



**2017-2018 AmeriCorps  
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)  
Version 1**

NC Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service  
Office of the Governor  
20312 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699  
919-814-2063, 919-814-2065



CFDA #: 94.006  
OMB Control #: 0345-0047  
*Federal Agency: Corporation for National and Community Service*

## NOTICE OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

**Federal Agency Name:** Corporation for National and Community Service  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** AmeriCorps State and National Grants FY 2016  
**Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement  
**CFDA Number:** 94.006

### Key Dates

#### INTENT TO APPLY

It is **mandatory** that **all** State formula applicants submit an Intent to Apply for funding to the NC Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (NC CVCS). Not required for Competitive applicants.

Please submit the Notification of Intent to Apply Form 2017-2018 (Page 2) of this NOFO and email it to [Kyle.Vandusen@nc.gov](mailto:Kyle.Vandusen@nc.gov) and [Susan.Dean@nc.gov](mailto:Susan.Dean@nc.gov) by the due date listed below.

**AmeriCorps\*State Formula (New, Recompets, Continuations):** **Friday, January 22nd, 2017**

#### APPLICATION SUBMITTAL DUE DATES

**AmeriCorps\*State Competitive (Invitation Only):** **November 10th, 2016**

**AmeriCorps\*State Formula (New, Recompets, Continuations):** **March 10th, 2017**

**NOTE: All applications are due in eGrants and hard copies in the NC CVCS office By 12:00 midnight EST on the dates shown above. Please be sure to bind your hard copy applications DO NOT USE: Binders, binder clips, staples or folders with your application.**

#### TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SESSIONS

##### \*REQUIRED ATTENDANCE for NEW APPLICANTS

To facilitate an efficient and effective grant application review process, the NC Commission expects applications will be prepared adequately and accurately for funding consideration. To ensure applicants are better equipped with the necessary information to prepare their application, the NC Commission will host a series of training and technical assistance (TTA) sessions. The sessions are identical and new applicants only need to attend **one**. **Fiscal and programmatic staff from each applying new organization are expected to attend one of the sessions. If a new applicant does not attend one of the sessions, it will render an applicant ineligible to apply for grant funding.** Please click on the session you would like to attend and sign-up. The deadline to sign-up is noon the day before the session.

**Charlotte TTA-** December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016 from 10am-1pm [Charlotte TTA Registration](#)

**Raleigh TTA-** December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016 from 9:30am-12:30pm [Raleigh TTA Registration](#)

Disclosure: Publication of this Announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity (NOFO) does not obligate the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) or the North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service (NC CVCS) to award any specific number of grants or to obligate the entire amount of funding available.

TO: Kyle Van Dusen, NC CVCS      FAX: (919)715-8677      E-MAIL: [Kyle.vandusen@nc.gov](mailto:Kyle.vandusen@nc.gov)

**Notification of Intent to Apply Form 2017-2018**

**This form is due in the NC CVCS office by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time by the deadlines listed above.**  
**ALL applicants must submit this form to have their application considered for funding.**

**Contact Person(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organization Applying:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address, City, State, ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone # for Contact(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail(s) for Contact(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**What Type of funds are you going to request? (Please check only one; see NOFO for more information)**

- New Competitive Program (Invitation Only)       AmeriCorps Partnership Challenge
- New Professional Corps Program       New Education Awards Program
- Continuation State Formula       New or Recompete State Formula

**Which CNCS Focus Area does your program primarily address? (See NOFO and Glossary for more info)**

- Disaster Services       Healthy Futures       Economic Opportunity
- Veterans and Military Families       Environmental Stewardship       Education
- Other/Non-CNCS Focus Area (Please describe)

**How many AmeriCorps members does your program plan to engage?** \_\_\_\_\_

**If you would like to hand deliver this form on or before the deadline, the address is:**

North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service  
ATTN: Kyle Van Dusen  
116 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27603

**Please review the NOFO, Application Instructions, and cited Code of Federal Regulations entries that outline the requirements for AmeriCorps applications before submitting this Notification of Intent to Apply form.**



## A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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

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

### **Overview of the North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service**

The mission of the NC Commission is to promote and facilitate service and volunteering to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement in the state. The Commission encourages community service and volunteerism as a means of problem solving in the state and strives to enhance the quality of life for North Carolinians by promoting service as an integral part of the growth of NC. Above all, the Commission provides valuable support for the state's growing, and necessary, force of national service members and volunteers who impact the lives of others and help meet critical community needs.

