

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

For 2021-2022 AmeriCorps State Funds



RFP #2122WNCSB-AC

**Issued by:
STATE OF WISCONSIN
WISCONSIN NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE BOARD**

Submitting a Notification of Intent to Apply is mandatory for all applicants. Access the survey at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/21-22-AC>

**Notifications of Intent to Apply must be submitted by 12:00 Midnight CT,
October 26, 2020**

**All Proposals and Required Additional Documents must be
received no later than 4:30 PM CT on November 9, 2020**

**LATE NOTIFICATIONS OF INTENT TO APPLY AND PROPOSALS WILL NOT
BE ACCEPTED**

**For further information regarding this RFP, contact
servewisconsin@wisconsin.gov**

Questions on this RFP will be accepted until 12:00 Midnight, November 2, 2020

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Appendix A: 2021-2022 AmeriCorps State Application Peer Review Form

Appendix B: Formula Funding Process – Narrative

Appendix C: Selection Criteria for 2021-2022 Formula Grant Competition – Performance Scoring Examples

Important Dates

- **Notification of Intent to Apply:** Submission of a Notification of Intent to Apply is required to be eligible for this competition and is due **October 26, 2020 by 12:00 Midnight CT** via the following online form:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/21-22-AC>
- **Deadline:** Proposals and required additional documents must be received by Serve Wisconsin by **November 9, 2020 at 4:30 PM CT; late proposals and documents will not be accepted**
- **Notification of Selection:** CNCS expects that successful applicants will be notified by **mid-May 2021**

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

This *Request for Proposals (RFP)* should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations 45 CFR Sections 2520 – 2550, which can be found at <https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?ID=9e5466ae66b0b60241f448502b41433b&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title45/45chapterXXV.tpl>, the *RFP Glossary* (Section 8.0), *Application Instructions and Attachments*, and *Performance Measure Instructions*, which are incorporated by reference.

The RFP process is aligned with the Wisconsin State Service Plan, which can be found at <https://www.servewisconsin.wi.gov/state-service-plan>. The RFP is issued by Serve Wisconsin and the State of Wisconsin, and publication of this *RFP* does not obligate Serve Wisconsin or the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to award any specific number of grants or to obligate the entire amount of funding available.

1.1 Program Description

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

1.1.1 Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations (see Section 1.3) proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions/practices to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that members can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

1.1.2 AmeriCorps Funding Priorities (See Section 8.0 for further information about some of the priorities and additional requirements)

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

- Efforts to help local communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants may propose programming in any CNCS focus area to aid communities as they recover from the COVID 19 pandemic.
- Programs that actively engage in removing structural racial inequities, advancing racial equality, and increasing opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities.
- Economic Opportunity – a program model that increases economic opportunities for communities by preparing people for the workforce.
- Education – see sixth bullet.
- Healthy Futures – a program model that reduces and/or prevents prescription drug and opioid abuse.
- Evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange (<https://www.nationalservice.gov/impact-our-nation/evidence-exchange>) that are assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence.
- Veterans and Military Families – a program model that positively impacts the quality of life of veterans and improves military family strength.
- Rural intermediaries - organizations that demonstrate measurable impact and primarily serve rural communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure.
- Faith-based organizations.
- Programs that reduce child poverty.
- Environmental stewardship.
- Economic Mobility Corps – a joint initiative with the Community Development Financial
- Institutions Fund to place national service members at Certified Community Development Financial Institutions to enhance their capacity to provide financial literacy, financial planning, budgeting, saving, and other financial counseling activities in distressed and underserved areas (See Attachment A)

To receive priority consideration applicants must show that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes, and must include a high quality program design. Proposing programs that receive priority consideration are not guaranteed funding.

1.1.3 Performance Goals or Expected Outcomes - National Performance Measures

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

CNCS expects applicants to use National Performance Measures as part of their comprehensive performance measurement strategy if the National Performance Measures are part of the applicant's Theory of Change. Applicants should use both performance and evaluation data to learn from their work as well as make tactical and strategic adjustments to achieve their goals. For more information, please refer to the National Performance Measure Instructions at https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/3%20ASN_FY2021_PerformanceMeasuresInstructions_FINAL_508.pdf.

1.1.4 Program Authority

Awards under this Notice are authorized by the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, ([42 U.S.C. § 12501 et seq.](#)).

1.2 Federal Award Information

1.2.1 Estimated Available Funds

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

1.2.2 Estimated Award Amount

Award amounts will vary, as determined by the scope of the projects.

1.2.3 Project Period

The project period is generally one year with a start date of August 15 or September 1, 2021, and end date of August 14 or August 31, 2022, respectively. Continuation awards for subsequent years are not guaranteed; they depend on availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance.

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

1.2.4 Type of Award

AmeriCorps Operating Grants: CNCS may award a Cost Reimbursement or a Fixed Amount grant to any successful applicant, but the availability of a Full-Cost Fixed Amount grant is limited to certain applicants. Professional Corps are not eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement grants. See Sections 1.3.1 and 8.0 for more information. CNCS will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year.

| Grant Types | Cost Reimbursement | Fixed Amount | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Available Subtypes | Traditional | Full-Cost | Education Award Program (EAP) | Professional Corps – See Section 1.5.3 for further requirements | No Cost Slots |
| Maximum Cost per MSY | \$16,300 | \$16,300 | \$800 or \$1,000* | \$1,000 | \$0 |
| Type of Slots in the National Service Trust | Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum-time, Abbreviated-time | Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum-time, Abbreviated-time | Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum-time, Abbreviated-time | Full-time only | Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum-time, Abbreviated-time |
| Budget Submission Required | Yes | No | | Yes, if requesting operating funds | No |
| Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSYs | No | Yes | | | No |
| Special Requirements | N/A | N/A | | Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries and benefits must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in budget. | N/A |
| Financial Reporting Requirements | Yes | No | | | |
| Available to New Applicants | Yes | No | Yes | | |

*Per 42 U.S.C. § 12581a, the Corporation may provide the operational support under this section for a program in an amount that is not more than \$800 per individual enrolled in an approved national service position, or not more than \$1,000 per such individual if at least 50 percent of the persons enrolled in the program are disadvantaged youth.

1.2.5 Program Models

In Wisconsin, AmeriCorps programs typically employ one of two program models, as described below:

1. Youth Corps Program Model: Pursuant to Sec. 16.22(1)(dm), Wis. Stats., the term “youth corps program” means a full-time, year-round national service program or a full-time, summer national service program that does all of the following: 1) undertakes meaningful service projects with visible public benefit, including natural resources, urban renovation and human resource projects; 2) includes as participants persons who

have attained the age of 16 but who have not attained the age of 26, including youths who are not enrolled in school and other disadvantaged youths; and 3) provides those participants with crew-based, highly structured and adult-supervised work experience, life skills training, education, career guidance and counseling, employment training and support services and with the opportunity to develop citizenship values and skills through service to their community and country. (Note: The Wisconsin National Community Service Board (Board; see Section 8.0) cautions programs wishing to enroll 16-year-olds in AmeriCorps. CNCS has determined that 16-year-olds must be out-of-school as determined by State Law, and in Wisconsin there are very few cases where a 16-year-old can be deemed out-of-school.)

2. Multi-site Program Model: A “multi-site program” is an AmeriCorps program that places one or two members at multiple project sponsor sites within a single community, county, region or statewide. Host service sites are schools, nonprofit and public agencies that agree to involve an AmeriCorps member in community service; supervise and evaluate that member; and possibly provide a certain amount of matching funds for the member’s living allowance and operating costs.

1.3 Eligibility Information

1.3.1 Eligible Applicants

The following non-Federal entities (all of which are defined in 2 CFR. §200.1) that have a DUNS number and are registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) are eligible to apply:

- Indian Tribes
- Institutions of higher education
- Local governments
- Nonprofit organizations
- States

Entities must have a valid SAM registration and DUNS and/or Unique Entity Identifier to receive an award. See Section 2.1.2.

New Applicants

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

New applicants are eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement and Education Award Program (EAP) grants but are not eligible to apply for Full-Cost Fixed Amount grants.

Continuation Applicants

Continuation applicants are organizations that are currently in year one or two of a three-year competitive grant. The following programs are eligible to apply for competitive continuation funding: Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee-Academic & Career Planning; Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee-Club Corps; College Possible; Easter Seals Wisconsin; Marshfield Clinic Volunteer Wisconsin; North Central Community Action Program; Public Allies, Inc.; Renewal Unlimited, Inc.; United Way of Dane County-Achievement Connections; United Way of Dane County-Schools of Hope; Western Dairyland Economic Opportunity Council; and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Continuation applicants must submit an application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. Please see the *Application Instructions and Attachments* for these requirements.

CNCS reserves the right to award applications in an amount other than the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so.

1.3.2 Types of Applicants

Single-State Applicants

Organizations that propose to operate in only one state must apply through the Governor-appointed State or Territory Commissions (i.e., the Board/Serve Wisconsin). Each Commission administers its own selection process and submits to CNCS the applications it selects to compete for funding directly to CNCS. Single-state applicants must contact their Commissions to learn about their state or territory processes and deadlines. State deadlines may be significantly earlier than the CNCS deadlines and may have additional

requirements. The list of State and Territory Commissions can be found here:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions>. A Single-State application from a State or Territory with a Commission that is submitted directly to CNCS by the applicant rather than to the Commission will be considered noncompliant and will not be reviewed.

National Direct Applicants

National Direct applicants include:

- *Multi-State*: Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one State or Territory apply directly to CNCS.
- *Federally-recognized Indian Tribes*: Applicants that are Indian Tribes can apply directly to CNCS.

Although National Direct applicants do not have to apply to Commissions, there are substantial requirements to coordinate with the Commissions for states in which national service programs will operate. See the CNCS *NOFO* for more information about these requirements. National Direct applicants must also complete a National Direct Consultation Form, which is located at <https://www.statecommissions.org/national-direct-consultation>.

In addition to being eligible to apply under this *RFP* or directly to CNCS, federally recognized Indian Tribes will also be eligible to apply for operating or planning grants under a separate Notice of Funding Opportunity for Indian Tribes to be released by CNCS later in the fall with an application deadline in spring. CNCS may request applicants apply under the Tribal competition rather than under this *RFP*.

1.3.3 Threshold Issues

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

- Professional Corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a Professional Corps by CNCS must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.
- If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: 45 CFR §2522.910-.940), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.
- All applicants must propose program designs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. Applicants assessed as lower than the Preliminary evidence tier (i.e., Pre-Preliminary) must provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality review criteria in order to be considered for funding.

Due to staff time and other capacity commitments for oversight and management of an AmeriCorps program, the Board encourages applicants to apply for no fewer than 10 AmeriCorps members under this *RFP*.

1.3.4 Other Eligibility Requirements

Under Section 132A(b) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this *RFP*.

Applications that propose to engage in activities that are prohibited under CNCS's statutes, regulations, or the terms and conditions of its awards are not eligible to receive CNCS funding.

