

THE WASHINGTON CAMPUS COMPACT RETENTION PROJECT

**Service-Learning as a Strategy to
Improve Retention and Academic Advancement Rates of
First-Generation Higher Education Students and
First-Generation College-Bound High School Students**

A Statewide AmeriCorps Program



Request for Proposal
(Issued Wednesday April 2, 2008)
Letter of Interest Due Date: Wednesday April 16, 2008
Full Proposal Due Date: Wednesday April 30, 2008

Washington Campus Compact member institutions are invited to participate as project partners in the third year of this statewide program that will **improve retention and academic advancement rates of first-generation higher education students and first-generation college-bound high school students through the use of service-learning**. The long-term goal of this program is for first-generation college/university students to graduate and for disadvantaged first-generation college/university-bound high school students to graduate (from high school) and attend postsecondary education institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Washington Campus Compact was awarded an AmeriCorps State Formula grant from the Washington Commission for National and Community Service (Commission) in 2006. The Commission receives federal funds from the Corporation for National & Community Service (Corporation) to operate AmeriCorps programs in Washington.

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is intended to identify higher education institutions that, in addition to those continuing with the program from years one and two, would like to participate in year three, 2008-2009. **Washington Campus Compact** (WACC) is a statewide consortium

of 31 higher education institutions that have joined together to advance the public purposes of colleges and universities, to help students become engaged leaders in their communities, and to strengthen communities. WACC is part of a national network, with 31 affiliated state offices, and more than 1100 colleges and universities as members.

AmeriCorps is a program of the [Corporation for National & Community Service](#), an independent federal agency created to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation. The Corporation also oversees [Senior Corps](#) and [Learn and Serve America](#). Together these programs engage more than 1.5 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service each year.

For more information, please refer to these informative websites:

Washington Campus Compact: www.wacampuscompact.org

Washington Commission for National and Community Service: www.ofm.wa.gov/servewa

Corporation for National & Community Service: www.nationalservice.org/

PRIMARY NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED

The *Retention Project* will address the following needs:

- First-generation college/university students have low retention rates and low academic advancement rates.
- Disadvantaged, first-generation college/university-bound high school students have low retention rates, low academic advancement rates, and reduced access to postsecondary education.
- Low-income college/university and high school students have low academic retention rates, low academic advancement rates, and reduced access to postsecondary education.
- Students need opportunities, such as service-learning, to improve retention and academic advancement rates and to gain civic skills and an ethic of service and civic responsibility.

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS PRIMARY NEEDS

SERVICE-LEARNING has been shown to have positive impacts on retention and academic advancement. The *Retention Project* will utilize service-learning as a strategy to improve retention and academic advancement rates of first-generation college/university students and first-generation college/university-bound high school students. First-generation college and university students will engage in service-learning (mentoring) with first-generation college/university-bound high school students. As a result of the service-learning experiences, both college/university and high school students will strengthen their commitment to their own education, will stay in college/university/school, and will advance in their academic careers. In addition, high school students will see the value, and increase the possibility, of attending postsecondary education institutions.

To support the effort of using service-learning as a strategy to improve retention and academic advancement, AmeriCorps members will be placed on campuses to:

- Work with college/university faculty and administrators to recruit and train first-generation college/university students and then place them in service-learning (mentoring) projects with disadvantaged, first-generation college-bound high school students
- Coordinate service-learning projects for first-generation college/university students and disadvantaged, first-generation college-bound high school students
- Develop long-term sustainable partnerships between colleges/universities and high schools by placing college service-learners in high schools to mentor disadvantaged, first-generation college/university-bound high school students

Specifically, the AmeriCorps members and college/university students will mentor students in grades 9–12 to:

- Identify and eliminate the barriers to academic advancement
- Prepare for Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)
- Prepare for retesting of WASL (if needed)
- Prepare for postsecondary education testing such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)
- Complete senior culminating projects
- Integrate service-learning into senior culminating projects
- Participate in service-learning projects together
- Develop an ethic and habit of service and civic responsibility

In addition, AmeriCorps members and college/university students will:

- Educate students about postsecondary education opportunities and entrance requirements
- Provide encouragement to attend postsecondary education institutions
- Model success
- Participate in, and facilitate regular service-learning reflection activities (with each other and with high school mentees)

PROJECT ASSESSMENT

The *Retention Project* is intended to improve retention and academic advancement rates of first-generation college/university students and disadvantaged, first-generation college/university-bound high school students. WACC will collect data regularly to determine effectiveness and impact of the project.

ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

April 2, 2008	<i>Retention Project</i> RFP issued for new campus partners in the 2008-2009 program year
April 16, 2008	Letter of Interest Due (electronic submission or fax accepted)
April 30, 2008	Due Date – electronic submission. (WACC will continue to accept proposals after this date, but priority will be given to proposals received by April 30, 2008)
(Prior to start of program)	Original proposal with certification signatures

May 7, 2008	Campus partners selected and notified
May 8- Aug 25, 2008	AmeriCorps members recruited and selected by campuses
Summer 2008	Site Supervisors to attend WACC grantee's meeting Location and exact date to be determined
September 1, 2008	<i>Retention Project</i> start date
September 8- 11, 2008	Member team orientation (mandatory for all AmeriCorps members) Ellensburg, WA
November/December 2008	Member training (mandatory for all AmeriCorps members)
January/February 2009	Member training (mandatory for all members)
April 2009	<i>Continuums of Service</i> Conference, Seattle, WA (members and site supervisors can/should attend)
July 9- 10, 2009	Statewide team graduation (mandatory for all members) Location to be determined

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The *Retention Project* is a three-year statewide program. The period of performance for each year is estimated to be:

Year 1:	September 1, 2006–July 15, 2007
Year 2:	September 1, 2007–July 15, 2008
Year 3:	September 1, 2008–July 15, 2009

PROJECT MATCH REQUIREMENTS

In-kind Match: \$3,700 per full-time AmeriCorps member. In-kind match contributions are the value of goods or services covered by the project partner or a third party in support of the project. This share of funds may come from state or local sources. Project partners are responsible for contributing an in-kind match of \$3,700 per full-time member, per program year.

Participation Fee*: \$5,500 per full-time AmeriCorps member per year. These contributions are used to support the member's living allowance, benefits, and operating costs of the project.

*if this fee is prohibitive, please contact WACC to discuss the issue.

AMERICORPS MEMBER RECRUITMENT/ELIGIBILITY

Project partners are responsible for the recruitment and selection of AmeriCorps members on their respective campuses. WACC will provide technical assistance and support to project partners in the recruitment and selection process. *Project partners are required to fill full-time AmeriCorps positions by September 1, 2008, unless other arrangements are negotiated.*

Minimum Eligibility Requirements: The federal government establishes minimum AmeriCorps eligibility requirements. A member must be 17 years of age or older at the commencement of service; must have a high school diploma or its equivalent, or obtain a diploma/its equivalent by the end of the service term; and must be a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent U.S. resident.

Additional Eligibility Requirements: Project partners may add additional eligibility requirements. In addition to the minimum eligibility requirements, WACC highly *recommends* that project partners require a full-time member to have a minimum of a two-year college degree.

Full-time Members' Terms of Service: A full-time AmeriCorps member serves 40 hours per week for a 10.5-month term of service. The 2008-2009 term of service is September 1, 2008–July 15, 2009.

Full-time Members Living Allowance/Benefits: A full-time member receives a \$11,400 living allowance in total (\$1085.71 per month), medical benefits, liability insurance, and workers compensation insurance during the term of service. In addition, upon completion of the term of service, a member receives a \$4,725 education award.

Eligibility of Returning Members: To serve a second AmeriCorps term of service, an individual must receive satisfactory performance reviews for previous terms of service, complete the required number of service hours, and satisfactorily meet any performance criteria as stipulated by the term of service. *Federal regulations state that under no circumstances will an individual (full-time or part-time positions) be eligible to receive more than two education awards.*

(CAMPUS) PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

Partnerships: Each campus project is required to partner with one or more local high schools or community-based organizations serving high school students. The partnership can be a new or existing one. The AmeriCorps member will be able to help develop and sustain this partnership.

Project Type: It is recommended that project partners integrate the *Retention Project* into an existing curricular or co-curricular course or initiative. For example, a college or university can integrate a service-learning component into an existing program aimed at improving retention and academic advancement of first-generation incoming or transfer students. Or, a current service-learning faculty member can place its first-generation college/university students in mentoring positions with a partnering high school. Another example could be integrating the *Retention Project* with an existing program that reaches out to disadvantaged, first-generation college/university-bound high school students.

Please be creative in your approach to meet project outcomes (improve retention and academic advancement rates of first-generation college/university students and first-generation college-

bound high school students). WACC intends to generate best practices that can be duplicated on other campuses.

Project Size: Project partners can request one or two full-time AmeriCorps positions per year.

PROJECT PARTNER REQUIREMENTS

- Be a current WACC member or be willing to join WACC
- Participate in program orientations, trainings, and site visits
- Participate in program assessment efforts
- Recruit and select full-time AmeriCorps member(s) on or before August 25, 2008
- Support AmeriCorps members to participate in all program training available to them, including networking with other AmeriCorps members serving in the region
- Sign and submit timesheets on the 15th and 30th/31st of each month
- Submit semi-annual progress reports
- Provide required in-kind match and participation fee, and documentation of in kind match
- Provide members with designated work space including phone, computer, and e-mail access
- Provide adequate supervision to AmeriCorps members to achieve campus project objectives
- Disseminate campus project impact data to stakeholders and colleagues

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Priority Due Date: April 30, 2008 (Electronic Submission)

Proposals received after this date will be considered on a space-available basis.

