



Alliance for Campus Community Engagement 2026 MLK National Day of Service Grant REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



NOW SEEKING PROPOSALS

CAMPUS GRANTS OF \$1,000 & \$2,000 & \$5,000

DEADLINE: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2025

**PLEASE REVIEW THE ENTIRE RFP BEFORE COMPLETING
THE MLK DAY OF SERVICE GRANT APPLICATION**

Engage NJ is the lead agency on this \$250,000 per year, multi-year grant, aimed at honoring the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Transform Mid-Atlantic, Inc. will be supporting grant technical assistance in 2025-2026. The Alliance for Campus Community Engagement, a network of higher education coalitions across the United States has been awarded this funding through an AmeriCorps Days of Service Grant. The program will engage **over 7,000 students across 11 states** in service projects on or around Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 2026, supporting underserved individuals and communities.

The [Alliance for Campus Community Engagement](#) is a vibrant network of state/regional place-based organizations across the country. This group of organizations is dedicated to supporting the public purposes of higher education and community engagement nationally through a robust and diverse array of programs, initiatives, and events. *See page 7 for Alliance organization contact information.*

Grants for MLK Day of Service activities that are awarded funding through the Partnership Alliance must show adherence to the spirit of service that Dr. King espoused. Throughout his life, Martin Luther King Jr. sought to bring diverse people together to solve problems in an effort to form "the beloved community." He once said that "life's most persistent and urgent question is 'What are you doing for others?'" For volunteer students serving in communities, these awards will increase not only their capacities to see how they truly make a difference in their communities, but also increasing their desire to continue volunteering.

Each member of the Alliance represents a state or region, as follows: Washington Campus Coalition for the Public Good (Washington and Idaho), LEAD California, Engage New Jersey, Community-Engaged Alliance (Indiana), Partners for Campus Community Engagement (New York and Pennsylvania), North Carolina Campus Engagement, Transform Mid-Atlantic (Maryland, Washington D.C., Delaware, and West Virginia). Collectively, we are a coalition of 270+ institutions of higher education.





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SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES

Thursday, October 30, 2025	Request for Proposals / Applications Open
Wednesday, November 5, 2025 4:00PM-5:00PM EST	Grant Info Webinar I (click here to register) <i>Highly recommended for first-time applicants</i>
Tuesday, November 11, 2025 3:30PM-4:30PM EST	Grant Info Webinar II (click here to register) <i>Highly recommended for first-time applicants</i>
Friday, November 14, 2025	Deadline for Campuses to Submit Applications <i>See APPENDIX I for application requirements</i>
Tuesday, November 25, 2025	Campus Grant Awards Announced
Friday, December 12, 2025	Deadline to Complete Criminal History Background Check <i>(required for all Alliance staff and campus leads if not previously completed)</i>
Friday, December 12, 2025	Campus MOUs Signed and Returned to Alliance State/Regional Office
January 5-26, 2026	MLK Campus Service Projects <i>Service projects <u>must</u> occur within this timeframe</i>
Friday, January 30, 2026	Final Financial and Event Report Due
Spring 2026 (TBD)	Shared Learning Call for Campus Grantees

*1 – The designated person overseeing the MLK award as an in-kind match must FIRST begin the Criminal History Background Check, as required by the MLK Day of Service Grant Terms and Conditions, and be cleared BEFORE counting that time under the grant. More information can be found in the Appendices.





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ELIGIBILITY & TYPES OF AWARDS

1. All nonprofit higher education institutions in CA, DC, DE, ID, IN, MD, NC, NJ, NY, PA, VA, WA, and WV are eligible to submit a proposal for an MLK Day of Service grant*². The level of grants to be awarded are:

\$1,000 – based on an estimated 50-100 students serving at the MLK Day of Service event

\$2,000 – based on an estimated 101-200 students at the MLK Day of Service event

\$5,000 – based on an estimate 201 students or more serving at the MLK Day of Service event

Please note that these numbers are used as a guiding metric rather than a strict criterion. Campuses should use past events as a benchmarking tool. First-time MLK Day of Service events should lean toward setting very conservative targets.

2. Applicants must select one or more partner for their event, such as a nonprofit, charity, social service agency, or public school
3. Applicants should demonstrate capacity and experience in implementing successful service projects
4. Applicants must use their state/regional Alliance organization's guidelines regarding the use of their logo as sponsor on your marketing materials and press releases

**² Please note that member campuses in good standing of Alliance networks and that member campuses will receive priority status in the proposal review process. Funds not allocated to member campuses may be awarded to non-member campuses, following a selection process. Please [contact your state/region's Alliance member organization](#) for more details regarding membership and eligibility*





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GRANT MANAGEMENT

Each successful applicant must identify an MLK coordinator for its event and grant, serving as the primary contact between the institution and their state/regional Alliance organization. It is preferable that this MLK coordinator is a full-time salaried individual, with sufficient capacity and access to students to be successful in coordinating the institution's MLK event.

