

2018 – 2019
MICHIGAN’S AMERICORPS
CONCEPT PAPER GUIDELINES
FOR NEW & RECOMPETING APPLICANTS



IMPORTANT DUE DATES:

Intent to Apply forms must be received by the MCSC by **September 22, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.**

Intent to Apply forms should be submitted to

bennettk12@michigan.gov.

Concept Paper Applications must be received by **October 4, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.**

Concept Paper Applications should be submitted to

bennettk12@michigan.gov.

For more information: www.michigan.gov/mcsc

If you have additional questions, please contact:

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Notice of Intent to Apply: Submission of a Notice of Intent to Apply is **required to be eligible for this competition** and is due **Friday, September 22, 2017** at 5:00 p.m. EST via e-mail to bennettk12@michigan.gov.

Concept Paper Deadline: Concept paper applications are due **Wednesday, October 4, 2017** at 5:00 p.m. EST. Concept paper applications should be submitted via email to at bennettk12@michigan.gov.

OVERVIEW

AmeriCorps is a national network of service programs designed to engage thousands of Americans on a full- or part-time basis to help communities address their toughest challenges. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) administers AmeriCorps at the federal level and works in partnership with states to develop service programs and to create a community-based national service network. CNCS seeks to fund AmeriCorps programs that address goals in the areas of disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, services for veterans and military families. Programs must demonstrate community impact and solve community problems through an evidence-based approach (e.g. performance data, research, theory of change).

The Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC) is the administrative agent for Michigan's AmeriCorps programs receiving CNCS funding. The MCSC utilizes service as a strategy to address the state's most pressing issues and empowers volunteers to strengthen communities. For more information on the MCSC, including currently funded programs, please visit our website at www.michigan.gov/mcsc.

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.

In order to maximize the impact of the public investment in national service, CNCS will provide grants to programs that demonstrate that they will engage AmeriCorps members in an evidence-based or evidence-informed 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 shall provide evidence that the proposed intervention is effective for the proposed population and community challenge.

CNCS requires that programs co-brand as AmeriCorps programs and that their participants consistently identify, and are recognized, as AmeriCorps members providing value to the community. Applicants will be asked to provide their implementation plans to ensure that this occurs.

Applicants may be asked to respond to additional and/or different application questions in the comprehensive application (due December 14, 2017) if the applicant's concept is successful in the first phase of review.

A. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1. Purpose of AmeriCorps funding

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations (see *Eligibility* 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:

- Disaster Services - improving community resiliency through disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation
- Economic Opportunity - increasing economic opportunities for communities by engaging opportunity youth, either as the population served and/or as AmeriCorps members, to prepare them for the workforce
- Education - improving student academic performance in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Mathematics (STEM)
- Healthy Futures - reducing and/or preventing prescription drug and opioid abuse
- Veterans and Military Families - positively impacting the quality of life of veterans and improving military family strength
- Governor and Mayor Initiatives
- Rural intermediaries - organizations that demonstrate measurable impact and primarily serve communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure.
- Safer Communities - programs that focus on public safety, preventing and mitigating civil unrest, and/or partnerships between law enforcement and the community
- Encore Programs - programs that engage Americans age 55 and older

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.

B. AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimated Available Funds

CNCS and MCSC expect a highly competitive AmeriCorps grant competition. MCSC expects to award new, re-competing, and continuation AmeriCorps grants. The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

2. Estimated Award Amount

Awards will be for operating funds and AmeriCorps member positions. The MCSC and/or CNCS will review applications and determine the appropriate award amount, if any. 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. The concept paper 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. Types of Grants

AmeriCorps grants can be awarded on a cost reimbursement or fixed amount basis. CNCS will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year (see *Definitions* section).

Fixed-amount grants are only available to re-competing programs. New applicants are not eligible to apply for fixed amount grants.

C. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

1. Eligible Applicants

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

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

Previously receiving funds from CNCS or another federal agency is not a prerequisite to apply to this *Notice*.

New Applicants

CNCS encourages organizations that have never received funding from CNCS to apply. The general practice is to award at least 20 member positions (slots) but no more than 50 member positions (slots) to organizations receiving an AmeriCorps grant for the first time. *The MCSC will entertain applications for as few as 10 member positions, but they will only be considered for formula funding.*

New applicants are eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement and Education Award Program (EAP) grants but not eligible to apply for Full Time Fixed Amount grants. Existing subgrantees/operating sites of Fixed Amount and Cost Reimbursement grantees that can demonstrate a track record and capacity to manage a Fixed Amount grant are considered to have AmeriCorps experience and therefore can apply for Fixed Amount grants. School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants may not apply for Full Time Fixed Amount grants.

2. Threshold Requirements

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

- All applicants should request at least 20 member slots.
- 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 full-time or less than full-time positions will be serving in a full-time capacity.
- 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.¹ A similar restriction may be enacted with the appropriation which will fund awards under this *Notice*.

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. MEMBER ELIGIBILITY, RECRUITMENT, AND SELECTION

1. Term of Service

Programs may engage members on a full- or less than full-time basis. Regardless of the type of service term, the maximum time limit is one calendar year. The following slots can be utilized:

Slot Type	Minimum Number of Hours	MSY Conversion
Full-Time	1700 (during a period of not less than nine months and not more than one year)	1.0 MSY
Half-Time	900	0.5 MSY
Reduced Half-Time	675	0.38 MSY

¹ 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.

Quarter-Time	450	0.27 MSY
Minimum-Time	300	0.21 MSY

2. Member Eligibility

At the time of enrollment in a Michigan’s AmeriCorps program, members must:

- Be at least 17 years of age;
- Possess a high school diploma or its equivalent, or agree to obtain a high school diploma or equivalent prior to using the education award;
- Not have dropped out of elementary or secondary school;
- Be a U.S. citizen, a U.S. national, or lawful permanent resident alien; and
- Meet the task-related eligibility requirements established by the program.

3. Selection

Each individual program selects its own Michigan’s AmeriCorps members, and the selection criteria may vary among programs. Programs must select members in a non-partisan, non-political, non-discriminatory manner that is in accordance with State and Federal equal employment opportunity laws. Programs must establish minimum qualifications for members related to the service they will provide, including the successful completion of an AmeriCorps orientation period. Programs must ensure they do not displace any existing paid employees.

Programs with members who will have substantial direct contact with children or individuals considered vulnerable by the program, shall conduct criminal history checks on these members as part of the screening process.