The NC Commission, located in the Office of the Governor, is guided by a Commission Member Board, appointed by the Governor. Members serve three-year terms and represent the geographic and demographic diversity of the state.

### **General Information**

This *NOFO* should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520–2550 ([http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/45CFR\\_chapterXXV.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/45CFR_chapterXXV.pdf)), the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, Application Instructions, and the Performance Measure Instructions which are incorporated by reference. These documents can be found at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities> and also <http://www.volunteernc.org/> under 2017-2018 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity. Please review the Application Instructions and Attachments for step-by-step instructions on completing your application in eGrants and the required additional documents to send to the NC CVCS.

The full regulations are available online at [www.ecfr.gov](http://www.ecfr.gov). The TTY number is 800-833-3722. For a printed copy of related material, call 202-606-7508.

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

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations (see page 8) proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that members can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

### **CNCS Focus Areas**

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

### **Disaster Services**

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

### **Economic Opportunity**

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people; help economically disadvantaged people, including youth identified in My Brother's Keeper (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) to have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy; transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing; and/or have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed.

### **Education**

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

### **Environmental Stewardship**

Grants will provide support for increased individual behavioral change leading to increased energy efficiency, renewable energy use, and ecosystem improvements particularly for economically disadvantaged households and communities. Grant activities will decrease energy and water consumption; improve at-risk ecosystems; increase behavioral changes that lead directly to decreased energy and water consumption or improved at-risk ecosystems; and/or increase green training opportunities that may lead to decreased energy and water consumption or improved at-risk ecosystems.

### **Healthy Futures**

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

### **Veterans and Military Families**

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

## **2. 2017 AmeriCorps Funding Priorities**

(See Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for further information about some of the priorities)

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

- Disaster Services - improving community resiliency through disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation
- Economic Opportunity - increasing economic opportunities for communities by engaging opportunity youth, either as the population served and/or as AmeriCorps members
- Education - improving student academic performance in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Mathematics (STEM)
- Environment - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Service Corps
- Healthy Futures – Reducing and/or Preventing Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse

- Veterans and Military Families -- positively impacting the quality of life of veterans and improving military family strength
- Governor and Mayor Initiatives
- Programming that supports My Brother's Keeper
- Multi-focus intermediaries that demonstrate measureable impact and primarily serve communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure. i.e. rural and other underserved communities
- Safer communities
- Evidence Based Intervention Planning Grants
- Encore Programs

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

### **3. National Performance Measures**

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

All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output and outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. CNCS and the NC CVCS does not expect applicants to select performance measures to correspond to each and every potential member activity or community impact. CNCS and the NC CVCS values the quality of performance measures over the quantity of performance measures. As described in the Application Instructions, applicants must include all their information about their proposed performances measure in the Performance Measure section of the applications in eGrants ([CNCS's web-based grants management system](#)). All information requested in the National Performance Measure Instructions must be included in the text of the performance measures themselves, and it must be evident in the performance measure text that all definitions and requirements outlined in the National Performance Measures Instructions are met. Providing performance measures information elsewhere in the narrative cannot be in lieu of providing full information in the Performance Measures section of the application in eGrants.

### **4. Program Authority**

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

## **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

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

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

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

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

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

The project period is generally one year with a start date proposed by the applicant (**Start dates must occur before November 1 and cannot be longer than one calendar year**). The grant award covers a three-year project period unless otherwise specified. In most cases, the application is submitted with a one-year budget. Continuation funding for subsequent years is not guaranteed and shall be dependent upon availability of appropriations and program performance.

