



*Targeted Priority  
Notice of Funding Opportunity*

**Philip D. Murphy, Governor**

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Executive Director**

**New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service**

**For Program Year 2018/2019**

**Application Due Date: April 10, 2018**

**NEW JERSEY COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY  
SERVICE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

**P.O. Box 456  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-633-9627**

**Funding provided by the Corporation on National and Community**

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## **SECTION 1: NEW JERSEY COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE GRANT INFORMATION AND TIMELINE**

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### **DESCRIPTION OF THE GRANT PROGRAM**

AmeriCorps is a national service network that provides full- and part-time opportunities for participants, called members, to serve their communities and build the capacity of organizations to meet local needs. The New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service, New Jersey Department of State, seeks to fund local initiatives and utilize the AmeriCorps model to increase civic engagement and improve New Jersey's communities by deploying AmeriCorps members to provide services within the Targeted Priority Areas of:

1. Healthy Futures – reducing and/or preventing prescription drug and opioid abuse
  - Child Wellness – in one or more of the following areas:
  - Reducing and/or Preventing child abuse
  - Improving outcomes for child victims of abuse
2. Improving outcomes for foster youth, including youth aging out of foster care
3. Working to improve or support improvement of one or more of the following infrastructure categories: Aviation, Bridges, Dams, Hazardous Waste, Inland Waterways, Levees, Ports, Public Parks, Rail, Roads, Schools, Solid Waste, Transit, and Wastewater.

Programs would develop their Targeted Priority programs in alignment with one or more of the CNCS focus areas. These focus areas are:

- Disaster Services
- Economic Opportunity
- Education, including STEM
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Futures
- Veterans and Military Families

A full description of the focus areas is contained in Section II of this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Through this AmeriCorps Targeted Priority Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), the New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service (hereinafter, the Commission) seeks submission of applications that demonstrate that they will engage AmeriCorps members in an evidence-informed and evidence-based approach to providing a service intervention that will result in intended solutions to community problems (e.g., based on proposed program's performance and evaluation data or research demonstrating the effectiveness of a similar intervention). Applicants will be awarded points for providing evidence that their proposal intervention will lead to the outcomes identified in the theory of change (logic model). Applicants shall provide evidence that the proposed intervention is effective for the proposed population and community challenge.

**The AmeriCorps Targeted Priority program is federally funded and requires a local combination of significant cash and in-kind match.**

#### **A. Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding**

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved

national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that members can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans. The Education Award can be used for a period of up to seven (7) years following successful completion of a term of service.

Single state applicants from New Jersey will first submit directly to the NJ Commission on National and Community Service on eGrants. The application will be reviewed and scored among other New Jersey applicants. Selected applications which score 75 points or above will then compete with other state level applicants nationally through the CNCS process. Targeted Priority applications must be selected at both the state and national level in order to receive funding for the program year.

Applicants planning to operate in more than one state must apply directly to CNCS as a National Direct.

**In reading this NOFO, applicants must follow the NJ Commission’s due dates first. Section I of this NOFO contains all of the NJ Commission specific requirements. Section II will contain all of the CNCS specific requirements.**

**The following should be read in order to develop a complete application:**

Section I: NJ Commission Grant Information and Timeline

Section II: CNCS Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Section III: Mandatory Supplemental Guidance

Section IV: CNCS Application Instructions (CNCS will be releasing these in mid-October. The NJ Commission will post on its website upon release. Please refer back around the third week of October at [http://www.nj.gov/state/programs/dos\\_program\\_community\\_service\\_grant\\_opp.html](http://www.nj.gov/state/programs/dos_program_community_service_grant_opp.html) ).

Section V: 2018 Performance Measures

**B. Timeline:**

Thursday, February 22	NOFO Technical Assistance Session, 10:00 a.m – 1:00 p.m. Passaic County Community College Public Safety Academy, 300 Oldham Road, Wayne, NJ
Friday, February 23	NOFO Technical Assistance Session, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Center For Family Services, 500 Pine Street, Camden, NJ 08103
Wednesday, February 28	NOFO Technical Assistance Session, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Lawrence Library, 2751 Brunswick Pike, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
Thursday, March 22	Notice of Intent to Apply due to NJ Commission
Tuesday, April 10	Applications due to NJ Commission on eGrants
Thursday, April 12	Hard copies of applications due to NJ Commission
Wednesday, April 25	Approximate notification of state level selection by NJ Commission
Wednesday, May 2	NJ Commission due date for Targeted Priority package submission to CNCS
Monday, June 25	CNCS notifies applicants selected for funding

NOTE: Attendance at one of the three NOFO Technical Assistance Sessions is required in order to submit an application.

## **AWARD INFORMATION**

The Corporation for National and Community Service and the NJ Commission are offering the opportunity to compete for a three-year cycle of Targeted Priority AmeriCorps programs. **Awards from this Targeted Priority NOFO will implement the first year of the program which runs from September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2019.**

### **Types of Award**

The NJ Commission will accept applications for Cost-Reimbursement Grants including Traditional and Professional Corps. The NJ Commission will also accept Fixed Amount Grants for Full-time, Education Award Only, or Professional Corps. Please refer to Section II CNCS NOFO for a fuller description of the Grant Types and Sub-Types.

### **Formula Grants**

The New Jersey Commission anticipates conducting a Formula competition process in the Spring, 2018. Applications submitted for this Targeted Priority funding NOFO will automatically be considered for funding during the Formula competition. If selected for funding in both competitions, the applicant will only be funded under the Targeted Priority application and forego the Formula grant.

### **Funding Period**

For New or Re-competing applications, this is Year 1 of 3 of a multi-year grant period covering the following funding periods:

Year 1 September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2019

Year 2 September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020

Year 3 September 1, 2020 to August 31, 2021

## **ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY**

Eligibility is open to public or private non-profit organizations, including community organizations and faith-based organizations; Local Education Agencies (LEAs) including charter schools; institutions of higher education; government entities within the state (e.g., cities/municipalities, counties, state departments); labor organizations; and partnerships or consortia consisting of the aforementioned. Organizations that have been convicted of a Federal crime are disqualified from receiving the assistance described in this NOFO. Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Section 501 ©(4), that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply.

## **STATUTORY/REGULATORY SOURCE AND FUNDING**

The applicant's project must be designed and implemented in conformance with all applicable state and federal regulations. In addition to the program requirements outlined in this NOFO, applicants should refer to the new AmeriCorps regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520-2550 ([www.americorps.gov/about/ac/](http://www.americorps.gov/about/ac/) and [www.americorps\\_rule\\_register.pdf](#))

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Three General Technical Assistance Workshops will be held as listed in the Timelines section, p. 4.

**Only applications submitted by agencies that attend one of the general technical assistance workshops listed in the timelines section will be accepted. Attendees must stay to the end of the session in order to be considered as having fulfilled this requirement.**

Pre-registration is requested by calling 609-633-9627 or via e-mail at [Samirah.Abdul-Fattah@sos.nj.gov](mailto:Samirah.Abdul-Fattah@sos.nj.gov). Registrants requiring special accommodations for the Technical Assistance Workshops should identify their needs at the time of registration.

## **APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

### **1. Notice of Intent to Apply**

Submission of a Notice of Intent to Apply is requested and is due **Thursday, March 22, 2018**. Please send an e-mail with your Notice of Intent to [Ivette.Ramos@sos.nj.gov](mailto:Ivette.Ramos@sos.nj.gov). Include in the e-mail:

- Organization Name
- Address
- Contact Name
- E-mail address
- Phone Number
- Focus area your organization plans to address
- Applying as New and Regular Cost Reimbursement or Fixed Amount.

The New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service, Department of State operates this grant program in strict conformance with procedures designed to ensure accountability and integrity in the use of public funds and, therefore, *will not accept late applications*. The responsibility for a timely submission resides with the applicant.

**Applications must be submitted electronically on eGrants NO LATER THAN 4:00 PM ON Tuesday, April 10, 2018.**

Applications must be submitted to the corresponding NJ Commission Prime application on eGrants. Once the applicant has verified and submitted their application on eGrants, they must print out the full application and mail four (4) copies to the Commission. To print out the application go to the review link and print out the following three sections:

- Application for Federal Assistance
- Budget
- Budget Narrative

Hard copies of the application should arrive at the Commission office by **Thursday, April 12, 2018**. Please send application copies to the address below:

NJ Commission on National and Community  
Service – AmeriCorps  
NJ Department of State  
PO Box 456, 4th floor  
33 West State Street  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
ATTN: Ivette Del Rio Ramos

## **Submission of Additional Documents:**

All documents that are requested in the CNCS NOFO need to be sent to the NJ Commission and not to CNCS. The NJ Commission will forward additional documents to CNCS upon selection of the application at the NJ level. Please see the CNCS NOFO for all of the required additional documents.

Additional Documents may be e-mailed to [Ivette.Ramos@sos.nj.gov](mailto:Ivette.Ramos@sos.nj.gov) with the following subject line: [Legal Applicant Name]– [Application ID number]. Emails should include the following information:

- the legal applicant name and its point of contact information
- the application ID number
- a list of documents that should be attached to the email
- individually saved files that are clearly labeled
- files that include the legal applicant name and application ID number within the body of each document.

Do not submit other items not requested in this *Notice* or Application Instructions. The NJ Commission will not review or return them.

## **ADDITIONAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS OR BENEFITS**

The NJ Commission would like to highlight the following additional requirements and benefits of AmeriCorps.

### **Terms of Service**

Programs may engage members full-time or less than full-time. Full-time members must serve at least 1700 hours during a period of not less than nine months and not more than one year. Half-time members must serve at least 900 hours during a period of one year as indicated in the approved budget. No member can serve less than 300 hours during a one-year period. Programs may propose at least 300 hours for minimum-time, at least 450 hours for quarter-time, and at least 675 hours for reduced half-time members based on the program design. However, within a program, we require all reduced half-time, quarter-time, and minimum-time members to serve the same number of hours. If any reduced part-time program has a need for greater flexibility, consideration will be given to a proposal for two different sets of hours within the same program if adequately justified.

### **Living Allowance**

The NJ Commission requires that all AmeriCorps members receive a living allowance regardless of the federal regulation which does not require a living allowance for less than full-time members. Full-time members must receive the minimum stipend amount listed in the chart. Recommended levels for less than full-time members are listed below:

Type of Member Position	Min. # of Hours	MSY	Min. Total Living Allowance	Max. Living Allowance
Full Time	1700	1.000	\$13,732	\$27,464
Half Time	900	0.500	\$ 7,270	\$14,539
Reduced HT	675	0.381	\$ 5,452	\$10,905
Quarter Time	450	0.265	\$ 3,635	\$7,270
Minimum Time	300	0.212	\$ 2,423	\$4,874

A living allowance is not considered a wage. **In New Jersey, AmeriCorps members are not eligible for unemployment insurance, family leave or disability.**

### **Child Care**

The Corporation directly funds child care for any full-time member who is eligible for and needs such assistance to participate in the program. They pay 100% of the allowance as defined by payment rates of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). They can provide technical assistance to a program and can help a grantee determine member eligibility, provider eligibility, and child care allowance. Direct payments will be made to the child care providers. Therefore, do not include child care assistance in your AmeriCorps budget. The Corporation bases member eligibility for child care on need. Members' needs must be consistent with the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990:

- total family income of members must be less than 75% of the state median income, as defined by the state under CCDBG guidelines;
- members must reside with and be a parent or guardian of a child under the age of 13.

When a grantee accepts members in their program that are receiving and continue to receive child care assistance from other sources such as a parent or guardian, they are ineligible for child care from your program. On the other hand, if members become ineligible for assistance because of their enrollment in the grantee's program, or the member certifies that he or she needs child care to participate in the program, the grantee must provide child care.

### **Health Insurance**

Grantees must provide full-time members with health insurance at the time of acceptance into the program if the member is not otherwise covered by a health insurance policy. If a member who previously had coverage loses it through no deliberate act of his or her own, such as parental or spousal job loss, the grantee must provide the member with basic health insurance that meets Corporation requirements.