Note that under appropriations provisions annually enacted by Congress, if CNCS is aware that any corporation has any unpaid federal tax liability—

- that has been assessed
- for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed
- that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability—

that corporation is not eligible for an award under this *RFP*. However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has made a determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the federal government.

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

1.3.5 Other Considerations

CNCS has refocused many national service efforts to assist with the response to natural disasters. Applicants are encouraged to include member service activities in their proposal that would involve members in disaster preparedness or response. This could include member training activities that would involve members in local disaster response or limited deployments to areas in the nation affected by disasters.

Serve Wisconsin supports programs that actively engage qualified people with disabilities as AmeriCorps members and volunteers. These efforts are part of a larger initiative from CNCS, which supports efforts to increase participation in national service by people with disabilities. Serve Wisconsin stands behind the principle that everyone can serve their community and encourages programs to engage people with disabilities in their local service efforts.

1.4 Cost Sharing or Matching

1.4.1 Fixed Amount Grants

There is no match requirement for Fixed Amount grants (see Section 8.0). CNCS does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program; therefore, organizations should raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.

1.4.2 Cost Reimbursement Grants

Applicants are required to match funds based on the chart below. The applicant's match can be non-CNCS cash and/or in-kind contributions. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet the match requirement at the time of application submission. See *Section 1.5 Funding Restrictions* for more information.

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

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

How to Calculate Minimum Match Requirement

$$\begin{aligned} & \$ \text{ CNCS (Federal) Request} \div (100\% - \text{minimum match share}\%) = \$ \text{ TOTAL AWARD} \\ & \$ \text{ TOTAL AWARD} - \$ \text{ CNCS Request} = \$ \text{ Grantee Share} \end{aligned}$$

Example: A program in year 7 (minimum match share = 38%) of AmeriCorps operations is requesting \$300,000 from CNCS.

$$\begin{aligned} & \$300,000 \div (100\% - 38\% \text{ (or } 62\%)) = \mathbf{\$483,871} \text{ (minimum total award)} \\ & \$483,871 - \$300,000 = \mathbf{\$183,871} \text{ (minimum grantee share)} \end{aligned}$$

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

The living allowance or salary provided to AmeriCorps members in Professional Corps programs (see Section 8.0) does not count toward the matching requirement.

1.4.3 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 and Attachments*.

Applicants who plan to request an alternative match schedule must submit a request directly to servewisconsin@wisconsin.gov by the application due date of **November 9, 2020 at 4:30 PM Central Time (CT)**. Serve Wisconsin must first approve an alternative match schedule before submitting to CNCS on behalf of state applicants. See the *Application Instructions and Attachments* for more information.

1.5 Funding Restrictions

1.5.1 Types of Grants

The purpose of this document is to provide interested parties with information to enable them to prepare and submit a proposal for AmeriCorps State funding for the creation, expansion, or enhancement of programs that meet the requirements of the AmeriCorps national service program. The State, as represented by the Board, intends to use the results of this process to award contracts for AmeriCorps State national service programs beginning in August or September 2021. These programs include AmeriCorps State Competitive Professional Corps, Full-Cost Fixed Amount, Education Award Program (EAP) Fixed-Amount grants, Cost Reimbursement, and AmeriCorps State Formula grants.

AmeriCorps State Competitive Grants: These grants are awarded to fund a portion of program costs and members' living allowance. AmeriCorps State competitive applications are submitted to the Board through this *RFP* process. Eligible applications are reviewed at the state level and then sent to CNCS where they are selected for funding or returned back to the state for further consideration under the formula grant process.

AmeriCorps State Formula Grants: Under this *RFP* AmeriCorps State formula applications are those applications not funded by CNCS in the competitive grant cycle. The State of Wisconsin receives an annual formula allocation of funds from CNCS. The Board determines which applications receive formula grants in the state of Wisconsin. To read about other funding opportunities available through the State Formula process, see Section 3.6.

1.5.2 Member Living Allowance

A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage. Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time terms of service. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time member, it must comply with the maximum limits in Table 1. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either CNCS or grantee share. Exceptions are noted below.

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

Table 1: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance

| Service Term | Minimum # of Hours | Minimum Living Allowance | Maximum Total Living Allowance |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Full-time | 1,700 | \$15,100 | \$30,200 |
| Three Quarter-time | 1,200 | n/a | \$21,318 |
| Half-time | 900 | n/a | \$15,988 |
| Reduced Half-time | 675 | n/a | \$11,991 |
| Quarter-time | 450 | n/a | \$7,994 |
| Minimum-time | 300 | n/a | \$5,329 |
| Abbreviated-time | 100 | n/a | \$1,776 |

Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements

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

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

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

1.5.3 Maximum Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)

The CNCS cost per MSY is determined by dividing the CNCS share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested. It does not include child care or the value of the education award a member may earn. The maximum amount an applicant may request from CNCS per MSY is determined on an annual basis. New and re-competing State Commission sub-grantees/applicants will be held to the maximum cost per MSY for their grant type.

Table 2: Maximum Cost per MSY

| Grant Program | Maximum |
|---|---------------------|
| Individual Competitive State/Territory Program (cost reimbursement) | \$16,300* |
| Professional Corps Fixed Amount Grant | \$1,000** |
| Education Award Program Fixed Amount Grant | \$800 or \$1,000*** |
| Full-cost Fixed Amount Grant | \$16,300 |

**Cost reimbursement programs operating in rural communities (as defined in Section 8.0) and cost reimbursement programs that recruit opportunity youth as AmeriCorps members may request up to \$16,800 cost per MSY for the AmeriCorps members that will be serving in rural areas or who are opportunity youth.*

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

****Per 42 U.S.C. 12581a, the Corporation may provide the operational support under this section for a program in an amount that is not more than \$800 per individual enrolled in an approved national service position, or not more than \$1,000 per such individual if at least 50 percent of the persons enrolled in the program are disadvantaged youth.*

For purposes of fundamental fairness, CNCS may review an application which meets the statutory characteristics of a professional corps as a professional corps, regardless of whether the organization applied as a professional corps program. CNCS reserves the right to determine whether an applicant (whether or not the applicant has applied as a **Professional Corps**) has sufficiently demonstrated that they cannot effectively operate an AmeriCorps program without receiving CNCS operating funds. There may be specific circumstances where CNCS determines that a legal applicant has not demonstrated the need for operational grant funds due to other funding resources. Where CNCS’s due diligence review of an application shows that the applicant has a historically high level of support from non-CNCS sources, and as a result has levels of unrestricted funding that is in excess of the requested level of CNCS funding, CNCS may choose to not provide operational grant funding.

1.5.4 Segal AmeriCorps Education Award

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

1.5.5 Indirect Costs

Application budgets may include indirect costs. Based on qualifying factors, applicants may either use a federally approved indirect cost rate, a 10% *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim

certain costs directly as outlined in 2 CFR. §200.413. States, local governments, and Indian Tribes may use previously-approved cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across federal awards. Applicants that have a federal negotiated indirect cost rate or that will be using the 10% *de minimis* rate must enter that information in the Organization section in eGrants. However, under section 121(d) of the NCSA and CNCS's regulations at 45 CFR. §2521.95 and 2540.110, no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps grants. See the *Application Instructions and Attachments* for more information.

The instructions for how to enter the organization's indirect cost rate are located here: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/2020/egrants-indirect-cost-rate-instructions>. Applicants should not submit documentation addressing the indirect cost rate agreement via email.

Please note: To request a Federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, when CNCS is the applicable cognizant agency for an organization's indirect costs, the applicant must submit a request to IndirectCostRate@cns.gov. The applicant may also obtain instructions and additional information by contacting the email address above.

1.5.6 Pre-Award Costs

Pre-award costs, where authorized, are allowed after receiving written approval from the CNCS Office of Grants Administration.

2.0 PREPARING AND SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL

This *RFP* should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR. §§2520-2550, the *Application Instructions and Attachments*, and the *National Performance Measure Instructions*, which are incorporated by reference. These documents can be found at <https://www.servewisconsin.wi.gov/start-a-program>. The full Regulations are available online at www.ecfr.gov.

2.1 Content and Form of Application Submission

Please note that single-state applicants that apply to Serve Wisconsin through this *RFP* have different deadlines, more required additional documents, and different instructions than CNCS. Please ensure that you use this *RFP* to complete your proposal to the Board and not the FY2021 *Notice of Funding Opportunity* from CNCS.

2.1.1 How to Apply

- Determine if you are a National Direct applicant that will apply directly to CNCS or a Single-State applicant that will apply through the Wisconsin State Commission (see Section 1.3.2)
- Obtain a DUNS number, see Section 2.1.2
- Register (or update) your organization with the System for Award Management, see Section 2.1.2
- Submit a Notification of Intent to Apply, see Section 2.1.3
- Establish an eGrants account, see Section 2.2
- Write a high quality proposal that is responsive to this *RFP*
- Submit required additional documents
- Submit the application in eGrants

2.1.2 Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

All applicants **must** register with the System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/> and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If an applicant is awarded a grant, it must maintain an active SAM registration throughout the life of the award. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees at: https://sam.gov/SAM/transcript/Quick_Guide_for_Grants_Registrations.pdf.

SAM registration must be renewed annually. A Commission is responsible for ensuring its state applicants have compliant registrations. CNCS suggests that applicants finalize a new registration or renew an existing one at least three weeks before the application deadline, to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise. **Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and address on all grant applications to CNCS.**

CNCS will not make awards to entities that do not have a valid SAM registration and DUNS or Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time CNCS is ready to

make a Federal award, CNCS may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

The Federal government is implementing Unique Entity Identifiers (UEI) as part of the SAM registration process to eventually replace DUNS numbers. CNCS may ask applicants to add the UEI to their application as part of the clarification or pre-award process. CNCS is adding a field to capture the UEI in eGrants. If you already have a UEI and the UEI field is available in eGrants, you can enter it at the time you submit your application.

Applicants can obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online at the [DUNS Request Service](#). CNCS recommends registering at least 30 days before the application due date, if applicants do not yet have their UEI.

2.1.3 Notification of Intent to Apply

In order to gauge the number of applications we are likely to receive and to plan more efficiently for technical assistance and application review, all applicants, including continuation applicants, must submit a Notification of Intent to Apply via an online form. This may be accessed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/21-22-AC>. Organizations that submit a Notification of Intent to Apply will receive a confirmation email from Serve Wisconsin within 24 hours. Send a message to servewisconsin@wisconsin.gov if you encounter technical difficulties that prevent you from submitting a Notification of Intent to Apply via that SurveyMonkey link.

Submitting a Notification of Intent to Apply by 12:00 Midnight CT, October 26, 2020, is mandatory.

Applications submitted by applicants who have not submitted a Notification of Intent to Apply by the deadline will not be considered for funding.

2.1.4 Additional Documents

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 required additional documents must be received by Serve Wisconsin by 4:30 PM CT on November 9, 2020. No exceptions will be made.**

Do not submit any supplementary materials that are not requested, such as videos, pictures, brochures, etc. The Board will not review or return them.