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

**4. Type of Award**

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

General Summary

| Grant Types  | Cost Reimbursement |  |                               | Fixed Amount   |       |  |
|--|--------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|-------|--|
|  | Traditional        | Professional Corps   | Evidence Based Planning Grant | Full time  | EAP   | Professional Corps   |
| Maximum Cost per MSY   | \$13,830,          | Up to \$1,000*   | N/A                           | \$13,430   | \$800 | Up to \$1,000*   |
| Type of Slots in the National Service Trust                              | All                | All  | N/A                           | Full-time or Less than Full-time serving in a full time capacity | All   | Full-time only   |
| Budget Submission Required   | Yes                |  |                               | No   |       | Yes, if requesting operating funds   |
| Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSYs | No                 |  |                               | Yes  |       |  |
| Special Requirements   | N/A                | Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in budget. | See Notice                    | N/A  |       | Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in budget. |
| Financial Reporting Requirements   | Yes                | Yes; Living allowance or salary paid to members may not be counted toward the match requirements   | Yes                           | No   |       |  |
| Available to new Applicants  | Yes                |  |                               | No   | Yes   |  |



\*CNCS assumes that Professional Corps will cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non-CNCS funds and thus will not be requesting operating funds as part of their applications. CNCS will consider Professional Corps programs' requests for operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate in its narrative and supporting budget materials significant legal applicant financial need and substantial challenges to raising non-CNCS resources.

CNCS will determine whether a Professional Corps legal applicant has sufficiently demonstrated that they cannot effectively operate an AmeriCorps program without receiving CNCS operating funds on a case-by-case basis, examining all of the circumstances surrounding the application. There are a wide variety of circumstances under which a Professional Corps legal applicant will be able to demonstrate a compelling need for operating funds. However, given the high demand for AmeriCorps funding there are also specific circumstances where CNCS believes that a Professional Corps legal applicant will be highly unlikely to demonstrate a need for operational funds. For example, where CNCS's due diligence review of a Professional Corps application shows that the applicant has a historically high level of support from non-CNCS sources, and as a result has levels of unrestricted net assets that are well in excess of the requested level of CNCS funding, it is difficult to see how the Professional Corps would be able to demonstrate that they should receive operational funding (which would inherently reduce the funding available to other high-quality applicants).

## C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### 1. Eligible Applicants

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

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

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

### New Applicants

The NC CVCS encourages organizations that have never received funding from CNCS to apply. The general practice is to award no more than 25 Member Service Years (MSY) (See Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for more information on MSYs) to organizations receiving an AmeriCorps grant for the first time. Applicants must request **at least 10 MSYs** to be considered for funding in North Carolina. If requesting more than 30 MSYs, the **program must operate in more than one county**.

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

### Recompete Applicants

Recompete Applicants for State Formula funding are organizations that have received AmeriCorps funding before and are ending their third year of a three-year grant.

## Continuation Applicants

Continuation Applicants are organizations that are currently in year one or two of a three-year grant. Continuation Applicants must submit an application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. Please see the Application Instructions for these requirements. Requests by existing continuation applicants for increases in the level of funding or number of positions will be assessed using the criteria under this NOFO.

## Type of Applicants

### Single-State Applicants

Organizations that propose to operate in only one state (North Carolina) must apply through the Governor-appointed State or Territory Commission (i.e. North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service NC CVCS). 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 the North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service to learn about their state processes and deadlines which may be *earlier* or *later* than the CNCS deadlines and may have additional requirements. Guidelines, requirements and timelines to apply in North Carolina can be found here under the 2017-2018 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity tab: <http://www.volunteernc.org/>.

### National Direct Applicants

- *Multi-state*: Organizations that propose to operate an AmeriCorps programs in more than one state or territory must apply directly to CNCS and cannot apply in North Carolina.
- *Federally-recognized Indian Tribes*: Applicants that are Indian Tribes may apply directly to CNCS.

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

## Coordination among State Commissions and National Direct Applicants

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

To ensure coordination:

National Direct applicants who plan on operating in North Carolina, except federally-recognized Indian Tribes, must:

Before application submission:

- Consult with the NC CVCS by completing and submitting the 2017 National Direct Consultation form located <http://www.volunteernc.org/> under the 2017-2018 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity and submitting it back to [Kyle.vandusen@nc.gov](mailto:Kyle.vandusen@nc.gov) and [Jeff.Mixon@nc.gov](mailto:Jeff.Mixon@nc.gov)

## 2. Threshold Issues

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

- All applicants **must request at least 10 MSYs**. New and re-competing applicants with less than 10 MSYs will be deemed noncompliant and will not be reviewed.
- If an applicant is applying for a Professional Corps grant, its application must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.
- If an applicant is applying for a Full Time Fixed Amount grant, the application must reflect that only full-time or less than full-time positions serving in a full-time capacity will be permitted.

