

Washington Reading Corps

1. **Purpose:** The mission of the Washington Reading Corps (WRC) is to improve reading abilities of young students in grades PK–6 across Washington through research-based tutoring of struggling readers and effective collaborations among schools, families, community members, national service, businesses and state partners.
2. **Description of services provided:** In 2016–17, 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–6 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:** Low performing, high poverty schools are selected to receive services from WRC members through a competitive process that evaluates past performance implementing the WRC program, and/or readiness to benefit from the placement of WRC members to support literacy development.
4. **Beneficiaries in School Year (SY) 2016–17:**
 - 89 sites including schools, early learning sites, and community-based organization sites.
 - 4,133 students served, early learning through grade 6.
 - 2,760 community volunteers recruited by WRC members.

Funding in FY17:	State Appropriation:	\$950,000
	Federal Appropriation:	\$0.0
	Other fund sources:	<u>\$0.0</u>
	TOTAL (FY17)	\$950,000

5. **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.
6. **First year funded:** FY 1998–99 was the pilot year for funding.
7. **State and federal funding since inception:**

Biennium	State Funding (Million)	Federal Funding (Million)
1998–99 (Pilot year)	\$8	\$4.8
1999–2001	\$16	\$9.2
2001–2003	\$7.7	\$8.8
2003–2005	\$7.4	\$9.3
2005–2007	\$1.7	\$8.3
2007–2009	\$2.1	\$8.5
2009–2011	\$2.1	\$7.2
2011–2013	\$1.9	\$6.7
2013–2015	\$1.9	\$1.86* *no funding for FY 2013
2015-17	\$1.9	\$1.23

8. **Number of beneficiaries (e.g., schools, students, districts) since inception:**

Fiscal Year	Number of Schools	Number of Districts	Number of AmeriCorps/VISTA Members	Number of Students Served	Number of Community Volunteers
FY 2017	89	39	150	4133	2760
FY 2016	74	42	153	3935	1307
FY 2015	66	47	128	4678	3890
FY 2014	56	24	56	3,746	936
FY 2013	100	48	260	8,063	3,746
FY 2012	92	50	260	6,512	n/a
FY 2011	93	50	238	6,378	n/a
FY 2010	76	45	275	7,108	5,157
FY 2009	106	51	295	7,484	3,335
FY 2008	102	50	295	13,243	7,155
FY 2007	95	50	271	7,305	3,384
FY 2006	96	54	279	7,993	3,859
FY 2005	135	56	288	10,579	8,447
FY 2004	135	56	302	12,181	8,500
FY 2003	171	72	358	14,215	9,007
FY 2002	171	72	374	12,704	8,385
FY 2001	207	91	396	18,529	13,416
FY 2000	207	91	386	26,000	18,000
FY 1999	210	90	380	22,000	11,000

9. **Average and range of funding per beneficiary, 2016–17 school year:** On average, each school received services from one or more AmeriCorps national service members. Schools did not receive additional grant funding. Each site paid a \$3500 fee per member. Funds from the grant, as well as state and local funds, pay for the total cost of \$19,504 per member for placement at a school.

10. Programmatic changes since inception:

- Direct grant funding is no longer provided directly to schools—starting in FY 2006—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.
- 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.

11. Evaluations of program/major findings: Results of external evaluations conducted during the past two program years by different evaluation teams include the following.

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. At

several sites members were provided with Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) strategies from a model designed to support ELL students in a mainstream classroom.

From 2014–15:

- 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 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.

12. Major challenges faced by the program:

- If state funds are not provided, Washington will not leverage the federal funds and the program will end.
- 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 reduced in scope and impact.

- The WRC did regain the grant in program year 2014–15 for a three year grant cycle by the federal funding source. Because the federal funding is very competitive in this area, there is increased need to ensure program performance and quality program delivery. Continuous program improvement must be the focus of the program.

13. Future opportunities:

- Enhance and expand early learning partnerships.
- Encourage and support progress monitoring at all sites to target and improve instruction.
- Continue to expand implementation of the Comprehensive Literacy Plan and support Washington State Standards.
- Work with Educational Service Districts (ESDs) to support members and sites regionally with more technical assistance.
- Increase the number of members to provide the service within low performing, high poverty schools in the state.

14. Statutory and/or budget language:

Budget Proviso: SSB 5883, Section 1511 (6)—\$950,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for FY 2016 and \$950,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for FY 2017 are provided solely for the Washington Reading Corps. The superintendent shall allocate reading corps members to low-performing schools and school districts that are implementing comprehensive, proven, research-based reading programs. Two or more schools may combine their Washington Reading Corps programs.

15. 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 \(WRC\)](#)

16. Program Contact Information:

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