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

All applicants:

- A copy of the most recent single audit for your organization, your organization's most recent financial audit or other financial statements if you have not had an audit. If a management letter was provided as part of your audit, it must be included with the audit you provide. Wisconsin state agencies and universities do not need to provide the State audit.
- Evaluation briefs, reports, studies. Please see the Evidence Tiers definitions in Section 8.0 and Section 2.4.2 for further information.
- Labor Union Concurrence (if applicable)
 - If a program applicant:
 - Proposes to serve as the placement site for AmeriCorps members; and
 - Has employees engaged in the same or substantially similar work as that proposed to be carried out by AmeriCorps members; and
 - Those employees are represented by a local labor organization-- then the application must include the written concurrence of the local labor organization representing those employees. Written concurrence can be in the form of a letter or email from the local union leadership.
 - If a program applicant:
 - Proposes to place AmeriCorps members at sites where they will be engaged in the same or substantially similar work as employees represented by a local labor organization, then the applicant must submit a written description of how it will ensure that:

- AmeriCorps members won't be placed in positions that were recently occupied by paid staff.
- No AmeriCorps member will be placed into a position for which a recently resigned or discharged employee has recall rights as a result of a collective bargaining agreement, from which a recently resigned or discharged employee was removed as a result of a reduction in force, or from which a recently resigned/discharged employee is on leave or strike.
- Federal debt delinquency (if applicable). Applicants delinquent on federal debt must submit a complete explanation in Word or PDF format.
- Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)
- Cost Allocation Plan (if applicable)
- Permission to use federal funds as match (if applicable). If using other federal funds for match, documentation from the other federal entity showing that those federal funds are permitted to be used as match on an AmeriCorps grant
- Alignment with Wisconsin State Service Plan: Find this on the Serve Wisconsin Website
- Additional Checklists: Find these on the Serve Wisconsin website
<https://www.servewisconsin.wi.gov/start-a-program>
 - Additional Checklist A: Additional Documents Checklist*
 - Additional Checklist B: Budget Checklist (N/A for Fixed-Amount and EAP applicants)*
** Though we expect you to submit these checklists with your documents, failure to include them will not disqualify an application.*

New and Recompeting applications

In addition to the required documents above, New and Recompeting applicants must submit the following additional documents.

- Evaluation plan or report, if required. Please submit in Word. The evaluation report should include a title page with the CNCS grant ID for the project that was evaluated, the name of the project, and the date of completion of the report. If any of this required information is missing, the applicant may not receive credit for meeting their evaluation requirements. Please refer to Section 2.4.2 – 2. Evidence Base and Section 8.0 for detailed instructions by evidence tier.
- Organizational chart
- IRS Determination letter, and any amendments, reflecting approval or denial of tax-exempt status (if applicable)
- Financial Management Surveys

Rural Intermediaries (New and re-competing)

- Letters of support from the consortium members

Entities applying on behalf of a Federally Recognized Tribe (New and re-competing)

- Tribal organization eligibility documentation.

Additional documents should be submitted via email: Submit all additional required documents as one or more attachments via email to servewisconsin@wisconsin.gov. Submit all additional documents together with the following email subject line: 2021-2022 AmeriCorps Proposal – [Organization Name] [AmeriCorps Program Name]. For staff and peer review reasons, electronic submission is the preferred option for your submission. If an alternate submission method is required, please contact servewisconsin@wisconsin.gov by November 2, 2020.

Applications and additional documents submitted by fax will not be accepted.

Regardless of the method of submission, all additional documents must be **received** by Serve Wisconsin by 4:30 PM CT on November 9, 2020 timely submission of emailed document packets will be determined by the date and time the email was received by Serve Wisconsin, and will determine if all required documents have been submitted. If time allows, staff will notify the applicant of any missing or incomplete additional documents via email. It is the responsibility of the applicant, not the Board, to ensure that all documents are submitted on time. **Not submitting all of the required grant application documents by the deadline will**

result in disqualification of the application. More information about the required additional documents can be found in the *Application Instructions and Attachments*.

2.1.5 Submission Dates and Times

The deadline for the receipt of all applications and additional documents under this *RFP* is **November 9, 2020 by 4:30 PM CT**.

Unless requested by the Board, no additional information will be accepted from an applicant after the deadline for submittal of applications.

2.1.6 Late Applications

Submitting an application after the deadline and/or not submitting all required grant application documents will result in disqualification of the application.

2.2 How to Submit an Application in eGrants

Applicants must submit applications electronically via the CNCS web-based system, eGrants (<https://egrants.cns.gov>). Because it is a unique system, it is recommended that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application creation process as soon as possible. Applicants should draft the application as a word processing 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. Serve Wisconsin and CNCS will consider the number of pages as they print out through eGrants when determining compliance with any page limits in this *RFP*.

Please see the *Application Instructions and Attachments* for more instructions on how to enter and submit your application in eGrants. CNCS also provides eGrants tutorials at www.nationalservice.gov/resources, keyword: eGrants.

2.2.1 Electronic Application Submission in eGrants

Applicants must create and submit applications electronically via CNCS's web-based management system, eGrants. It is recommended that applicants create an account and begin the application creation process as soon as possible to account for potential system errors.

The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must use his or her own eGrants account to sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Contact the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via the web form at https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask_eg if a problem arises when creating an account or preparing or submitting the application. The general public hours for the National Service Hotline are as follows:

- Monday-Friday 9:00 AM – 7:00 PM ET (January, May, June, July, August, September)
- Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM – 7:00 PM ET (February, March, April, October, November, December)

Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the competition to which the organization is applying. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit their application via eGrants. You must then submit a brief paragraph including your eGrants ticket number issued to you by the National Service Hotline with your explanation of the technical issues that prevented you from submitting in eGrants by the deadline via email to servewisconsin@wisconsin.gov before the application submission deadline.

In the event of prolonged unavailability of the eGrants system on the date of submission, the Board reserves the right to extend the eGrants submission deadline. Any notice of extension of the deadline will be sent to all organizations that submitted a Notification of Intent to Apply and will be posted on the Board's website at www.servewisconsin.wi.gov

2.3 Application Fields and Page Limits

In eGrants, applicants will enter the following components of a complete application:

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: This is automatically generated when applicants complete the data elements in the eGrants system
- Narratives
 - Executive Summary
 - Program Design
 - Organizational Capability
 - Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
 - Evaluation Plan (if applicable)
- Logic Model
- Performance Measures
- Budget
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certification
 (<https://egrants.cns.gov/cnsmisc/ECERTS.HTM>, and <https://egrants.cns.gov/cnsmisc/EASSUR.HTM>)

2.3.1 Page Limits

There are page limits for the Narratives and Logic Model. No page limit applies to the narrative portion of the Evaluation Plan, Performance Measures, or the supplementary materials.

Serve Wisconsin and CNCS will consider the number of pages only as they print out from the “Review” tab in eGrants (where you will see the “View/Print your application” heading) when determining compliance for page limits. CNCS will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods in determining whether an application complies with the applicable page limits. CNCS strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the “Review and Submit” tab in eGrants prior to submission to check that the application does not exceed the page limit.

Please note that number of pages of a document printed from word processing software may be different than number of pages that will print out from eGrants. When drafting your proposal in word processing software, use the following as a *guideline* for the font sizes, spacing, and margins in eGrants.

Margins: Top 1.56”; Bottom 1.0”; Left 1.0”, Right 0.65”
 Font: Georgia 11 point, 1.5 line spacing

This is only a guideline. Reviewers will not consider submitted material that is over the page limits in the printed eGrants application Narratives, even though eGrants allows an applicant to enter and submit text over the limit. Do not submit other information not requested in the *RFP* or *Application Instructions and Attachments*; the Board will not review it.

Narratives:

Applications may not exceed 10 pages for the Narratives or 12 pages for applications for Rural Intermediaries as the pages print out from eGrants.

The application sections that count towards the page limit are the:

- SF-424 Face Sheet
- Executive Summary
- Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy narratives

Logic Model

The Logic Model may not exceed three pages when printed with the application from the “Review” tab in eGrants.

2.4 Application Review Information

2.4.1 Review Criteria

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

2.4.2 Application Fields

A. Executive Summary (Required - 0 percent)

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

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

This program will focus on 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, Full-Cost Fixed Amount, No Cost Slots, and Professional Corps Fixed) should list their Other Revenue (see Section 8.0) because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still raise significant additional resources to operate the program.*

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. For Serve Wisconsin's scoring criteria, please see *Appendix A – 2021-2022 AmeriCorps Peer Reviewer Form*.

1. Theory of Change and Logic Model (24 points)

The Theory of Change shall address:

- The proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community problem.
- The applicant's proposed intervention is clearly articulated including the design, dosage, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) leveraged volunteers.
- The applicant's intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's Theory of Change.
- The expected outcomes articulated in the application narrative and Logic Model represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem identified by the applicant.
- The rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention(s) is reasonable.
- The service role of AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.

The Logic Model shall depict:

- A summary of the community problem
- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including, but not limited to:
 - Locations or sites in which members will provide services
 - Number of AmeriCorps members who 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, types and number of activities conducted). If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as output indicators.
- Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

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

In the application narrative, applicants should discuss their rationale for setting output and outcome targets for their performance measures.

Rationales and justifications should be informed by the organization's performance data (e.g., program data observed over time that suggests targets are reasonable), relevant research (e.g. targets documented by organizations running similar programs with similar populations), or prior program evaluation findings.

Logic models are meant to be standalone sections of a proposal. Applicants should not assume that logic model reviewers have seen other portions of the application. Applicants with multiple interventions should complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each intervention. Logic Model content that exceeds three pages will not be reviewed.

2. Evidence Base (20 points)

The assessment of an applicant's evidence base has two parts. First, the applicant will be assigned to an evidence tier (see Section 8.0). Second, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the degree to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored.

Evidence Tier (12 points)

An evidence tier will be assessed for each applicant for the purpose of understanding the relative strength of each applicant's evidence base and the likelihood that the proposed intervention will lead to outcomes identified in the logic model.

In 2020, the evidence tiers of successful AmeriCorps State and National applicants that were competing were as follows: Strong 26%, Moderate 18%, Preliminary 24%, and Pre-Preliminary 32%. As these figures indicate, CNCS values and funds programs at all points along the evidence continuum and expects programs to progress along the evidence continuum over time. **Thus, do not be deterred from applying for funding due to your current evidence level.**

Applicants who have outcome or impact evaluation reports of the same intervention described in the application (see Section 8.0 for a definition of "same intervention") may submit up to 2 of those reports, plus (if applicable) the evaluation report from their last three-year grant cycle, to qualify for the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tier. In order to qualify for consideration, the intervention evaluated in the submitted report(s) must match the intervention proposed by the applicant in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the Program Design and Logic Model sections of the application:

- Characteristics of the beneficiary population
- Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention
- Dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities
- The context in which the intervention is delivered
- Outcomes of the intervention

Submitted reports that do not sufficiently match the intervention proposed by the applicant in all of these areas will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points. Submission of additional documents that are not consistent with the guidance and requirements described in this RFP (e.g., advocacy pieces, policy briefs, other narratives that are not research studies or program evaluations) will not be reviewed.

