

# 2016 – 2017 MICHIGAN’S AMERICORPS COMPREHENSIVE APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR NEW & RECOMPETING APPLICANTS



## Due Dates

*Applications* must be received by: December 14, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. EST. Applications must be submitted via eGrants.

Applicant responses to participation in volunteer generation and National Days of service must be submitted via email to [yardj@michigan.gov](mailto:yardj@michigan.gov)

For more information, contact:

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Or visit [www.michigan.gov/mcsc](http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc)

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Application Deadline: Applications are **due Monday, December 14** at 5:00 p.m. EST. Applications must be submitted via eGrants.

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### 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 education, disaster preparedness, services for veterans and military families, healthy futures, environmental stewardship, and economic opportunity. 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 Michigan Community Service Commission 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](http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc).

The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic participation through service and volunteering. Through its AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs, CNCS has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

These Michigan's AmeriCorps Application Guidelines will focus on grant making for fiscal year 2016 in seven focus areas: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, Public Safety and Veterans and Military Families.

Indian Tribes are eligible to apply; however, a separate Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity for Indian Tribes for either fully operational or planning grants will be released later in the fall with an application deadline of spring 2016.

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 believes that all Americans should have opportunities to participate in national service, including those that have been traditionally underrepresented in national service, such as rural residents, people with disabilities, veterans and military families, Native Americans, and "Opportunity Youth, the one in six young people (ages 16-24) who are disconnected from school or work." CNCS recognizes that service can create powerful pathways to education and employment for these populations, transforming their communities and creating broad economic benefit for the country.

CNCS remains committed to ensuring programs that recruit and retain underrepresented individuals are a substantial cohort of the national service network. Veterans, military families, and Opportunity Youth are included in CNCS' funding priorities, and recruiting traditionally underrepresented populations into service is a strategic characteristic.

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.

## **MICHIGAN COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMISSION INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS**

The following section contains information and requirements from the Michigan Community Service Commission. Please note that some of these requirements will not appear in materials produced by CNCS, as they are unique to Michigan.

Michigan's AmeriCorps applicants must be familiar with both MCSC and CNCS requirements and ensure that all of the appropriate information is addressed in their application.

### ***Volunteer Generation and National Days of Service***

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 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. AmeriCorps 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 and procedure manuals. AmeriCorps members may promote retention of volunteers by planning recognition events or providing ongoing support and follow-up to ensure that volunteers have a high quality experience. Members may assist an organization in reaching out to individuals and 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 for approval activities outside the normal activities of the grant.

Volunteer recruitment and management is not intended to replace direct service activities of AmeriCorps members. Volunteers leveraged by members may not be engaged in prohibited activities or other activities that are not allowable for 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.

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.

Due to limitations with the eGrants system, Michigan's AmeriCorps applicants must submit their plan to generate volunteers and to participate in National Days of Service via email to [yardj@michigan.gov](mailto:yardj@michigan.gov) – not eGrants – by December 14, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. EST.

The applicant's response to volunteer generation and National Days of Service should not exceed two pages, double spaced.

### ***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.

### ***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.

### ***Michigan's AmeriCorps Program Directors Meetings***

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

### ***MCSC Trainings and Special Events***

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

### ***Budget Requirements and Instructions***

CNCS provides specific instructions on how to enter a budget into eGrants as well as information on federal requirements. However, the MCSC has specific instructions and requirements that comply with State of Michigan regulations.

When completing your budget for submission on December 14, please utilize the information in this section to ensure that your application meets MCSC and CNCS requirements. Please also utilize the Budget Narrative Template and Budget Narrative Example provided by the MCSC, which can be obtained on the MCSC website ([www.michigan.gov/mcsc](http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc)) before entering your budget into eGrants.

**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. 1. Staff Travel:** Describe the purposes for staff travel. Costs allowable are transportation (\$.565 maximum/mile as of 1/1/13), 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.

Be sure to include the following:

- 1.) The costs associated with traveling to six 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 as follows:

Out of State Travel to CNCS-Sponsored Meetings: Conference 4 nights, hotel @\$139 ave 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 @ 360 miles x .555 (premium state rate travel) = \$200 conf. reg. fee @\$504 = \$2000

2. **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 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 their LeaderCorps representative to attend two

statewide meetings (one in Lansing and one in northern Michigan). 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.

**D. 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 *E. Supplies* 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.

**E. 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.

**F. 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.

**G. 1. 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, i.e., project or financial management, team building, etc. Indicate daily rates of consultants, where applicable.

**2. Member Training:** These costs are also considered registration fees and should 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 such as age-appropriate tutoring, CPR, ecosystems and 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 trainings. This is a \$75 registration fee per full-time and half-time member and should be listed as such, and \$40 registration fee per reduced half-time, quarter-time, and minimum-time member. This should be its own line item within this section and should be represented as follows: "(# members \* \$75 reg. fee) + (# members \* \$40 reg. fee) = \$#### to attend statewide member training events." Insert the number of members granted to your program in the calculation and show the total costs associated.