In general, the Corporation does not pay the costs of health benefits for half-time members unless they serve full-time for a sustained period of time. For example, members may receive benefits when they serve in a summer program for thirty-five hours per week with other members who receive health benefits.

### **Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities**

Increasing the participation of individuals with disabilities in national and community service programs is a key interest of the Corporation. All AmeriCorps programs are required to actively reach out to people with disabilities for inclusion in AmeriCorps service.

## **Participation in National Days of Service**

As part of the National Service Network, there are a number of opportunities for grantees to take part in national service days. The Corporation and Commission expect all national service programs, including AmeriCorps programs, to participate in one or more days of service, including the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday and AmeriCorps Week. In addition, the Corporation and Commission expect programs with AmeriCorps members to participate in other national service activities such as common opening ceremonies (including the administration of an oath or affirmation), orientations, and training.

## **STATE COMMISSION TRAINING AND EVENTS**

### **Program Manager Trainings and Meetings**

All program managers **must** attend a three day orientation known as Starting Strong held in the last week or so in July, 2018, and any other training (e.g., site supervisor training) developed for project directors during the contract period. Project directors are also required to participate in all monthly conference calls or meetings.

In constructing the budget, figure in the cost for transportation, meals, and possible overnight accommodations related to all Corporation or Commission training sessions.

### **Statewide Corpsmember Trainings and Events**

All corpsmembers and project directors are required to attend the following trainings/events:

- AmeriCorps Launch – Fall 2018
- End-of-the-Year Training – Spring 2019
- Other statewide training such as Career Day or Disaster Preparedness.

In constructing the budget, figure in the cost of transportation to all of the training sessions.

## **EVALUATION OF NEW AND RECOMPETING APPLICATIONS**

### **State-level Review Process**

All applications for AmeriCorps Targeted Priority grants will be reviewed first through the Commission.

In year one, the application is evaluated and rated by a panel of three readers. The evaluation panel consists of one reader from the originating office, one from another office within the NJ Department of State, and one reader external to the NJ Department of State who is knowledgeable in the content area. Readers of grant applications for the NJ Department of State certify that no conflict of interest exists that would create an undue advantage or disadvantage for any applicant in the application evaluation and scoring process.

Applications are evaluated on the basis of quality, comprehensiveness, completeness, accuracy and appropriateness of response to the guidelines and requirements of the governing NOFO. Applicants may request information about their evaluation scores by writing to the NJ Commission on National and Community Service. The Commission reserves the right to withdraw from consideration any application that does not include each and every component to be evaluated and scored in the evaluation process.

Applications must receive a score of at least 75 points out of 100 and include all required components to be eligible for funding. Eligible applications are ranked and funded in descending order, from highest to lowest score, until available funds have been used. In the event of a tied

score at or above the NJ Department of State's cutoff score of 75, the NJ Department of State will select the applicant with the highest combined score for the Program Design section.

**Federal-level Review Process**

The Federal-level Review Process is described in the Section II CNCS NOFO.

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## SECTION II: CNCS NOTICE OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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**Federal Agency Name:** Corporation for National and Community Service  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** 2018 AmeriCorps State and National Grants – Targeted Priority  
**Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement  
**CFDA Number:** 94.006

Disclosure: Publication of this Announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity (*Notice*) does not obligate the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to award any specific number of grants or to obligate any particular amount of funding. The 2018 President’s Budget proposed the elimination of CNCS. The actual level and timing of grant funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

### Important Dates

Please refer to the [NJ Commission timelines in Section I](#) for all relevant due dates for New Jersey single-state applicants.

### A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

#### 1. Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding

The mission of CNCS is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic participation through service and volunteering. Through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Volunteer Generation Fund, CNCS has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations (see *Eligible Applicants* section) proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions/practices to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that members can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

#### CNCS Focus Areas

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. In order to carry out Congress’ intent and to maximize the impact of investment in national service, CNCS has the following focus areas:

##### Disaster Services

Grant activities will provide support to increase the preparedness of individuals for disasters, improve individuals’ readiness to respond to disasters, help individuals recover from disasters, and/or help individuals mitigate disasters. Grantees also have the ability to respond to national disasters under CNCS cooperative agreements and FEMA mission assignments.

##### Economic Opportunity

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people; help economically disadvantaged people, to have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy; transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing; and/or have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed.

##### Education

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children; improved school readiness for economically disadvantaged young children; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or support economically disadvantaged students prepare for success in post-secondary educational institutions.

### Environmental Stewardship

Grants will support responsible stewardship of the environment, while preparing communities for challenging circumstances and helping Americans respond to and recover from disruptive life events: programs that conserve natural habitats; protect clean air and water; maintain public lands; support wildland fire mitigation; cultivate individual and community self-sufficiency; provide reforestation services after floods or fires; and more. AmeriCorps programs support activities, such as conservation and fire corps, which may also help veterans and others learn new job skills through conservation service.

### Healthy Futures

Grants will provide support for activities that will improve access to primary and preventive health care for communities served by CNCS-supported programs; increase seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible; and/or increase physical activity and improve nutrition in youth with the purpose of reducing childhood obesity.

### Veterans and Military Families

Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength; increase the number of veterans, wounded warriors, military service members, and their families served by CNCS-supported programs; and/or increase the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through CNCS-supported programs.

## 2. Funding Priorities

CNCS seeks to prioritize the investment of national service resources in the following areas:

- Healthy Futures – reducing and/or preventing prescription drug and opioid abuse
- Child Wellness – in one or more of the following areas:
  - Reducing and/or Preventing child abuse
  - Improving outcomes for child victims of abuse
  - Improving outcomes for foster youth, including youth aging out of foster care
- Working to improve or support improvement of one or more of the following infrastructure categories: Aviation, Bridges, Dams, Hazardous Waste, Inland Waterways, Levees, Ports, Public Parks, Rail, Roads, Schools, Solid Waste, Transit, and Wastewater.

In order to receive priority consideration for submitting an application within a *Notice* priority(ies), applicants must demonstrate that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes and must include a high quality program design. Responses that propose programs for the purpose of receiving priority consideration are not guaranteed funding.

**Applications that do not fall within these funding priorities are considered noncompliant and will not be reviewed.**

## 3. Performance Measures

All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output and outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. This may be a National Performance Measure or an applicant-determined measure. Additional performance measures, including output-only National Performance Measures, may also be included if desired; however, all performance measures must be consistent with the program's Theory of Change and represent significant program activities. CNCS does not expect applicants to select performance measures to correspond to each and every potential member activity or community impact. CNCS values the quality of performance measures over the quantity of performance measures.

CNCS expects applicants to use National Performance Measures as part of their comprehensive performance measurement strategy if the National Performance Measures are part of the applicant's theory of change. Applicants should use both performance and evaluation data to learn from their work as well as make tactical and strategic adjustments to achieve their goals. For more information, please refer to the National Performance Measure Instructions [<http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities>].

As described in the Application Instructions, applicants must include all information about their proposed performances measure in the Performance Measure section of the applications in CNCS's web-based grants management system (the system). All definitions and data collection requirements described in the National Performance Measure Instructions must be included in the text of the performance measures themselves, and it must be evident in the performance measure text that all definitions and requirements outlined in the National Performance Measures Instructions are met. Providing performance measures information elsewhere in the narrative cannot be in lieu of providing full information in the Performance Measures section of the application in CNCS's web-based grant management system.

In the application narrative, applicants should discuss their rationale for setting output and outcome targets for their performance measures. Re-competing applicants proposing to significantly increase or decrease output or outcome targets from their previous grant should provide a justification for this change.

#### **4. Program Authority**

CNCS's legal authority to award these grants is found in the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, (NCSA) (42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.)

### **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

#### **1. Estimated Available Funds**

CNCS expects a highly competitive AmeriCorps grant competition. CNCS reserves the right to prioritize providing funding to existing awards over making new awards. The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

#### **2. Estimated Award Amount**

Grant awards have two components: operating funds and AmeriCorps member positions. Grant award amounts vary – both in the level of operating funds and in the type and amount of AmeriCorps member positions – as determined by the scope of the projects.

#### **3. Project and Award Period**

The project period is generally one year, with a start date proposed by the applicant.. The grant award covers a three-year project period unless otherwise specified. In most cases, the application is submitted with a one-year budget. Continuation funding for subsequent years is not guaranteed and shall be dependent upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance.

The project start date may not occur prior to the date CNCS awards the grant. AmeriCorps members may not enroll prior to the start date of the award. AmeriCorps members may not begin service prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period as designated in the grant award. A program may not certify any hours a member performs prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period.

#### **4. Type of Award**

a. AmeriCorps Operating Grants: CNCS may award a Cost Reimbursement or a Fixed Amount grant to any successful applicant, but the availability of a Full-Time Fixed Amount grant is limited to certain applicants. See the *Eligible Applicants* section and the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for more information. CNCS will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year.

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement			Fixed Amount		
Available Subtypes	Traditional	Professional Corps		Full-time	Education Award Program (EAP)	Professional Corps
Maximum Cost per MSY	\$14,932	\$1,000*		\$13,430	\$800	\$1,000*
Type of Slots in the National Service Trust	All	All		Full-time or Less than Full-time serving in a full-time capacity	All	Full-time only
Budget Submission Required	Yes			No		Yes, if requesting operating funds
Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSYs	No			Yes		
Special Requirements	N/A	Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in budget.		N/A		Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in budget.
Financial Reporting Requirements	Yes	Yes; Living allowance or salary paid to members may not be counted toward the match requirements		No		
Available to new Applicants	Yes			No	Yes	

\*CNCS requires Professional Corps programs to cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non CNCS resources. CNCS will only consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate significant organizational financial need and substantial challenges to raising non-CNCS resources based on the materials reviewed by the Office of Grant Management.

## C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### 1. Eligible Applicants

The following Non-Federal entities (as defined in 2 CFR §200.69) who have DUNS numbers and are registered in System for Award Management (SAM) are eligible to apply:

- Indian Tribes (2 CFR §200.54)
- Institutions of higher education (2 CFR §200.54)
- Local governments (2 CFR §200.64)
- Nonprofit organizations (2 CFR §200.70)
- States (2 CFR §200.90)

### New Applicants

CNCS encourages organizations that have not received prior funding from CNCS to apply. The general practice is to award no more than 50 member positions (slots) to organizations receiving an AmeriCorps grant for the first time.

New applicants are eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement and Education Award Program (EAP) grants but are not eligible to apply for Full-Time Fixed Amount grants. Existing subgrantees/operating sites of Fixed Amount and Cost Reimbursement grantees who can demonstrate a successful history and current capacity to manage a Fixed Amount grant are considered to have AmeriCorps experience and therefore can apply for Fixed Amount grants. See Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for more information.

### Types of Applicants

#### State and Territory Service Commissions (for Single-State Applicants)

Organizations that propose to operate in only one state must apply through the Governor-appointed State or Territory Commissions. Each commission administers its own selection process and submits the applications it selects to compete for funding directly to CNCS. Single-State applicants must contact their Commissions to learn about their state or territory processes and deadlines which may be significantly earlier than the CNCS deadlines and may have additional requirements. The list of Commissions can be found here: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions>. A Single-State application from a State or Territory with a Commission that is submitted directly to CNCS by the applicant rather than the Commission will be considered noncompliant and will not be reviewed. See the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for descriptions of National Direct and Single-State applicants.

#### National Direct Applicants<sup>1</sup>

*Multi-State:* Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one State or Territory apply directly to CNCS.

*States and Territories without Commissions:* Applicants in South Dakota, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands apply directly to CNCS because this State and these Territories do not have an established Commission.