The MCSC encourages programs to select members who possess leadership potential and a commitment to the goals of the AmeriCorps program, regardless of education level, work experience, or economic background. The MCSC also encourages programs to consider selecting some members from state and national recruitment systems in order to supplement local recruitment with people who (1) are from different backgrounds and regions of the nation, (2) have special skills or training, and (3) desire to serve but live in areas where there are few or no national service programs. Plans for effective member selection should be reflected in the AmeriCorps application.

4. Recruitment Tools and Resources:

MCSC and CNCS have a variety of tools available for programs to enhance their own recruitment efforts, including a national, web-based recruitment system.

5. Reasonable Accommodations for Disabilities

Increasing the participation of people with disabilities in national service programs is a key interest of the CNCS. All AmeriCorps programs are encouraged to actively reach out to and include people with disabilities. Programs and activities must be accessible. Programs must provide reasonable accommodation for known mental or physical disabilities of otherwise qualified members, service recipients, applicants, and program staff. All selections and project assignments must be made without regard to the need to provide reasonable accommodations. The vast majority of accommodations are inexpensive.

6. Participation in National Days of Service

As part of the national service network, there are a number of opportunities for programs to take part in related to national days of service. The MCSC and CNCS expect all national service programs, including AmeriCorps programs, to participate in one or more days of service, including the 9-11 National Day of

Service and Remembrance, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, National AmeriCorps Week, National Volunteer Week, and Global Youth Service Day. National days of service represent one way for programs to engage volunteers.

7. Program Monitoring and Management Responsibilities

Certain program models may make monitoring and program management a particular challenge for organizations. These include programs that are spread out geographically and programs that attempt to address many issue areas at once. If a program design includes one of these challenges, the program should address it specifically in their application and provide specific strategies for monitoring and management. Strategies may include: recruiting and enrolling members who can work independently; providing appropriate orientation, ongoing training, and a means of regular communication; selecting strong host sites; ensuring strong support from direct-line supervision of members; and narrowing the range of tasks members perform to make monitoring easier.

If approved for an AmeriCorps grant, the organization is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of grant-supported activities. Activities must be in compliance with applicable federal requirements and address performance goals. Monitoring needs to cover each program, function, or activity. The organization is responsible for ensuring program quality and that the program has an impact on the problems facing the communities in which it operates. This includes monitoring the member services, including the timely and accurate documentation of member eligibility and service hours. Each program should develop systems that closely track and monitor these requirements.

8. Program Reporting

Michigan's AmeriCorps programs must comply with all reporting required by the MCSC, including quarterly progress reports, monthly expenditure reports, member hours tracking forms, continuous improvement surveys, and member enrollment, termination, and end-of-term-of-service forms. Programs are required to use an MCSC designated on-line reporting system for all aspects of reporting.

9. Michigan's AmeriCorps Program Director Meetings

Michigan's AmeriCorps program directors must participate in regularly scheduled monthly program directors' meetings and conference calls.

10. MCSC Trainings and Special Events

Michigan's AmeriCorps staff and members are strongly encouraged to participate in all MCSC sponsored program trainings and service events, including the annual Michigan's AmeriCorps Member Celebration and Regional Russ Mawby Signature Service Projects. In addition, organizational leaders are required to attend an annual meeting to discuss sustainability and national service issues.

E. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. 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](#).

2. Funding Restrictions

a. Member Living Allowance

A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage. Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time terms of service. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time member, it must comply with the maximum limits in the table below. 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 1: 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
One-year Half-time	900	n/a	\$14,539
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	\$10,905
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$7,270
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$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 State Commission sub-grantees/applicants will be held to the maximum cost per MSY for their grant type.

Table 2: 2017 Maximum Cost Per MSY

Grant Program	Maximum
Individual Competitive State/Territory Program (cost reimbursement)	\$14,932*
Multi-state (cost reimbursement)	\$14,932*
Professional Corps Grant (Cost Reimbursement)	\$1,000**
Professional Corps Fixed Amount Grant	\$1,000*
Education Award Program Fixed Amount Grant	\$800
Full-time 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.*

c. Amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award for FY 2018

AmeriCorps members serving in programs funded with FY 2018 dollars who successfully complete a term of service will receive an education award from the National Service Trust. The amount of a full-time education award is equivalent to the maximum value of the Pell Grant for the award year in which the term of national service is approved. CNCS will provide the updated Education Award amounts at the time of grant award.

The amount of the Pell Grant can change every year. Therefore, the amount of a full-time award can change in the future. However, once a member earns an award, the dollar value of that particular award will not increase. For all programs, award amounts for part-time terms of service vary based upon the length of the required term of service.

d. Member Enrollment Requirements for Existing Grantees

Grantees are expected to enroll all the members included in their grant award. Enrollment rates have a direct bearing on the number of slots and the size of awards approved in the continuation and re-compete processes. Continuation and re-competing Grantees that have not achieved full enrollment in the previous

year must provide an explanation and a corrective action plan in their application. Successful applicants that do not fully enroll are likely to receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years.

e. Member Retention Requirements for Existing Grantees

Grantees are expected to pursue the highest retention rate possible. Retention rates will have a direct bearing on the number of slots and the size of awards approved in the continuation and re-compete processes. Successful applicants that do not retain their members are likely to receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years. We recognize retention rates may vary among equally effective programs depending on the program model. Continuation or re-competing Grantees that have not achieved full retention in the most recently completed program year must provide an explanation and a corrective action plan in their application.

f. Generating Volunteers

A fundamental purpose of AmeriCorps is to help recruit, support, and manage volunteers that meet community needs. By creating volunteer opportunities and helping organizations to effectively engage volunteers, AmeriCorps programs multiply their impact, build organizational capacity, and support the development of sustainable programs. All Michigan's AmeriCorps programs are required to recruit volunteers and report on volunteer recruitment to the MCSC. Each program is required to recruit a minimum of 20 volunteers per MSY.

AmeriCorps programs are given great flexibility to determine the best approach for the effective involvement of volunteers and can deploy AmeriCorps members in a wide variety of ways to support volunteer recruitment and management. Members may be responsible for enlisting, training, and/or coordinating volunteers. They may help an organization to develop effective volunteer management systems that include clear position descriptions, screening techniques, and/or volunteer policy & procedure manuals. Members may promote retention of volunteers by planning recognition events or providing ongoing support and follow-up to ensure volunteers have a high quality experience. Members may assist an organization in reaching out to individuals & communities of different backgrounds when encouraging volunteerism, to ensure a breadth of experiences and expertise is represented in service activities.