Please note that you will be invoiced early in the program year for the total amount budgeted, in order to help pay for statewide events and trainings (this invoice is payable upon receipt).

**H. 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.

**I. 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 (i.e., 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 \$12,530 (minimum) and \$25,060 (maximum). You are not required to provide living allowances for members serving less than full-time. Please note that if your half-time program requires more than 900 but less than 1,700 hours, you may prorate the living allowance accordingly.

Projects in existence prior to September 21, 1993 when the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 was enacted may offer a living allowance lower than the minimum 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: Programs are not required to budget*

*for unemployment costs for members.*

**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.

## **A. Corporation Fixed Percentage Method**

### **CALCULATING ADMINISTRATIVE/INDIRECT COSTS**

#### **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 that 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 (State Commission) 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**.
- b) 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.
- c) Enter the sum of the CNCS and grantee shares under Total Amount.
- d) 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 for Administrative/Indirect Costs**

#### **A. Corporation Fixed Percentage**

**CNCS Corporation Fixed Amount:**  $(\text{CNCS [Section I]} + [\text{Section II}] \times 0.0526) \times (0.80) = \text{CNCS Share.}$

**Grantee Corporation Fixed Amount:**  $(\text{CNCS [Section I]} + [\text{Section II}] + \text{Grantee Share [Section I]} + [\text{Section II}] \times 0.10) = \text{Total Grantee Share}$

**\*Commission Fixed Amount:**  $(\text{CNCS [Section I]} + [\text{Section II}] \times .0526) \times (.20) = \text{CNCS Commission Share}$

#### 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.

- a. 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.
- b. To allocate the CNCS share of this amount: Multiply the sum of the Corporation funding share in Sections I and II by 0.0421. This is the maximum amount you can claim as the CNCS share of indirect costs.
- c. 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.

## **CNCS INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS**

The following information is from the Corporation for National and Community Service. The information includes the federal Notice of Funding, Application Instructions, and the Glossary. Please note that the questions to which you must respond in eGrants are contained here as noted.

### **A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

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

Through all its programs, CNCS seeks to expand economic opportunity – helping Americans acquire the skills, education, and training they need for productive employment. By helping more Americans graduate, pursue higher education, and find work: national service can provide immediate and long term benefits by expanding individual opportunity, building family stability, and creating more sustainable, resilient communities.

#### **1. Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding**

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations (see page 4) 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 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 may award a Cost Reimbursement, a Fixed Amount grant, or an AmeriCorps Partnership Challenge grant to any successful applicant, but the availability of a Full Time Fixed Amount grant is limited to certain applicants. See Section C.1 and Glossary for more information. In addition to the 2 funding allocated for competitive distribution under this Notice, CNCS provides funding based on population directly to Governor-appointed State Service Commissions which they, in turn, award through a process they administer according to state priorities.

This Notice should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520–2550, the Notice Glossary, Application Instructions, and the Performance Measure Instructions which are incorporated by reference. These documents can be found at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-yourcapacity/grants/funding-opportunities>. The full regulations are available online at [www.ecfr.gov](http://www.ecfr.gov). The TTY number is 800-833-3722. For a printed copy of related material, call 202-606-7508.

#### **CNCS Focus 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, including youth identified in My Brother's Keeper 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 provide support for increased individual behavioral change leading to increased energy efficiency, renewable energy use, and ecosystem improvements particularly for economically disadvantaged households and communities. Grant activities will decrease energy and water consumption; improve at-risk ecosystems; increase behavioral changes that lead directly to decreased energy and water consumption or improved at-risk ecosystems; and/or increase green training opportunities that may lead to decreased energy and water consumption or improved at-risk ecosystems.

#### 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, 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. 2016 AmeriCorps Funding Priorities**

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

- Disaster Services - improving community resiliency through disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation
- Economic Opportunity - increasing economic opportunities for communities, specifically opportunity youth (see Glossary), both as the population served and as AmeriCorps members
  - Education - improving student academic performance in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Mathematics (STEM) or addressing student and school needs through School Turnaround AmeriCorps programming (see Glossary and Appendix)
- Environment - 21st Century Service Corps (see Glossary)
- Veterans and Military Families -- positively impacting the quality of life of veterans and improving military family strength
- Governor and Mayor Initiatives (see Glossary)
- Programming that supports My Brother's Keeper (see Glossary)
- Multi-focus intermediaries that demonstrate measureable impact and primarily serve communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure. i.e. rural and other underserved communities (see Glossary)
- Safer communities - activities that focus on public safety and preventing and mitigating civil unrest e.g., summer programming or engaging communities that are part of The National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention.
  - Elder Justice AmeriCorps (see Glossary)

In order to receive priority consideration, 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.

