of hosting a Digital Navigation Corps member.

Direct support to Digital Navigation Corps member

- **Adequate workspace and supplies**
 - A comfortable and welcoming work environment.
 - Reasonable office space.
 - Access to building and workspace (e.g., keycard).
 - Materials and supplies necessary to perform assigned duties.
 - Use of a work computer, phone/phone number and email comparable to that of paid staff.
- **Service-related travel reimbursement**
 - Mileage reimbursement (or reimbursement for public transit costs) for project-related travel, at rates and using processes as used for host site's employees.
- **Reimbursement for project-related supplies and materials**
 - Reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses (with documentation/receipts) for supplies and materials needed to perform assigned duties.

Host sites also pay a **financial cost-share match** to Literacy Minnesota. The cost-share rate is currently **\$9,000**, effective as of 7/15/25. Please note that the cost-share rate may increase due to future increases to the federal living allowance rates.

This \$9,000 cost share includes a non-refundable **\$1,000** initial payment before the AmeriCorps member begins service. The remainder is to be paid once the AmeriCorps member starts service. Literacy Minnesota will work with host sites on payment plans to pay in installments rather than in a single payment, if preferred. AmeriCorps members may help host sites with fundraising, including toward the cost-share match, as part of their service responsibilities.

OPTIONAL: Additional benefits and support for Digital Navigators as able

Additionally, host sites are not required but ***strongly encouraged to provide additional support and benefits to Digital Navigators whenever feasible***. Host sites that are able to do so often have an increased ability to recruit and retain high-quality AmeriCorps members. They help to create pathways for more people from a wider range of identities and backgrounds to participate in AmeriCorps service (beyond those who have pre-existing sufficient financial safety nets) and enable more members to successfully complete a term of service.

As you envision your Digital Navigation Corps project, consider the multitude of ways in which you could support your AmeriCorps member in successfully completing their service and having an even greater impact on your project and community. Examples include emergency funds, housing assistance, food or grocery cards, phone or internet reimbursement, formal career coaching, public transit passes or gas cards.

Please discuss *in advance* with Literacy Minnesota staff any additional benefits you intend to provide in order to ensure they follow AmeriCorps regulations and policies.

AMERICORPS MEMBER BENEFITS

AmeriCorps members receive a living allowance, childcare allowance (if eligible), federal student loan deferment/forbearance, access to emergency funds (if eligible), and the [Segal Education Award](#) (\$7,395) in exchange for 10-12 months of full-time service. These benefits are provided by AmeriCorps and managed by a combination of Literacy Minnesota and the federal AmeriCorps agency.

Literacy Minnesota additionally provides monthly training and networking, access and support for Google Career Certificates, \$750 per year in housing assistance funds, an Employee Assistance Program, and individualized technical assistance.

AmeriCorps members serve full-time (about 40 hours per week) with their host sites, typically weekday business hours. They are encouraged to be available for evening and weekend project needs as able. AmeriCorps members must request approval to hold another part-time job or attend school part-time while in service.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Category	Weight	Details
<u>Organizational Capacity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization information - Contact information - Participation in National Service Programs - Organization description - Project management and supervision 	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization's mission and current programming fit with the proposed project. • Organization can provide the necessary level of support for a successful project and successful AmeriCorps member. • Narrative demonstrates the organization has the capacity and will be prepared to provide an appropriate work environment. • Narrative demonstrates that the organization has a plan for providing ample supervision and support for both the AmeriCorps member and the project as a whole. • Staff member is identified to directly supervise the AmeriCorps and manage the project, will be able to dedicate 10-15 hours a month to project management/supervision, and is qualified and prepared to provide adequate supervision and support. • Narrative demonstrates organization has a plan for project management and on-site supervision and support that will provide an attractive service opportunity for an AmeriCorps member.
<u>Project Concept:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summary of request - Need statement - Project vision - Community involvement - Goal statement - Member activities - Programming interventions 	70%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project supports Literacy Minnesota and AmeriCorps missions and goals, specifically as they relate to digital literacy and workforce development. • Project concept is innovative and forward-thinking with a compelling vision. • Target population has significant digital literacy needs and indicators of poverty. • Narrative demonstrates the need for AmeriCorps resources to expand capacity to serve target population. • Project concept has been well thought out and has clearly defined goals, objectives and strategies. • Narrative demonstrates an ambitious but manageable plan for utilizing a full-time Digital Navigator to build the host site's capacity to be more effective and/or expand services. • Narrative demonstrates a plan for community involvement that will give the target community a role to play in decision-making and long-term sustainability of the project.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Proposals for Digital Navigation Corps projects through Literacy Minnesota must be submitted through an online application **by 11:59pm on September 1, 2025**.

The link to the application is [here](https://www.tfaforms.com/5126727) (<https://www.tfaforms.com/5126727>).

Selected host sites are then required to create a detailed **Member Position Description** for member recruitment and workplan purposes – **first draft due September 26, 2025** (templates/instructions to be provided) – and participate in **supervisor training webinars** before recruiting their Digital Navigator member. Dates of trainings TBD.

Please contact the Literacy Minnesota national service staff with any questions about this application, requests for technical assistance or for feedback on project ideas.

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