In the Evidence Tier section of the application narrative, applicants must (1) summarize the study design and key findings of any outcome or impact evaluation report(s) submitted and (2) describe any other evidence that supports their program, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies that inform their program design. Applicants who submit evaluation reports for consideration must also describe

in the Evidence Base section of the application narrative how the intervention described in the submitted reports is the same as the intervention described in the application (see Section 8.0).

Applicants should provide citations for the studies they describe, if applicable; however, reviewers will not review any documents external to the application other than evaluation report(s) submitted in accordance with the *RFP* instructions.

Applicants must meet all requirements of an evidence tier in order to be considered for that tier.

If the evaluation reports submitted by the applicant do not meet the definitions (see Section 8.0), the applicant may be considered for a lower evidence tier.

Evidence Quality (8 points)

After the applicant's evidence tier has been assessed, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the extent to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored.

For applicants who are assessed as being in the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tiers, reviewers will score the submitted evaluation reports using the following standards:

- The submitted reports are of satisfactory methodological quality and rigor for the type of evaluation conducted (e.g., adequate sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, appropriate use of control or comparison groups, etc.);
- The submitted reports describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years;
- The submitted reports show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.

For applicants who are assessed as being in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier, reviewers will score the narrative provided in the Evidence Base section of the application using the following standards:

- The applicant uses relevant evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies, to inform their proposed program design;
- The described evidence is relatively recent, preferably from the last six years;
- The evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.

Applicants assessed in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier who do not provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality standards will not meet the threshold requirements for this *RFP* and will not be considered for funding.

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

3. Notice Priority (0 points)

- The applicant's proposed program fits within one or more of the AmeriCorps funding priorities as outlined in Section 1.1.2 and more fully described in Section 8.0.
- The proposed program meets all of the requirements detailed in Section 1.1.2 and in Section 8.0.

4. Member Experience (6 points)

- AmeriCorps members will gain skills as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed.
- The program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the program operates.
- The applicant will foster an inclusive service culture where different backgrounds, talents, and capabilities are welcomed and leveraged for learning and effective service delivery.

C. Organizational Capability (25 percent)

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

1. Organizational Background and Staffing (9 points)

- The organization details the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing the AmeriCorps program as well as providing oversight and monitoring for the program.

2. Compliance and Accountability (8 points)

- The organization has a monitoring and oversight plan to prevent and detect non-compliance and enforce compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities and criminal history checks at the grantee, subgrantee (if applicable), and service site locations.
- The CNCS-required evaluation report meets CNCS requirements (if applicable).
- The CNCS-required evaluation report is of satisfactory quality (if applicable).

3. Culture that Values Learning (4 points)

- The applicant's board, management, and staff collect and use information, including performance data, for learning and decision making.

4. Member Supervision (4 points)

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

D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)

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

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

1. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 points)

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

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

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

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

E. Evaluation Plan (Required for re-competing grantees - 0 points)

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

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

First-time applicants should be aware that CNCS may require submission of data collection instruments if a grant is approved for funding. For more information about how to develop a high-quality data collection plan, visit the CNCS Knowledge Network: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/americorps/building-effective-data-collection-plans-presented-october-12-2017>.

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

The evaluation report must be submitted with the required additional documents by the deadline (see Section 2.1.4). The evaluation plan is to be included in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in eGrants. Formula funded applications are not subject to the evaluation requirements that are described in this section.

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/cnsc-evaluation-policies>):

- A short description of the Theory of Change - why the proposed intervention is expected to produce the proposed results
- Outcome(s) 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
- 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
- Description of the data sources, sampling methods, measurement tools, and data collection procedures that will be used in the evaluation
- Analysis plan that clearly describes the methodology/ies that will be used to analyze the collected data
- A timeline for the evaluation that describes how the evaluation will cover at least one year of CNCS-funded activity and will be completed within the three-year timeframe of the grant
- Qualifications needed for the evaluator
- The proposed budget

Information provided in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field will not be scored and will not be reviewed by CNCS until after funding decisions have been made.

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. §2522.700-710:

- 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 impact evaluation of the program (see Section 8.0), and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in 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 CFR §2522.730.

For purposes of compliance with evaluation plan and report requirements, an application will be considered a re-competing application if it has previously been funded competitively for at least three years for the same project (see Section 8.0 for the CNCS definition of “same project”).

- If the applicant has received competitive funding for the same project for at least three years, it will be required to submit an evaluation plan.
- If the applicant has received at least six years of competitive funding for the same project, the applicant will be required to submit an evaluation report as well as an evaluation plan for the upcoming 3-year grant. If the applicant does not satisfy the definition of re-competing, it will not be required to submit an evaluation plan or completed evaluation report.

The “Evaluation Summary or Plan” field of eGrants does not count towards the page limit for the application; however, it does have a set character limit of 20,000 characters. 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 that are re-competing for funds are eligible to apply for approval of an alternative evaluation approach (AEA). Grantees requesting approval of an alternative evaluation approach should submit this request along with their evaluation plan in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in eGrants. CNCS guidance on alternative evaluation approaches can be found on the CNCS website: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/2019/ASN-alternative-evaluation-approach-guidance>.

If the request for the alternative evaluation approach plus 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 field 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.

2.5 Procuring and Contracting Agency

This Request for Proposals (*RFP*) is issued by the Wisconsin National and Community Service Board, which is the sole point of contact for the State of Wisconsin during the selection process. The person responsible for managing the *RFP* process is Alexis Matthews, Program Officer. All contracts resulting from this *RFP* will be administered by the Board.

2.6 Clarification and/or Revisions to the Specifications and Requirements

Any questions or inquiries concerning this *RFP* must be received **in writing via email by 12:00 Midnight CT on November 2, 2020**. Questions will not be accepted via telephone. Please submit all questions and inquiries to the RFP Manager:

Email: servewisconsin@wisconsin.gov

Applicants are expected to raise any questions, exceptions, or additions they have concerning the *RFP* document by 12:00 Midnight CT on November 2, 2020. All questions asked by applicants with corresponding answers will be released periodically at <https://www.servewisconsin.wi.gov/start-a-program>. The final posting of Questions and Answers will occur on November 4, 2020. After November 2, only specific eGrants technical assistance may be given.

If an applicant discovers any significant ambiguity, error, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other deficiency in this *RFP*, the applicant should immediately notify the RFP Manager of such error and request a modification or clarification of the initial *RFP*.

Each proposal shall stipulate that it is predicated upon the requirements, terms, and conditions of this *RFP* and any supplements or revisions thereof.

Any contact with Serve Wisconsin staff or Board members concerning this *RFP* is prohibited, except as authorized by the RFP Manager during the period from the date of release of the *RFP* until the Board approves final grant applications for AmeriCorps funding for the 2021-2022 program year.

2.7 Technical Assistance

Serve Wisconsin intends to provide technical assistance to ensure that strong proposals are developed. The following policies will be followed as a fair process for the provision of technical assistance:

1. Technical Assistance will be equally available to all prospective applicants.
2. Staff will only respond to applicants who have reviewed the available written materials and have a specific question to be answered. Questions may only be submitted in writing (see Section 2.6).
3. Staff will only provide answers to specific questions and make general comments regarding the Regulations and *RFP*, as opposed to providing specific programmatic suggestions for a particular applicant.
4. Staff will not review proposal drafts.
5. In compliance with federal regulations regarding conflict of interest, WNCBS Board members will not provide any form of technical assistance to a potential grant applicant. Instead, they will refer applicants to the RFP Manager.
6. Serve Wisconsin will provide applicants with technical assistance on entering and submitting proposals in CNCS's web-based grants management system and will provide guidance on how to access assistance from the National Service Hotline.

2.8 Reasonable Accommodations

Upon request, reasonable accommodations will be provided by the Board including the provision of information materials in an alternative format for individuals with disabilities. For special needs, contact Alexis Matthews at servewisconsin@wisconsin.gov.

2.9 Calendar of Events

Listed below are specific and estimated dates and times of actions related to this *RFP*. The actions with specific dates must be completed as indicated unless otherwise changed by the Board. There may or may not be a formal notification issued for changes in estimated dates and times. Meeting dates will be posted on the Board's Web site at www.servewisconsin.wi.gov, and all meetings are publicized as open meetings.

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>EVENT</u> |
|---|---|
| October 5, 2020 | Date of Issue of <i>RFP</i> |
| October 12, 2020 | Technical Assistance Pre-Recorded Webinars Released |
| October 26, 2020 (12:00 midnight CT) | Notification of Intent to Apply due to Serve Wisconsin |
| November 2, 2020 (12:00 midnight CT) | Last day for submitting written inquiries regarding this <i>RFP</i> |
| November 4, 2020 | Final Questions & Answers from applicants available online |
| November 9, 2020 (4:30 PM CT) | Applications and additional documents due to Serve Wisconsin |
| November 9, 2020 (4:30 PM CT) | Alternative Match Requests Due (if applicable, via email) |
| December 1, 2020 | Program Evaluation & Development Committee meeting, Madison |
| December 1, 2020 | All recommended applicants are required to present to committee |
| December 10, 2020 | Applications in eGrants will be returned to applicants for revisions/clarifications following end of PE&D Meeting |
| December 18, 2020 | WNCBS Board meeting |
| | Revisions due to Serve Wisconsin for Board-approved applications; there may be further rounds of revisions after this date |

January 6, 2021
Mid-May 2021

Board-approved applications due to CNCS
Date by which CNCS expects to make notification of Competitive awards
If funding is available, the formula grant process will begin in spring 2021

Spring 2021

2.10 Contract Term and Funding

Unless CNCS delays award notification, funds awarded under this solicitation will be for a period of one year starting August 15, 2021 or September 1, 2021, and ending August 14, 2022 or August 31, 2022, respectively.

2.11 Oral Presentations

Representatives for all applications that pass the State level peer review and program performance evaluation and are recommended to the Board for funding will be required to provide a short, 5-minute presentation to the Board's Program Evaluation & Development Committee at their December 2020 meeting. The presentation should summarize the application. Board members may also ask applicants questions regarding their applications.

There are no limits to the number of individuals applicants may send to this meeting, and it is recommended that the individuals who are the most knowledgeable about the program and application attend the meeting. **Applicant representatives should not distribute supplementary materials (i.e., reports, pictures, brochures, etc.) to Committee/Board members during the oral presentation period.**

2.12 Incurring Costs

The State of Wisconsin is not liable for any cost incurred by applicants replying to this *RFP*.

2.13 Withdrawal of Proposals

Proposals shall be irrevocable until contract award unless the proposal is withdrawn. Applicants may withdraw a proposal in writing at any time. A written request to withdraw the proposal must be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant organization and submitted to the RFP Manager. If a previously submitted proposal is withdrawn before the proposal due date and time, the applicant may submit another proposal at any time up to the proposal due date and time.