*Federally-recognized Indian Tribes:* Applicants that are Indian Tribes apply directly to CNCS. In addition to Indian Tribes as defined in 2 CFR §200.54, tribal organizations controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by Indian Tribes are also eligible to apply. An entity applying on behalf of a federally-recognized tribe or multiple specific federally-recognized tribes must submit a sanctioning resolution, applicable for the entirety of the period of performance that the applicant is applying for, adopted by the Tribal Council (or comparable tribal governing body) of each Indian Tribe. The resolution(s) must identify the entity by name as a tribal organization and indicate whether it is controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by an Indian Tribe(s). It must authorize the entity to be the legal applicant and act on behalf of and include the Indian Tribe(s) in a CNCS application for the purpose of conducting the activities and providing the services described in the application. A current resolution will not suffice to meet this requirement unless the resolution applies for the entire period of performance of the award, i.e., current resolutions that are applicable to a previous AmeriCorps award at the time of the application submission, but expire during the prospective period of performance of a new award, do not meet this requirement.

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<sup>1</sup> Although National Direct applicants do not have to apply to Commissions, there are substantial requirements to coordinate with the Commissions for states in which national service programs will operate. See the *Coordination among State Commission & National Direct Applicants* section for information on these important requirements.

## 2. Threshold Issues

Applications should reflect that they meet the following threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying.

- Professional Corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a Professional Corps by CNCS must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.
- Applications for a Full-Time Fixed Amount grant must reflect that only full-time or less than full-time positions serving in a full-time capacity.
- Applications for the Governor and Mayor Initiative must clearly reflect that they are from one Governor, one or more Mayors, and a minimum of two nonprofits.
- If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: 45 CFR §2522.910-.940), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.

## 3. Other Requirements

Under section 132A(b) of the NCSA, organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this *Notice*.

Note that under section 745 of Title VII, Division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, if CNCS is aware that any corporation has any unpaid Federal tax liability which—

- has been assessed,
- for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and
- that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, that corporation is not eligible for an award under this Notice.<sup>2</sup> A similar restriction may be enacted with the appropriation which will fund awards under this *Notice*. However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has made a determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interest of the federal government

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(4) that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for CNCS funding.

## D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

This *Notice* should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520–2550, the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, Application Instructions, and the National Performance Measure Instructions which are incorporated by reference. These documents can be found at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities>. The full Regulations are available online at [www.ecfr.gov](http://www.ecfr.gov).

### 1. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants should refer to [CNCS Funding Opportunities](#) to obtain the necessary information to apply. Applicants can also send an email to [americorpsgrants@cns.gov](mailto:americorpsgrants@cns.gov) or call (202) 606-7508 for a printed copy of the application materials. The TTY (Text Telephone) number is (800) 833-3722.

### 2. Content and Form of Application Submission

#### a. Application Content

In CNCS's web-based management system, applicants will enter the following components of a complete application:

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: This is automatically generated when applicants complete the data elements in the system
- Narratives
  - Executive Summary
  - Program Design
  - Organizational Capability

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<sup>2</sup> However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has made a determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the federal government.

- Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
- Evaluation Plan (if applicable)
- Logic Model
- Standard Form 424 Budget
- Performance Measures
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certification

#### **b. Page Limits**

There are three page limits that must be adhered to: Narrative, Logic Model, and Learning Memo (if re-competing).

##### Narrative

Applications must not exceed 12 pages for the Narratives or 15 pages for Rural Intermediaries and Multi-State applications with more than five operating sites. CNCS will use the number of locations in the “multi-state operating sites” field in CNCS’s web-based management system to determine whether a multi-site application has more than five operating sites. The “multi-site operating sites” field can be found by clicking on the “operating sites” link in the system. Multi-state applicants that list five or fewer operating sites cannot exceed 12 pages for the Narrative.

In determining whether an application complies with page limits, CNCS will count the following for the narrative:

- The application’s Executive Summary, SF 424 Facesheet, and
- The Narrative portions contained in the Program Design, Organizational Capacity, and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy sections of the application.

CNCS will consider the number of pages only as they print out from the “Review” tab in CNCS’s web-based management system (where you will see the “View/Print your application” heading) when determining compliance for page limits. CNCS will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods in determining whether an application complies with the applicable page limits. CNCS strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the “Review” tab prior to submission to check that the application does not exceed the page limit. The application page limit does not include the Budget, narrative portion of the Evaluation Plan, the Logic Model, performance measures, or the supplementary materials, if applicable.

##### Logic Model

The Logic Model may not exceed three pages when printed with the application from the “Review” tab in CNCS’s web-based management system.

**Please note the length of a document in word processing software may be different than what will print out in the CNCS’s web-based system.** Reviewers will not consider any submitted material that exceeds the page limits in the printed report, also, note that the system will not prevent an applicant from entering text that will exceed page limitations. This applies to both the application page limit and the Logic Model page limit.

##### Learning Memo (if a re-competing applicant)

The learning memo must be in a 12 point font or larger and should not exceed three single sided pages double spaced text. (See 7.c. Submission of Additional Documents)

#### **3. Dun and Bradstreet University Numbering System (DUNS) Number & System for Award Management (SAM)**

Applications must include a DUNS number **and** an Employer Identification Number. The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number. DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online: [DUNS Request Service](#). CNCS recommends registering at least 30 days before the application due date.

After obtaining a DUNS number, all applicants **must** register with the [SAM](#) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete and, if a grant is awarded, throughout the life of the award. SAM registration must be renewed annually. CNCS suggests finalizing a new registration or renewing an existing one at least two weeks before the application deadline to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise. Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and address on all grant applications to CNCS.

Applicants who do not comply with these requirements may be ineligible to receive or maintain an award. See the [SAM Quick Guide for Grantees](#).

#### **4. Submission Dates and Times**

##### **a. Notification of Intent to Apply**

Submission of a Notification of Intent to Apply is strongly encouraged for this competition and is due **Wednesday, December 13, 2017**. Eligibility is not based on submission of Notification of Intent to Apply. Please send the intent by using this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CNCSIntentToApply2018AmeriCorps>. All Notifications of Intent to Apply will receive an email response acknowledging receipt.

Single-State/Territory applicants should provide this information directly to Commission in the state or territory in which the applicant intends to operate, and not directly to CNCS. The Commissions' deadlines are earlier than this deadline.

National Direct Applicants: The Notification of Intent to Apply must include contact information (name of the applicant organization, address, contact person, email address, and phone number) and the focus area(s) the anticipated application will address.

State/Territory Commissions: The Notification of Intent to Apply submitted by each Commission must include an estimate of the number of applications planned for submission by focus area.

Continuation grantees who are only submitting continuation applications should not submit a Notification of Intent to Apply nor should Commissions include them in their estimate of anticipated applications.

##### **b. Application Submission Deadline**

Please refer to [Section I Timetable for submission due date to the NJ Commission](#). The deadline applies to new, re-competing, and continuation applicants. Commissions deadlines are significantly before the CNCS deadlines, so prospective Single-State applicants should contact their respective Commission as soon as possible. CNCS reserves the right to extend the submission deadline and any notice of such extended deadline will be posted on CNCS's website.

##### **c. Additional Documents Deadline**

Any required additional documents are due on the application deadline. See *Submission of Additional Documents* section for other guidance.

##### **d. Late Applications**

All applications received after the submission deadline published in the Notice are presumed to be non-compliant. In order to overcome this presumption, the applicant must:

- provide a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that caused the delay, including:
  - the timing and specific cause(s) of the delay
  - the ticket number if a request for assistance was submitted to the National Service Hotline
  - any information provided to the applicant by the National Service Hotline
  - any other documentation or evidence that supports the justification
- ensure that the NJ Commission receives the justification and any other evidence that substantiates the claimed extenuating circumstance(s) via email to [Ivette.Ramos@sos.nj.gov](mailto:Ivette.Ramos@sos.nj.gov) no later than one business day after the application deadline stated in the Notice.

Communication with [NJ Commission](#) staff, including an applicant's program officer, is not a substitute for the letter. Applicants are required to continue working in [CNCS's web-based application system](#) and with the National Service Hotline to submit the application. [The NJ Commission](#) will determine whether or not to accept a late application on a case-by-case basis. Applicants that do not submit a justification or any other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the published timeframe will not be reviewed or selected for award.

**Please note:** An advance request to submit a late application will not be considered. Applicants are encouraged to continue working on their application until it is submitted. If you are experiencing technical difficulties, please carefully review and follow the guidance listed above, and submit your application as soon as possible.

**5. Intergovernmental Review**

This Notice is not subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

**6. Funding Restrictions**

**a. Member Living Allowance**

A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either CNCS or grantee share. Exceptions are noted below.

While Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to submit detailed budgets, they are still required to provide a living allowance to members that complies with the minimum and maximum requirements. Exceptions noted below. Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to indicate that amount in the application and should request those positions as “without living allowance” in the budget.

**Table: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance**

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1,700	\$13,732	\$27,464
Half-time	900	\$ 7,270	\$14,539
Reduced Half-time	675	\$ 5,452	\$10,905
Quarter-time	450	\$ 3,635	\$7,270
Minimum-time	300	\$ 2,423	\$4,847

**Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements**

**1. Programs existing prior to September 21, 1993** are not required to offer a living allowance. If an applicant chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement, but not the maximum requirement.

**2. EAP Grantees** are not required to provide a living allowance, but if a living allowance is provided, it must comply with the maximum requirements set forth in the Living Allowance Table above.

**3. Professional Corps Grantees** must provide members a living allowance or salary, which must meet the minimum, but may exceed the maximum living allowance set in the Living Allowance Table above. Professional Corps member salaries are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve, and are not included in the budget request to CNCS (federal or matching share.)

**b. Maximum Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)**

The CNCS cost per MSY is determined by dividing the CNCS share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested. It does not include child care or the value of the education award a member may earn. The maximum amount an applicant may request from CNCS per MSY is determined on an annual basis.

New and re-competing Commission sub-grantees/applicants will be held to the maximum cost per MSY for their grant type.

**Table: Maximum Cost per MSY**

Grant Program	Maximum
Individual Targeted Priority State/Territory Program (cost reimbursement)	\$14,932*
Multi-state (cost reimbursement)	\$14,932*
Professional Corps Applicants/ees (Cost Reimbursement)	\$1,000**
Professional Corps Fixed Amount Applicants/Grantees	\$1,000*
Education Award Program Fixed Amount Grant	\$800
Fulltime Fixed Amount Grant	\$13,430
State/Territory Commission Formula Prime	\$18,000

Individual State/Territory Formula Program	\$20,000
State/Territory Commission Average (of all its subgrants)	\$14,932

\*Cost reimbursement programs operating in rural communities (as defined in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) and cost reimbursement programs that recruit opportunity youth as AmeriCorps members may request up to \$15,100 cost per MSY for the AmeriCorps members who will be serving in rural areas or who are opportunity youth.

\*\*CNCS requires Professional Corps programs to cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non CNCS. CNCS will only consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate significant organizational financial need and substantial challenges to raising non-CNCS resources based on the materials reviewed by the Office of Grant Management.

CNCS reserves the right to determine whether an applicant is a Professional Corps and whether the legal applicant has sufficiently demonstrated that they cannot effectively operate an AmeriCorps program without receiving CNCS operating funds. Given the high demand for AmeriCorps funding there may be specific circumstances where CNCS determines that either a legal applicant is not a Professional Corps program or is unlikely to demonstrate a need for operational funds due to other funding resources. Where CNCS’s due diligence review of a Professional Corps application shows that the applicant has a historically high level of support from non-CNCS sources, and as a result has levels of unrestricted funding that is in excess of the requested level of CNCS funding, CNCS may choose to not provide additional operational funding.

**c. Segal AmeriCorps Education Award**

AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service will be eligible for an Education Award from the National Service Trust. The amount of the Education Award is linked to the value of the Pell Grant. A member has up to seven years after his or her term of service to use the Education Award. CNCS will provide the updated Education Award amounts at the time of grant award.

**d. Cost Sharing or Matching**

**Fixed Amount Grants**

There is no specific match requirement for Fixed Amount grants. CNCS does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program; therefore organizations should raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.

**Cost Reimbursement Grants**

A first-time successful applicant is required to match at 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in 45 CFR §2521.60 and below.

AmeriCorps Funding Year	1, 2, 3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Grantee Share Requirements	24%	26%	30%	34%	38%	42%	46%	50%

Section 121(e)(5) of NCSA (42 U.S.C. 12571(e)) requires programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant to report the amount and source of these funds to CNCS on a Federal Financial Report. Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout.

