

Washington Reading Corps

1. **Purpose:** The mission of the Washington Reading Corps (WRC) is to improve the reading abilities of young students in grades PK–5 across Washington State through research-based tutoring strategies. The WRC supports struggling readers through effective collaborations among schools, families, community members, national service, businesses and state partners.
2. **Description of services provided:** In 2017-18, WRC schools, community centers, and early learning sites receive the support of 150 AmeriCorps national service members (WRC members) who provide:
 - **Tutoring and Early Childhood Development:** WRC members and volunteers work with students grades PK–5 identified as needing reading assistance and/or reading readiness skills, and children in early learning centers to increase kindergarten preparedness through one-on-one and small group tutoring sessions. Students successfully exiting the WRC program raise their reading skills by at least one grade level or meet benchmark and show improvement in attitudes and behaviors towards reading.
 - **Volunteer Generation:** WRC members assist schools and early learning sites to recruit, train, manage, and recognize volunteers. Volunteers provide one-on-one and small group tutoring in reading and reading readiness before, during, and after school during the school year. All volunteer tutors are trained and report that the training they receive improves their ability to provide services to students.
 - **Family Involvement:** WRC members organize family involvement activities that support literacy improvement in the home, school, and community and develop a family involvement plan. These family activities involve students identified as struggling readers and their parents and/or caregivers.
3. **Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:** WRC schools are selected through a competitive process that evaluates past performance with implementing the WRC program, and/or readiness to benefit from the placement of WRC members to support literacy development. Priority is given to schools that have a high free and reduced lunch population and have been identified for additional support through state and federal guidelines.

Beneficiaries in 2017-18 School Year:

# of School Districts:	46
# of Schools:	108
# of Students:	4,639
Other:	5

of OSPI staff associated with this funding (FTEs): .30
 # of contractors/other staff associated with this funding: .10

FY18 Funding: State Appropriation: \$950,000
 Federal Appropriation: \$0.0
 Other fund sources: \$0.0
 TOTAL (FY18) \$950,000

4. **Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding? If yes, explain.** Yes. The fixed amount grant of \$1.86 million in federal funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is leveraged by both state and local funds of \$1.31 million. This state funding is critical to the continuation of the program and thus the funding from the federal funding source.
 FY 1998–99 was the pilot year for funding.

5. **State funding history:**

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
FY18	\$950,000	\$698,728
FY17	\$950,000	\$878,368
FY16	\$950,000	\$877,034
FY15	\$950,000	\$902,826
FY14	\$950,000	\$909,829
FY13	\$950,000	\$949,995
FY12	\$950,000	\$946,097

6. **Number of beneficiaries (e.g., schools, students, districts) history:**

Fiscal Year	# of Schools	# of Districts	Number of AmeriCorps	Number Students Served	#Community Volunteers
FY18	108	46	150	4639	2,757
FY17	89	39	150	4133	2760
FY16	74	42	153	3935	1307
FY15	66	47	128	4678	3890
FY14	56	24	56	3,746	936
FY13	100	48	260	8,063	3,746
FY12	92	50	260	6,512	n/a

7. **Programmatic changes since inception (if any):** Starting in FY 2006, direct grant funding was no longer provided directly to schools –due to a reduction in WRC state funding. Prior to FY 2006, schools received minimal state grant funds from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for program implementation (including

assessment materials) in addition to the services provided by their AmeriCorps members.

Currently we are seeing the following changes in the program and among the AmeriCorps members, since the inception of WRC:

- Increased rigor of member and volunteer training in scientifically-based reading research.
- Technical assistance provided via webinar trainings and site visits by OSPI and Washington Service Corps staff.
- Development of early learning partnerships.
- Enhanced involvement of WRC members in schools with parent/family literacy events.
- Member support for school recruitment of community volunteers and their involvement in tutoring and literacy development.

8. **Evaluations of program/major findings:**

From 2017-18

- The Washington Reading Corps (WRC) contracted with the RMC, Portland to impact analysis of WRC on student reading development.
- WRC conducted a series of focus groups with site supervisors (school/district faculty who supervise the AmeriCorps volunteers) to discuss how to enhance the partnership between WRC and districts.
- The WRC members attended a two and half-day institute focusing on literacy development for grades P-5 and how to successfully facilitate small group instruction.

From 2016-17

- The Washington Reading Corps successfully launched a new grant from the National Corporation of Community Service with support from Serve Washington. The new grant aims to recruit 225 WRC members, starting in school year 2017-18.
- The Washington Reading Corps members participated in a 3 day institute in Wenatchee, WA and were provided in depth professional learning on early literacy, foundational skills, family engagement and supporting English Language Learners by state leaders and Regional Literacy Coordinators from Association of Educational Service Districts.
- The regional cluster meeting occurred three times over the course of the year and were supported by Employment Service Coordinators and AESD Literacy Coordinators. The cluster meetings provided members with ongoing and in-depth literacy skills and knowledge, classroom management, opportunities to learn more about education in WA State and life post WRC.