- An application for the Governor and Mayor Initiative must clearly reflect that the application is from one Governor, one or more Mayors, and a minimum of two nonprofits.
- If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: 45 C.F.R. §2522.910-.940), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.

### 3. Other Requirements

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

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

- has been assessed
- for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and
- that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, that corporation is not eligible for an award under this Notice.<sup>1</sup> A similar restriction may be enacted with the appropriation which will fund awards under this *Notice*.

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

### 4. Cost Sharing or Matching

#### Fixed Amount Grants and Education Award Program Grants

There is no specific match requirement for Full Time Fixed Amount, Education Award Program, and AmeriCorps Partnership Challenge grants. CNCS does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program; therefore, organizations must raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.

#### Cost Reimbursement Grants

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

|                             | Years 1-3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Overall Minimum Match Share | 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.

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

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

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

### Alternative Match

Under certain, very exceptional circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in the regulations at 45 CFR §2521.60(b). To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Application Instructions. Applicants that plan to request an alternative match schedule must submit a request directly to [Kyle.Vandusen@nc.gov](mailto:Kyle.Vandusen@nc.gov) by the application due date. The NC CVCS must approve an alternative match schedule before submitting to CNCS on behalf of state applicants. See the Application Instructions for more information.

### Indirect Costs

CNCS allows applicants to include indirect costs in application budgets. Based on qualifying factors, applicants have the option of using 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 C.F.R. § 200.413 Direct costs. States, local governments and Indian Tribes may use approved cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across federal awards. Applicants who hold a federal negotiated indirect cost rate or 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 C.F.R. 2517.710, no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps grants.

## 5. Funding Restrictions

### a. Types of Grants:

AmeriCorps State formula applications are those applications not funded by CNCS in the competitive grant cycle. The State of North Carolina receives an annual formula allocation of funds from CNCS based on North Carolina's population. The Commission Board recommends to CNCS which applications receive formula grants in North Carolina.

### b. Member Living Allowance

A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage. Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time terms of service. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time member, it must comply with the maximum limits in the table below. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either CNCS or grantee share. Exceptions are noted on *page 13*.

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

**Table: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance**

| Service Term      | Minimum # of Hours | Minimum Living Allowance | Maximum Total Living Allowance |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Full-time         | 1700               | \$12,630                 | \$24,930                       |
| Half-time         | 900                | n/a                      | \$13,199                       |
| Reduced Half-time | 675                | n/a                      | \$9,899                        |
| Quarter-time      | 450                | n/a                      | \$6,599                        |
| Minimum-time      | 300                | n/a                      | \$4,400                        |

**Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Table: Maximum Cost per MSY**

| Grant Program   | Maximum        |
|---|----------------|
| Individual Competitive State/Territory Program (cost reimbursement) | \$13,830       |
| Professional Corps Grant (Cost Reimbursement)                       | Up to \$1,000* |
| Professional Corps Fixed Amount Grant                               | Up to \$1,000* |
| Education Award Program Fixed Amount Grant                          | \$800          |
| Fulltime Fixed Amount Grant   | \$13,430       |

\*CNCS’s assumption is that Professional Corps will cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non CNCS funds and thus will not be requesting operating funds as part of their applications. CNCS will consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate in its narrative and supporting budget materials significant organizational financial need and substantial challenges to raising non CNCS resources.

Cost reimbursement programs operating in rural communities (as defined in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) and cost reimbursement programs that recruit opportunity youth as AmeriCorps members may request up to \$14,000 cost per MSY for the AmeriCorps members that will be serving in rural areas or who are opportunity youth. Applicants requesting the higher cost/MSY must include a compelling case justifying the cost/MSY and explaining why these costs cannot be covered by the Grantee Share (Match).

**c. Amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award for FY 2017**

AmeriCorps members serving in programs funded with FY 2017 dollars who successfully complete a term of service will receive an Education Award from the National Service Trust of \$5,815.00 for a year of full-time service, with correspondingly smaller awards for less than full-time service. The amount of the Education Award is linked to the value of the Pell Grant. A member has up to seven years after his or her term of service to use the Education Award.