### **Next Gen AmeriCorps**

Depending on overall funding available, CNCS is inviting applicants to propose the Next Generation AmeriCorps or Next Gen AmeriCorps. The importance of service remains even within tight fiscal constraints we face as a nation. The goal of Next Gen AmeriCorps is to use innovative strategies to offer the same service opportunities but at a more efficient cost to the government. To participate, applicants must have a cost per member that is lower than \$10,000 per year per full time member using CNCS funding. CNCS is looking for innovative approaches and models to implement, for example: locating operations in Promise Zones, areas that meet Promise Zone criteria, or that demonstrate other indicators of severe need.

### **National Performance Measures**

The Serve America Act (SAA) emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. CNCS's five-year Strategic Plan establishes an ambitious set of objectives that guided the development of 16 agency-wide Priority Performance Measures. CNCS expects organizations to use National Performance Measures as part of their comprehensive performance measurement strategy that relies on 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/documents/main-menu/2014/2015-performance-measures-instructions>].

All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output and outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary service activity. 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. As described in the Application Instructions, applicants must include all their information about their proposed performance measure in the Performance Measure section of the applications in eGrants (CNCS's web-based grants management system). All information requested 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 and NOFO FAQs 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 eGrants.

## **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

CNCS expects a highly competitive AmeriCorps FY 2016 grant competition. The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations, which have not yet been made. 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.

### **Award Period**

Unless otherwise specified, the grant generally covers a three-year project period. In approving a multi-year project period, CNCS generally makes an initial award for the first year of operation. In most cases, the application is submitted with a one-year budget. Continuation funding is not guaranteed. Factors considered in awarding continuation grants include satisfactory performance, demonstrated capacity to manage the grant, compliance with grant requirements, agency priorities, and the availability of appropriated funds. CNCS reserves the right to adjust the amount of a grant or elect not to continue funding for subsequent years.

### **Project/Award Period**

The project start date is proposed by the applicant and is generally one year. 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.

## C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### 1. Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply: public or private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations; institutions of higher education; government entities within states or territories (e.g., cities, counties); labor organizations; partnerships and consortia; and Indian Tribes. Receiving funding previously from CNCS or another Federal agency is not a prerequisite to applying under this *Notice*.

In addition to being eligible to apply under this *Notice*, federally recognized Indian Tribes will also be eligible to apply under a separate Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity for Indian Tribes for operating or planning grants released later in the fall with an application deadline of spring 2015.

Organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime are disqualified from receiving the assistance described in 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.

### New Applicants

CNCS encourages organizations that have never received funding from CNCS to apply. The general practice is to award no more than 50 member positions (slots) and at least 20 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 not eligible to apply for Fixed Amount grants. Existing subgrantees/operating sites of Fixed Amount 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.

### Continuation applicants

Organizations that have current AmeriCorps awards that do not end in FY16 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*.

## 2. Cost Sharing or Matching

### Fixed Amount Grants and Education Award Program Grants

There is no specific match requirement for Fixed Amount and Education Award Program 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

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 Pub. L. 113-76, Division H, Title IV, § 402 <https://beta.congress.gov/113/plaws/publ76/PLAW-113publ76.htm>

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 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 Glossary) 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 that plan to request an alternative match schedule must submit a request by January 5, 2015. State programs submit requests for alternative match to the State Commission. State Commissions submit on behalf of their state applicants and National Directs submit their requests directly to [ACAAlternateMatchScheduleRequests@cns.gov](mailto:ACAAlternateMatchScheduleRequests@cns.gov).

## **D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **1. Address to Request Application Package**

Organizations should refer to the CNCS and MCSC website to obtain the necessary information to apply. Please contact the MCSC with any questions.

### **2. Content and Form of Application Submission**

#### **What are the steps that organizations need to take to apply?**

- Submit a request for an alternative match schedule, if applicable
- Get a DUNS number
- Establish an eGrants account
- Coordinate with State Commission
- Write a high quality application responsive to the *Notice*
- Provide required supplemental materials via email, if applicable
- Submit the application via eGrants by the deadline

Please note that state applicants that apply to a State Commission may have different deadlines (likely earlier than those listed in this *Notice*), may have additional narrative questions and/or supplemental materials to submit as determined by the State Commission, and may have different directions and/or systems in which to submit their applications.

#### **How to Submit an Application in eGrants**

Applicants must submit their applications electronically via the CNCS web-based system, [eGrants](#). Because it is a unique system, it is recommended that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application creation process at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word document and copy and paste the document into the appropriate eGrants fields no later than 10 days before the deadline. Please note the length of a document in word processing software may be different than what will print out in eGrants.

Please contact the MCSC with any eGrants questions. Depending on the nature of the question, the MCSC may refer you to the National Service Hotline at 800-942-2677 or <https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask> if a problem arises while creating an account or while preparing or submitting an application in eGrants.