MCSC's expectation is that volunteers will be engaged in ways that support the mission of the AmeriCorps program in which members serve. The involvement of volunteers should enhance or build upon any direct service goals of the program or organization of which the AmeriCorps members are a part.

Volunteers may be engaged on national days of service such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service (January), 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance (September), and Global Youth Service Day (April). In the case of national days of service, the program may propose service activities outside the normal focus of the grant.

Volunteer recruitment and management is not intended to replace direct service activities of AmeriCorps members.

If an applicant believes it is unable to include volunteer recruitment and management as part of their program, either because of the program model or for any other reason, the applicant must request a waiver in their application. The waiver must state specific reasons why this requirement would require a fundamental alteration of the program structure. The explanation will be considered during the grant application review process.

g. Match Requirements
Fixed amount Grants

There is no specific match requirement for fixed amount grants, but CNCS does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program. Organizations must raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.

Cost Reimbursement Grants (non-fixed amount)

A first-time successful applicant is required to match at 24 percent of the total program cost 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.

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 the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, 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 the Federal Financial Report. Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year.

The living allowance or salary provided to AmeriCorps members in Professional Corps programs 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.

h. 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.

F. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. How to Apply

Organizations that propose to operate in a single state apply directly to the State Commission for the state in which they will operate. In Michigan, this is the Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC). Single-state applicants must follow the state-specific deadlines and application instructions as detailed in

these guidelines. Organizations that propose to operate in more than one state apply directly to CNCS. Organizations in states and territories without commissions apply directly to CNCS.

a. Notice of Intent to Apply (Required for concept paper and application submission)

Applicants are **required** to send a Notice of Intent to Apply by **September 22, 2017**. Notifications should be sent by e-mail to bennettk12@michigan.gov with the subject: *AmeriCorps State Notice of Intent*. MCSC will not consider notifications received after the deadline. Failure to submit a Notice of Intent to Apply will render an applicant ineligible to apply. The Notice of Intent to Apply helps MCSC plan more efficiently for external review. *Applicants should use the Intent to Apply Form on p. 27 of these guidelines.*

b. Submission Dates and Times

The deadline for submitting concept paper applications is 5:00 p.m. EST on October 4, 2017. MCSC will not consider applications received after the deadline, except when noted below. MCSC reserves the right to extend the submission deadline and any notice of such extended deadline will be posted publicly. This deadline applies to new and re-competing applicants.

c. Late Applications

MCSC may, at its discretion, consider an application received after the deadline, but only if the applicant submits a letter to bennettk12@michigan.gov explaining the extenuating circumstance that caused the delay. Communication with MCSC staff (including an assigned program officer) is not a substitution for sending this letter. The letter must be received no later than one business day after the application deadline.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

a. Submitting the Concept Paper Application via Email

The initial concept paper application is due via email as described above on **October 4, 2017**.

- First round concept papers must be submitted in a Word document, double-spaced, one inch margins, and size 12 Times New Roman font
- Submit a budget using the excel budget template
- Submit a completed Financial Management Survey
- Submit a copy of your latest audit

**All forms can be found on the Michigan Community Service web site www.michigan.gov/mcsc*

b. Submitting the Comprehensive Application

Applications that are successful in the initial external and internal review process must be submitted by **December 14, 2017**. MCSC staff will provide additional instructions in advance of that due date. The MCSC refers to these applications as “comprehensive applications” and will provide additional technical assistance prior to submission.

3. Page Limits

*Concept Paper Applications may not exceed **nine (9) pages for new applicants and ten (10) pages for re-competing applicants. This does not include the title page.*** Reviewers will not consider submitted material that is over the page limit. Do not submit non-required supplemental materials such as videos, DVDs, brochures, letters of support. These items will not be reviewed or returned.

G. CONCEPT PAPER AND APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Assessment 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.

NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

A. Title Page (use form provided)

B. Program Design

1. Need

Describe the community need(s) the AmeriCorps members will be addressing. Provide documented and relevant data about the prevalence and severity of the need(s) in the community(ies) where your proposed AmeriCorps members will serve.

2. Theory of Change / Evidence-Based/Evidence-Informed and Measurable Community Impact

Describe how the intervention is designed to address the problem described in the previous section and what evidence there is to support that the intervention will lead to the outcomes identified. Why should CNCS/MCSC invest in this project?

Please state the proposed outcomes clearly, and provide evidence that the proposed intervention will lead to the proposed outcomes. Provide a description of the studies and/or evaluations conducted that provide evidence that the proposed intervention is effective for the proposed population and community challenge.

Please describe:

- Number of locations or sites in which members are providing direct services
- Number of AmeriCorps members that will be delivering the intervention or program model
- The proposed intervention to respond to identified community problem(s)
- The rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention(s)
- 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 core activities of AmeriCorps members and leveraged volunteers in implementing or delivering the intervention
- The expected outputs and outcomes and how they represent meaningful progress in addressing identified community need(s)
- The indicators & data collection tools that will be used to measure & track program outcomes

3. Member Experience

Training: What are the anticipated training topics and the timeline for member training? Please describe how long the training will last, who will provide the training, and how the program will ensure that it adequately prepares members for their service activities.

Meaningful service experience: Describe how the program will provide a meaningful service experience that includes education about the identified community problem/need and the community in which they serve..

C. Organizational Capability

1. Organizational Background and Staffing

Describe how the organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program.

2. Past Performance For Current Grantees & Former Grantees Only (Recompeting applicants)

Describe the applicant's performance against performance measure targets during its last three years of program operations. How successful has the applicant been in solving the identified problem? If the applicant did not meet performance targets, provide an explanation and describe the plan for improvement.

Enrollment: Please state the program's enrollment rate for the last full year of operation. If the program enrolled less than 100% of the slots received during its last full year of program operation, provide an explanation and describe the plan for improvement. Enrollment rate is calculated as slots filled, plus refill slots filled, divided by slots awarded.

Retention: Please state the program's retention rate for the last full year of operation. If the applicant was not able to retain all of its members during the last full year of program operation, provide an explanation and describe the plan for improvement. While CNCS recognizes retention rates may vary among effective programs depending on the program model, the expectation is that Grantees pursue the highest retention rate possible. Retention rate is calculated as the number of members exited with award (full or partial award) divided by the number of members enrolled.

3. Member Supervision

Describe how AmeriCorps members will receive sufficient guidance and support from their supervisor, and how AmeriCorps supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations.

Please note: This is the end of the narrative portion of your application. Below begins the instructions for completing the required budget to accompany your narrative.

BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS

Please submit a budget in Excel as a separate attachment from the narrative questions above. Please utilize the Budget Narrative Template, which can be accessed at www.michigan.gov/mcsc/0,4608,7-137-8074-333304--,00.html.

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.

- 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.

Before You Begin: Your detailed budget must provide a full explanation of associated costs including the purpose, justification, and the basis of your calculations. Where appropriate, your calculations should be presented in an equation format, identifying the number of persons involved with the event, per person/unit cost, and/or the annual salary cost.

Summary of Statutory Budget Requirements: Equipment costs must not exceed 10% of the total federal share. Administrative costs must not exceed 5% of the total CNCS funds requested.

Consistency of Treatment: To be allowable under this award, costs must be consistent with policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both federally financed and other activities of the applicant. Furthermore, the costs must be accorded consistent treatment in both federally financed and other activities as well as between activities supported by different sources of federal funds.

SECTION I: PROGRAM OPERATING COSTS

- A. **Personnel Expenses:** Include the portion of principal staff time attributed directly to the operation of the AmeriCorps program. List each staff position percentage of time attributable to program and wage calculation. *Note that all programs are required to have at least one full-time equivalent staff person dedicated to the operation of the program.* Any exception to this rule must be approved by MCSC.
- B. **Personnel Fringe Benefits:** Include costs of benefit(s) for your project staff. You can identify and calculate each benefit or show cost as a percentage of all salaries. Please provide cost calculations for benefits, such as FICA, health, retirement, etc., separately rather than as one lump sum item.
- C. **Staff Travel:** Describe the purposes for staff travel. Costs allowable are transportation (\$.535 maximum/mile – 2017 rates), lodging, subsistence, and other related expenses for local and outside the project area travel. All travel and mileage rates must not be greater than the most recent State of Michigan travel reimbursement rates, as well as consistent with the organization’s travel policy. Please refer to the most current DTMB schedule of travel rates at http://www.michigan.gov/dtmb/0,5552,7-150-9141_13132---,00.html.

Be sure to include the following:

- 1.) The costs associated with traveling to five program director meetings in Lansing.
- 2.) \$2,000 for travel for at least one staff member to attend the CNCS sponsored technical assistance meetings. The description should be exactly as follows:
Out of State Travel to CNCS-Sponsored Meetings: Conference 4 nights, hotel @\$139 avg. gov rate + tax (per Conlin Travel) = \$150/nt x 4 nts=\$600; airfare \$450; Food-\$29.25 (B-fast @ \$8.25 + Dinner @ \$21) x 5 days = \$146; cab fare @ \$100RT; mileage to airport RT @ 373.8 miles x .535 (premium state rate travel) = \$200 conf. reg. fee @\$504 = \$2000

- D. **Member Travel:** Describe the purpose for which members will travel. Costs allowable under this category are transportation (see above for travel rate information), lodging, meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) during events/ trainings, and other related expenses for members to travel outside their service location or between sites. Costs associated with traveling locally, such as bus passes to local sites, mileage reimbursement for use of car, etc., may be included in this category. Each applicant should budget for LeaderCorps representative to attend two statewide meetings (one in Lansing and one in northern Michigan), and specifically state this in the budget narrative. Applicants need only budget mileage and incidentals. Each applicant must also include all necessary travel costs for members to attend a statewide Lansing held Member Celebration and mileage for a regional service project.
- E. **Equipment:** Equipment is defined as tangible, non-expendable personal property having a useful life of more than one year AND an acquisition cost of \$5,000 (five thousand) or more per unit (including accessories, attachments, and modifications). Include items that do not meet this definition in the *Supplies* section below. Purchases of equipment are limited to 10% of the total grant amount (i.e., the federal share of all budget line items). If applicable, show the unit cost and number of units you are requesting.
- F. **Supplies:** Include the funds for the purchase of consumable supplies and materials, including Member Service Gear (uniform) and equipment that does not fit the definition above. You must individually list any single item costing \$1,000 (one thousand) or more. Programs are required to purchase all members a basic AmeriCorps uniform package (such as a t-shirt, sweatshirt, hat, lapel pin, and button). All applicants must budget a uniform package (minimum of \$35.00 and maximum of \$70.00 per member). List what the uniform package includes and the total cost per package. Any exception to this rule must be approved by the MCSC. Programs should supply items that are best suited to the type of services provided by members.
- G. **Contractual and Consultant Services:** Applicants may include costs for consultants related to the project's operations. Consultants used for evaluation should be included in H. Evaluation below. Payments to individuals for consultant services under this grant may not exceed \$750 per day (exclusive of any indirect expenses, travel, supplies, etc.). Where applicable, indicate the daily rate for consultants.
- H. **Staff Training:** These costs are considered registration fees and should be listed as such along with the costs associated with training of staff working directly on the project; especially training that specifically enhances staff project implementation and professional skills (e.g., project or financial management, team building, etc). Indicate daily rates of consultants, where applicable.
- I. **Member Training:** These costs are also considered registration fees and **MUST** be listed as such along with the costs associated with the training of members that will support them in carrying out their service activities (e.g., orientation, project-specific skills and knowledge such as age-appropriate tutoring, CPR, ecosystems in the environment, Life After AmeriCorps, etc.). Indicate daily rates of consultants, where applicable.

All applicants must budget registration fees for members to attend statewide MCSC-sponsored training. This is a \$75 registration fee per full-time member and should be listed as such, and \$40 registration fee per half-time, reduced half-time, quarter-time, and minimum-time member. Please note that you will be invoiced early in the program year for the total amount budgeted. This invoice is payable upon receipt.

This should be its own line item within this section and should be represented as follows (insert the

number of members granted to your program in the calculation and show the total costs associated):
(# members * \$75 reg. fee) + (# members * \$40 reg. fee) = \$### to attend statewide member training

- J. **Evaluation:** Include costs for project evaluation activities, including additional staff time or subcontracts you did not budget under A. *Personnel Expenses*, use of evaluation consultants, purchase of instrumentation and other costs specifically for this activity. This *does not* include the daily/weekly gathering of data to assess progress toward project objectives, but is a larger assessment of the *impact* your project is having on the community, as well as an assessment of the overall systems and project design. Indicate daily rates of consultants, where applicable.
- K. **Other Operating Costs:** Allowable costs in this category are criminal FBI background checks of members. In addition, these costs may include office space rental for sites where projects are operating, utilities, and telephone and internet expenses that are specifically used for AmeriCorps members, directly involve AmeriCorps program staff, and are not part of the organization's indirect cost/admin cost. If shared with other projects or activities, you must prorate the costs equitably. List each item and provide a justification in the budget narrative.