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

| <b>Term of Service</b> | <b>Minimum # of Hours</b> | <b>Education Award</b> |
|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Full Time              | 1700                      | \$5,815.00             |
| Half Time              | 900                       | \$2,907.50             |
| Reduced Half Time      | 675                       | \$2,215.24             |
| Quarter Time           | 450                       | \$1,538.36             |
| Minimum Time           | 300                       | \$1,230.69             |

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

### **1. Where to Access the 2017-2018 Application**

National Direct Organizations (operating in more than one state) and North Carolina Competitive applicants should refer to the CNCS website [2017-2018 CNCS Funding Opportunities](#) to obtain the necessary information to apply. Single-state applicants who wish to apply for State Formula funding in North Carolina should refer to the NC CVCS website <http://www.volunteernc.org/> under the 2017-2018 AmeriCorps Funding Opportunity to obtain the necessary information to apply.

\*Please note that single-state applicants applying to the NC CVCS through this NOFO have different deadlines, more required additional documents and different instructions than CNCS. **Please ensure that you use this North Carolina NOFO to complete your proposal and not the FY2017 Notice of Funding Opportunity from CNCS or the Federal NOFO located on the NC CVCS website or the CNCS website.**

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

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

- Determine whether you are a National Direct applicant that will apply directly to CNCS or a Single-State applicant that will apply through the North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service.
- Obtain a DUNS number <http://www.dnb.com/get-a-duns-number.html>
- Register (or update) your organization with the System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov>
- Submit a Notification of Intent to Apply to [Kyle.Vandusen@nc.gov](mailto:Kyle.Vandusen@nc.gov) and [Susan.Dean@nc.gov](mailto:Susan.Dean@nc.gov) using the Intent to Apply Form (**Page 2**) in this NOFO (**Competitive -Not required**) (**State Formula-January 22nd, 2017**)

- Sign-up (Registration link on *page 1*) and attend an FY2017 NOFO Training and Technical Assistance session in either Raleigh or Charlotte (NEW APPLICANTS REQUIRED to attend but not Continuation or Recompete applicants)
- Establish an eGrants account <https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp>
- For National Direct applicants: Coordinate with State Commission(s) for the location where proposed grant activities will occur by using the National Direct Consultation Form located at the <http://www.volunteernc.org/> under the 2017-2018 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity tab.
- Write a high quality application that is responsive to this NOFO.
- Provide required additional documents and hard copied applications (See application instructions for more details) by **November 10, 2016 for Competitive Applicants, and March 10, 2017 for State formula Applicants.**
- Complete and submit the application via eGrants by **November 10, 2016 for Competitive Applicants, and March 10, 2017 for State Formula Applicants.**

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

Applications must include a DUNS number and an Employer Identification Number. The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number. DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. The website indicates a 48-hour e-mail turnaround time on requests for DUNS numbers; however, CNCS suggests registering at least 30 days in advance of the application due date. After obtaining a DUNS number, all applicants must be registered with the Systems for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>.

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

### **3. How to Apply**

Single-state applicants who wish to apply for State Formula in North Carolina should refer to the NC CVCS website <http://www.volunteernc.org/> under the 2017-2018 AmeriCorps Funding Opportunity to obtain the necessary information to apply.

### **4. Notice 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 must complete and submit the Notification of Intent to Apply Form located on *page 2* by the deadline for intent to apply. This form may be emailed to [Kyle.Vandusen@nc.gov](mailto:Kyle.Vandusen@nc.gov) and [Susan.Dean@nc.gov](mailto:Susan.Dean@nc.gov) or faxed to (919)-715-8677 or hand delivered to the address listed on the form.

**Submitting a Notification of Intent to Apply by the deadline of 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time) (State Formula-January 22nd, 2017) is mandatory for all State formula applicants. Applications submitted by applicants who have not submitted a Notification of Intent to Apply by the deadline will not be considered for funding. Submitting an intent does not obligate the organization to apply for funding.**

### **5. Bound Hard Copy Application and Additional Documents**

An application is only complete if it includes all required documentation located in the Application Instructions (see the checklist on *page 4* of the application instructions) and is received by the application

due date. **Incomplete applications may not be considered.** All additional required documents that are not possible to attach in eGrants are due to the NC Commission office in a bound hard copy by the application deadline. These documents are specified in the Application Instructions and Attachments.

Do not submit any other supplementary materials such as videos, brochures, or any other item not requested in the application instructions. **The Commission will not review them or return them.**

Submit a bound hard copy application and additional documents in person or via a parcel service in a sealed envelope to (**Detailed instructions can be located in the Application Instructions**):

**If using the U.S. Postal Service**

NC Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service  
Attn: Kyle Van Dusen  
20312 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699

**If using UPS, FedEx or hand delivering**

NC Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service  
Attn: Kyle Van Dusen  
116 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27603

More information about application submittal can be found in the Application Instructions and attachments.