The living allowance or salary provided to AmeriCorps members in Professional Corps programs (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) does not count toward the matching requirement.

**Alternative Match**

Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in the regulations at 45 CFR §2521.60(b). To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Application Instructions. Applicants who plan to request an alternative match schedule must submit a request at the time the application is submitted. State programs submit requests for alternative match to the

Commission. Commissions submit on behalf of their state applicants and National Directs submit their requests directly to [ACAAlternateMatchRequests@cns.gov](mailto:ACAAlternateMatchRequests@cns.gov).

#### **e. Indirect Costs**

Application budgets may include indirect costs. Based on qualifying factors, applicants may either use a federally approved indirect cost rate, a 10 percent *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly as outlined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.413. States, local governments and Indian Tribes may use approved indirect cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across federal awards. Applicants that have a federal negotiated indirect cost rate or that will be using the 10 percent *de minimis* rate must enter that information in the Organization section in the CNCS's web-based management system. However, under section 121(d) of the NCSA and CNCS's regulations at 45 C.F.R. 2517.710, no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps grants.

### **7. Other Submission Requirements**

#### **a. Coordination among State Commissions and National Direct Applicants**

CNCS expects Commissions and National Direct applicants to consult and coordinate activities at the local level, as specified in Section 131 of the NCSA (42 U.S.C. § 12583). This consultation is designed to ensure the most effective use of national service resources and lead to enhanced coordination. The list of Commissions can be found here:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions>.

To ensure coordination:

National Direct applicants, except federally-recognized Indian Tribes, must:

Before application submission:

- Consult with the Commission of each state and/or territory in which the organization plans to operate and describe this consultation in their applications. Contact the Commissions for details about the consultation process. Provide information that connects the proposed activities to the current State/Territory Service plan and/or State logic model.

After Award:

- Provide the Commission with contact information for National Direct programs in the state and/or territory and update the information on an annual basis.
- Participate in the Commissions' annual needs assessment and training plan development activities, and in the development of its state/territory service plan, as well as appropriate training and other events.
- Include the Commission on the National Direct's mailing/email distribution lists and invite it to appropriate training and other events.

State/Territory Commissions must:

Before application submission:

- Consult in a timely manner with the National Direct applicants, except Indian Tribes, that contact them prior to application submission.

After Award:

- Consider the schedules and needs of National Direct applicants, including Indian Tribes, operating in their states when planning annual events and technical assistance activities.
- Include National Direct programs, including Indian Tribes, in their annual needs assessment and training plan development activities, and in the development of their state/territory service plan.
- Add staff of multi-state programs in their state/territory to their mailing/email distribution lists and invite them to appropriate training and other events.

CNCS will solicit Commission input on National Direct applicants, except Indian Tribes, proposing to operate in their state/territory. Via the CNCS's web-based management system, Commissions have the opportunity to select "support," "do not support," or "neutral," and provide comments. Participation by Commissions in providing this input is strongly encouraged. CNCS reviews and considers Commission input on multi-state applicants proposing to operate in their state.

CNCS will assess an applicant's strategic considerations. Applicants must check the relevant boxes in the Program Information tab in CNCS's web-based management system in order to be considered for CNCS's assessment of the strategic considerations (see *Selection for Funding* section.) Applicants should only check the boxes if the strategic

consideration is a significant and if intentional part of their program design and implementation strategies are described in the application.

#### **b. Electronic Application Submission in CNCS's web-based management system**

Applicants must submit applications electronically via [CNCS's web-based system](#). CNCS recommends that applicants create an account and begin the application at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word processing document, then copy and paste the text into the appropriate field no later than ten days before the deadline.

The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must be using CNCS's web-based management system under his or her own account in order to sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Contact the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via [Questions](#) if a problem arises when creating an account or preparing or submitting the application. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the Notice to which the organization is applying. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit their application via CNCS's web-based management system.

#### **c. Submission of Additional Documents**

Applicants are required to submit the following additional documents by the application submission deadline:

All applicants

- Evaluation briefs, reports, studies. Please refer to the *Evidence Base* section for detailed instructions by evidence tier.

Recompeting applications

- Evaluation report, if required. Please see the *Evidence Base* definition in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance and Section E. Evaluation Plan for further information.
- Learning memo, if required. Any applicant required to submit an evaluation report in order to comply with CNCS evaluation requirements must also submit a learning memo that describes how they are using the evaluation to improve and to inform their activities in the next funding cycle. The learning memo must be in a 12-point font or larger and should not exceed three pages of double-spaced text. The learning memo should include:
  - A short summary of key learnings from the evaluation
  - An explanation of how the program will incorporate key learnings into its strategy, design or implementation
  - An explanation of how these changes will improve the program
  - A discussion of how learning from the evaluation may inform next steps in the program's long-term research agenda

Governor/Mayor Initiative applicants (New and recompeting)

- Letter(s) of support from partnering nonprofits
- Letter of support co-signed by Governor and participating Mayor(s)

Rural Intermediaries (New and recompeting)

- Letters of support from the consortium members

Entities applying on behalf of a Federally Recognized Tribe (New and recompeting)

- Sanctioning resolution adopted by the tribal council of each Indian Tribe. (See the *Eligible Applicants* section.)

Additional Documents must be emailed to [Ivette.Ramos@sos.nj.gov](mailto:Ivette.Ramos@sos.nj.gov) with the labels outlined below. Emails should include the following information:

- Subject line: [Legal Applicant Name]– [Application ID number]
- Body of the email should identify:
  - The legal applicant name and its point of contact information
  - The application ID number
  - A list of documents that should be attached to the email

- Attachments to emails should include
  - Individually saved files that are clearly labeled
  - Each file should also include a header or title within the body of each additional document to include the legal applicant name and application ID number.

Do not submit other items not requested in this *Notice* or Application Instructions. CNCS will not review or return them.

## **E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **1. Criteria**

Each applicant must describe a project that will deploy AmeriCorps members effectively to solve a significant community problem. CNCS urges applicants to submit high quality applications that carefully follow the guidance in this *Notice* and in the Application Instructions. The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization will receive funding.

#### **A. Executive Summary (Required - 0 percent)**

Please fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary. Do not deviate from the template below.

The [Name of the organization] proposes to have [Number of] AmeriCorps members who will [service activities the members will be doing] in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will serve]. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing.]

This program will focus on [Healthy Futures/Child Wellness/Infrastructure]. The CNCS investment of \$[amount of request] will be matched with \$[amount of projected match], \$[amount of local, state, and federal funds] in public funding and \$[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.

Fixed-Amount grant applicants (EAP, Full-time Fixed) should list their Other Revenue (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still raise significant additional resources to operate the program.

CNCS will post all Executive Summaries of awarded grant applications on [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov) in the interest of transparency and Open Government.

#### **B. Program Design (50 percent)**

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

##### **1. Need (4 points)**

- The problem the program will address is prevalent and severe in communities where members will serve and has been documented with relevant data.

“Community” can be a geographic region, a specific population of people, or a combination of both. The applicant must document the need it plans to address with its proposed program, whether it is a defined geographic community or a subset of individuals living in a particular area.

##### **2. Theory of Change and Logic Model (24 points)**

The Theory of Change shall address:

- The proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community problem.
- The applicant's proposed intervention is clearly articulated including the design, dosage, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) leveraged volunteers.
- The applicant's intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change.
- The expected outcomes articulated in the application narrative and logic model represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem identified by the applicant.
- The rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention(s) is reasonable.

- The service role of AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.

The Logic Model shall depict:

- A summary of the community problem outlined in the narrative.
- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:
  - Number of locations or sites in which members will provide services
  - Number of AmeriCorps members that will deliver the intervention
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
  - The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention)
  - The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
  - The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level)
- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served, hours of service delivered, types and number of activities conducted.) If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as output indicators
- Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

Note: The logic model is a visual representation of the applicant's theory of change. Programs may include short, medium or long-term outcomes in the logic model. Applicants are not required to measure all components of their theory of change. The applicant's performance measures should be consistent with the program's theory of change and should represent significant program activities.

In the application narrative, applicants should discuss their rationale for setting output and outcome targets for their performance measures. Re-competing applicants proposing to significantly increase or decrease output or outcome targets from their previous grant must provide a justification for this change.

Applicants should use National Performance Measures if they are part of the program's theory of change. Applicants are not required to use National Performance Measures and should only use them if they are part of the program's theory of change. Rationales and justifications should be informed by the organization's performance data (e.g., program data observed over time suggests targets are reasonable), relevant research (e.g. targets documents by organizations running similar programs with similar populations), or prior program evaluation findings.

Applicants with multiple interventions should complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each intervention. Logic model content that exceeds three pages will not be reviewed.

### **3. Evidence Base (12 points)**

The assessment of an applicant's evidence base has two steps. First, the applicant will be assigned to an evidence tier. (See the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance.) Second, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the applicant's overall capacity to collect and use data (including performance measurement and evaluation data) will be assessed and scored.

Evidence Tier:

An evidence tier will be assessed for each applicant for the purpose of applying the strategic characteristics (moderate/strong evidence) and understanding the relative strength of each applicant's evidence base and the likelihood that the proposed intervention will lead to outcomes identified in the logic model. Applicants should use the evidence checklist to self-assess their evidence tier before completing the application.

Applicants must 1) state the evidence tier in which they think they qualify; 2) clearly indicate and describe the evidence that supports the highest evidence tier for which they are eligible and 3) describe the complete body of evidence that supports their program intervention including evidence from lower tiers. Applicants should pay particular attention to the requirements for each tier of evidence. All requirements must be met in order for applicants to be assigned to a tier. Applicants who do not fully describe their evidence base may not be assigned to a tier for which the applicant otherwise may have qualified.

In 2017, the evidence tiers of funded AmeriCorps State and National competitive grantees' were as follows: Strong 9%, Moderate 9%, Preliminary 38%, and Pre-Preliminary 27%. As these figures indicate, CNCS values and funds programs at all points along the evidence continuum and expects programs to progress along the evidence continuum over time. Thus, do not be deterred from applying for funding due to your current evidence level.

Applicants classifying their evidence as preliminary who propose to replicate an identical or similar evidence-based intervention, as well as applicants classifying their evidence as either moderate or strong evidence should reference the information about the evidence tiers. Submission of additional documents (e.g., advocacy pieces, policy briefs, other narratives that are not research studies or program evaluations) that are not consistent with the guidance and requirements described in the *Notice* will not be reviewed.

All applicants must include as much detailed information as possible in the Evidence section of the application. All applicants who have collected relevant performance measurement data must describe this data fully as outlined in the requirements for the pre-preliminary evidence tier. Applicants who have conducted evaluations of their own program or that are replicating other evidence-based programs must describe these evaluations in the application narrative as outlined in the evidence tier descriptions. Applicants are advised to focus on presenting high-quality evidence from up to two of the strongest and most relevant studies while also summarizing the remaining body of evidence that exists for the program. Studies must be evaluations of specific programs or interventions. Research that does not focus on a specific program or intervention, but rather focuses on a broader issue area or population, will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points.

When describing research studies or evaluations in the application narrative, applicants must include the following information in order to earn points:

- 1) The date the research or evaluation was completed, and the time period for which the intervention was examined
- 2) A description that shows the study's relevance to the proposed intervention
- 3) A description of the target population studied (e.g., the demographics)
- 4) The methodology used in the study (e.g., outcome study, random assignment, regression discontinuity design, propensity score matching, etc.)
- 5) A description of the data, data source, and data collection methods
- 6) The outcomes or impacts examined and the study findings
- 7) The strength of the findings (e.g., effect size, confidence level, statistical power of the study design and statistical significance of findings).

Applicants must provide this information in the narrative even if they submit the study or evaluation. Applicants should provide citations for the studies they describe, if applicable; however, reviewers will not review any links or cited documents referenced in the application and will not review any additional documents that is not a study submitted in accordance with the *Notice* instructions.