National Service Hotline hours are Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET. The two Fridays and weekends prior to the application deadline (January 9-11 and 16-19) the Hotline will be open from 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. ET to assist applicants. If you contact the Hotline, be prepared to provide the application ID, organization name, and the *Notice* to which your organization is applying.

If technical issues prevent an applicant from submitting an application on time, please contact the National Service Hotline prior to the deadline to explain the technical issue and receive a ticket number. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, the applicant must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit via eGrants.

An application is only complete if it includes all required documentation and is received by the application due date. Incomplete applications will not be considered. All additional required documents should include the applicant organization name and Application ID number at the top of the page and are due by the application deadline to [yardj@michigan.gov](mailto:yardj@michigan.gov). Emails should include in the Subject line, the applicant organization name and Application ID number.

Additional documents may include (if applicable): letter(s) of support for the Governor/Mayor Initiative, evaluation reports, letters from the consortium members for Multi-focused intermediaries, and up to two evaluation briefs, reports, and/or peer reviewed articles if the applicant has a moderate or strong evidence base.

If extenuating circumstances make the use of eGrants impossible, applicants may send a hard copy of the application and include a cover letter detailing the circumstances that make it impossible to submit via eGrants to the address provided in Section IX. Agency Contacts, via overnight carrier. Applicants must use a non-U.S. Postal Service carrier because of security-related delays in receiving mail from the U.S. Postal Service. All deadlines and requirements in this *Notice* apply to hard copy applications. CNCS does not accept applications submitted via fax or email.

#### **Application Fields and Page Limits**

In eGrants, applicants will enter text in the following fields

- Executive Summary
- Program Design
- Organizational Capability
- Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
- Evaluation Plan

Applications may not exceed 15 pages for the Narratives (16 pages for Multi-State applications with more than five operating sites, 18 pages for Multi-Focus Intermediaries, School Turnaround, and Next Gen AmeriCorps applicants). Application content considered in determining page limit compliance includes the Executive Summary, SF 424 Facesheet, and the Narrative Sections contained in the Program Design, Organizational Capacity, and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy as the pages print out from eGrants. Please note the length of a document in word processing software may be different than what will print out in eGrants. CNCS will consider the number of pages as they print out through eGrants when determining compliance for page limits. CNCS strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the “Review and Submit” page 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.

The Logic Model may not exceed more than three pages when printed from the application.

Reviewers will not consider submitted material that is over the page limits in the printed report, even if eGrants allows an applicant to enter and submit text over the limit. This applies to both the application page limit and the logic model page limit. Do not submit other items not requested in this Notice or Application Instructions. CNCS will not review or return them.

## Assessment Criteria

Each applicant must clearly 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.

## Threshold Issues

Applications should reflect that they meet the threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying. For example: If an applicant is applying for a Professional Corps grant, its application should demonstrate that the community in which it will place professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals. If an applicant is applying for a Fixed Amount grant, the application should reflect that only full-time or less than full-time positions serving in a full-time capacity will be permitted. An application for the Governor and Mayor Initiative should clearly reflect that the application is from one Governor, one Mayor, 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 clearly describe how the program will meet these requirements. School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants must meet the threshold requirements outlined in the Glossary and Appendix.

New and recompeting applicants must submit an application with a minimum of 20 AmeriCorps members. Applications that have less than 20 members will be deemed noncompliant and will not be reviewed.

CNCS will assess an applicant's strategic considerations. Applicants must check the relevant boxes in the Performance Measure tab in eGrants in order to be considered for CNCS' assessment of the strategic considerations. Applicants should only check the boxes if the strategic consideration is an intentional part of their program design and they have implementation strategies described in the application.

## Application Fields

Note: the following sections, A.-H., contain the questions to which you must respond in eGrants.

### 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 [what 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 an additional [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing.]

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area(s) of [Focus Area(s)].\* 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.

\*If the program is not operating in a CNCS' focus area, omit this sentence.

Fixed Amount grant applicants (EAP, Fulltime Fixed, and AmeriCorps Partnership Challenge) should list their Other Revenue (see Glossary) because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still must 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. School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants should respond to the additional criteria in the Glossary and Appendix.

**1. Problem/Need (9 points)**

- The community problem/need is clearly defined and aligns with the proposed intervention.
- The community problem/need is prevalent and severe in communities where members will serve and has been well documented with relevant data.

**2. Theory of Change and Logic Model (15 points)**

- The applicant's proposed intervention is clearly articulated including the design, 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 theory of change should be either evidence-informed or evidence-based, meaning that the proposed intervention is guided by the best available research evidence that supports its effectiveness in the evidence section.
- The proposed outcomes represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem/need identified by the applicant.
- The applicant's AmeriCorps members will produce significant and unique contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.

The logic model shall depict:

- A summary of the community problem/need outlined in the narrative.
- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including:
  - 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.)
  - Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention.