**6. Late Applications**

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

**b. Electronic Application Submission in eGrants**

Applicants must submit applications electronically via [eGrants, CNCS's web-based system](#). CNCS recommends that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word processing document, then copy and paste the text into the appropriate eGrants field 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. When determining compliance with any page limits in this *NOFO*, the NC CVCS will consider the number of pages as they print out per the guidance in the *Page Limits* section.

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

Contact the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via [eGrants Questions](#) if a problem arises when creating an account or preparing or submitting the application. See hours above. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the Notice to which the organization is applying. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit their application via eGrants. National Service Hotline hours are as follows: Mon - Fri, 9 am – 7 pm ET (Jan, Aug, Sept) Mon - Thu, 9 am – 7 pm ET (Oct, Nov, Dec).

If technical issues prevent an applicant from submitting an application on time, please contact the National Service Hotline prior to the deadline to explain the technical issue and receive a ticket number. If



the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, the applicant must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit via eGrants. You must then submit a brief paragraph including your eGrants ticket number with your explanation of the technical issues that prevented you from submitting in eGrants by the deadline to the NC Commission via email to [Kyle.Vandusen@nc.gov](mailto:Kyle.Vandusen@nc.gov) before the 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time deadline.

In the event of prolonged unavailability of the eGrants system on the date of submission, the NC Commission 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.

### **c. Submittal of Additional Documents**

Applicants must submit all additional documents to each of the three emails: [Kyle.Vandusen@nc.gov](mailto:Kyle.Vandusen@nc.gov), [Susan.Dean@nc.gov](mailto:Susan.Dean@nc.gov), and [americorps@nc.gov](mailto:americorps@nc.gov)

### **7. 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 and Evaluation Plan
- Logic Model
- Performance Measures
- Standard Form 424 Budget
- Authorization, Assurances and Certification

### **b. Page Limits**

**Applications may not exceed 15 pages for the Narratives** (18 pages for Multi-Focus Intermediaries—see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance specific to this application type), which includes the following sections:

- The applicant's Executive Summary, SF 424 Face Sheet, and
- The narrative portions contained in the Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy sections in the application.
- The application page limit **does not** include the budget, narrative portion of the Evaluation Plan, Continuation Narrative, the Logic Model, performance measures, or the supplementary materials, if applicable.

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

Please note the length of a document in word processing software may be different than what will print out in eGrants. Reviewers will not consider submitted material that is over the page limits in the printed report, also note that eGrants will not prevent an applicant from entering text which will exceed page limitations. This applies to both the application page limit and the Logic Model page limit. Do not submit other items not requested in this *NOFO* or Application Instructions. NC CVCS will not review or return them.

### **Assessment Criteria**

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

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

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area(s) of [Focus Area(s)].\* The CNCS investment of \$[amount of request] will be matched with \$[amount of projected match], \$[amount of local, state, and federal funds] in public funding and \$[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.

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

Fixed Amount grant applicants (EAP, Fulltime Fixed, and Professional Corps Fixed) should list their Other Revenue (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still must raise significant additional resources to operate the program. CNCS will post all Executive Summaries of awarded grant applications on [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov) in the interest of transparency and Open Government.

### **B. Program Design**

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 the NC CVCS Peer scoring criteria, please see 2017-2018 AmeriCorps Peer Reviewer Form [Peer Review Form](#)**

#### ***1. Need (6 points)***

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

#### ***2. Intervention (10 Points)***

- The proposed intervention is clearly described.
- The proposed intervention aligns with the identified community need.

#### ***3. Theory of Change and Logic Model (38 points)***

- The applicant's proposed intervention is clearly articulated including the design, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) the roles of leveraged volunteers.
- The applicant's intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change. [The theory of change should be either evidence-informed or evidence-based, meaning that the proposed intervention is guided by the best available research evidence that supports its effectiveness in the evidence section.]
- The proposed outcomes represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem/need identified by the applicant, and the applicant has provided rationale for selecting output and outcome targets.
- The applicant's AmeriCorps members will produce significant and unique contributions to existing efforts to address the stated need.