Reviewers will examine the descriptions (and attached studies if relevant) using the following criteria:

- a) How closely the intervention evaluated in the studies matches the one proposed by the applicant;
- b) The methodological quality and rigor of the studies presented (e.g., sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, use of control or equivalent comparison groups, baseline equivalence and study attrition, etc.);
- c) Strength and consistency of the findings, with preference given to findings that show a meaningful and persistent positive effect on participants demonstrated with confidence levels; and
- d) The date of the study, with a preference towards studies that have been conducted within the last six years.

If the evidence submitted as part of an application does not describe a well-designed and well-implemented evaluation, the applicant may be considered for a lower evidence tier. Applicants must meet all requirements of the evidence tier in order to be considered for that tier. Applicants who do not meet all requirements will be considered for a lower tier.

#### Evidence Quality and Evaluation Capacity

After the applicant's evidence tier has been assessed, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the applicant's overall capacity to collect and use data (including performance measurement and evaluation data) will be assessed and scored. Applicants must address the following standards in the application narrative. The standards are weighted differently for

applicants in different evidence tiers to reflect expected variations in program life cycle and evaluation capacity at each stage of the evidence continuum.

<b>Evidence Quality and Evaluation Capacity Standards</b>	<b>No Evidence &amp; Pre-Preliminary Points</b>	<b>Preliminary Points</b>	<b>Moderate &amp; Strong Points</b>
The applicant’s evidence is of satisfactory quality. Applicants with no evidence describe an evidence-informed theory of change.	2	2	2
The applicant’s data collection systems are sufficient to yield high quality process and outcome data.	5	4	1
The applicant demonstrates adequate capacity to use process and outcome data including performance measurement (and evaluation data if applicable) to inform continuous learning and program improvement.	5	5	5
The applicant’s long-term research agenda is aligned to the organization’s learning needs and position on the evidence continuum (evidence tier).	0	1	4

Evidence quality and evaluation capacity standards must be addressed in the application narrative. All applicants, including new grantees, are required to provide additional information in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field of the application (See Section E. Evaluation Plan); however, information provided in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field will not be scored and will not be reviewed until after funding decisions have been made.

**4. Notice Priority (3 points)**

- The applicant proposed program fits within one or more of the 2018 AmeriCorps funding priorities as outlined in the *Funding Priorities* section and more fully described in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance and the proposed program meets all of the requirements detailed in the *Funding Priorities* section and in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance.

**5. Member Experience (7 points)**

- AmeriCorps members will gain skills as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed.
- AmeriCorps members will have access to meaningful service experiences that includes education about the community problem/need and the community in which they will serve.
- AmeriCorps members will have access to opportunities for reflection that involves the intentional processing of members’ experience and the incorporation of lessons learned
- The program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the programs operate.
- The applicant will also foster an inclusive service culture where different backgrounds, talents, and capabilities are welcomed and leveraged for learning and effective service delivery.

**C. Organizational Capability (25 percent)**

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application’s response to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

**1. Organizational Background and Staffing (7 points)**

- The organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program.

**2. Compliance and Accountability (8 points)**

- The organization will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities at the grantee, subgrantee (if applicable), and service site locations.
- The applicant will hold subgrantees (if applicable) and service site locations accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified.
- If applicable, the CNCS-required evaluation report meets CNCS requirements.

- If applicable, the CNCS-required evaluation report is of satisfactory quality.

### **3. Culture that Values Learning (8 points)**

- The applicant's board, management, and staff collects and uses information for learning and decision making.
- The applicant's management and staff produces frequent reports on how well the organization is implementing its programs and strategies.

### **4. Member Supervision (2 points)**

- AmeriCorps members will receive sufficient guidance and support from their supervisor to provide effective service.
- AmeriCorps supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations.

## **D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)**

Reviewers will assess the quality of the application's budget to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

**This criteria will be assessed based on the budget submitted. No narrative should be entered in the narrative box except for "See budget"**

### **1. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 points)**

- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors and proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award.
- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget is in compliance with the budget instructions.
- Match is submitted with adequate information to support the amount written in the budget.
- The cost per MSY is equal to or less than the maximum cost per MSY.

Proposed budgets that contain MSY costs that exceed the maximum cost per MSY and/or less than required match will be considered unresponsive to the application criteria.

Applicants must complete the budget and ensure the following information is in the budget screens:

- Current indirect rate cost if used to claim indirect/administrative costs.
- Identify the non-CNCS funding and resources necessary to support the project, including for Fixed Amount applicants.
- Indicate the amount of non-CNCS resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash), the sources of these commitments, and if the commitments are proposed or secured.

## **E. Evaluation Plan (Required for recompeting grantees - 0 percent)**

If the applicant is competing for the first time, please provide a data collection plan in the "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field that includes the following:

- A description of the applicant's data collection system and how it is sufficient to collect high quality performance measurement data during the first three years of the grant. If the applicant does not yet have a data collection system, describe the plan and timeline for developing a high quality system.
- A description of how the applicant will use performance data (including CNCS performance measures and other process and outcome measures if applicable) to improve its program in the first three years of funding.

First-time applicants should be aware that CNCS may require submission of data collection instruments if a grant is approved for funding.

If the applicant is recompeting for AmeriCorps funds for the first time (see definition of "recompeting" below) the program must submit its evaluation plan in the "Evaluation Summary or Plan" section of the Narratives field in CNCS's web-based management system. If the applicant is recompeting for a subsequent time, the program must submit its evaluation report and a learning memo as attachments (see the *Submission of Additional Documents* section for more information), and must also submit an evaluation plan for the next three-year period in the "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field in the system. Evaluations plans submitted outside of the system will not be reviewed.

Evaluation plans must include as much information as possible for each of the following (see Frequently Asked Questions: Evaluation, available at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/evaluation/cncs-evaluation-policies>):

- A short description of the theory of change - why the proposed intervention is expected to produce the proposed results
- Outcome of interest - clear and measurable outcomes that are aligned with the theory of change and will be assessed during the evaluation
- Research questions to be addressed by the study - concrete research questions (or hypotheses) that are clearly connected to the outcomes
- Study components – a) a proposed research design for the evaluation including a rationale for the design selected, an assessment of its strengths and limitations, and a description of the main components; b) description of the sampling methods, measurement tools, and data collection procedures, and c) an analysis plan
- Qualifications needed for the evaluator
- The proposed budget

For more information about evaluation plans visit the CNCS Knowledge Network's Evaluation Resources: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/evaluation/planning-evaluation>.

The evaluation requirements differ depending on the amount of the grant, as described in 45 CFR §2522.710:

- If the applicant is a State/Territory subgrantee and/or National Direct Grantee (other than an Education Award Program grantee), and its average annual CNCS program grant is \$500,000 or more, it must arrange for an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in 45 CFR §2522.730.
- If the applicant is a State/Territory subgrantee and/or National Direct Grantee whose average annual CNCS program grant is less than \$500,000, or an Education Award Program Grantee, it must conduct an internal or an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for Targeted Priority funds as required in 45 CFR §2522.730.

For purposes of compliance with evaluation plan and report requirements, a program will be considered a recompeting application if it satisfies the CNCS definition of “same project” (*see* Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) and has been funded competitively for at least three of the last five years. If the project satisfies the definition of same project and the applicant has received competitive funding for at least three of the last five years, it will be required to submit an evaluation plan. If the project satisfied the definition of same project and the applicant has completed two or more competitively funded three-year cycles, including at least four years of competitive funding in the last five years, the applicant will be required to submit an evaluation report as well as an evaluation plan for the upcoming 3 year grant. If the project does not satisfy the definition of recompeting, it will not be required to submit an evaluation plan or completed evaluation report.

The “Evaluation Summary or Plan” field of the Narrative does not count toward the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit of 10,000 characters. Applicants should print out the plan to ensure the narrative does not exceed the character limits when entered in CNCS's web-based management system.

State/Territory subgrantees and/or National Direct Grantees that are recompeting for funds may be eligible to apply for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. Grantees requesting approval of an alternative evaluation approach should submit a request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach along with their evaluation plan in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in the system. The request should clearly explain: (a) the evaluation constraints faced by the program, (b) why the proposed approach is the most rigorous option feasible, and (c) how the proposed alternative approach will help the grantee build their evidence base. Evaluation plans should include, at a minimum, the required elements listed in this *Notice*. The evaluation plan must be consistent with the information submitted in the competitive funding application and in the request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. CNCS guidance on alternative evaluation approaches can be found at:

[https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/files/guidance\\_for\\_grantees\\_approval\\_of\\_alternative\\_evaluation\\_approach.pdf](https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/files/guidance_for_grantees_approval_of_alternative_evaluation_approach.pdf)

If the request for the alternative evaluation approach and the evaluation plan itself will exceed the character limit of the evaluation summary or plan field in the system, the applicant should do the following:

- Enter the evaluation plan in the evaluation summary or plan field in the system.

- Include a note in the evaluation summary or plan field stating that the applicant is requesting an alternative evaluation approach.
- Include the alternative evaluation approach at the END of the application narrative with the heading “REQUEST FOR ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION APPROACH.” This section of the application narrative will not count against the page limit.

**F. Amendment Justification (0 percent)**

Enter N/A. This field will be used if the applicant is awarded a grant and needs to amend it.

**G. Clarification Information (0 percent)**

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter information that requires clarification in the post-review period.

**H. Continuation Changes (0 percent)**

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter changes in the application narratives in continuation requests.

**2. Review and Selection Process**

CNCS will make determination about applicants utilizing the data provided within the application and supplemental materials. These determinations may be different than what the applicant self-determined upon submission of its application.

**a. Compliance and Eligibility Review**

CNCS staff will conduct a Compliance Review to determine if an application meets the compliance requirements published in this *Notice* and advances to the next stage of the review process. Applications determined non-compliant will not be considered for funding. An application is compliant if the applicant:

- Is an eligible organization
- Is eligible to submit directly to CNCS
- Submits an application by the submission deadline
- Submit an application with a minimum of twenty AmeriCorps member positions (slots).

Reviewing for eligibility is intended to ensure that only those applications that are eligible for award are further reviewed. However, a determination of eligibility can take place at any point during the application review and selection process. Applicants that are determined to be non-compliant and ineligible will not receive an award.

**b. Review**

Each application will be assessed by several CNCS staff. Staff reviewers will evaluate the application using the application review criteria, consider the comprehensiveness and feasibility of the application, and assess the priorities and strategic considerations detailed in the *Notice*. External Reviewers will review and assess the evidence base criteria in the *Notice*. All reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

**c. Post Review Quality Control**

After the reviewers complete their assessment, CNCS staff will review the results for fairness and consistency. Some applications may be selected for a Quality Control assessment. This additional level of review may be used to assess applications ranked first by a Commission that received low scores (unless the Commission only submitted one application) and applications for which there are significant panel anomalies. In addition, the Commission input on National Direct applications will be reviewed and assessed.

**d. Risk Assessment Evaluation**

CNCS staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant, including conducting due diligence to ensure an applicant's ability to manage federal funds and the applicant's past performance (if applicable.) This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding and the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If CNCS determines that an award will be made, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award. In evaluating risks, CNCS may consider the following, but not limited to:

- Financial capability and capacity to manage Federal funds
- Quality of financial management systems and ability to meet the administrative standards prescribed in applicable OMB Guidance
- History of performance as reflected in the applicant’s record in managing previous CNCS awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
  - Timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements,
  - If applicable, meeting matching requirements, and
  - If applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
- Information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as—
  - Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS),
  - U.S. Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services
  - Dun and Bradstreet, or
  - “Do Not Pay”
- Reports and findings from single audits performed under Uniform Administrative Guidance (formerly OMB Circular A-133) and findings of any other available audits
- IRS Tax Form 990
- An applicant organization's annual report
- Publicly available information including information from an applicant organization's website
- Any other information listed in 45 CFR § 2522.140
- The applicant’s ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.
- Past Performance

Commission staff will assess their recompeting subgrantees’ past performance and submit those assessments to CNCS. CNCS will assess its recompeting direct grantees related to past performance. This assessment is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant’s eligibility for funding or the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this assessment will inform funding decisions. In evaluating programmatic performance, CNCS will consider the following for applicants that are current formula and competitive grantees:

- Grant progress reports – attainment of Performance Measures
- Enrollment and retention
- Compliance with 30 day enrollment and exit requirements in the AmeriCorps portal
- Site visit or other monitoring findings (if applicable)
- OIG findings (if applicable)
- Significant opportunities and/or risks of the grantee related to national service
- Commission Rank

Additionally, CNCS may use the results of the review of the risk assessment evaluation in determining which applications to fund. If CNCS concludes that the reasons for applicants having poor risk assessment evaluations are not likely to be mitigated, those applications may not be selected for funding.