Match:

Describe the grantee match contribution for Section I by clearly indicating the source(s), the type of contribution (cash or in-kind), the amount (or estimate), and the intended purpose of the match. Applicants may enter this information in any category in the Purpose-Calculation field.

SECTION II: MEMBER COSTS

A. Living Allowance:

The narrative should clearly identify the number of members the program will support by category (e.g., full-time, half-time, reduced-half-time, quarter-time, minimum-time) and the amount of living allowance they will receive, allocating appropriate portions between the CNCS and grantee match based on other funding sources.

Members: Enter the total number of members the applicant is requesting in each category. Enter the amount of the living allowance for each type of member. Enter the number of members for which the applicant is not requesting funds for a living allowance, but for which the applicant is requesting education awards.

Calculating the Living Allowance: Generally, all full-time members must receive a living allowance between \$13,732 (minimum) and \$27,464 (maximum). You are not required to provide living allowances for members serving less than full-time.

Projects in existence prior to Sept. 21, 1993 when the National & Community Service Trust Act of 1993 was enacted may offer a living allowance lower than the minimum (\$12,630) to full-time members.

B. Member Support Costs:

Consistent with the laws of your state, you must provide members with the benefits described below.

FICA: Unless exempted by the IRS with accompanying documentation, all projects must pay FICA for any member receiving a living allowance, even when the Corporation does not supply the living allowance. In the first column next to FICA, indicate the number of members who will receive FICA. Calculate the FICA at 7.65% of the total amount of the living allowance.

Worker's Compensation: Worker's compensation is required for Michigan's AmeriCorps members

(if you are not required to pay worker's compensation you must obtain Occupational, Accidental, Death and Dismemberment coverage for members to cover in-service injury or incidents).

Health Insurance: The program must offer health care benefits to full-time members in accordance with AmeriCorps requirements. Except as stated below the program may not pay health care benefits to half-time members with CNCS funds. The program may choose to provide health care benefits to half-time members from other sources. Half-time members who are serving in a full-time capacity for a sustained period of time (such as a full-time summer project) may be eligible for health care benefits supported with program funds. However, CNCS must either approve this in the grant agreement or by prior written approval. In the budget narrative, indicate the number of members who will receive the project's existing health care benefits. CNCS funds cannot be used to pay for dependent coverage.

Other: Include any other required member support costs here.

**Note: Michigan does not require programs to budget for unemployment costs.*

Match: Describe the grantee match contribution for Member Costs by clearly indicating the source(s), the type of contribution (cash or in-kind), the amount (or estimate), and the intended purpose of the match. You can enter this information in the Purpose/Category field in section *B. Member Support Costs*.

SECTION III: ADMINISTRATIVE / INDIRECT COSTS

Definition:

Administrative costs are general or centralized expenses of the overall administration of an organization that receives CNCS funds and do not include particular project costs. These costs may include administrative staff positions. For organizations that have an established indirect cost rate for federal awards, administrative costs mean those costs that are included in the organization's indirect cost rate agreement. Such costs are generally identified with the organization's overall operation and are further described in Office of Management and Budget Circulars A-21, A-87, and A-122. For organizations that do not have an established indirect cost rate for federal awards, administrative costs include:

- Costs for financial, accounting, auditing, contracting, or general legal services, except in unusual cases whether they are specifically approved in writing by the Corporation as project costs;
- Costs for internal evaluation, including overall organization's management improvement costs (except for independent and internal evaluations of the project evaluations that are specifically related to creative methods of quality improvement); and
- Costs for general liability insurance that protects the organization(s) responsible for operating a project, other than insurance costs solely attributable to the project.

Administrative costs may also include that portion of salaries and benefits of the program's director and other administrative staff not attributable to the time spent in support of a specific project. The principles that pertain to the allocation and documentation of personnel costs are stated in the OMB circulars that are incorporated in CNCS regulations [45 CFR 2541.220(b)].

Administrative costs ***do not*** include the following allowable expenses directly related to a project (including their operations and objectives), such as:

- allowable direct charges for members, including living allowances, insurance payments made on behalf of members, training, and travel;
- costs for staff (including salary, benefits, training, and travel) who recruit, train, place, or supervise members or who develop materials used in such activities, if the purpose is for a specific project objective;

- costs for independent evaluations and any internal evaluations of the project that are related specifically to creative methods of quality improvement;
- costs, excluding those already covered in an organization's indirect cost rate, attributable to staff that work in a direct project support, operational, or oversight capacity, including, but not limited to: support staff whose functions directly support project activities;
- staff who coordinate and facilitate single or multi-site project activities; and
- staff who review, disseminate, and implement CNCS guidance and policies directly relating to a project; space, facility, and communications costs that primarily support program operations, excluding those costs that are already covered by an organization's indirect costs rate; and other allowable costs, excluding those costs that are already covered by an organization's indirect cost rate, specifically approved by CNCS as directly attributable to a program.

Indirect Cost Rates

If grantees have an approved indirect cost rate, such rate will constitute documentation of the grantee's administrative costs including the 5.26% maximum payable by CNCS and the grantee match of administrative costs.

If a grantee wants to claim more than 10% match in administrative costs it must have or obtain an approved indirect cost rate. Where appropriate, CNCS will establish an indirect cost rate that may be used for this and other Federal awards.

As per federal guidelines, the Michigan Community Service Commission will set aside a portion of the federal administrative share to use in administering its sub-grantees, equal to approximately 1% of the total budget. This amount must not exceed 20% of the maximum 5.26% federal share and, therefore, the sub-grantee's portion must not exceed 80% of the maximum federal share. The calculations are below.

Options for Calculating Administrative/Indirect Costs (choose either A OR B)

Applicants may choose to use one of two methods to calculate allowable administrative costs – a Corporation fixed percentage method or a federally approved indirect cost rate method. Regardless of the option chosen, the Corporation's share of administrative costs is limited by statute to 5.26% of the total Corporation funds *actually expended* under this grant.

Please note – applicants are not required to budget for administrative/indirect costs. However, the applicant is required to budget for the CNCS Commission Fixed Amount, as described in Option A.d. below.

Option A: Corporation Fixed Percentage Method

The Corporation fixed rate allows you to charge administrative costs up to a cap without a federally approved indirect cost rate and without documentation supporting the allocation. You may charge, for administrative costs, a fixed 5.26% of the total of the Corporation (CNCS) funds **expended**. In order to charge this fixed 5.26%, the grantee match for administrative costs may not exceed 10% of all direct cost expenditures. The allocation budgeted and claimed *should not exceed actual expenses*.