3.0 PROPOSAL SELECTION AND AWARD PROCESS

The Board selects applications using an extensive, multi-stage review and selection process. This process includes Board, staff, and peer review and evaluation of pre-determined performance indicators. This section describes the application review and selection process.

In accordance with State Statute 16.22(2)(h), the Board must give priority to the greatest extent practicable to persons providing youth corps programs when awarding grants. The Board has enacted the following policy: when considering applications for AmeriCorps grant funding: if two applicants are approximately equal in performance and one of the two programs is a youth corps, then the youth corps program shall be given priority over the other program. Under this policy, two applications shall be considered approximately equal if there is a difference of two percentage points or less between their percentages of points earned. For applications that are approximately equal, the Board may consider other factors including, but not limited to: youth corps priority; compliance issues; program start date; program location; demographic factors; public or private non-profit registered in Wisconsin; State Service Plan; program expansion.

3.1 Preliminary Staff Review – Timely Submission

Serve Wisconsin staff will consider timely submission of emailed document packets to be determined by the date and time the email was received by Serve Wisconsin and will determine if all required documents have been submitted. If time allows, staff will notify the applicant of any missing or incomplete additional documents via email. It is the responsibility of the applicant, not the Board, to ensure that all documents are submitted on time. Board staff will also document a list of grant applications that were submitted by the deadline in eGrants. Applications submitted by eligible organizations by the deadline and that include all required grant application documents will continue in the selection process. **Submitting an application after**

the deadline and/or not submitting all required grant application documents on time will result in disqualification of the application.

3.2 Proposal Review for Continuation Competitive Applications

Since CNCS currently funds these projects, these organizations are only required to submit continuation requests and required additional documents that will be reviewed by Board staff. A recommendation for funding will be made to the Board without peer review; however, Continuation Applicants will be subject to performance score review (see Section 3.3.2).

After the Board approves the continuation applications, the applications will then be sent to CNCS for review. CNCS will make the final determination as to whether an applicant will continue to receive funding or will be declined. If a continuation application is declined at the federal level, the application will be considered for Formula funding under this *RFP*, if eligible.

3.3 Proposal Review for All Other Applications (not Continuations)

If your organization is not applying for Continuation Competitive funding and unless eligible for and applying for Continuation Formula funding (see Section 3.6), your organization will be submitting a New or Recompete application. After review for timely submission, the next steps are the concurrent state level peer review process and the Serve Wisconsin staff technical review process. New and recompetite applications are peer reviewed by outside experts including, but not limited to, community service practitioners, educators, administrators, and former national service participants. All reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest. If you are a current AmeriCorps Grantee, do not assume that peer reviewers are familiar with your program.

Serve Wisconsin staff complete a technical review of all sections of the application narrative, logic model, performance measures, and budget. Staff will prepare funding recommendations to the Board based on the results of the staff technical review and state level peer review. Following final Board approval of applications, staff may request technical changes to applications.

3.3.1 State Level Peer Review

In evaluating your application for funding, peer reviewers will only assess the program design section of the narratives and the logic model. Application Peer Review Forms, included in this *RFP* as Appendix A, are used for the state level peer review process. Note that the peer review format in Appendix A is revised annually to reflect changes in CNCS's *NOFO* related to the program design portion of the application narrative. The point values in the Peer Review Form are doubled from the points values listed in this *RFP*. The state peer reviewers do not review the Organizational Capability or Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy sections; therefore, point values are increased in order to reach 100 total possible points.

Proposals will be scheduled for review by at least 3 peer reviewers, and the reviewers' scores are then averaged for each application. An application must receive an average peer score of 80 or above to be considered by the Board for submission as a New or Recompete Competitive Application. The Board will consider all applications receiving an average score of 80 or above if they also pass the Performance Scoring Evaluation and may recommend any or all for submission as a New or Recompete Competitive Application. ***An application that receives an average peer review score of fewer than 80 points will be ineligible for further consideration.*** Reaching the 80 point threshold is inclusive of rounding to two places after the decimal point.

3.3.2 Performance Scoring Evaluation

Performance scoring percentages will be considered by the Board for applications requesting funding to continue existing programs including recompetite and continuation applications. A program's performance is based on the following criteria: enrollment and retention rates; 30-Day compliance with exiting members; meeting performance measure targets; and timeliness of reporting.

Recompetite applications that have a performance scoring percentage less than 80% (inclusive of rounding to two places after the decimal point) will be eliminated from further consideration for Competitive funding, unless the Board decides to waive the 80% requirement based on evidence of a corrective action plan to include benchmarks and associated milestones. The Board could choose to recommend to CNCS that the application be funded based on the corrective action plan. An exception to the 80% minimum shall apply to

applicants proposing a new and not previously funded AmeriCorps project, and shall apply for the first three years that the new/not previously funded project is funded. The exception for such new projects shall not preclude use of other criteria to determine appropriateness of funding such new projects.

An exception to the 80% minimum also applies to Continuation Competitive applications (see Section 3.2). As approved by the Board, any Continuation Competitive application that has a performance scoring percentage less than 80% (inclusive of rounding to two places after the decimal point) will be eliminated from further consideration for Competitive funding, unless the Board decides to waive the 80% requirement based on evidence of a corrective action plan to include benchmarks and associated milestones. The Board could choose to recommend to CNCS that the application be funded based on this plan.

3.3.3 Post Review Quality Control

After the peer review is complete, Serve Wisconsin staff will review the results for fairness and consistency. Some applications may be selected for a Quality Control review. This additional level of review may be used for applications with peer review scores that would impact an application's ability to meet the established threshold.

Quality Control reviewers may be Serve Wisconsin staff not involved in the technical review of the application and/or individuals with qualifications similar to those of peer reviewers. The Quality Control reviewer(s) will provide an assessment of the application's key strengths and weaknesses.

3.3.4 Ranking of Applications for New and Recompete Competitive Consideration

Prior to sending New and Recompete applications to the federal level for competitive review, CNCS requires state commissions to rank proposals. The Board must prioritize the proposals based on their relative quality.

The proposed ranking of New and Recompete applications will be provided to the Board as part of their December 2020 meeting. Average application score and fit in Wisconsin's portfolio criteria for all applicants plus performance scoring for existing programs will be considered for ranking of Competitive applications. Performance scoring percentage and fit in Wisconsin's portfolio criteria will be used to break any tie for the number one ranking position. Fit in Wisconsin's portfolio criteria includes, but is not limited to: program location, program focus, cost efficiency, public or private non-profit registered in Wisconsin, and staff capacity.

All applications approved by the Board will be sent to CNCS for review by their January 6, 2021 deadline.

3.4 CNCS Review and Selection Process

3.4.1 Review and Selection Process

CNCS will engage External and Staff Reviewers with relevant knowledge and expertise to assess and provide input on the eligible applications. The review and selection process is intended to produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and strategic considerations described in this *RFP*. The determinations made by CNCS reviewers may be different than what the applicant self-determined upon submission of its application.

The stages of the review and selection process follow:

A. Initial Application Compliance and Eligibility Review

CNCS will conduct an initial Eligibility Review to determine if an application meets the eligibility requirements as detailed in this *RFP* and advances to the next stage of the review process.

An application is compliant if the applicant:

- Is an eligible organization
- Is eligible to submit directly to CNCS
- Submitted an application and all required additional documents by the application submission deadline

Reviewing for eligibility is intended to ensure that only those applications that are eligible for award are further reviewed. However, a determination of eligibility can take place at any point during the application

review and selection process. Applicants that are determined to be non-compliant and ineligible will not receive an award.

B. Application Review

External Review

External Reviewers will review and assess the evidence criteria in the *RFP*. CNCS will recruit and select reviewers on the basis of demonstrated expertise. All External Reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

Internal Review

CNCS staff will evaluate the applications using the application review criteria and assess the priorities and strategic considerations detailed in the *RFP*. Reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

Post-Review Quality Control

After the initial review process is complete, CNCS staff will review the results for fairness and consistency. Some applications may be selected for a Quality Control assessment. This additional level of review may be used to assess applications for which there are significant reviewer anomalies. In addition, the State Commission input on National Direct applications will be reviewed and assessed.

C. Applicant Clarification

CNCS may ask an applicant for clarifying information. CNCS staff will use this information to make funding recommendations. A request for clarification does not guarantee an award. Applicants may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked for clarifying information. An applicant's failure to respond to a request for clarification adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of its application from consideration

D. Pre-Award Risk Assessment

CNCS staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant to assess an applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to the assessment of the applicant's eligibility and the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If CNCS determines that an award will be made to an applicant with assessed risks, special conditions that correspond to the degree of assessed risk may be applied to the award. Additionally, if CNCS concludes that the reasons for applicants having poor risk assessment are not likely to be mitigated, those applications may not be selected for funding.

In evaluating risks, CNCS may consider some of the following criteria:

Due Diligence:

- federal debt delinquency
- suspension and debarment
- information available through OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as:
 - Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)
 - U.S. Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services
 - System for Award Management (SAM)
 - "Do Not Pay"
- reports and findings from single audits performed under Uniform Administrative Guidance and findings of any other available audits or investigations
- IRS Tax Form 990

Operational and Financial Management:

- financial stability
- Operational and Financial Management Survey

Past Performance:

- applicant's record in managing previous CNCS awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
- timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements
- accuracy of data reported

- conformance to the terms and conditions of previous federal awards
- applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on award recipients
- meeting matching requirements
- the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
- *Grant progress reports – attainment of Performance Measures*
- *Enrollment and retention*
- *Monitoring findings - CNCS and/or OIG (if applicable) State Commission (for their subgrantees)*
- *Commission rank*

Other Programmatic Risks:

- publicly available information, including information from the applicant organization's website

State Commission staff will assess their re-competing subgrantees' past performance and submit those assessments to CNCS. 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 may consider the italicized criteria above for applicants that are current formula and competitive grantees.

Additionally, CNCS may use the results of the review of the risk assessment evaluation in determining which applications to fund.

E. Consideration of Integrity and Performance System Information

Prior to making any award that exceeds \$250,000, CNCS is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM and FAPIIS (see [41 U.S.C. 2313](#)). Additionally, CNCS may expand upon these requirements and use its discretion to review and consider information about any applicant receiving an award, including those under the simplified acquisition threshold.

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

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

3.4.2 Selection for Funding

The review and selection process is designed to:

- Identify how well eligible applications are aligned with the application review criteria
- Build a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:
 - CNCS Funding Priorities (see Section 1.1.2)
 - Meaningful representation of
 - Geographic diversity
 - Rural communities (see definition in Section 8.0)
 - Single and multi-state programs
 - Faith-based organizations
 - Focus area representation

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

CNCS reserves the right to prioritize funding existing awards over making new awards.

CNCS reserves the right to award applications in an amount other than the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so.