**e. Consideration of Integrity and Performance System Information**

Prior to making any award that exceeds \$150,000, CNCS is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM and FAPIIS (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). Additionally CNCS may expand upon these requirements and use its discretion to review and consider information about any applicant receiving an award, including those under \$150,000.

Any applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through FAPIIS and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through FAPIIS;

CNCS will consider any comments by any applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing its review of risk posed by the applicant under the Risk Assessment Evaluation section of this *Notice*.

#### **f. Applicant Clarification**

Some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information and/or make changes to their application including changes to the budget. This information is used by CNCS staff in making funding recommendations. Applications may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked clarification questions. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to requests for clarification adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of applications from consideration.

#### **g. Selection for Funding**

The assessment of applications involves a wide range of factors and considerations. CNCS staff will apply their experience and expertise in evaluating and recommending applications. CNCS will engage external reviewers to provide insight and input with respect to the evidence base of eligible applications. In the end, the review and selection process will produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that reflect the priorities and strategic consideration described in this *Notice*.

Specifically, the review and selection process will:

A. Identify how well eligible applications are aligned with application review criteria and/or represent relative risk and/or opportunity.

B. Yield a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:

- Meaningful representation of
  - Geographic diversity
  - Rural communities (see definition in Mandatory Supplemental Guidance)
  - Single and multi-state programs
  - Faith-based organizations
  - CNCS *Notice* Priorities representation
  - Focus area representation
  - Moderate and Strong evidence levels
- Program models that demonstrate a new approach to solving a community problem based on thorough review of existing research and evaluation about existing approaches to the problem
- Program models that will utilize AmeriCorps members to replicate evidence-based programs with fidelity

Based on the evaluation of these strategic considerations, applications may be selected for funding over applications with a greater degree of alignment with the review criteria. In selecting applicants to receive awards under this *Notice*, the Chief Executive Officer will endeavor to include a diverse portfolio of applications based on staff evaluations, recommendations, priorities, and strategic considerations.

***CNCS reserves the right to adjust or make changes to the review process, in the event that unforeseen challenges or exigent circumstances make it impossible, impractical or inefficient to execute the review process as planned. Any such adjustments or changes will not affect the selection criteria that will be used to assess applications submitted to CNCS in response to this Notice.***

#### **4. Feedback to Applicants**

Following grant awards, each applicant will receive summary comments pertaining to their application. Feedback will be based on the review of the original application and will not reflect any information that may have been provided in response to applicant clarification, if any. All compliant applications will receive feedback from the external review of the evidence base portion of their application.

#### **5. Transparency in Grant-making**

CNCS is committed to transparency in grant-making. The following information for new and re-competing applications will be published on [CNCS Results of Grant Competitions](#) within 90 business days after all grants are awarded:

- A list of all compliant applications submitted

- Executive Summaries of all compliant applications submitted by the applicants
- Data extracted from the SF-424 Face Sheet and the submitted program narratives for successful applications
- A blank template of the external review worksheet
- A list of all external reviewers that completed the review process
- A summary of external reviewer comments for successful applications.

## **F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **1. Federal Award Notices**

CNCS will make awards following the grant selection announcement. CNCS anticipates announcing the results of this competition by notifying applicants **by May 15, 2018**, contingent on timely full year appropriations. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions via email. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The Notice of Grant Award signed by the Grant Officer is the only document authorizing awardees to commence grant activities. Unsuccessful applicants will also receive a notification that their application was not approved for funding.

An awardee may not obligate or expend federal funds until the start of the Project Period identified on the Notice of Grant Award.

### **2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

#### **a. Uniform Guidance**

All awards under this Notice are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), now consolidated in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 2205.

#### **b. Requests for Improper Payment Information**

CNCS may, from time to time, request documentation from recipients in order to monitor the award or to comply with other legal requirements, such as the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002, as amended. Failure to make timely responses to these requests may result in award funds being placed on temporary manual hold, reimbursement only, or other remedies as appropriate. In addition, CNCS may, in appropriate circumstances, consider in its funding decisions any previous failures to make timely responses.

#### **c. CNCS Terms and Conditions**

All awards made under this *Notice* will be subject to the 2018 CNCS General Terms and Conditions, and the 2018 Specific Terms and Conditions for the particular program (when applicable.) These Terms and Conditions contain detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the CNCS General and Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/terms-and-conditions-cnsc-grants>.

### **3. National Service Criminal History Check Requirements**

The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. The law requires recipients to conduct and document NSCHCs on any person (including award-funded staff, national service participant, or volunteer) receiving a salary, living allowance, stipend, or education award through a program receiving CNCS funds. This includes staff that receive part of their salary through a subgrant. An individual is ineligible to serve in a position that receives such CNCS funding if the individual is registered, or required to be registered, as a sex offender or has been convicted of murder. The cost of conducting NSCHCs is an allowable expense under the award.

Unless CNCS has provided a recipient with a written exemption or written approval of an alternative search procedure, recipients must perform the following checks—

All award-funded staff, national service participants, and volunteers must undergo NSCHCs that include:

- A nationwide name-based search of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) and
- Either
  - A name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the person’s state of residence and in the state where the person will serve/work; *or*
  - A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check.

Special Rule for Persons Serving Vulnerable Populations. Award-funded staff, national service participants, and volunteers *with recurring access to vulnerable populations* (i.e., children age 17 or younger, individuals age 60 or older, or individuals with disabilities) must undergo NSCHCs that include:

- A nationwide name-based check of the [NSOPW](#); and
- Both
  - A name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the person’s state of residence and in the state where the person will serve/work; *and*
  - A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check.

See 45 CFR § 2540.200–§ 2540.207 and [CNCS Criminal History Check Resources](#) for complete information and FAQs.

#### **4. Use of Material**

To ensure that materials generated with CNCS funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, CNCS reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so (2 CFR §200.315 (b)).

#### **5. Reporting**

Recipients are required to submit a variety of reports which are due at specific times during the life cycle of an award. All reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time.

Cost reimbursement grantees are required to provide mid-year and end of year progress reports, semi-annual financial reports, and an internal or external evaluation report as required by the AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR §§2522.500-2522.540 and §§2522.700-2522.740.

Fixed Amount grantees are required to provide mid-year and end of year progress reports and an internal or external evaluation report. All grantees, including Fixed Amount grantees, submit quarterly financial reports to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Payment Management System.

Award recipients will be required to report at [www.FSRS.gov](http://www.FSRS.gov) on all subawards over \$25,000 and may be required to report on executive compensation for your organization and for your subgrantees. Recipients and subrecipients must have the necessary systems in place to collect and report this information. See [2 CFR Part 170](#) for more information and to determine how these requirements apply.

Once the grant is awarded, recipients will be expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are providing CNCS with high quality programmatic and financial data. At a minimum, grantees should have policies and practices which address the following five aspects of data quality:

- The data measures what it intends to measure;
- The grantee collects data in a consistent manner;
- The grantee takes steps to correct data errors;
- The grantee ensures that the data reported is complete; and
- The grantee actively reviews data prior to submission.

#### **Progress Report Data**

In addition to semi-annual reporting of progress toward the grant’s approved performance measure outputs and outcomes, additional demographic and narrative data must be reported annually (as applicable), including the number of applicants for AmeriCorps positions and the number of volunteers recruited and/or supported by AmeriCorps members (both episodic and ongoing volunteers.)

Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the recipient’s ability to secure future CNCS funding. For further guidance and training resources see – [CNCS Performance Measure Resources](#).

#### **5. Continuation Funding Information and Requirements**

Organizations that have current AmeriCorps awards that do not end in FY17 must submit an application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. Please see the Application Instructions. Requests by existing

continuation applicants for increases in the level of funding or number of positions will be assessed using the criteria under this *Notice*.

#### **G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)**

This *Notice* is available at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities>. The TTY number is 202-606-3472. For further information or for a printed copy of this *Notice*, call (202) 606-7508. For questions regarding multi-state or Indian Tribes applications submitted directly to CNCS, please call (202) 606-7508 or send an email to [americorpsgrants@cns.gov](mailto:americorpsgrants@cns.gov). Questions about single state applications should be addressed to the respective Commission. A list of all Commissions can be found here: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions>. CNCS' mailing address is:

Corporation for National and Community Service  
ATTN: Office of Grants Policy and Operations/ASN Application  
250 E St SW  
Washington, DC 20525

#### **H. OTHER INFORMATION**

##### **1. Technical Assistance**

In addition to consulting the Application Instructions, Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, Performance Measure Instructions, and AmeriCorps regulations as directed in this *Notice*, Commissions and National Direct applicants are encouraged also to consult the CNCS web site for a schedule of technical assistance conference calls, and Frequently Asked Questions that are updated during the competition period. Applicants in a single state should consult with their Commission.

##### **2. Reallocation of Funding**

CNCS reserves the right to reallocate funding in the event of disaster or other compelling need for service.

# **SECTION III**

## **2018 AmeriCorps State & National Mandatory Supplemental Guidance**

*The AmeriCorps State & National Mandatory Supplemental Guidance is intended to provide applicants with additional information for the preparation of their applications under the AmeriCorps State and National Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity. The Supplemental Guidance provides both detailed definitions of certain terms included in the Notice, as well as additional details regarding how to properly file an application under the Notice. This Supplemental Guidance is incorporated by reference in the Notice, and applicants must comply with any requirements stated in this Supplemental Guidance.*

**Capacity Building:** A set of activities that expand the scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of programs and organizations. These activities achieve lasting positive outcomes for the beneficiary populations served by CNCS-supported organizations (i.e., AmeriCorps programs). As a general rule, CNCS considers capacity building activities to be *indirect services* that enable CNCS-supported organizations to provide more, better, and sustained *direct services*. Capacity building activities cannot be solely intended to support the administration or operations of the organization. Capacity building activities must:

- 1) Be intended to support or enhance the program delivery model;
- 2) Respond to the program’s goal of increasing, expanding, or enhancing services in order to address the most pressing needs identified in the community; and
- 3) Enable the program to provide a sustained level of more or better direct services after the capacity building services end.

**Cost Reimbursement Grants:** These grants fund a portion of program operating costs and member living allowances, with flexibility to use all of the funds for allowable costs regardless of whether or not the program recruits and retains all AmeriCorps members. Cost reimbursement grants include a formal matching requirement and require the submission of a budget and financial reports.

**Encore Programs:** Congress set a goal that 10 percent of AmeriCorps funding should support encore service programs that engage a significant number of participants age 55 or older. CNCS seeks to meet that 10 percent target in this competition and encourages encore programs to apply. Encore will provide an opportunity for current evidence-based Senior Corps Foster Grandparents Program and Senior Companion Program grantees to expand their programs through AmeriCorps funding.

**Enrollment Rate:** The enrollment rate is calculated as slots filled, plus refill slots filled, divided by slots awarded.

**Evidence-Based Intervention Planning Grants:** CNCS is seeking applications for planning grants to develop national service models<sup>3</sup> that seek to integrate members in innovative ways into evidence-based interventions. For example, in the Economic Opportunity focus area applicants could explore how to adapt social enterprise, workforce partnership, supportive housing, or financial literacy program models that have demonstrated effectiveness through the Social Innovation Fund. Similarly, in the Healthy Futures focus area, applicants might explore how to integrate AmeriCorps members into effective program models designed to improve health outcomes such as increased access to, or utilization of, health care. Alternatively, applicants could propose taking an evidence-based practice<sup>4</sup> such as motivational interviewing and training AmeriCorps members to apply these skills in ways that could improve individual economic or health outcomes.