Hard copy with original certification signatures is due prior to the start of the program.

- Cover Page (Page 8 of RFP)
Original signature from authorized representative (e.g., dean, chief academic officer, student affairs officer, vice president, president) **is required** (on original hard copy submission, but not on electronic submission).
- Needs Data, if available (Page 9 of RFP)
- Project Narrative
In no more than eight (8) double-spaced pages, the narrative should include the following:
 1. Executive summary
 2. Project design
 3. Current or planned initiatives that address retention of first-generation college/university and/or high school students
 4. Current or planned service-learning initiatives
 5. Existing or planned partnerships with high schools (schools, purpose, history)
 6. Number of students and faculty involved
 7. Desired outcomes (retention and academic advancement goals)
 8. Connection to larger institutional goals (strategic plan, institutional priorities, department goals, etc.)
 9. Training and supervision planned for members

10. Recruitment plan including timeline and position description of full-time and part-time AmeriCorps members
11. Institutional support and capacity for project (include source of match funds)
12. Plans for dissemination of campus project impact data to stakeholders and colleagues

Resume of Site Supervisor

Letter of Support (*required for original copy but not electronic submission*)
from dean, chief academic officer, student affairs officer, or vice president (with copy sent to president)

SELECTION CRITERIA

Project design and connection to existing or planned initiatives, priorities, and partnerships	40%
Project's capacity to meet <i>Retention Project</i> outcomes	40%
Supervision, training, and support of members	20%

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL

Priority Due Date: April 30, 2008 (Electronic copy)

Proposals received after this date will be considered on a space-available basis.

Hard copy with original certification signatures is due prior to the start of the program.

Submit one (1) electronic copy and one (1) original

E-mail electronic copy to:

linda.schnee@wwu.edu

Include in subject line: *Retention Project Proposal*

Mail one original to:

Linda Schnee
Program Director
Washington Campus Compact

Mailing Address
c/o Western Washington University
516 High St., MS 5291
Bellingham, WA 98225-5996

Courier Service Address
405 32nd St., Suite 229
Bellingham, WA 98225

CONTACT

All questions can be directed to Linda Schnee at 360/650.7263 or linda.schnee@wwu.edu



COVER PAGE: *Retention Project 2008-2009*

1. Contact Information

Higher Education Institution: _____
Project Supervisor: _____
Title/Department: _____
Mailing Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Phone: _____
E-mail: _____
County: _____ Congressional District: _____ Legislative District: _____

Grants Officer/Fiscal Contact: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Phone: _____
E-mail: _____

High School Partner: _____
High School Contact: _____
Title/Department: _____
Mailing Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Phone: _____
E-mail: _____
County: _____ Congressional District: _____ Legislative District: _____

2. Number of full-time AmeriCorps members requested: _____

3. Understanding

- I understand that our institution is responsible for providing a participation fee of \$5,500 per member and an in kind match of \$3,700.
- I understand that our institution is responsible for covering campus program operating expenses (such as supervision, fingerprinting, local travel, some travel to member trainings, site-specific training, phone, office supplies, etc.) above the required participation fee.

4. Certification (original signatures needed on hard copy submission but not on electronic submission.)

To the best of my knowledge and belief, all data in this proposal is true and correct, the document has been duly authorized by the governing body, and the applicant agrees to perform the responsibilities as outlined in this proposal and abide by the requirements of the *Retention Project* as outlined in the Request for Proposal.

Program Supervisor, Name/Title _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Authorized Representative, Name/Title _____

(e.g., dean, chief academic officer, student affairs officer, vice president, president)

Signature _____ Date _____

RETENTION PROJECT 2008-2009

NEEDS DATA

Please provide as much of the following data as you have available to you at this time.

Higher Education Institution: _____

1. What are the demographics of the student population?	
2. What percent of the general student population qualifies for financial aid?	
3. What percent of the general student population are first-generation college/university students?	
4. What percent of the first-generation college/university students qualify for financial aid?	
5. What is the retention rate of the general student population?	
6. What is the retention rate of students who qualify for financial aid?	
7. What is the retention rate of the first-generation college/university students?	

High School Partner: _____

8. What are the demographics of the student population?	
9. What percent of the general student population qualifies for free or reduced lunches?	
10. What percent of the general student population are first-generation college/university-bound students?	
11. What percent of the first-generation college/university-bound students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches?	
12. What is the retention rate of the general student population?	
13. What is the retention rate of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches?	
14. What is the retention rate of the first-generation college/university-bound students?	