The MLK coordinator is required to provide the following as a condition of the grant:

1. As an in-kind contribution, the coordinator must state their salary and fringe in the grant tracking sheet. Similarly, the coordinator must use a "Alliance MLK Grant Tracking Sheet" to approximate their time spent on event- and grant-coordination. Selected grantees will receive more information, including the tracking sheet, from their state/regional Alliance organization. A sample time-tracking sheet is provided in APPENDIX II for reference.

Please note that institutions will also have the opportunity to track other non-personnel in-kind contributions to their event (those donated to the event such as free transportation, space, food, guest speakers)

2. Successful applicants must provide and adhere to an MLK event budget equal to the amount being awarded - \$1,000; \$2,000; or \$5,000. Spending lines in your budget may include:
 - **Transportation** - including vehicle rental or mileage reimbursement. The standard mileage reimbursement should not exceed the federal mileage rate
 - **Equipment and Supplies** - including print, food, drinks - must include an individual listing of items costing more than \$1,000
 - **Contractors** - including guest speakers and event facilitators
 - **Other** - Please note that you should contact your state/regional Alliance organization to discuss and agree to "Other" budget items AND significant budget amendments, following your selection as a grantee, in advance of these expenses being made.

A sample budget sheet is provided in APPENDIX III for your reference.





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3. Successful applicants must track the following:

- The primary issue(s) as the focus of the MLK event (see next section showing focus areas)
- The number of people serving / volunteering at the MLK event
- The number of community entities partnered with or involved in the event
- The number of people and communities who confirm their commitment to future service activities

4. State/regional Alliance organization and AmeriCorps logos (samples and guidance for which will be provided by state/regional office to successful applicants) must be displayed at all project/event locations and on materials, including marketing materials, relating to the project

5. Receipts must be kept for all grant spending, with unused funds or funds spent without available receipts returned to your state/regional Alliance office upon completion of the MLK event, and no later than January 30, 2026. The completed “Alliance MLK Grant Tracking Sheet” (download a copy) must be sent to your state/regional Alliance office with receipts by this deadline, as well.





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FOCUS OF MLK DAY OF SERVICE EVENTS

Please carefully review **APPENDIX IV** for a list of prohibited activities. Campuse MLK grantees must outline in their **proposal**, and then focus on during the activity, one or more of these **focus areas to**^{*3}:

- Increase economic, environmental, educational, or other forms of fairness
- Support Environmental Stewardship, including supporting communities to become more resilient through measures that conserve land and water, increase sustainable energy use and improve at-risk ecosystems, especially in underserved households and communities
- Engage volunteers from historically underrepresented groups including but not limited to Black, Indigenous, and people of color; LGBTQI+; veterans and military families; persons in rural areas; and persons with disabilities in order to remove barriers to their full and equal participation
- Support underserved individuals and communities
- Engaging in activities to counter the corrosive effects of hate-fueled violence on our democracy and public safety

Please note that the Alliance and AmeriCorps are interested in advancing service events that, collectively as a portfolio, include:

- Geographic diversity
- Rural communities
- Small to large participation events, and
- Faith-based organizations

^{*3} - *Please note that you will not be required to quantify or measure the effects of your activities in one or more of these areas*





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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & APPENDICES

- I. **Questions regarding Grant Compliance and Criminal History Background Checks should be sent to both of the following email addresses:**
 - a. wagner@transformmidatlantic.org (Anthony Wagner, Transform Mid-Atlantic)
 - b. info@engagenj.org (Engage New Jersey Office)

- II. **All other questions should be sent to your Alliance State/Regional Office (click on names for email addresses):**
 - a. [Community-Engaged Alliance](#) (IN): [Dr. Elijah Howe](#)
 - b. [Engage New Jersey](#) (NJ): [Dr. Saul Petersen](#)
 - c. [LEAD California](#) (CA): [Ms. Piper McGinley](#)
 - d. [North Carolina Campus Engagement](#) (NC): [Ms. Leslie Garvin](#)
 - e. [Partners for Campus Community Engagement](#) (PA/NY): [Ms. Danelle Wagner](#)
 - f. [Transform Mid-Atlantic](#) (MD/DC/DE/WV/Northern VA): [Ms. Nicki Fiocco](#)
 - g. [Washington Campus Coalition for the Public Good](#) (WA/ID): [Ms. Jenny Spurgin](#)

- III. **Criminal History Background Check**

All persons receiving wages or salary which they intend to include in their budgets as a match, while planning and coordinating their service event under the duration of the MLK award, **MUST** comply with obtaining clearance checks from the National Sex Offender Registry FBI records, with one AmeriCorps-approved vendor - Truescreen - using accounts created by Engage NJ and sent to successful applicants to begin the online background check process as soon as they are notified of their award grant.