Applicants are encouraged to propose ideas for how AmeriCorps members might be integrated throughout the project life cycle – from community issue and model development to implementation to evaluation of the new

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<sup>3</sup> A body of evidence is emerging that supports the role of national service in effective education interventions. Many of these service education interventions are currently being funded by AmeriCorps. The purpose of these planning grants is to identify new evidence-based service interventions in focus areas with less evidence such as Economic Opportunity and Healthy Futures.

<sup>4</sup> Applicants are encouraged to use federal agency clearinghouses or evidence reviews (see <https://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/main-menu/2016/clearinghouses-and-evidence-reviews>) to identify evidence-based programs and practices.

intervention. For example, AmeriCorps members may be integrated into the evidence-based program through direct service delivery or through supporting organizational capacity in program development and evaluation.

A planning grant provides support to a grant recipient to develop an AmeriCorps program that will engage AmeriCorps members in implementing evidence-based interventions to solve community problems. In some cases, members have been involved in the effective or promising intervention and in other cases members have not been integrated into the program model to date. For interventions that have integrated members, this planning grant could be an opportunity to refine and enhance the model. For interventions that have not included AmeriCorps, a planning grant could be used to create a new intervention and test the feasibility of adapting evidence-based interventions with a national service component. Grant recipients are awarded up to \$75,000 for a 12-month planning period and are expected to be better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle. A planning grant may not be used to support AmeriCorps members. Applicants will apply for a Cost Reimbursement grant. The project period is no more than a year, with a start date proposed by the applicant. The project start date may not occur prior to the date CNCS awards the grant.

**Evidence-based program:** Evidence-based programs have been rigorously evaluated and have demonstrated positive results for at least one key desired outcome. Rigorous evaluation means at least one randomized controlled trial study or quasi-experimental evaluation, either of the program itself or of another program that the applicant is proposing to replicate.

**Evidence-informed program:** Programs in this category use the best available knowledge, research, and evaluation to guide program design and implementation, but do not have scientific research or rigorous evaluation of the program itself and are not replicating an evidence-based program.

Applicants who have not yet collected data from their own programs may be evidence-informed if they have incorporated research from other evidence-based programs into their program designs.

## **Evidence Tiers**

**No evidence** means the applicant has not provided evidence that they have systematically collected any qualitative or quantitative data on their own program to date.

Applicants in this tier must describe how their program design is evidence-informed. An evidence-informed program uses the best available knowledge, research and evaluation to guide program design and implementation, but does not have scientific research or rigorous evaluation of the program itself. Applicants may describe up to two research or evaluation studies of similar programs that inform their program design but may not submit these studies.

**Pre-preliminary evidence** means the applicant has demonstrated data collection experience testing or tracking at least one aspect of its logic model. For example, the applicant has collected systematic and accurate data on one or more of the following: the community problem the proposed intervention will address, the program intervention's activities and services delivered, participation in the intervention by the target population, and/or participant outcomes (e.g., performance measurement data or a process evaluation assessing implementation of the intervention.)

In order to qualify for this tier, the applicant must have collected data about their own program. The data collection process, methods and results must be described fully and the applicant should explain the link between data collection and the relevant component(s) of its logic model. Applicants that do not fully describe the data collection process, methods and results in the application narrative may be assessed as having no evidence. Applicants should describe evidence for the pre-preliminary tier in the Evidence section of the application but should not submit additional documents unless required to meet CNCS evaluation requirements. Evaluations submitted to comply with CNCS evaluation requirements will be reviewed only for compliance with evaluation requirements and will

not be considered when assessing this evidence tier. Evaluations submitted by applicants who were not required to submit evaluations will not be reviewed.

**Preliminary evidence** means the applicant has provided data from at least one outcome study of their own intervention that yielded promising results for the proposed intervention or that the applicant proposes to replicate a similar evidence-based intervention with fidelity to the evaluated program model. The ways to demonstrate preliminary level of evidence are as follows:

**Preliminary with Outcome Study** The applicant must describe at least one outcome study that was conducted of their own intervention. This must include a detailed description of the outcome study data from pre and post-tests without a comparison group or post-test comparison between intervention and comparison groups. In some cases a retrospective pre-post test may be considered, but its use must be justified in the application narrative. The applicant must explain whether the outcome study was conducted internally by the applicant organization or by an entity external to the applicant. Applicants must describe the studies fully but should not submit them unless required to meet CNCS evaluation requirements. Outcome evaluations that are submitted to fulfill the CNCS evaluation requirements will be reviewed for compliance with evaluation requirements and will not be considered when assessing this evidence tier. Outcome evaluations submitted by applicants who were not required to meet CNCS evaluation requirements will not be reviewed.

In addition to describing up to two outcome studies of their own program or intervention, applicants must fully describe the performance measurement data they have collected and how the outcome study data goes beyond performance measurement.

#### Preliminary with Replication

- The applicant must describe and submit at least one randomized controlled trial study or quasi-experimental evaluation (an evaluation using a statistically valid, matched comparison group) that found positive results for the same intervention that the applicant plans to replicate. The applicant must describe how the intervention studied and the applicant’s proposed approach are the same and how the applicant will replicate the intervention with fidelity to the program model. The study must have been conducted by an entity external to the organization whose program was studied. If applicable, applicants may also describe evidence from a process evaluation demonstrating that they have implemented the replication with fidelity. The process evaluation should be described but not submitted.
- Applicants who do not submit the required study or who do not describe fully how they will replicate the evidence-based program with fidelity will be considered for a lower tier.

For the purposes of this *Notice*, “replicate” means that the key elements of the applicant’s intervention are implemented as the evidence-based program model describes (e.g., in terms of content or curriculum, delivery process, and target population), and the applicant’s adaptations are relatively minor. For example, an applicant implementing an intervention using certified teachers to administer the curriculum would not be considered replicating that program with fidelity if it replaces teachers with AmeriCorps members who are not certified teachers, because the documented success of the intervention relied on the specialization of certified teachers.

Applicants proposing to replicate an evidence-based program with fidelity must describe how their program is the same as, or very similar to, the program they will replicate in the following areas:

- Characteristics of the beneficiary population
- Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention
- Dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention
- Training for the AmeriCorps members and/or other individuals, such as volunteers, delivering the intervention
- The context in which the intervention is delivered

- Outcomes of the intervention

Applicants must also describe how they will assess whether they are implementing the intervention with fidelity to the intervention they are replicating.

Applicants must be clear about whether the sites proposed in the application overlap with the sites included in an evaluation that would qualify them for the moderate or strong evidence tier. In cases where the applicant is part of a multi-site or multi-grant program (for example, a national program operating in multiple states) that has conducted an evaluation that would qualify them for the moderate or strong evidence tier, but the evaluation did not include the applicant's proposed sites, the applicant must describe how they are replicating the evidence-based program with fidelity at one of the sites included in the application. In this case, an application for sites included in the evaluation would receive moderate or strong evidence, and an application for the sites not included in the evaluation would receive preliminary evidence.

**Moderate evidence** means the applicant has submitted up to two well-designed and well-implemented studies of their own program that evaluated the same intervention described in this application and identified evidence of effectiveness on one or more key desired outcomes of interest as depicted in the applicant's logic model. Evidence of effectiveness (or positive findings) is determined using experimental design evaluations (i.e., Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT)) or Quasi-Experimental Design evaluations (QED) with statistically matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups. The ability to generalize the findings from the RCT or QED beyond the study context may be limited (e.g., single-site). The studies were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.

Applicants classifying their evidence as **Moderate** must submit up to two evaluation reports from external entities or evaluations published in peer-reviewed articles as separate attachments.

CNCS grantees re-competing for their third competitive grant cycle are required to submit an evaluation report of their CNCS funded program. The CNCS-required evaluation report may count towards one of the two studies required for the Moderate evidence tier or may be submitted in addition to this. In the latter case, all three studies will be considered against the review criteria.

If the applicant is not required to submit an evaluation report of their CNCS funded program, then more than two studies will not be considered.

Applicants must be clear about whether the sites proposed in the application overlap with the sites included in an evaluation that would qualify them for the moderate or strong evidence tier. In cases where the applicant is part of a multi-site or multi-grant program (for example, a national program operating in multiple states) that has conducted an evaluation that would qualify them for the moderate or strong evidence tier, but the evaluation did not include the applicant's proposed sites, the applicant must describe how they are replicating the evidence-based program with fidelity at one of the sites included in the application. In this case, an application for sites included in the evaluation would receive moderate or strong evidence, and an application for the sites not included in the evaluation would receive preliminary evidence.

**Strong evidence** means the applicant has demonstrated that the intervention described in the application has been tested nationally, regionally, or at the state-level (e.g., multi-site) using a well-designed and well-implemented QED or RCT of their own program. Alternatively, the proposed intervention's evidence may be based on multiple (up to two) well-designed and well-implemented QEDs or RCTs of their own program in different locations or with different populations within a local geographic area. The overall pattern of study findings is consistently positive on the key desired outcomes of interest as depicted in the applicant's logic model. Findings from the RCT or QED studies may be generalized beyond the study context. The studies were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.

Applicants classifying their evidence as **Strong** must submit up to two evaluation reports from external entities or evaluations published in peer-reviewed articles as separate attachments.

CNCS grantees re-competing for their third competitive grant cycle are required to submit an evaluation report of their CNCS funded program. The CNCS-required evaluation report may count towards one of the two studies required for the Strong evidence tier or may be submitted in addition to this. In the latter case, all three studies will be considered against the review criteria.

If the applicant is not required to submit an evaluation report of their CNCS funded program, then more than two studies will not be considered.

Applicants must be clear about whether the sites proposed in the application overlap with the sites included in an evaluation that would qualify them for the moderate or strong evidence tier. In cases where the applicant is part of a multi-site or multi-grant program (for example, a national program operating in multiple states) that has conducted an evaluation that would qualify them for the moderate or strong evidence tier, but the evaluation did not include the applicant's proposed sites, the applicant must describe how they are replicating the evidence-based program with fidelity at one of the sites included in the application. In this case, an application for sites included in the evaluation would receive moderate or strong evidence, and an application for the sites not included in the evaluation would receive preliminary evidence.

**Fixed Amount Grants:** These grants provide a fixed amount of funding per Member Service Year (MSY) that is substantially lower than the amount required to operate the program. Organizations use their own or other resources to cover the remaining costs. Programs are not required to submit budgets or financial reports, there is no specific match requirement, and programs are not required to track and maintain documentation of match. However, CNCS provides only a portion of the cost of running the program and organizations must raise the additional resources needed to run the program. Programs can access all of the funds, provided they recruit and retain the members supported under the grant based on the MSY level awarded. Professional Corps programs applying for operational funding through a Fixed Amount Grant must submit a budget in support of their request for operational funds.

- **Full-Time Fixed amount grants:** Fixed amount grants are available for programs that enroll full-time members or less than full-time members serving in a full time capacity only. Professional Corps may only have full-time members. Programs can access funds under the grant based on enrolling the full complement of members supported under the grant.
- **Education Award Grants (EAP) Fixed amount grant:** Programs apply for a small fixed amount per MSY, can enroll less than full-time members, and use their own resources to cover all other costs. Programs can access funds under the grant based on enrolling the full complement of members supported under the grant. As with full-time fixed amount grants, there are no specific match or financial reporting requirements for EAP fixed amount grants.

**Governor and Mayor Initiative:** CNCS will accept one application per state in each year's new and re-compete competition. If a state has a Governor and Mayor Initiative in continuation status, the State Commission can submit a new application. However, CNCS is interested in increasing the number of states that have Governor and Mayor(s)' Initiatives as well as funding high quality program designs.