Programs may include short, medium, or long-term outcomes in the logic model. While performance measure outcomes should be consistent with the program's theory of change, programs are not required to measure all outcomes that are included in the logic model.

The Logic Model should identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

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

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

Applicants will be awarded up to 12 points for providing evidence that their proposed intervention will lead to the outcomes identified in the logic model. Applicants shall provide a description of up to two research studies or

evaluations that provide evidence that the proposed intervention is effective for the target population and community problem, and should describe how this evidence places them in the highest evidence tier for which they are eligible. Applicants should pay particular attention to the requirements for each tier of evidence. More points are awarded for higher tiers of evidence.

Applicants requesting consideration for the moderate and strong evidence levels should reference the Submission of Additional Documents section for guidance on the submission of evaluation studies.

All applicants must include as much detailed information as possible in the Evidence section of the application. Applicants are advised to focus on presenting high-quality evidence from two of the strongest and most relevant studies. 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.

All applicants must include a description of up to two research studies or evaluations in order to earn points, including the following information:

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

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 will be considered for a lower tier of evidence and related point values.

Requirements associated with the five evidence tiers are described next.

**No evidence** (0 points) means that the applicant has not provided evidence that they have systematically collected any qualitative or quantitative data to date.

**Pre-preliminary evidence (1-2 points)** 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 systemic and accurate data on one or more of the following: the community need 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 (for example, performance measurement data or a process evaluation assessing

implementation of the intervention.) The data collection process 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. Evidence for the pre-preliminary tier should be described in the Evidence section of the application but does not require submission of supplemental documentation.

**Preliminary evidence (3-6 points)** means the applicant has described up to two outcome studies about the intervention that yielded promising results for the proposed intervention or a similar intervention that the applicant will replicate with fidelity to the evaluated program model. The ways to demonstrate preliminary level of evidence are as follows:

- 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. An outcome study includes data beyond that which is collected as part of routine performance measurement. This description should explain whether the outcome study was conducted internally by the applicant organization or by an entity external to the applicant.

OR

- The applicant must describe at least one random control trial study or quasi-experimental evaluation (e.g. propensity score matching) that found positive results for the same intervention that the applicant plans to replicate. The description should include details about 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.

OR

- The applicant may submit evidence from both bullets listed above. In this case, the applicant must provide data from an outcome study of an intervention it has previously implemented (see above) and also proposes to modify their program by replicating another random control trial study or quasi-experimental evaluation. Applicants should describe their previous outcome study and should also describe and submit the study (ies) of the proposed evidence-based intervention.

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.

**Moderate evidence (7-9 points)** means the applicant has submitted up to two well-designed and well implemented studies 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 sources or evaluations published in peer-reviewed articles as separate attachments.

Current CNCS grantees 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 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 a current grantee, then more than two studies will not be considered.

**Strong evidence (10-12 points)** means the applicant has demonstrated that the intervention has been tested nationally, regionally, or at the state-level (e.g., multi-site) using a well-designed and well-implemented QED or RCT. Alternatively, the proposed intervention's evidence may be based on multiple (up to two) well-designed and well-implemented QEDs or RCTs in different locations or with different populations within a local geographic area. The overall pattern of study findings is consistently positive. 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 sources or evaluations published in peer-reviewed articles as separate attachments.

Current CNCS grantees 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 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 a current grantee, then more than two studies will not be considered.

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

- The applicant proposed program fits within one or more of the 2016 AmeriCorps funding priorities as outlined on page 3 and more fully described in the Glossary.
- The proposed program meets all of the requirements detailed on page 3 and in the Glossary.

#### **5. Member Training (4 points)**

- AmeriCorps members will receive high quality training to provide effective service
- AmeriCorps members and volunteers will be aware of, and will adhere to AmeriCorps requirements including the rules regarding prohibited activities (see Glossary).

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

- AmeriCorps members will receive high quality 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.

#### **7. Member Experience (3 points)**

- AmeriCorps members will gain skills and experience 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, including opportunities for reflection and connection to the broader National Service network.

- The program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the programs operate.

**8. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification (2 points)**

- Members will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- Staff and community members where the members are serving will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- AmeriCorps members will be provided with and will wear service gear that prominently displays the AmeriCorps logo daily.

**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 (10 points)**

- The organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program.
- The organization has adequate experience administering AmeriCorps grants or other federal grants effectively.
- The organization has sufficiently engaged community members and partner organizations in planning and implementing its intervention.

As documentation of community support and commitment to the program please procure, keep on file, but do not submit to CNCS, letter(s) from the applicant’s most significant community partner(s). The letter(s) should include what the partner(s) see as the benefit to the community provided by the applicant’s AmeriCorps members and what activities would not happen without the AmeriCorps members

**2. Compliance and Accountability (15 points)**

- The applicant’s organization, in implementation and management of its AmeriCorps program, will prevent and detect compliance issues.
- The applicant will hold itself, subgrantees, and service site locations (if applicable) accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified.
- The organization will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities at the grantee, subgrantee, and service site locations (if applicable).
- The AmeriCorps members service will not duplicate, displace, or supplant volunteers, staff and/or interns.