From 2015-16

- Site supervisors strongly endorsed the usefulness of having a Washington Reading Corps member provide tutoring. More than 80% of Washington Reading Corps site supervisor respondents described tutoring as very or extremely useful at their site. A majority cited data from reading assessments or student growth in reading as evidence of the usefulness of Washington Reading Corps tutoring.

- Three regional literacy trainings were provided by the Washington Service Corps and the Education Service District (ESD) Literacy Coordinators for members in November 2015 and February and May 2016. Regional WSC coordinators organized trainings and activities with each regional Literacy Coordinator, including a LETRS training (ParaReading), a supplemental reading module based on the National Reading Panel's recommendations for research-based instruction.
- Strategies for bilingual students or English Language Learners (ELL). About 1/3 of site supervisor respondents said their site provided some member training to support reading skills of ELL or bilingual students. About half of those described coaching, demonstrations, or weekly conversations with members specifically related to supporting bilingual and ELL students. At several sites the ELL teacher provided training or coaching to members.
- WRC school staff described members as "essential," "a critical piece of helping students," and "really useful and beneficial." In particular, the presence of the members increased sites' capacity to provide extra reading practice opportunities for students, serve Tier II students who would not otherwise receive extra reading attention and assistance, and offer smaller reading groups.
 - Roughly 80 percent of WRC students who began the program completed. Of those students, 57 percent met grade-level reading benchmarks.
 - WRC members were involved in coordinating 617 literacy-focused school or home activities and events for parents and families.

From 2014-15

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From 2013-14

- 80 percent of students improved in their reading behaviors, attitudes, and self-confidence.
- Over half (54 percent) of students tutored reached grade level or gained a year in reading skills.
- At the start of the school year, WRC students were one or more grades below grade level.
- Two-thirds of students were tutored at least four days per week.
- Two-thirds of students received at least 30 minutes of tutoring per session.

9. [Major challenges faced by the program:](#)

- If state funds are not provided, Washington will be unable to leverage the federal funds provided from the National Corporation for Community Service and the program will sunset.
- Student assessment—as a result of state funding cuts in FY 2006, OSPI no longer provides grants to schools and therefore cannot require schools to use a common assessment. Funding to schools would provide resources for schools to purchase and implement a common instrument to better measure student performance.
- The WRC was not awarded the federal grant in 2013, greatly reducing the number of members for the state. The WRC applied for and received 56 unfunded slots from CNCS to provide member services with the Washington state funding and school match for 2013–14.
- The National Corporation for Community Service has been recommended for dissolution and if this agency should be dissolved; the WRC program will only be supported by state funds and the program will be reduced in scope and impact.

10. **Future opportunities:** During the 2017-18 school, several staff members of the WRC visited their sister program—the Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) to learn more about their program and infrastructure. The WRC staff spent two days learning about the implementation of the

MRC program, the training and development of MRC’s AmeriCorps members, and the monitoring system used for every student receiving support from the MRC. Upon return to WA, the WRC staff met with their stakeholders and continued to connect with their job alike in Minnesota. With momentum building, there is great interest in infusing the WRC program with elements from the MRC program to increase student outcomes and AmeriCorps Member Involvement.

11. **Statutory and/or Budget language:**
Budget Proviso: SSB 5883, Sec. 513 (6) - \$950,000 of the general fund--state appropriation for fiscal year 2018 and \$950,000 of the general fund-state appropriation for fiscal year 2019 are provided solely for the Washington reading corps. The superintendent shall allocate reading corps members to schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and school districts that are implementing comprehensive, proven, research-based reading programs. Two or more schools may combine their Washington reading corps programs.

12. **Other relevant information:**
- WRC members are future education leaders.
 - Nearly 60 percent have an interest in teaching after their year of service.
 - Nearly 20 percent of WRC members plan to have a career in education policy or administration.
 - Sustainability—WRC Project Supervisors and members meet with 100 percent of the sites participating in the WRC and discuss plans for, and progress towards, building capacity and sustainability of the early learning and reading support programs.
 - The schools are selected through a competitive process supported through OSPI’s iGrants system.

- With the re-awarding of the grant process in 2014–15, the interest and request for Washington’s WRC sites regain numbers and scope.

For more information visit the Washington Reading Corps site at:
Washington Reading Corps Program
Washington Reading Corps (WRC)

13. *List of schools/districts receiving assistance:* See OSPI [website](#).

14. *Program Contact Information:*

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