CNCS reserves the right to adjust or make changes to their review process, if unforeseen challenges or urgent circumstances make it impossible, impracticable, or inefficient to conduct the review process as planned. Any such adjustments or changes will not affect the selection criteria that will be used to assess applications.

3.4.3 Feedback to Applicants

Following grant awards, applicants will receive summary feedback from the External Review and Staff Review of their compliant applications. This feedback will be based on the review of the original application and will not reflect any information provided during clarification.

3.4.4 Transparency in Grant-making

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

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

Submitted program narratives for successful applications will be available upon request.

3.5 CNCS Award Administration Information

3.5.1 Federal Award Notices

CNCS will make awards following the grant selection announcement. Please see Section 2.9 for the date CNCS anticipates announcing the results of this competition, contingent on the availability of congressional appropriations. All applicants, successful or not, will be notified of funding via email.

Notification of an award is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The Notice of Grant Award is the authorizing document for grant activities. An awardee may not expend federal funds until the start of the Project Period identified on the Notice of Grant Award unless it has received a written pre-award cost approval from CNCS.

3.5.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

A. Uniform Guidance

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

B. Requests for Improper Payment Information

CNCS may request documentation from recipients in order to monitor the award or to comply with other legal requirements, such as the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002, as amended. Failure to make timely responses to these requests may result in award funds being placed on manual hold, reimbursement only status, or other remedies may be applied as appropriate.

C. CNCS Terms and Conditions

All awards made under the criteria in this *RFP* will be subject to the FY 2021 CNCS General Terms and Conditions, and the FY 2021 AmeriCorps Program Specific Terms and Conditions. These Terms and Conditions contain detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the CNCS General and Program Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/terms-and-conditions-cnccs-grants>.

3.5.3 National Service Criminal History Check Requirements

The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a specific screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. The law requires grantees to conduct and document NSCHCs on persons (including award-funded staff, national service participants, or volunteers) receiving a salary, living allowance, stipend or education award through a program receiving CNCS funds. This includes staff who receive part of their salary through a subgrant. An individual is ineligible to serve in a position that receives such CNCS funding if the individual is registered, or required to be registered, as a sex offender or has been convicted of murder. The cost of conducting NSCHCs is an allowable expense under the award. Grantees should utilize the two vendors CNCS has engaged to conduct the required NSCHCs. Information regarding use of these two vendors can be found at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/2018/nschc-using-fieldprint-and-truescreen-manual>. Failure to conduct a NSCHC may result in significant disallowed costs.

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. 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*
 - b. 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. 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*
 - b. A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check.

See 45 CFR §2540.200 - §2540.207 and <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/criminal-history-check> for complete information and FAQs.

3.5.4 Official Guidance

All CNCS active Guidance is available on the agency's Guidance webpage: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/official-guidance>. *The contents of these documents do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way unless incorporated into a contract or grant agreement. These documents are intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.*

3.5.5 Use of Material

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

3.5.6 Re-Focusing of Funding

CNCS reserves the right to re-focus program dollars for this competition in the event of disaster or other compelling needs.

3.6 State Formula Funding

Applications sent to the federal level for competitive review and declined for funding by CNCS will be considered for State Formula funding if they meet the requirements detailed below and in Appendices B and C.

In order to be eligible for Formula funding through the Board, an applicant shall be one of the following at the time of application for Formula funds: Wisconsin state or local government entity, or one of the following if its governing body operates within the state of Wisconsin: a federally recognized Indian Tribe, a public or private nonprofit organization (organized as a tax-exempt entity under the federal IRS Code, including religious organizations and labor organizations), or an institution of higher education as defined in Wisconsin Statute 118.55(1). The only exception to this policy would be for an annual Formula process in which all other possible Formula funding options have been considered and Formula funding remains unallocated. In cases where Formula funds would otherwise remain unallocated, those funds could be provided to an entity that does not meet the requirements of this policy.

Continuation Formula Funding: Currently funded Formula programs (for the 2020-2021 program year) that have not had three consecutive years of Formula funding since the Board approved Continuation Formula funding eligibility-to-apply for all Formula funded programs may choose to apply for Continuation Formula funding for 2021-2022. The following programs are eligible to apply for continuation formula funding: Dane County Human Services – PASS; Marquette University; Marshfield Clinic – Recovery Corps; Racine Zoological Society; Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers; ; Wisconsin Association for Runaway Services; WI Primary Health Care Association; and YMCA of Metro Milwaukee.

An eligible applicant may apply for up to two years of Continuation Formula funding, for a maximum of three consecutive years of Formula funding. After three consecutive years of Formula funding, the program would be required to apply for Competitive funding for the following year of funding. Formula funded grantees are not required to apply for second and third year Continuation Formula funding and can choose to apply for Competitive funding instead of applying for a second or third year of Continuation Formula funding.

Continuation Formula applications are subject to the requirements in Appendices B and C. **Continuation Formula applicants must submit a Notification of Intent to Apply by the deadline specified in Section 2.1.3**, although actual submission of the Continuation Formula application will not occur until spring 2021. Continuation Formula applicants will be required to provide a short, 5-minute presentation to the Board's Program Evaluation & Development Committee at the meeting during which the Committee will consider applications for Formula funding.

Additionally, there may be opportunities for new AmeriCorps programs and/or AmeriCorps Planning Grants to be funded through a State Formula process if Formula funds remain unallocated. If Formula funds remain unallocated, additional Requests for Proposals may be issued in the spring. To read more about AmeriCorps Planning Grants, visit <https://www.servewisconsin.wi.gov/program-planning-grant>.

3.6.1 Ranking of Applications for Formula Consideration

The amount of funds available for state formula grants in 2021 is not yet determined. In addition to limits in the amount of funds available to the Serve Wisconsin, CNCS may place restrictions on the number of MSYs that can be filled through state AmeriCorps awards. In 2020, Serve Wisconsin was allocated \$2.6 million and no limit of MSYs.

Please review the criteria in Appendices B and C which include documents that outline how applications will be ranked for Formula consideration. The Board's Program Evaluation & Development Committee and/or staff will prepare a ranking of Formula programs and recommendations for awarding funds, member positions, and MSYs. These recommendations are reviewed by the Program Evaluation & Development Committee of the Board and/or forwarded to the full Board for consideration. The Board reserves the right to request that programs modify their applications in order to create a manageable Formula portfolio. This may include setting a maximum number of programs funded and/or a minimum or maximum number of MSYs per program.

For Competitive applications, applicants are encouraged to apply for the maximum amount of funding and MSYs that they require to administer their programs; however, when applications are considered for formula funding, they may initially be considered at a maximum funding level of \$326,000 (maximum cost per MSY x 20 MSYs).

3.6.2 Option to Recommend a Formula Application be Considered as a Planning Grant

After reviewing an eligible proposal submitted under this RFP, Serve Wisconsin staff may recommend to the Board that an application, regardless of peer review and the performance scoring evaluation, be considered

as a Planning Grant application if staff determines that the organization needs more time to prepare to operate a successful AmeriCorps program.

3.7 Right to Reject Proposals and Negotiate Contract Terms

The Board reserves the right to reject any or all proposals. The Board may negotiate the award amount, authorized budget items, type and number of AmeriCorps MSYs or member positions, and specific programmatic goals with the selected applicants prior to entering into an agreement with an applicant.

3.8 Right to Reopen RFP

The Board reserves the right to reopen the RFP if additional funding becomes available, a sufficient number of applications were not received, or it is in the best interest of the Board.

3.9 Public Inspection of Proposals

After notification of awards is made by CNCS and/or the Board, and under the supervision of Board staff, copies of proposals will be available for public inspection. Applicants should schedule reviews by emailing servewisconsin@wisconsin.gov.

No entire proposal submitted to the state may be marked as confidential, and any materials so marked, by being included in the application, will be considered public information. Evaluation tabulation and scoring by individual peer reviewers will also be open for public inspection, but these scores will not identify individual peer reviewers.

3.10 Appeals Process

Applicants can only protest or appeal violation of procedures to the Board that are outlined in this *RFP* or fall within the Formula grant selection process. Ranking and scoring by the peer reviewers is not subject to protest or appeal. Notice of intent to protest and any protests must be made in writing. Individuals should make their protests as specific as possible and should fully identify the procedural issue being contested.

Any written notice of intent to protest must be filed with the Board and received in no later than five (5) working days after the notices of intent to award are issued. Any written protest must be received within ten (10) working days after the notice of intent to award is issued.

Via Email:
The Board Chair
Wisconsin National & Community Service Board
ServeWisconsin@wisconsin.gov

The appeal will be reviewed by the Program Evaluation & Development Committee of the Board and a recommendation will be forwarded to the Board for consideration.

The decision of the Board may be appealed to the Secretary of the Department of Administration within five (5) working days of issuance. A copy of such appeal must also be filed with Board. The appeal must allege a violation of a Wisconsin statute or a section of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.

4.0 GENERAL PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

All proposal requirements are outlined in this *RFP*, the *Application Instructions and Attachments*, and Additional Checklists.

5.0 TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Technical requirements differ based on the type of application being submitted and are included in the *Application Instructions and Attachments*. Pay careful attention to the technical requirements for the appropriate application. For your convenience, an additional documents checklist is available.

6.0 PROGRAM BUDGETS

Program budgets are submitted as part of your proposal. Please follow the budget instructions in the *Application Instructions and Attachments*. Grants under this program are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements as specified in Section 3.5.2.A of this RFP.

7.0 SPECIAL CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

7.1 Payment Requirements

Grant recipients must submit payment requests on at least a quarterly basis. The method of requesting payments will be further detailed in the contract.

7.2 Reporting

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

Grantees will be required to submit reports that will be used in Serve Wisconsin's required reports to CNCS. Grantees are required to provide quarterly performance reports and an internal or external evaluation report as required by the AmeriCorps regulations §§2522.500-2522.540 and §§2522.700-2522.740. In addition, grantees – other than fixed amount grantees – will be required to submit quarterly financial reports, and all grantees will be required to submit a project closeout report.

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

- The data measures what it intends to measure
- The data reported is complete
- The grantee collects data in a consistent manner
- The grantee takes steps to correct data errors
- The grantee actively reviews data for accuracy prior to submission.

Progress Report Data

In addition to reporting of progress toward the grant's approved performance measure outputs and outcomes, additional performance data and narrative data must be reported annually (as applicable), including the number of applicants for AmeriCorps positions and the number of volunteers recruited and/or supported by AmeriCorps members. The full list of required and optional performance data elements for AmeriCorps programs can be found on the AmeriCorps Grantee Progress Report webpage:

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/grants-funding/manage-funds/manage-ameri-corps-state-and-national-grants/ameri-corps-grantee-progress-reports>.

Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the recipient's ability to secure future CNCS funding.

7.3 Prime Contractor and Subcontracts or Placement Sites

The prime contractor will be responsible for contract performance when subcontractors or placement sites are used. However, when subcontractors or placement sites are used, they must abide by all terms and conditions of the contract.