**D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (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. Cost Effectiveness (18 points)**

- The budget is sufficient to carry out the program effectively.\*
- The budget aligns with the applicant’s narrative.\*
- The program design is cost effective and the benefits justify the cost.
- The applicant has raised or describes an adequate plan to raise non-CNCS resources to fully support the program.
- The applicant, if re-competing, has a lower cost per Member Service Year (MSY – see Glossary) than approved in previous grants, or provides a compelling rationale for the same or increased cost including why this increase could not be covered by the grantee share.

\*Program costs not included in the formal budget, including for Fixed Price and Partnership Challenge grantees, must be described in this section in sufficient detail to allow reviewers to assess their sufficiency and alignment.

Having a low cost per Member Service Year (MSY) is a competitive advantage. New applicants that submit with a low cost per MSY and re-competing applicants that submit with a lower cost per MSY than previously funded may receive higher priority for funding. Applicants requesting a higher cost per MSY than funded in previous years must justify their requests. If an applicant requests above the maximum cost per MSY (see Section 5.C.), it must justify its request. Please note that such requests are rarely approved.

## **2. Budget Adequacy (7 points)**

- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors.
- 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.

Applicants must fill out the budget and ensure the following information is in the budget narrative (requested information in the budget screens):

- Identify the non-CNCS funding and resources necessary to support the project.
- Indicate the amount of non-CNCS resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash) and the sources of these commitments.

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

If the applicant is competing for the first time, please enter N/A in the Evaluation Plan field since it pertains only to re-competing grantees. If the applicant is re-competing for AmeriCorps funds for the first time (see definition of “re-competing” below) the program must submit its evaluation plan in the Evaluation Plan field in eGrants. If the applicant is re-competing for a subsequent time, the program must submit its evaluation report via email to [AdditionalDocuments@cns.gov](mailto:AdditionalDocuments@cns.gov) by the application deadline, as well as an evaluation plan for the next three-year period in the Evaluation Plan field in eGrants. Evaluations plans submitted outside of eGrants 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/cnsevaluation-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 estimated 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 competitive funds as required in 45 CFR §2522.730.

A program will be considered a recompeting application if it satisfies the CNCS definition of “same project” (see Glossary) and has been funded competitively for at least one complete three-year cycle. If the project satisfies the definition of same project and the applicant has completed one three-year cycle, 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 three-year cycles, 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 Plan field of eGrants does not count towards the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit. Applicants should print out the plan to ensure the narrative does not exceed the character limits when entered in eGrants. State/Territory subgrantees and/or National Direct Grantees with an average annual CNCS program grant of \$500,000 or more that are recompeting for funds are 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 eGrants. 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. More information on alternative evaluation approaches can be found at:

[https://www.nationalservicerresources.gov/files/guidance\\_for\\_grantees\\_approval\\_of\\_alternative\\_evaluation\\_approach.pdf](https://www.nationalservicerresources.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 eGrants, the applicant should do the following:

- Enter the evaluation plan in the evaluation summary or plan filed in eGrants.
- 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.

### **3. Dun and Bradstreet University Numbering System (DUNS) Number and 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: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. The website indicates a 48-hour e-mail turnaround time on requests for DUNS numbers; however, CNCS suggests registering at least 30 days in advance of the application due date. After obtaining a DUNS number, all applicants must be registered with the Systems for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>.

SAM collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data in support of Federal agency contracts, grant awards, cooperative agreements, and other forms of federal assistance. All grant recipients are required to maintain a valid SAM registration, which must be renewed annually. Applicants that are not already registered with SAM are urged to begin the registration process immediately in order to avoid any delays in submitting applications. Applicants must have a DUNS number in order to register with SAM. To register online go to <https://www.sam.gov/portal/pulbic/SAM/>.

## 5. Funding Restrictions

### A. 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 Glossary.

General Summary

| Grant Types   | Cost Reimbursement |  | Fixed Amount   |       |  |
|---|--------------------|--|--|-------|--|
|   | Traditional        | Professional Corps   | Full-Time/Less than FT serving in a full time capacity                                   | EAP   | Professional Corps   |
| Maximum Cost per MSY  | \$13,730           | Up to \$1,000*   | \$13,430   | \$800 | Up to \$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 Only                    | All   | Full-Time Only   |
| Budget Submission Required  | Yes                |  | No   |       | Yes, if requesting operating funds   |
| Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSY | 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 the budget. | N/A  | N/A   | Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. No CNCS funds may be used to pay member living allowance or salary. |
| Match Requirements  | Yes                | Yes; Living allowance or salary paid to members may not be counted toward the match requirement.   | No, but organizations must raise the additional revenue required to operate the program. |       |  |
| Financial Tracking Requirements   | Yes                |  | No   |       |  |
| Available to New Applicants   | Yes                |  | No   | Yes   | Yes  |

\*CNCS' assumption is that Professional Corps will be covering the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non CNCS funds and thus will not be requesting operating funds as part of their applications. CNCS will consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate

in its narrative and supporting budget materials significant organizational financial need and substantial challenges to raising non CNCS resources.