However, because the MCSC requires 1% of each grantee's CNCS administrative costs to be set aside from the reimbursable grant award, each grantee regardless of grant award type is only allowed to charge up to 4.20% of the total of the Corporations funds expended (a.) and will need to follow the instructions below even if you have a federally approved indirect cost rate. The federally approved indirect cost rate may be budgeted under the Administrative/Indirect Costs (Option B below) not to exceed a reimbursement rate of 4.21%.

- a) To allocate the *CNCS share* of this amount (called Corporation Fixed Amount on the budget: Multiply the sum of the CNCS shares of Sections I and II by 5.26% (i.e. 0.0526) x .80 (this is the same as

- 4.20%). This is the maximum amount that you can request as the CNCS share of administrative costs. Enter this amount as the CNCS share for Section III, in the line item **Corporation Fixed Amount**.
- To allocate the *Grantee share* of this amount: If applicable, multiply the total (both CNCS and grantee shares) for of Sections I and II by 10% (0.10). This is the maximum amount you can enter as the grantee share for Section III A, in the line item Corporation Fixed Amount.
 - Enter the sum of the CNCS and grantee shares under Total Amount.
 - To allocate the CNCS Commission Fixed Amount of administrative costs: Multiply the sum of the CNCS shares of Sections I and II by 5.26% (i.e., 0.0526) x .20 (which is the same as 1.05%) = _____. This is the maximum amount the program is *required* to list as the Commission's CNCS share of administrative costs. Enter this amount as the CNCS share for Section III, in the line item **Commission Fixed Amount**. *Do not list any part of this amount under Grantee Share.*

Budget Narrative Example:

CNCS Corporation Fixed Amount:

(CNCS [Section I] + [Section II] x 0.0526) x (0.80) = CNCS Share

Grantee Corporation Fixed Amount:

(CNCS [Section I] + [Section II] + Grantee Share [Section I] + [Section II] x 0.10)=Total Grantee Share

***Commission Fixed Amount:**

(CNCS [Section I] + [Section II] x .0526) x (.20) = CNCS Commission Share

Option B: Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate Method

If you have a Federally Approved Indirect Cost (IDC) rate and choose to use it, the IDC rate will constitute documentation of your administrative costs including the 5% maximum payable by CNCS. Specify the Cost Type for which your organization has current documentation on file (i.e., Provisional, Predetermined, Fixed, or Final indirect cost rate). Supply your approved IDC rate (percentage) and the base upon which this rate is calculated (direct salaries, salaries and fringe benefits, etc.). It is at your discretion whether or not to claim your entire IDC rate to calculate administrative costs. If you choose to claim a lower rate, please include this rate in the *Rate Claimed* field.

- Determine the base amount of direct costs to which you will apply the IDC rate, including both the CNCS and Grantee's shares, as prescribed by your established rate agreement (i.e., based on salaries and benefits, total direct costs, or other). Then multiply the appropriate direct costs by the rate being claimed. This will determine the total amount of indirect costs allowable under the grant.
- To allocate the CNCS share of this amount: Multiply the sum of the Corporation funding share in Sections I & II by 0.0421. This is the maximum amount you can claim as the CNCS share of indirect costs.
- To allocate the Grantee share of this amount: Subtract the amount calculated in step b. (the CNCS administrative share) from the amount calculated in step a. (the Indirect Cost total). This is the amount the applicant can claim as grantee share for administrative costs.

H. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

1. Goals of the Review and Selection Process

The assessment of applications involves a wide range of factors and considerations. As in the past, the MCSC will engage external reviewers to provide insight and input with respect to eligible applications. In addition, the MCSC staff will apply their experience and expertise in evaluating applications. In the end, the review and selection process will produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that

represent the priorities and selection factors described in these *guidelines*. Specifically, the review and selection process will:

a. Identify eligible applications that satisfy the following considerations:

- High alignment with criteria
- Align with funding priorities
- Relative risk and opportunity

b. Consider:

- Recruitment and deployment of community volunteers to leverage impact
- The strength of the need and evidence base for the program

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

- Geographic representation
- Meaningful representation of
 - Rural and urban communities
 - Small and large programs
 - Single and multi-state programs
 - Faith- and community-based organizations
- Focus area representation
- Organizations and/or program models that build capacity for individuals, nonprofits and communities to solve problems
- Organizations and/or program models that recruit and engage traditionally underrepresented populations as AmeriCorps members and expand opportunities to serve as AmeriCorps members, particularly for new Americans, low-income individuals, “Opportunity Youth-- the one in six young people (ages 16-24) who are disconnected from school or work,” rural residents, older Americans, veterans, communities of color, Native Americans, and people with disabilities
- Organizations that embrace innovative approaches to solving problems

2. Stages in the Review and Selection Process

a. MCSC External Review

MCSC will retain external reviewers who will assess concept papers. Each application will be reviewed by at least three external reviewers. External reviewers will represent the Board of Commissioners of the MCSC and/or be recruited and selected on the basis of demonstrated knowledge of AmeriCorps programming, and/or the selection criteria and focus areas. All external reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

b. Notification

Selected concept paper applicants will be contacted on October 20, 2017 if they have or have not been selected for comprehensive application submission. Comprehensive applications must be submitted by December 14, 2017. Guidelines and instructions will be provided, as well as a technical assistance session on November 2, 2017 from 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

The MCSC Board review committee will make recommendations to the full Board of Commissioners, who will approve which applications are submitted to CNCS for further review for competitive funding and which ones will be held for formula consideration.

c. CNCS Review

CNCS staff will review all applications submitted to determine compliance with eligibility, the submission deadline, and completeness. Applications determined non-compliant will not be considered for funding. An application is compliant if the applicant:

- Is an eligible organization
- Submits an application by the submission deadline
- Submits an application that is complete, in that it contains all required elements and follows the instructions provided in this *Notice*
- Submits an application with a minimum of twenty AmeriCorps member positions (slots)

CNCS will screen applications in accordance with the requirements in this *Notice* to determine if the applicant has met all eligibility and submission requirements. The screening may occur at various stages of the grant-making process. Applicants determined to be ineligible will not receive an award.

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 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.

d. 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 State Commission that received low scores and applications for which there are significant panel anomalies. In addition, the State/Territory Commission input on National Direct applications will be reviewed and assessed.

e. 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 stability
- 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),
- Dun and Bradstreet, or
- “Do Not Pay”
- Reports and findings from single audits performed under 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 C.F.R. § 2522.140
- The applicant’s ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.
- Past Performance

State Commission staff will assess their re-competing subgrantees’ past performance and submit those assessments to CNCS. CNCS will assess its re-competing 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 and are submitting applications for the same program model:

- 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)
- 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.

I. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Award Notice

CNCS will award grants following the grant selection announcement. We anticipate announcing the results of this competition by early June 2018, dependent on the availability of appropriations.

2. Documents that Govern the Grant

The Notice of Grant Award incorporates the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant as well as the AmeriCorps regulations and grant provisions.

3. 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. 45 CFR § 2543.36; 2541.30

4. Reporting Requirements

Cost reimbursement Grantees are required to provide quarterly progress reports, monthly periodic expense reports, semi-annual financial reports, and an internal or external evaluation report as required by the AmeriCorps regulations §§2522.500-2522.540 and §§2522.700-2522.740.

Fixed-amount Grantees are required to quarterly progress reports and an internal or external evaluation report. All grantees provide quarterly expense reports through the Payment Management System at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

While applications will not be evaluated on these criteria, Grantees 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 performance measure 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.

DEFINITIONS

New applicants are those that have never had AmeriCorps State and/or National funding before. Current and former formula Grantees are not new.

Recompete applicants are those that have received AmeriCorps State and/or National funding before and are in Year three of their grant cycle and are applying for continued funding for the program for another three years.

Continuation applicants are those that are in their first or second year of a funding cycle.

Previous applicants are those that have been funded through state formula grants and/or were unsuccessful recompute applicants in previous years.

Cost Reimbursement 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.

Full-time Fixed Amount / Less than Full-Time serving in a Full-Time Capacity Grants (Non-EAP) These fixed amount grants are available for programs that enroll full-time members or less than full-time members that are serving in a full time capacity only, including Professional Corps. 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 cost. 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 still 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.

Fixed-amount grants are only available to re-competing programs. Second and third-year continuation applicants with cost reimbursement grants must submit a new application if they are interested in applying for a fixed amount grant. New applicants are NOT eligible to apply for fixed amount grants.

Full-time fixed amount applicants in the Education Focus Area are required to select either a Priority Education Measure or Complementary Program Measure. Applicants proposing non-Education programs may select from Tiers 1-5.

Education Award Fixed Amount Grants (EAP) 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.

Fixed-amount grants are only available to re-competing programs. Second and third-year continuation applicants with cost reimbursement grants must submit a new application if they are interested in applying for a fixed amount grant. New applicants are NOT eligible to apply for these grants.

Member Service Year (MSY): One MSY is equivalent to a full-time AmeriCorps position (at least 1700 service hours).

Evidence informed means that:

- a) There is at least one study that is a correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias; quasi-experimental study that meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations (See http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/reference_resources/wwc_procedures_v2_1_standards_handbook.pdf); or randomized controlled trial that meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with or without reservations and
- b) The study referenced in paragraph (a) found a statistically significant or substantively important (defined as a difference of 0.25 standard deviations or larger), favorable association between at least one critical component and one relevant outcome presented in the logic model for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice.

Quasi-experimental study means a study using a design that attempts to approximate an experimental design by identifying a comparison group that is similar to the treatment group in important respects. These studies, depending on design and implementation, can meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations (they cannot meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations).

Randomized controlled trial means a study that employs random assignment of, for example, students, teachers, classrooms, schools, or districts to receive the intervention being evaluated (the treatment group) or not to receive the intervention (the control group). The estimated effectiveness of the intervention is the difference between the average outcome for the treatment group and for the control group. These studies, depending on design and implementation, can meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

Evidence-based means that:

Evidence from previous studies whose designs can support causal conclusions (i.e., studies with high internal validity), and studies that in total include enough of the range of participants and settings (i.e., studies with high external validity). This is defined as:

- (1) More than one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study or well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study that supports the effectiveness of the practice, strategy, or program; or
- (2) One large, well-designed and well-implemented randomized controlled, multisite trial that supports the effectiveness of the practice, strategy, or program.



Michigan's AmeriCorps Intent to Apply Form 2018-2019

Name of Organization: _____

Contact Person (Name & Title): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

On which CNCS focus area(s) will the proposed program focus?

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans and Military Families | <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Futures | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

Also, indicate the **anticipated size** of your Michigan's AmeriCorps program. Please note that programs must enroll a minimum of ten (10) full-time equivalent members to be considered. In your application you may adjust the number of members.

Number of members:

Full-time (1700 hours)	_____	Reduced Half-Time (675 hours)	_____
Half-time (900 hours)	_____	Quarter-time (450 hours)	_____
Minimum-time (300 hours)	_____		

A fillable version of this form is available at:

www.michigan.gov/mcsc/0,4608,7-137-8074-333304--,00.html.

Please submit this form via email by 5:00 p.m. EST on September 22, 2017 to bennetk12@michigan.gov with the SUBJECT: *AmeriCorps State Notice of Intent*



2018-19 Michigan's AmeriCorps Concept Paper Title Page

Name of Proposed Program: _____

Name of Organization: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Name of Organization Operating Program (if different from Applicant Organization):

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email address: _____

County, region, or city in which program will operate: _____

On which CNCS focus area(s) will the proposed program focus?

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans and Military Families | <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Futures | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

Also, indicate the **anticipated size** of your Michigan's AmeriCorps program. Please note that programs must enroll a minimum of ten (10) full-time equivalent members. In your application you may adjust the number of members.

Number of members:

Full-time (1700 hours) _____	Reduced Half-Time (675 hours) _____
Half-time (900 hours) _____	Quarter-time (450 hours) _____
Minimum-time (300 hours) _____	

BUDGET

CNCS Share Requested: _____ Grantee Share: _____

Authorized Signature: _____

Title: _____ Date: _____

A fillable version of this form is available at www.michigan.gov/mcsc/0,4608,7-137-8074-333304--,00.html.

MICHIGAN'S AMERICORPS NEW/RECOMPETING APPLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

Please review the following checklist to ensure that your application meets the submission requirements. Each application will be reviewed for compliance. **Any application received by MCSC not in compliance with any item on the following checklist will be considered ineligible for review.** The application will be returned to the applicant.

Please complete and submit the checklist along with your Michigan's AmeriCorps application.

Applicant Organization:

Applicants must submit one completed application package via email that includes:

- TITLE PAGE**
 - Applicants must use the form provided in the Appendix. A single page .pdf of this form is also available at www.michigan.gov/mcsc -- follow the "AmeriCorps Funding Opportunity" link.