7.4 Executed Contract to Constitute Entire Agreement

In the event of contract award, the contents of this RFP (including all attachments), RFP addenda and revisions, the proposal of the successful applicant, and additional terms agreed to in writing by the Board and the grant recipient shall become part of the contract. Failure of the successful applicant to accept these as a contractual agreement may result in a cancellation of award.

The following priority for contract documents will be used if there are conflicts or disputes:

- AmeriCorps Contract between the Board and Grantee
- Code of Federal Regulations
- AmeriCorps Grant Terms and Conditions
- Applicant's Proposal and Any Subsequent Amendments
- State Request for Proposals

7.5 Termination of Contract

The Board may terminate the contract at any time at its sole discretion by delivering 30 days written notice to the grant recipient. Upon termination, the Board's liability will be limited to the pro rata cost of the services performed as of the date of termination plus expenses incurred with the prior written approval of the Board. In the event that the grant recipient terminates the contract, for any reason whatsoever, it will refund to the Board within 10 days of said termination, all payments made hereunder by the Board to the grant recipient for work not completed or not accepted by the Board. Such termination will require written notice to that effect to be delivered by the grant recipient to the Board not less than 90 days prior to said termination.

8.0 GLOSSARY

AmeriCorps: The national service program funded under 42 U.S.C. §12571-12595 (Division C Programs).

AmeriCorps Regulations: Refers to the Code of Federal Regulations that includes the federal requirements related to administering an AmeriCorps State program. You can find the CFR. for AmeriCorps programs under Title 45 – Public Welfare, Volume 4, Chapter XXV, parts 2500 – 2599 at www.ecfr.gov.

AmeriCorps State: The AmeriCorps funds that are allocated to states through a population-based formula or are awarded to states through a national competition.

AmeriCorps National Service Network: Includes AmeriCorps State, AmeriCorps National, AmeriCorps Tribes and Territories, AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), and AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) programs taken together as programs dedicated to national service.

AmeriCorps Member: Any individual who is serving in an approved national service position and is eligible to receive the education award from the National Service Trust. The term "AmeriCorps Member" is synonymous with the term "participant" as used by the CFR and the AmeriCorps Health Care policy.

Applicant: A firm/organization submitting a proposal in response to this *RFP*.

Board: The Wisconsin National and Community Service Board.

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

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

CFR.: Code of Federal Regulations.

Community-based Agency: A private nonprofit organization (including a church or other religious entity) that: (1) is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community; and (2) is engaged in meeting educational, environmental, public safety, homeland security, or other human needs.

Consortia: A group of organizations eligible for Corporation assistance under this application, or a nonprofit organization created or identified by such a group, whose purpose is to facilitate and support the work of member organizations in ways that add material and human resources (e.g., subgrants and technical assistance) beyond those available to each member individually.

Continuation Applicants: Those currently in their first or second year of a competitive or Formula funding cycle.

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

CNCS or the Corporation: The Corporation for National and Community Service.

DUNS#: The DUNS number is an identifier that helps the federal government improve statistical reports on federal grants and cooperative agreements. The DUNS number does not replace your 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 email turnaround on requests for DUNS numbers; however, CNCS suggests registering at least 30 days in advance of the application due date.

Education Award Program (EAP) fixed amount grant: Programs apply for a small fixed dollar amount per MSY, can enroll less than full-time members, and use their own resources to cover most of the costs to run the program. Programs can access funds under the grant based on enrolling the full complement of members supported under the grant. As with full-time fixed amount grants, there are no specific match or financial reporting requirements.

eGrants: CNCS's integrated, secure, Web-based system for applications: <https://egrants.cns.gov>

Eligible Member: An individual: (1) who is enrolled in an approved national service position; (2) who is a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States; (3) who is at least 17 years of age at the commencement of service unless the member is out of school and enrolled in a Clean Energy Service Corps Program as defined in the Act [42 U.S.C., Chapter 129, §12572 (a) (3)], in which case he or she must be between the ages of 16 and 25, inclusive; (4) has a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate [or agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent before using an education award] and who has not dropped out of elementary or secondary school in order to enroll as an AmeriCorps member [unless enrolled in an institution of higher education on an ability to benefit basis and is considered eligible for funds under section 484 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. §1091], or who has been determined through an independent assessment conducted by the Program to be incapable of obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent [provided that CNCS has waived the education attainment requirement for the individual]; (5) has passed required criminal history background checks.

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

Evidence-based: Evidence-based programs that have been rigorously evaluated and have demonstrated positive results for at least one key desired outcome. Rigorous evaluation means conducting at least one Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) or Quasi-Experimental Design (QED) evaluation of the same intervention described in the application.

Evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange:

- Economic Opportunity:
https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/CNCS_Economic_Opportunity_Evidence_Brief_2019_508.pdf
- Education:
https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/CNCS_Education_Evidence_Brief_112318_508.pdf

- Healthy Futures:
https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/HF_Evidence_Brief_FINAL_v2_508.pdf

Evidence-informed: Programs in this category use the best available knowledge, research, and evaluation to guide program design and implementation, but do not have scientific research or rigorous evaluation of the intervention described in the application.

Applicants may be evidence-informed if they have incorporated research from other evidence-based programs into their program designs and/or have collected performance measurement data on the intervention described in the application.

Evidence Tiers

Pre-preliminary evidence means the applicant has not submitted an outcome or impact evaluation of the same intervention described in the application, although the applicant may have collected some performance data on the intervention (e.g., data on intervention outputs and/or outcomes). Applicants in this tier must describe in the Evidence Base section of the application how their program design is evidence-informed (see definition above). Applicants may also cite prior performance measure data if applicable.

Preliminary evidence means the applicant has submitted up to two outcome evaluation reports (non-experimental) that evaluated the same intervention described in the application and yielded positive results on one or more key desired outcomes of interest as depicted in the applicant's logic model. The outcome evaluations may either have been conducted internally by the applicant organization or by an entity external to the applicant. The study design must include pre and post-assessments without a statistically matched comparison group or a post-assessment comparison between intervention and comparison groups. In some cases a retrospective pre-post assessment may be considered, but its use must be justified in the text of the evaluation report.

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

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

Moderate evidence means the applicant has submitted up to two well-designed and well-implemented evaluation reports that evaluated the same intervention described in the 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 evaluations were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.

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

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

Strong evidence means the applicant has submitted up to two evaluation reports demonstrating that the same intervention described in the application has been tested nationally, regionally, or at the state-level (e.g., multi-site) using a well-designed and well-implemented experimental design evaluation (i.e., Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)) or a Quasi-Experimental Design evaluation (QED) with statistically

matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups. Alternatively, the proposed intervention's evidence may be based on multiple (up to two) well-designed and well-implemented QEDs or RCTs of the same intervention described in the application in different locations or with different populations within a local geographic area. The overall pattern of evaluation findings must be consistently positive on one or more key desired outcomes of interest as depicted in the applicant's logic model. Findings from the RCT or QED evaluations may be generalized beyond the study context. The evaluations were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.

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

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

Impact evaluation is an evaluation that provides statistical evidence of how well a program achieves its desired outcomes and what effect it has on service recipients and/or service participants compared to what would have happened in the absence of the program. Impact evaluations must be designed to provide evidence of a causal relationship between program activities and outcomes (45 C.F.R. § 2522.700). Grantees must use an experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation design (i.e., the evaluation must include a control group or a statistically matched comparison group).

Same intervention described in the application: The intervention evaluated in submitted evaluation reports must match the intervention proposed in the application in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the Program Design and Logic Model sections of the application:

- Characteristics of the beneficiary population
- Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention
- Dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities
- The setting in which the intervention is delivered
- Outcomes of the intervention

Submitted reports that do not sufficiently match the intervention proposed by the applicant in all of these areas will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points.

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

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

State Commissions can withhold up to 2% administrative funds from fixed price grants.

Grant Recipient: An organization that is awarded AmeriCorps funds for direct benefit of the community.

Host Service Site: An organization, or other entity, that has been selected to provide a service placement for, or host, a member. Also referred to as a Member Service Location.

Indian Tribes: A federally-recognized Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Native village, Regional Corporation, or Village Corporation, as defined under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. §1602), that the United States Government determines is eligible for special programs and services provided under federal law to Indians because of their status as Indians. Indian Tribes also include any tribal organization controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by one of the entities described above.

Member Service Location: A member service location is the site at which an AmeriCorps member is placed to provide service to the community. Also referred to as a Host Service Site.

Member Service Year (MSY): This term refers to the equivalent of one full-time AmeriCorps member position (at least 1700 service hours). One full-time slot equals 1.0 MSY. One three-quarter time slot equals .700 MSY; one half-time slot equals 0.500 MSY; one reduced half-time slot equals 0.381 MSY; one quarter-time slot equals 0.2646 MSY; one minimum-time slot equals 0.2116 MSY; and one abbreviated-time slot equals 0.0705 MSY.

Multi-Site Program: An AmeriCorps program that places one or more members at multiple host service sites within a single community, county, or statewide.

National Direct Applicants:

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

Federally-recognized Indian Tribes: Applicants that are Indian Tribes apply directly to CNCS.

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

New Applicant: Those who have never had AmeriCorps State and/or National funding before. Current and former formula Grantees are not new.

NOFO or Notice: Notice of Funding Opportunity

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

Partnership: A joint arrangement among a group of organizations eligible for Corporation assistance under this application, or a nonprofit organization created or identified by such a group, whose purpose is to carry out common objectives that are specific and well-defined, and in which the responsibilities of each partner are clearly defined and mutually understood.

Performance Measure: Performance measures are measurable indicators of a program's performance as it relates to member service activities. Performance measurement is the process of regularly measuring the services provided by your program and the effect your program has in communities or in the lives of members or community beneficiaries. The main purpose of performance measurement is to strengthen AmeriCorps programs and foster continuous improvement and to identify best practices and models that merit replication.

Professional Corps: A Professional Corps is a program model composed of AmeriCorps members serving as professionals; i.e. teachers, health care providers, police officers, engineers, attorneys, or other professionals. The programs recruit and place qualified members in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Professional Corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a Professional Corps by CNCS must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.

Professional Corps members' salaries/compensation, including childcare are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve, and are not included in the budget request to CNCS. The living allowance or salary provided to AmeriCorps members in Professional Corps programs does not count toward the matching requirement. CNCS requires **Professional Corps** programs to cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non-CNCS resources. CNCS will only consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate significant organizational financial need based on the materials reviewed by the Office of Grant Management/Grant Administration. These grants are fixed price grants.

Applicants may propose any authorized program type. In the case that a proposed program fits more than one program type (e.g., a program could be either a professional corps or a traditional program). CNCS staff will make a determination as to program type that will be considered for funding. The determination will be based on data provided within the application and supplemental materials submitted with the application. The determination may be different from the program type proposed by the applicant.

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

Program: A national service program, described in the Act (42 U.S.C. §12572(a)), carried out by the Grantee through funds awarded by CNCS, and carried out in accordance with federal requirements.