**B. Member Living Allowance**

The proposed budget must include a living allowance for full-time members that is between \$12,530 (minimum) and \$25,060 (maximum) per member except as noted below. A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage.

Cost reimbursement 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 Table 1 below. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either CNCS or grantee share. (EXCEPTION: as noted in Section B.1. and B.3.)

While Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to submit detailed budgets, they are still required to provide a living allowance that complies with the minimum and maximum requirements to members (EXCEPTION: as noted in section B.2. and B.3.) Most 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          | 1700               | \$12,530                 | \$25,060                       |
| One-year Half-time | 900                | n/a                      | \$13,265                       |
| Reduced Half-time  | 675                | n/a                      | \$9,950                        |
| Quarter-time       | 450                | n/a                      | \$6,635                        |
| Minimum-time       | 300                | n/a                      | \$4,420                        |

**1. Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements (for programs existing prior to September 21, 1993)**

If a program existed prior to September 21, 1993, a living allowance is not required. If an applicant chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement of \$12,530, but not the maximum requirement of \$25,060.

**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. School Turnaround AmeriCorps Continuation EAPs may exceed the maximum living allowance consistent with their existing grant terms.

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

Maximum Costs per MSY are set forth in Table 2 below. 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: 2015 Maximum Cost per MSY**

| Grant Program   | Maximum        |
|---|----------------|
| Individual Competitive State Program (cost reimbursement) | \$13,730       |
| Professional Corps Grant (Cost Reimbursement)             | Up to \$1,000* |
| Professional Corps Fixed Amount Grant                     | Up to \$1,000* |
| Education Award Program Fixed Amount Grant                | \$800          |
| Fulltime Fixed Amount Grant                               | \$13,430       |
| State/Territory Commission Average (of all its subgrants) | \$13,730       |

\*CNCS' assumption is that Professional Corps will be covering the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non CNCS funds and thus will not be requesting operating funds as part of their applications. CNCS will consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate in its narrative and supporting budget materials significant organizational financial need and substantial challenges to raising non CNCS resources. School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants serving exclusively in rural schools may request up to \$15,000 cost per MSY. All applicants must include a compelling case as to why the applicant's cost per MSY must be higher.

Programs operating in rural communities (as defined in the Glossary) and programs that recruit opportunity youth as AmeriCorps members may request up to \$13,930 cost per MSY for the AmeriCorps members that will be serving in rural areas or who are opportunity youth. The applicant must include a compelling case as to why the applicant's cost per MSY must be higher.

**D. Amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award for FY 2015**

AmeriCorps members serving in programs funded with FY 2015 dollars who successfully complete a term of service will receive an Education Award from the National Service Trust of \$5,730 for a year of full-time service, with correspondingly smaller awards for less than full-time service. 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.

**Table 3: Term of Service and FY15 Education Award**

| Term of Service    | Minimum # of Hours | FY15 Education Award |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Full Time          | 1700               | \$5,775.00           |
| One-Year Half Time | 900                | \$2,887.50           |
| Reduced Half Time  | 675                | \$2,199.92           |
| Quarter Time       | 450                | \$1,527.45           |
| Minimum Time       | 300                | \$1,221.96           |

**E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

**1. Criteria**

The assessment of applications involves a wide range of factors and considerations. CNCS will engage external reviewers to provide insight and input with respect to eligible applications. In addition, CNCS 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 this *Notice*.

Specifically, the review and selection process will:

A. Identify eligible applications that satisfy the following considerations:

- High alignment with narrative assessment criteria
- High alignment with priorities outlined in the *Notice*, including priority-specific requirements as detailed in the Glossary
- Relative risk and opportunity

B. Consider:

- State/Territory Commission rank and recommendations on state applicants
- State/Territory Commission input on National Direct applications, except federally-recognized Indian Tribes

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

- Meaningful representation of
  - Geographic diversity
  - Rural communities (see definition in Glossary)
  - Small and medium programs
  - Single and multi-state programs
  - Faith- and community-based organizations
- Focus area representation
- Organizations and/or program models that recruit and engage traditionally underrepresented populations as AmeriCorps members and expand opportunities to serve as AmeriCorps members
- High ratio of match and/or other revenue to CNCS investment Evidence levels Promise Zone designees or cities that have had a Strong Cities, Strong Communities community solutions team.

