

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

Legal Applicant/Program Name:		Reviewer Number:	
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Theory of Change and Logic Model (48 points)

Theory of Change (Narrative)	Satisfactory Answer: Y/N	Comments including both strengths and weaknesses
The proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community problem.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
The applicant's proposed intervention is clearly articulated including the design, dosage, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) leveraged volunteers.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
The applicant's intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
The expected outcomes articulated in the application narrative and Logic Model represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem identified by the applicant.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
The rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention(s) is reasonable.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
The service role of AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
The Logic Model depicts . . .	Satisfactory Answer: Y/N	Comments including both strengths and weaknesses
A summary of the community problem	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locations or sites where members will provide services • # of AmeriCorps members who will deliver the intervention 	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	

The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • duration of intervention (e.g., total # of weeks, sessions) • dosage of intervention (e.g., number of hours per session or sessions per week) • target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level) 	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served, types and number of activities conducted); if applicable, identified National Performance Measures to be used as output indicators	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude/behavior, or condition as a result of the intervention; if applicable, identified National Performance Measures to be used as outcome indicators	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
Out of 48 maximum points, my score for these sections is:		

Evidence Tier (24 points)

The goal of this section is to determine the relevance and strength of the evidence provided as it relates to the proposed intervention. Please use the *Supplemental Information for Scoring AmeriCorps Applications* to aid your review.

Criteria	Satisfactory Answer: Y/N	Comments including both strengths and weaknesses
Applicant has summarized the study design and key findings of any evaluation report(s) submitted	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
Applicant has described any other evidence that supports their program, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies that inform their program design	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
If the applicant has submitted evaluation report(s) for consideration they have also described how the intervention described in the Evidence Based section of the application narrative how the intervention described in the submitted reports is the same as the intervention described in the application	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
If the applicant has submitted evaluation report(s) for consideration, they sufficiently match the intervention proposed to be considered the same intervention (see <i>Supplemental Information</i> for more detail)	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
In the box to the right, state which evidence tier you determine is the most appropriate: pre-preliminary, preliminary, moderate, or strong		
Out of 24 maximum points, my score for these sections is:		

Evidence Quality (16 points)

Now that the applicant's evidence tier has been assessed, complete one of the two sections below, depending on which evidence tier you determined the applicant to fit.

Criteria	Satisfactory Answer: Y/N	Comments including both strengths and weaknesses
If the applicant has been assessed as being in the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tiers, use 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.).	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
The submitted reports describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
The submitted reports show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
If the applicant has been assessed as being in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier, use the following standards...		
The applicant uses relevant evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies, to inform their proposed program design.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
The described evidence is relatively recent, preferably from the last six years.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
The evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
Out of 16 maximum points, my score for these sections is:		

Member Experience (12 points)

Criteria	Satisfactory Answer: Y/N	Comments including both strengths and weaknesses
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.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
The program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the programs operates.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
The applicant will foster an inclusive service culture where different backgrounds, talents, and capabilities are welcomed and leveraged for learning and effective service delivery.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
Out of 12 maximum points, my score for this section is:		

Additional Comments and Overall Appraisal of Proposal – Please add any additional comments that were not captured above and evaluate the quality of the proposal in its entirety. Aside from your comments in the individual sections, consider how well the whole proposal flows. Do all of the sections support each other? Provide your assessment of the proposal as a whole by highlighting the principal strengths and/or weaknesses.

Summary of Points Awarded – Transfer the points given to each section above to this grid.

Narrative Item	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Reasons for deduction of points / suggestions for improvements not already captured in your comments (optional)
Theory of Change and Logic Model	48		
Evidence Tier	24		
Evidence Quality	16		
Member Experience	12		
Total Score	100		<i>Please ensure that your points awarded add up correctly.</i>

Use the standards on the next page to select the category you feel best describes the proposal. Reconsider your overall rating, and ensure it is supported by your analysis and comments in the preceding sections. Please select only one.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Exceptional Proposal – Recommend for Funding	A comprehensive and thorough program design of exceptional merit with very significant strengths and no significant weaknesses. Total score should be between 91-100 points.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Satisfactory Proposal – Recommended for Funding	Program design demonstrates overall competence and is worthy of support where the value of the strengths outweigh the identified weaknesses. Total score should be between 80-90 points.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Weak/Non-responsive Proposal – Do Not Recommend for Funding	A program design with very significant weaknesses and minimal significant strengths that have been identified. This option may also include a program design that is non-responsive to the published criteria. Proposal total score should be below 80 points.

Supplemental Information for Scoring AmeriCorps Applications for State Peer Reviewers

Executive Summary (0 points)

Applicants must follow a template for this section. Because there are no points associated with this section, it is only being provided for reference.

Evidence Tier

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 below). Applicants may also cite prior performance measure data if applicable.

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 program into their program designs and/or have collected performance measurement data on the intervention described in the application.

Preliminary evidence means the applicant has submitted up to two outcome evaluation reports 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 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 recompeting 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 recompeting 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 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.

Notice Priority (0 points)

Similar to the Executive Summary, this section has no points allocated to it, and is therefore only being provided for reference.