Until these clearances are received from the vendors in the form of redacted certifications, the above-mentioned persons cannot begin to count your time on any award or service event activities as in-kind contributions. The turnaround time for these clearances is anywhere from 1 day to three weeks, depending on the complexity of the person's history.





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- In the event that a background check is not cleared, awardees can proceed with one or both of the following steps, which will add a brief delay to commencement of MLK planning:
Submit an appeal form to the vendor to request a review of the background record in question. Sometimes there are mistakes reported or made that are responsible for non-clearance.

Amongst collaborators: simply choose another person to assume these responsibilities, and begin the aforementioned required background checks. This person will still have to wait to receive their clearances from the same approved vendor (mentioned above) before they begin counting time as in-kind contribution as well as start activities funded by the MLK award.
- If, however, that person* has already undergone a CHBC after 1/23/07 without a change in employer, and there is a valid record of it, the person(s) are no longer required to conduct a new background check, but rather ensure that the background check includes a clearance document for both the FBI and National Sex Offender Registry List check. In this situation, Engage NJ/Transform Mid-Atlantic will require validation via a copy of that clearance before starting time-tracked MLK activities.
- Successful applicants must provide a copy of their certification via email to wagner@transformmidatlantic.org and info@engagenj.org, as well as their state/regional office contact.

*Note: These individuals may find it more convenient to conduct a new background ground check through Engage NJ/Transform Mid-Atlantic's vendor accounts - that is acceptable.





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APPENDIX I: Application Requirements

Below is information that you will be requested to provide when completing the grant application.

Applicant Information

- Alliance organization affiliation
- Campus name & address
- Project Coordinator name, title, email address, & phone number
- Grant amount requested (up to \$5,000)

Eligibility (affirmative responses to these questions is required to be considered for a grant)

- Do you agree to undergo a criminal history background check by December 12, 2025?
- Do you agree to provide your total salary and fringe, and track your time on the grant as an in-kind contribution using a time-tracking sheet ([click here](#) and toggle to *Report - In-Kind Salary and Time* tab to view tracker - please note this spreadsheet includes various tabs, including one with all questions included on this application, the budget sheet, and reporting sheets) and return this information by January 30, 2026?
- Do you agree to utilize the funds as stated in your application and provide ALL receipts to account for approved spending by January 30, 2026?
- Do you agree to poll all participants and partners as to their verbal commitment to future service events?

Project Budget

- Upload a completed budget sheet - [click here to access template](#)

Narrative

- Please describe the event you are planning and how the funding will be used.
- Please give a brief statement of your organization's past experience or current capacity to successfully plan your MLK Day of Service activities.
- Please give the total number of people you anticipate serving and explain how you are arriving at that target number.
- Please explain who you intend to partner with for this/these event(s), or how you intend to solicit partner(s).

(continue to next page)





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Summary

- Project geographic location type (Urban, Rural, or Suburban)
- The primary issue(s) as the focus of the MLK event. You must choose one or more issue listed in the grant RFP.
- The number of people you anticipate serving at the MLK event.
- The number of community partners anticipated at the event.

Signature & Date

- Applicant signature
- Date





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APPENDIX II: Sample Time-Tracking Sheet

SAMPLE				
Tracking Time in Hours (approx)	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY '25
Submitting Application				
Planning Event	10.00	10.00	20.00	
Marketing Event		20.00	20.00	
Event Week Activity				40.00
Reporting on Event				5.00
Other				
Subtotal	10.00	30.00	40.00	45.00
TOTAL				125.00





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APPENDIX III: Sample Budget

SAMPLE BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE		DESCRIPTION
Transportation - including vehicle rental or mileage reimbursement. The standard mileage reimbursement should not exceed the federal mileage rate	\$1,000	\$1,000 in van rental costs to transport students to the event
Equipment and Supplies - including print, food, drinks - must include an individual listing of items costing more than \$1,000	\$500	\$480 total cost of refreshments ; \$20 printing
Contractors - including guest speakers and event facilitators	\$500	\$500 speaker honorarium
Other - Please Note that you should contact your state or regional entity to discuss and agree "other" budget items AND significant budget amendments, following your selection as a grantee, in advance of these expenses being made	\$0	
TOTAL	\$2,000	





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APPENDIX IV: AmeriCorps Days of Service Grant Prohibited Activities

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or AmeriCorps, staff may not engage in the following activities (see 45 CFR § 2520.65):

1. Attempting to influence legislation;
2. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
3. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
4. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
5. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
6. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
7. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
8. Providing a direct benefit to—
 - a. business organized for profit;
 - b. A labor union;
 - c. A partisan political organization;
 - d. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
 - e. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph above, unless AmeriCorps assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
9. Conducting a voter registration drive or using AmeriCorps funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
10. Any activity prohibited by applicable Executive Order/Memorandum;
11. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
12. Such other activities as AmeriCorps may prohibit.

----- END OF DOCUMENT -----