## **2. Review and Selection Process**

### **A. Compliance Review**

CNCS staff will review all applications submitted to CNCS to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completeness requirements. In order to be compliant and advance to External Review, an applicant must satisfy all the following requirements:

- Submit a Notice of Intent to Apply by the deadline.
- Submit an application and all required additional documents by the application submission deadline.
- Submit an application that is complete, in that it contains all required elements and additional documents and follows the instructions provided in this *Notice*.
- Submit an application with a minimum of twenty AmeriCorps members (if for competitive review).

### **B. Phase One Review**

There are two components to Phase One: 1) An assessment of the applicant's past performance for the same program model (if applicable) and 2) a review of Theory of Change and Logic Model portion of the application narrative. Each application will be read by several CNCS staff..

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

### **C. Selection of Applications for Phase Two Review**

Applications will advance to Phase Two Review based on the results of the Phase One Review, as well as consideration of the priorities and the strategic considerations outlined in the Notice. Those applications that do not advance to Phase Two Review will not be recommended for funding.

### **D. Phase Two Review Several**

CNCS staff will **use the Phase One** results and assess the remaining portions of the application on the basis of the selection criteria. 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 final 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 additional information in response to clarification questions in a timely fashion will result in the removal of applications from consideration.

**During Phase One and Phase Two, External Reviewers will review and assess the evidence base criteria in the Notice. Assessments of evidence base will be applied during Phase Two.**

### **E. Financial and 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. This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding, the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria, and the assessment of programmatic past performance. 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 CFR § 2522.140; and
- The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

### **F. Selection for Funding**

Applicants that do not advance to Phase Two will not be selected for funding. The CEO will select the final portfolio, based on staff recommendations on the quality of response (including clarification responses) against the criteria, programmatic and financial risk assessments, external review input, Notice's priorities and strategic considerations.

### **G. Feedback to Applicants**

Following grant awards, each applicant will receive the summary comments of Phase One and, if applicable, Phase Two Review 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 clarification questions, if any. All compliant applications will receive feedback from the external review of the evidence base portion of their application.

CNCS is committed to transparency in grantmaking. The following information pertaining to this competition for new and re-competing applications will be published on the CNCS website (<http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/open-government-initiative/transparency/results-grantscompetition>), within 90 business days after all grants are awarded:

- A blank template of the internal review form.
- A blank template of the external review form of the Evidence Base.
- A list of all compliant applications submitted.
- Executive summaries of all compliant applications submitted by the applicants as part of the application.
- Data extracted from the Standard Form 424 Face Sheet (SF424) and Program Narrative submitted by applicants for successful applications.
- Summaries of external reviewers' comments for successful applications.
- A list of external reviewers who completed the review process.

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

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

Applicants will be notified via email as to funding decisions. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The Notice of Grant Award signed by the grant officer is the authorizing document for grant activities.

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

#### **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.

#### **Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards**

Grants under this program are subject to 2 CFR 200 and CNCS regulations issued to implement the part. This final guidance, published on Dec. 26, 2013, supersedes and streamlines requirements from OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A-110, and A-122 (which have been placed in OMB guidances); Circulars A-89, A-102, and A-133; and the guidance in Circular A-50 on Single Audit Act follow-up.

#### **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. 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:

1. A nationwide name-based search of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW); and 2. 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:

1. A nationwide name-based check of the NSOPW; and
2. 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 C.F.R. § 2540.200–§ 2540.207 and <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/criminal-historycheck> for complete information and FAQs. Vendor checks (checks performed by commercial vendors) are often noncompliant with these requirements. Inability of a grantee to demonstrate that they have conducted an NSOPW and other required criminal history checks, as specified in CNCS's regulations,

See 45 C.F.R. § 2540.200–§ 2540.207 and <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/criminal-historycheck> for complete information and FAQs. Vendor checks (checks performed by commercial vendors) are often noncompliant with these requirements. Inability of a grantee to demonstrate that they have conducted an NSOPW and other required criminal history checks, as specified in CNCS's regulations, 26 may result in disallowance of all or part of the costs associated with noncompliance.

### **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

### **3. Reporting**

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 §§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.

If you receive an award directly from CNCS, you 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. You 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.

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.

### **Progress Report Data**

In addition to semi-annual reporting outcomes and progress toward the grant approved performance measures, additional data must be reported annually (as applicable).

### **Re-Focusing of Funding**

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

### **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 e-mail to [americorpsgrants@cns.gov](mailto:americorpsgrants@cns.gov). Questions about single state applications should be addressed to the respective State and Territory Commission. A list of all Commissions can be found here: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions>. The mailing address is:

Corporation for National and Community Service  
ATT: Office of Grants Policy and Operations/ASN Application  
1201 New York Avenue N.W.  
Washington, DC 20525

### **H. OTHER INFORMATION**

In addition to consulting the Application Instructions, Supplementary Materials, and AmeriCorps regulations as directed in this *Notice*, State/Territory 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 State/Territory Commission.