The application must address a pressing challenge the governor wishes to solve in her or his state. A Governor must apply with one or more mayor(s) in his or her state and a minimum of two nonprofits. In conjunction with the mayor(s), the governor will be responsible for identifying and selecting the nonprofits that are best able to achieve a demonstrated positive impact on the problem. The application should include letters of support from all relevant parties. If the governor and mayor(s) have not yet selected partnering nonprofit entities, they should describe the process that the governor and mayor(s) will use to select the nonprofit entities. The application, submitted to the

State Commission, will respond to the application criteria and explain how two or more nonprofits working together, with the governor's office serving as a convener, will effectively deploy AmeriCorps members for a collective impact. Only the governor, mayor(s), their designated government offices (but not the State Commission), or a public institutions of higher education university may apply for grants under the Governor and Mayor Initiative. Applications from other entities will be deemed non-compliant and will not be considered under this initiative.

For example, a governor and a mayor in a state could conclude the most pressing challenge facing the state is its low school graduation rate. The governor and/or mayor would submit one application describing:

- How the partnership will be organized and AmeriCorps resources will be allocated between the partnering entities (state, locality, and nonprofit entities);
- The proposed theory of change and program model; and
- How they will utilize an identified consortium of nonprofits that are well positioned to achieve outcomes identified in the theory of change.

Applications submitted as part of the Governor and Mayor Initiative must check the "Governor and Mayor Initiative" box in the Performance Measure tab in CNCS's web-based management system. Applicants must also submit the following via email by the application deadline:

- A letter of support cosigned by the governor and mayor, and
  - Letters of support from each partnering nonprofit
- Letters must be submitted for new and recompeting applicants. Applicants should see the *Submission of Additional Documents* in the *Notice* for specific submission information and requirements.

**Learning Memo:** Any applicant required to submit an evaluation report in order to comply with CNCS evaluation requirements must also submit a learning memo that describes how they are using the evaluation to improve and to inform their activities in the next funding cycle. The learning memo must be in a 12-point font or larger and should not exceed three pages of double-spaced text. The learning memo should include:

- A short summary of key learnings from the evaluation
- An explanation of how the program will incorporate key learnings into its strategy, design or implementation
- An explanation of how these changes will improve the program
- A discussion of how learning from the evaluation may inform next steps in the program's long-term research agenda

**Member Service Location:** A member service location is the site at which an AmeriCorps member is placed to provide his/her service to the community.

**Member Service Year (MSY):** One Member Service Year (MSY) is equivalent to a full-time AmeriCorps position (at least 1,700 service hours.)

### **National Direct Applicants**

*Multi-state:* Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one state or territory apply directly to CNCS.

*Federally-recognized Indian Tribes:* Applicants that are Indian Tribes apply directly to CNCS (see the *Eligible Applicants* section in the *Notice*).

*State and Territories without Commissions:* Applicants in South Dakota, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands apply directly to CNCS because this State and Territories have not established a State Commission.

**Operating Site:** An operating site is the organization that manages the AmeriCorps program on behalf of the multi-state recipient of the grant from CNCS. A multi-state grantee must have an operating site in each state in which it has AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps members may be placed at the operating site, or an operating site may place AmeriCorps members at multiple member service locations. Multi-focused intermediaries may also have operating sites.

CNCS anticipates that applicants have a carefully considered plan for their project implementation and have identified operating sites based on demonstrated community needs. CNCS expects the sites proposed at the time of application to align with those involved in project implementation. However, if necessary, applicants can modify their list of operating sites during the clarification process or through an amendment to the application, if funded.

**Opportunity Youth:** Opportunity youth are economically disadvantaged individuals ages 16-24 who are disconnected from school or work for at least six months prior to service. CNCS defines “economically disadvantaged” consistent with the definition used in the member development performance measures, “Receiving or meet the income eligibility requirements to receive: Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamps (SNAP), Medicaid, SCHIP, Section 8 housing assistance.” CNCS defines “disconnected from school or work” as unemployed, underemployed, and not in school for at least six months prior to their term of national service. A member who was not economically disadvantaged prior to becoming an AmeriCorps member, but became economically disadvantaged because the living allowance was low enough to make them eligible for SNAP, etc., cannot be counted as economically disadvantaged. In order to apply under this priority the applicant must demonstrate the programmatic elements they will implement in order to recruit and support opportunity youth as members and/or program beneficiaries. A substantial portion of their requested MSYs must consist of or be devoted to serving opportunity youth.

**Other Revenue:** Funds necessary to operate an AmeriCorps program that are not CNCS funds or grantee share (match) identified in the budget. Programs should not enter the total operating budget for their organization unless the entire operating budget supports the AmeriCorps program. Programs that have additional revenue sources not included in the matching funds section of the budget should provide the amount of this additional revenue that supports the program. This amount should not include the CNCS or grantee share amounts in the budget. Fixed amount grantees should enter all non-CNCS funds that support the program in this field. All fixed grants will have other revenue.

- **Professional Corps:** A Professional Corps is a program model composed of AmeriCorps members serving as professionals; i.e. teachers, health care providers, police officers, engineers, attorneys, or other professionals. The programs recruit and place qualified members in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Professional Corps members’ salaries/compensation are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve, and are not included in the budget request to CNCS. In order to be considered for funding, applicants must demonstrate that there are an inadequate number of professionals in the community(ies) where the program seeks to place members. These grants can either be fixed amount or cost reimbursement grants.
- Applicants may propose any authorized program type. In the case that a proposed program fits more than one program type (e.g., a program could be either a professional corps or a traditional program). CNCS staff will make a determination as to program type that will be considered for funding. The determination will be based on data provided within the application and supplemental materials submitted with the application. The determination may be different from the program type proposed by the applicant.

**Prohibited Activities:** While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or CNCS, staff and members 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. 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 C. 7. above, unless CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
9. Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
10. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
11. Such other activities as CNCS may prohibit.

AmeriCorps members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-CNCS funds.

**Reducing and/or Preventing Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse:** CNCS is interested in any program models that seek to address the prescription drug and opioid abuse crisis in America.

**Retention Rate:** The AmeriCorps member retention rate is calculated as the number of members exited with education award (full or partial award) divided by the number of members enrolled.

**Rural Communities:** CNCS uses rural-urban commuting area (RUCA) codes to classify program addresses as either rural or urban for analytic purposes. RUCA codes classify U.S. census tracts using measures of population density, urbanization, and daily commuting. Census tracts with an urban cluster population less than 50,000 are considered rural (RUCA codes 4-10). Applicants are encouraged to designate themselves as serving rural communities if some or all service locations are in rural areas as defined by RUCA codes or if the program can

provide other compelling evidence that the program is rural in the narrative portion of the application. This self-designation will be considered in grant-making decisions.

For more information about RUCAs codes, please visit the USDA website found here:  
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-commuting-area-codes.aspx>

The Office of Grants Management uses Beale Codes when assessing alternative match requirements as the statute (45 CFR 2521.60(c)) requires it.

**Rural Intermediaries:** CNCS recognizes that severely under-resourced communities may have limited capacity to successfully apply for and implement an AmeriCorps program, due to the size and organizational capacity of eligible applicant/host site organizations or the lack of available matching funds in these communities. Thus it may be effective for a single eligible applicant (intermediary) to develop an application and oversee the implementation of an AmeriCorps program that engages multiple grassroots non-profits/eligible applicants (referred to as a consortium) that, individually, do not have the necessary organizational or fundraising capacity to apply for and run an AmeriCorps program. Given the desire to address community needs holistically, the nonprofits/eligible applicants that make up the consortium may have, but are not required to have, different focus areas (including the non-focus area capacity building) and thus the non profit/eligible applicant intermediary will be multi-focused.

Applicants seeking consideration under this priority must demonstrate that they will be serving in rural severely under-resourced communities; that their application represents a consortium, that the activities provided by the consortium collectively address a compelling community need or set of needs; and that they have sufficient financial and management capacity to act as an umbrella organization for the consortium. Applicants seeking consideration under this priority may submit a narrative that does not exceed 18 pages. Applicants should refer to the *Page Limits* section in the *Notice* for information specific to Multi-focus Intermediary requirements.

The eligible applicant (intermediary) should submit one application which describes:

- How the partnership/consortium will be organized and AmeriCorps resources will be allocated between the partnering entities (intermediary and consortium members).
- The proposed theory (ies) of change and program model(s).
- How the intermediary will utilize an identified consortium of nonprofits/eligible applicants who are well positioned to achieve outcomes identified in the theory of change.

Applicants must submit via email by the application deadline letters of support from all members of the consortium. See the *Submission of Additional Documents* Section in the *Notice* for specific submission information and requirements.

**Safer communities:** Activities that focus on public safety, preventing and mitigating civil unrest, and/or partnerships between police and community. CNCS is looking for program models that create, support, and initiate activities that provide opportunities for law enforcement and community members to become constructively engaged in building or re building public spaces and opportunities for constructive dialogue via sports and community team building such as block watch organizations. Some examples are summer programming or engaging communities that are part of The National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention and programs that are developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) (<http://www.iacp.org/Police-Foundations-Section>) such as programs that engage youth between the ages of 14-21 living in high crime areas of the city who have been identified as “leaders” in good and/or bad way. The youth are paired with School Resources Officers who meet with them several times during the week to engage them in a variety of leadership building exercises i.e., camping, rafting, community clean-up and much more.

**Same Project:** Two projects will be considered the same if they: address the same issue areas, address the same priorities, address the same objectives, serve the same target communities and population, or utilize the same sites.

Programs must get approval from their CNCS program officers to be considered a new project.

If an applicant is applying for a different program model (a new project), select New. Current and previous grantees need to get approval from their Program Officer to be considered a new project. CNCS will consider a project to be new if there is a meaningful difference between it and previous projects in a comparison of the following characteristics, among others: the objectives and priorities of the projects; the nature of the services provided; the program staff, participants, and volunteers involved; the geographic locations in which the services are provided; the populations served; and the proposed community partnerships. (§ 2522.340).

Requests to be considered a new project should include information about how the new project differs from the previous project in the characteristics noted above. The request should also include the proposed name of the new project. CNCS staff will review the request to determine if the proposed project does represent a meaningful difference from the previous project or if the proposed project is an example of natural program evolution over time. If it is determined that the project is new, the Program Officer will create a new project in eGrants.

**Single-State Applicants:** Single state applicants are organizations that propose to operate in only one state; they must apply through the Governor-appointed State or Territory Commissions. Each state and territory commission administers its own selection process and submits to CNCS the applicants it selects to compete for funding. Single-State applicants must contact their State Commissions to learn about their state or territory processes and deadlines which may be significantly *earlier* than the CNCS deadlines and may have additional requirements. The list of State and Territory Commissions can be found here: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions>.

A single-state application submitted directly to CNCS by the applicant rather than the State Commission will be considered noncompliant and will not be reviewed.

**Unallowable Activities:** In addition to the *Prohibited Activities*, the following restrictions also apply to the service of AmeriCorps members:

**Nonduplication.**

Corporation assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program. And, unless there is nondisplacement, Corporation assistance will not be provided to a private nonprofit entity to conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities provided by a State or local government agency in which such entity resides.

**Nondisplacement.**

- (1) An employer may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the use by such employer of a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance.
- (2) An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance.
- (3) A service opportunity will not be created under this chapter that will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual.
- (4) A participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance may not perform any services or duties or engage in activities that would otherwise be performed by an employee as part of the assigned duties of such employee.
- (5) A participant in any program receiving assistance may not perform any services or duties, or engage in activities, that—
  - (i) Will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or
  - (ii) Are services, duties, or activities with respect to which an individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures.

- (6) A participant in any program receiving assistance may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any—
- (i) Presently employed worker;
  - (ii) Employee who recently resigned or was discharged;
  - (iii) Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures;
  - (iv) Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick); or
  - (v) Employee who is on strike or who is being locked out.

# SECTION IV: CNCS APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Application Instructions for Targeted Priority applicants can be accessed through the following link:

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2018%20AmeriCorps%20Application%20Instructions-%20Targeted%20Priority.pdf>

# SECTION V: CNCS 2018 Performance Measures Instructions

2018 Performance Measures instructions can be accessed through the following link:

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2018%20Performance%20Measures%20Instructions%20Final.pdf>