



UNIVERSITY OF
OREGON



AmeriCorps

RESOURCE ASSISTANCE FOR RURAL ENVIRONMENTS (RARE) AMERICORPS PROGRAM

Host Organization Opportunity Description

WHAT A RARE CAN DO FOR YOU

You might be surprised what one of our amazing RARE AmeriCorps members can accomplish in an 11-month term of service! Whether it is developing a parks and recreation master plan; conducting critical community outreach and engagement; planning a large event or fundraiser; or, helping ignite the local economy – our members help create catalytic change in the communities we serve. We “get things done” for rural Oregon!

RARE members are placed to increase the capacity of rural communities to improve their economic, social, and environmental conditions. They assist communities in the development and implementation of projects for achieving a sustainable natural resource base and improving rural economic conditions. Most RARE AmeriCorps projects fall into three broad categories:

- [Community and Economic Development](#)
- [Environmental and Sustainability Planning](#)
- [Food Systems](#)

THE BENEFIT TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Capacity matters in rural Oregon and that’s where RARE comes to the table! The benefits of partnering with the RARE AmeriCorps Program include, but are not limited to:

- 11 months/1700 hours of service from a graduate-level RARE member
- Quarterly trainings for member and supervisor in Community Development, Grant Writing, Communication, Land Use, Economic Development, Facilitation, Leadership, Etc.
- Tools, resources, and expertise available to all members via the University of Oregon
- Member and Host Organization support from RARE staff
- Project support and topically focused expertise from the Institute for Policy Research and Engagement
- Member and Host Organization support from our statewide partners: [Oregon Food Bank](#), [Oregon Main Street Program](#), [Travel Oregon](#), [Energy Trust of Oregon](#), [The Ford Family Foundation](#), the [Oregon Department of Emergency Management](#), [Sustainable Northwest](#), [Lake County Resources Initiative](#), [Geos Institute](#), and [Black Rural Network](#).

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

We know the grit and spirit found in rural Oregon. We're excited to work with rural organizations who have identified capacity-building projects that address the needs of underserved communities and can be completed or significantly improved in 11 months.

What counts as rural?

Just as no one description fits all of Oregon's rural communities, no one definition of rural fits for all RARE projects. We welcome applications from rural and remote communities, like Lakeview, Enterprise, and Gold Beach, and we welcome applications from rural placements closer to urban centers, like Coburg, Independence, and Scappoose. We have placed members in every county in the state. The unifying factors in our placements are the need for added capacity and the focus on improving livelihoods for rural Oregonians.

When selecting RARE host organizations, we are looking for **impactful projects and strong service-learning opportunities**. We know the key to a successful RARE placement is a strong support system in the community. **RARE AmeriCorps Host Organizations will identify a specific person(s) within the organization to serve as supervisor and mentor to the member.** RARE supervisors are expected to assist the member in developing a work plan and provide guidance throughout the term of service. Supervisors also benefit from RARE trainings and support from UO faculty and researchers.

Organizations eligible to host a RARE member include public agencies (including city, county, and regional governments); special districts (such as soil and water conservation districts, park, and transportation districts); and not-for-profit organizations. Types of organizations include watershed councils, housing authorities, and economic development districts.

Host Organization Application Evaluation Criteria

We consider each of the following as part of the application evaluation process:

- **Project Quality:** Projects that are a good fit for RARE have the following characteristics:
 - Scope: Appropriately scoped to be completed within an 11-month RARE term of service (Sep. - Jul.)
 - Long-Term Impact: Designed to have sustained impact into the future after a RARE member is no longer available to champion the project
 - Capacity-Building: Designed to increase the capacity of the community by emphasizing the transfer of skills to community members and the creation of policies, procedures, plans, and other systems that enable sustained impact
- **Supervisor Readiness:** Supervisors that are a good fit for RARE have the following characteristics:
 - Mentorship: Committed to mentoring, rather than simply managing, the member to enhance the member's professional development experience
 - Member Service-Learning: Committed to service learning - the idea that the member should both be providing time, capacity, and expertise to the community while also growing professionally through experimentation and reflection

- Supervisor Growth & Networking: Motivated to engage with RARE trainings and other RARE Host Organizations to further the supervisor's own network and professional development
- **Community Support & Capacity:** Demonstrated buy-in and capacity to support projects from community partners who have the most power in facilitating or obstructing project progress.
- **Commitment to Social Justice:** Demonstrated interest and receptiveness to:
 - Recognizing Issues: Exploring past and current policies and attitudes that have negatively impacted community members because of an identity they may have (race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc.)
 - Taking Action: Working to change policies and attitudes so that marginalized groups are supported and begin to achieve similar outcomes as those who have experienced less discrimination
- **Rural:** Projects primarily benefit rural, capacity-strapped communities that, without external support, would not have the ability to take on this work.
- **Ability to match:** The skills and interests of RARE members change each year (based on who applies to serve in the program). Therefore, part of our community selection process each year considers alignment between our host organizations' specific needs for the upcoming service year and our applicants' skills, abilities, and interests.

We ask our host organizations to provide members with, at minimum:

- A phone or reimbursement for use of personal cell phone
- Transportation or reimbursement for use of personal vehicle (if significant travel required)
- A workstation in a building with standard items (computer, desk, chair, access to office supplies and printer, etc.)

FISCAL CONTRIBUTION

RARE is funded in part by AmeriCorps and in part by match-funding from our host organizations.

2024-25 Community Match: \$26,000

Term of service:

Service Year 31: September 2024 – July 2025

The deadline to apply is 5pm PDT on Monday, April 1st

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

Visit our [host organization FAQ page](#) or contact our Program Director, Titus Tomlinson at 541-513-9989 or titust@uoregon.edu

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The RARE AmeriCorps Program is committed to an ongoing learning process around privilege, power, inequality, and systems of oppression. RARE is working towards making our program welcoming to, inclusive of, accessible to, and supportive of communities who are under-represented as planners and systems thinkers in Oregon, including women, Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC), LGBTQIA+ individuals, low-income individuals, and immigrants.