- PROGRAM NARRATIVE**
 - Typed
 - Double-spaced and in not less than 12-point font size
 - One-inch margins
 - Must not exceed 9 pages for new applicants and 10 for recompeting applicants (not including the title page)
 - Must follow the narrative format and include headings / sub-headings for each section
 - The pages must be numbered

- FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SURVEY**

- BUDGET NARRATIVE** (www.michigan.gov/mcsc/0,4608,7-137-8074-333304--,00.html)

- SUBMIT ONE COPY OF THE APPLICANT ORGANIZATION'S MOST RECENT INDEPENDENT AUDIT.**

ATTACHMENT: BUDGET CHECKLIST

Below is a checklist to help you make certain that you submit an accurate budget narrative that meets AmeriCorps requirements.

In Compliance?	Section I. Program Operating Costs
Yes ___ No ___	Costs charged under the Personnel line item directly relate to the operation of the AmeriCorps project? Examples include costs for staff that recruit, train, place, or supervise members as well as manage the project.
Yes ___ No ___	Staff indirectly involved in the management or operation of the applicant organization is funded through the administrative cost section (Section III.) of the budget? Examples of administrative costs include central management and support functions.
Yes ___ No ___	Staff fundraising expenses are not charged to the grant? You may not charge AmeriCorps staff members' time and related expenses for fundraising to the federal or grantee share of the grant. Expenses incurred to raise funds must be paid out of the funds raised. Development officers and fundraising staff are not allowable expenses.
Yes ___ No ___	All positions in the budget are fully described in the narrative?
Yes ___ No ___	The types of fringe benefits to be covered and the costs of benefit(s) for each staff position are described? Allowable fringe benefits typically include FICA, Worker's Compensation, Retirement, SUTA, Health and Life Insurance, IRA, and 401K. You may provide a calculation for total benefits as a percentage of the salaries to which they apply or list each benefit as a separate item. If the fringe amount is over 30%, please list separately. Holidays, leave, and other similar vacation benefits are not included in the fringe benefit rates but are absorbed into the personnel expenses (salary) budget line item?
Yes ___ No ___	Holidays, leave, and other similar vacation benefits are not included in the fringe benefit rates but are absorbed into the personnel expenses (salary) budget line item?
Yes ___ No ___	The purpose for all staff and member travel is clearly identified?
Yes ___ No ___	You have budgeted funds for staff travel to CNCS sponsored meetings in the budget narrative under Staff Travel?
Yes ___ No ___	Funds to pay relocation expenses of AmeriCorps members are not in the federal share of the budget?
Yes ___ No ___	Funds for the purchase of equipment (does not include general use office equipment) are limited to 10% of the total grant amount?
Yes ___ No ___	All single equipment items over \$5000 per unit are specifically listed?
Yes ___ No ___	Justification/explanation of equipment items is included in the budget narrative?
Yes ___ No ___	All single supply items over \$1000 per unit are specifically listed?
Yes ___ No ___	You only charged to the federal share of the budget member service gear that includes the AmeriCorps logo, with the exception of safety equipment?
Yes ___ No ___	Are all consultant services budgeted below the maximum federal daily rate of \$750/day? Is the daily rate noted in all sections of the budget narrative where consultants are proposed?
Yes ___ No ___	Does the budget reflect adequate budgeted costs for project evaluation?
Yes ___ No ___	Have you provided budgeted costs for background checks of members and grant-funded staff that are in covered positions per 45 CFR 2522.205?
Yes ___ No ___	Are all items in the budget narrative itemized and the purpose of the funds justified?

In Compliance?	Section II. Member Costs
Yes ___ No ___	Are the living allowance amounts correct? Full-time AmeriCorps members must receive at least the minimum living allowance. <i>Note: Programs in existence prior to September 21, 1993 may offer a lower living allowance than the minimum. If such a program chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement, but not from the maximum requirement.</i>
Yes ___ No ___	Living allowances are not paid on an hourly basis? They may be calculated using service hours and program length to derive a weekly or biweekly distribution amount. Divide the distribution in equal increments that are not based on the specified number of hours served.
Yes ___ No ___	Is FICA calculated correctly? You must pay FICA for any member receiving a living allowance. Unless exempted by the IRS, calculate FICA at 7.65% of the total amount of the living allowance.
Yes ___ No ___	Is the Worker's Compensation calculation correct? Some states require worker's compensation for AmeriCorps members. Check with your local State Department of Labor or State Commission to determine whether or not you are required to pay worker's compensation and at what level (i.e., rate). If you are not required to pay worker's compensation, you need to provide similar coverage for members' on-the-job injuries through their own existing coverage or a new policy purchased in accordance with normal procedures (i.e., Death and Dismemberment coverage).
Yes ___ No ___	Health care is provided for full-time AmeriCorps members only (unless part-time serving in a full-time capacity)? If your project chooses to provide health care to other half-time members, you may not use federal funds to help pay for any portion of the cost. Projects must provide health care coverage to all full-time members who do not have adequate health care coverage at the time of enrollment or who lose coverage due to participation in the project. In addition, projects must provide coverage if a full-time member loses coverage during the term of service through no deliberate act of his/her own.

In Compliance?	Section III. Administrative/Indirect Costs
Yes ___ No ___	Applicant has chosen Option A – CNCS-fixed percentage method and the maximum federal share of administrative costs does not exceed 5% of the total federal funds budgeted? To determine the federal administrative share, multiply all other budgeted federal funds by .0526.
Yes ___ No ___	Applicant has chosen Option A – CNCS fixed percentage method and the maximum grantee share is at 10% or less of total budgeted funds?
Yes ___ No ___	Applicant has chosen Option B – federally approved indirect cost rate method and documentation submitted to CNCS if multi-state, state or territory without commission or Indian Tribe applicant? Administrative costs budgeted include the following: (1) indirect costs such as legal staff, central management and support functions; (2) costs for financial, accounting, audit, internal evaluations, and contracting functions; (3) costs for insurance that protects the entity that operates the project; and (4) the portion of the salaries and benefits of the director and any other project administrative staff not attributable to the time spent in direct support of a specific project.
Yes ___ No ___	Applicant has chosen Option B – The maximum grantee share does not exceed the federally approved rate, less the 5% CNCS share?

In Compliance?	Match
Yes ___ No ___	Is the overall match being met at the required level, based on the year of funding?
Yes ___ No ___	For all matching funds, the source(s) [private, state and local, and federal], the type of contribution (cash or in-kind), and the amount (or an estimate) of match, are clearly identified in the narrative and in the Source of Match field?