Program Sponsor: An entity responsible for recruiting, selecting, and training members, providing them benefits and support services, engaging them in regular group activities, and placing them in projects. The program sponsor is in most cases the fiscal agent.

Prohibited Activities: While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or CNCS, staff and members may not engage in the following activities (see 45 CFR § 2520.65):

1. Attempting to influence legislation;
2. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
3. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
4. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
5. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
6. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
7. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
8. Providing a direct benefit to—

- a. A business organized for profit;
 - b. A labor union;
 - c. A partisan political organization;
 - d. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
 - e. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph 7 above, unless CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
9. Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
 10. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
 11. Such other activities as CNCS may prohibit.

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

Project: An activity, or a set of activities carried out by a program that results in a specific, identifiable community service or improvement that: (1) otherwise would not have been made with existing funds; and (2) does not duplicate the routine services or functions of the organization to which members are assigned.

Project Sponsor: The same as a host service site or an organization or other entity that has been selected to provide a placement for a member.

Proposal: A response to this *RFP*.

Recompete Applicants: Those that have received AmeriCorps State and/or National funding before and are in Year 3 of their grant cycle and are applying for continued funding for the program for a new cycle.

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

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

RFP: Request for Proposals.

Rural Communities: CNCS uses rural-urban commuting area (RUCA) codes to classify program addresses as either rural or urban for analytic purposes. RUCA codes classify U.S. census tracts using measures of population density, urbanization, and daily commuting. Census tracts with an urban cluster population less than 50,000 are considered rural (RUCA codes 4 – 10). Applicants are encouraged to designate themselves as serving rural communities if some or all service locations are in rural areas as defined by RUCA codes or if the program can provide other compelling evidence that the program is rural in the narrative portion of the application. This self-designation will be considered in grant-making decisions.

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

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

Rural Intermediaries: CNCS recognizes that severely under-resourced communities may have limited capacity to successfully apply for and implement an AmeriCorps program, due to the size and organizational capacity of eligible applicant/host site organizations or the lack of available matching funds in these communities. Thus it may be effective for a single eligible applicant (intermediary) to develop an application and oversee the implementation of an AmeriCorps program that engages multiple grassroots non-

profits/eligible applicants (referred to as a consortium) that, individually, do not have the necessary organizational or fundraising capacity to apply for and run an AmeriCorps program. Given the desire to address community needs holistically, the nonprofits/eligible applicants that make up the consortium may have, but are not required to have, different focus areas (including the non-focus area capacity building) and thus the nonprofit/eligible applicant intermediary will be multi-focused.

Applicants seeking consideration under this priority must demonstrate that they will be serving in rural severely under-resourced communities; that their application represents a consortium, that the activities provided by the consortium collectively address a compelling community need or set of needs; and that they have sufficient financial and management capacity to act as an umbrella organization for the consortium. Applicants should refer to Section 2.3.1 for information related to page limits specific to rural intermediaries.

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

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

Applicants must submit by the application deadline letters of support from all members of the consortium. See Section 2.1.4 for specific submission information and requirements.

SAM (System for Award Management): SAM is combining federal procurement system and catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into one new system. 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 valid registration, which must be renewed annually. Applicants 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 www.sam.gov.

Same Project: Two projects will be considered the same if they: address the same issue areas, address the same priorities, address the same objectives, serve the same target communities and population, and utilize the same sites. Programs must get approval from the Board and CNCS ASN HQ to be considered a new project.

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

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

Service-learning: A method under which students or members learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that: (1) is conducted in and meets the needs of a community and is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program, and with the community; (2) is member/student-planned and member/student-run; (3) is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students or the educational components of the community service program in which the members are enrolled; and (4) includes structured time for the students and members to reflect on the service experience.

Serve Wisconsin: The marketing name for the Wisconsin National and Community Service Board.

Single-State Applicants: Single state applicants are organizations that propose to operate in only one state; they must apply through the Governor-appointed State or Territory Commissions (Wisconsin National and Community Service Board). Each state and territory commission administers its own selection process and submits to CNCS the applicants it selects to compete for funding. Single-state applicants must contact their State Commissions to learn about their state or territory processes and deadlines which may be significantly *earlier* than the CNCS deadlines and may have additional requirements. The list of State and Territory Commissions can be found on CNCS's website.

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

Slot: Also called member positions or positions. One position in a national service program. Slots can be full-time (1700 hours), three-quarter time (1,200 hours), half-time (900 hours), reduced half-time (675 hours), quarter-time (450 hours), and minimum time (300 hours).

State: The State of Wisconsin.

State Commission: A State Commission on National and Community Service established by a state pursuant to the Act (42 U.S.C. §12638), including an authorized alternative administrative entity to administer the state's national service plan and national service programs and to perform such other duties prescribed by law. Wisconsin's State Commission is the Wisconsin National and Community Service Board.

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

Nonduplication:

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

Nondisplacement:

- 1) An employer may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the use by such employer of a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance.
- 2) An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance.
- 3) A service opportunity will not be created under this chapter that will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual.
- 4) A participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance may not perform any services or duties or engage in activities that would otherwise be performed by an employee as part of the assigned duties of such employee.
- 5) A participant in any program receiving assistance may not perform any services or duties, or engage in activities, that---
 - i) Will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or
 - ii) Are services, duties, or activities with respect to which an individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures.
- 6) A participant in any program receiving assistance may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any---
 - i) Presently employed worker;
 - ii) Employee who recently resigned or was discharged;
 - iii) Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures;
 - iv) Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick); or
 - v) Employee who is on strike or who is being locked out.

WNC SB: Wisconsin National and Community Service Board, a 21-member citizen body appointed by the Governor and staffed by state employees.

Youth Corps Program: Pursuant to Sec. 16.22(1)(dm), Wis. Stats., the term “youth corps program” means a full-time, year-round national service program or a full-time, summer national service program that does all of the following: (1) undertakes meaningful service projects with visible public benefit, including natural resources, urban renovation and human resource projects; (2) Includes as participants persons who have attained the age of 16 but who have not attained the age of 26, including youths who are not enrolled in school and other disadvantaged youths; and (3) Provides those participants with crew-based, highly structured and adult-supervised work experience, life skills training, education, career guidance and counseling, employment training and support services and with the opportunity to develop citizenship values and skills through service to their community and country.

Attachment A: Economic Mobility Corps

About the CDFI Fund and CDFIs

The mission of the U.S. Treasury Department's Community Development Financial Institution Fund (CDFI Fund) is to expand economic opportunity for underserved people and communities by supporting the growth and capacity of a national network of community development lenders, investors, and financial service providers known as Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs).

CDFIs are community-based financial institutions that have a common goal of filling financing gaps in underserved, low-income areas. As community-based institutions, they possess a keen sensitivity to needs of local residents and businesses, and their creation reflects a bottom-up, rather than a top-down, approach to community investment and revitalization.

Currently, there are more than 1,100 CDFIs that are certified by the CDFI Fund serving urban and rural communities throughout the United States. CDFIs are found in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico. They bridge diverse public and private sector interests to serve people and places that traditional financial institutions usually do not. CDFIs provide:

- loans for businesses and projects that otherwise would not receive for financing;
- safe, affordable banking services that otherwise would not be available in the community;
- loan rates and terms that are more flexible than those offered by traditional lenders; and
- development services—such as business planning, credit counseling, and homebuyer education—to help their borrowers use credit effectively and build financial strength.

As a result, CDFIs support the creation of small businesses and local jobs, and the development of affordable housing, community facilities, and schools—all in places where economic opportunity is needed most.

About the Economic Mobility Corps

A joint initiative of the CDFI Fund and CNCS, the Economic Mobility Corps (EMC) places full-time AmeriCorps members at Certified CDFIs to enhance their capacity to provide financial literacy, financial planning, budgeting, saving, and other financial counseling activities in distressed and underserved areas. Economic Mobility Corps members will be placed in Certified CDFIs and will receive training on the principles of financial counseling and financial literacy. A Certified CDFI is an entity that the CDFI Fund has officially notified that it meets all CDFI certification requirements. Only Certified CDFI's are eligible to receive EMC members.

This initiative will fund up to 61 full-time members a year for two years.

Who is Eligible for Award

Organizations that meet the AmeriCorps State and National eligibility criteria.

Additionally, applicants that are Certified CDFIs and organizations with CDFI Fund awards:

- Will be considered ineligible for award if the applicant has a previously executed award agreement(s), as of the date of the Application, (i) the CDFI Fund has made a determination that such entity is noncompliant or found in default with a previously executed agreement, and (ii) the CDFI Fund has provided written notification that such entity is ineligible to apply for or receive any future CDFI Fund awards or allocations. Such entities will be ineligible to submit an application for such time period as specified by the CDFI Fund in writing. Applicants that have pending noncompliance issues of any of its previously executed award agreement(s), are eligible to receive an award if the CDFI Fund has not yet made a final compliance determination.
- Will be considered ineligible for award if the applicant has defaulted on a loan from the CDFI Fund within five years of the application deadline.

Preference will be given to applicants that intend to enroll veterans as AmeriCorps members and/or serve rural areas.

AmeriCorps Member Position Description

Economic Mobility Corps members will strengthen the capacity of Certified CDFIs to provide financial literacy, financial counseling, and financial planning services offered by the Certified CDFIs, to distressed and underserved individuals. Duties include:

- conducting community outreach and recruitment of new clients to the Certified CDFI's counseling and planning services and programs;
- assisting or conducting one-on-one or group orientation sessions for new program clients to explain the Certified CDFI's services, as well as the responsibilities of the client;
- providing financial planning workshops and individual financial counseling to meet the needs of Certified CDFI clients, including conducting group education meetings, and delivering workshops, webinars and meetings;
- assisting in the development and execution of marketing strategies to promote program client participation in Certified CDFI-sponsored financial counseling and education programs;
- providing program clients with information on the different financial products and services (e.g., loan products, checking/savings accounts, etc.) offered by the Certified CDFI;
- conducting scheduled follow-ups with program clients to ask how they are doing, find out if they need additional help, and to help them stay engaged to achieve their plans by established deadlines;
- performing administrative duties that support the Certified CDFI's activities, including but not limited to, coordinating client meetings, preparing presentations, conducting research, reviewing training and outreach materials, reviewing applications for programs and services, and developing material that supports the Certified CDFI's financial counseling and outreach activity; and
- reporting to the Certified CDFI on a regular basis on activities undertaken by the service member.

Desired Skills

Economic Mobility Corps members should possess:

- a desire and ability to work with a diverse group of people, particularly those living in low-income and economically distressed neighborhoods;
- willingness to learn and serve others;
- ability to successfully work independently and in a team environment;
- strong organizational, writing, and oral communication skills, and possess high attention to detail;
- familiarity with community development, financial services, banking and lending terminology, including an understanding of financial planning basics, credit and credit scoring;
- have an interest in finance and/or financial education;
- computer skills, including high-degree of familiarity with Microsoft Excel, or other spreadsheet software; and
- Bachelor's degree preferred, with coursework in finance, accounting, business, or community development.