The logic model shall depict:

- A summary of the community problem/need outlined in the narrative.
- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including:
  - Number of locations or sites in which members will provide services
  - Number of AmeriCorps members that will deliver the intervention
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
  - The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention)
  - The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
  - The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level)
- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served) and, if applicable, included National Performance Measures to be used as outcome indicators
- Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill (short-term), attitude/behavior (medium-term), or condition (long-term) as a result of the intervention.

Programs may include short, medium, or long-term outcomes in the logic model. While performance measure outcomes should be consistent with the program's theory of change, programs are not required to measure all outcomes that are included in the logic model. The Logic Model should identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

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

#### **4. Evidence Base (15 points)**

Applicants will be awarded up to 15 points for providing evidence that their proposed intervention will lead to the outcomes identified in the logic model. Applicants must 1) state the evidence tier in which they think they qualify; 2) clearly indicate and describe the evidence that supports the highest evidence tier for which they are eligible and 3) describe the complete body of evidence that supports their program intervention including evidence from lower tiers. Applicants should pay particular attention to the requirements for each tier of evidence. More points are awarded for higher tiers of evidence.

Do not be deterred from applying for funding due to your current evidence level.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Requirements associated with the five evidence tiers are described next.

**NO EVIDENCE (0-1 points)** means that the applicant has not provided evidence that they have systematically collected any qualitative or quantitative data to date.

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

**PRE-PRELIMINARY EVIDENCE (2-3 points)** means the applicant has demonstrated data collection experience testing or tracking at least one aspect of its logic model. For example, the applicant has collected systemic and accurate data on one or more of the following: the community need the proposed intervention will address, the program intervention's activities and services delivered, participation in the intervention by the target population, and/or participant outcomes (for example, performance measurement data or a process evaluation assessing implementation of the intervention).

In order to qualify for this tier, the applicant must have collected data about their own program. The data collection process and results must be fully described, and the applicant should explain the link between data collection and the relevant component(s) of its logic model. Applicants should describe evidence for the pre-preliminary tier the applicant should explain the link between data collection and the relevant component(s) of its logic model. Applicants should describe evidence for the pre-preliminary tier in the Evidence section for the application but they may not submit additional research study documents unless required to meet CNCS evaluation requirements.

**PRELIMINARY EVIDENCE (4-5 points)** means the applicant has described at least one outcome study of their won intervention that yielded promising results for the proposed intervention or a similar intervention that the applicant will replicate with fidelity to the evaluated program model. The ways to demonstrate preliminary level of evidence are as follows:

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

An outcome study includes data beyond that which is collected as part of routine performance measurement. In addition to describing up to two outcome studies of their own program or intervention, applicants must describe the performance measurement data they have collected and how the outcome study data goes beyond performance measurement. This description should explain whether the outcome study was conducted internally by the applicant organization or by an entity external to the applicant.

#### **Preliminary with Replication**

The applicant must describe at least one random control trial study or quasi-experimental evaluation (e.g., propensity score matching) that found positive results for the same intervention that the applicant plans to replicate. The description should include details about how the intervention studied and the applicant's proposed approach are the same and how the applicant will replicate the intervention with fidelity to the program model. The study must have been conducted by an entity external to the organization whose program was studied. An applicant may be eligible for more points if they also submit evidence from a process evaluation demonstrating that they have implemented the replication with fidelity. The process evaluation should be described but not submitted.

Applicants who do not submit the required study or who do not describe fully how they are replicating the evidence-based program with fidelity will be considered for a lower tier. For the purposes of this RFP, "replicate" means that the key elements of the applicant's intervention are implemented as the evidence-based program model describes (e.g., in terms of content or curriculum, delivery process, and target population), and the applicant's adaptations are relatively minor. For example, an applicant implementing an intervention using certified teachers to administer the curriculum would not be considered replicating that program with fidelity if it replaces teachers with AmeriCorps members who are not certified teachers, because the documented success of the intervention relied on the specialization of certified teachers.

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

- Characteristics of the beneficiary population
- Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention
- Dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention

- Training for the AmeriCorps members and/or other individuals (such as volunteers) delivering the intervention
- The context in which the intervention is delivered
- Outcomes of the intervention

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

In cases where the applicant is part of a multi-site program (e.g., a national direct program operating in multiple states that has conducted an evaluation that qualifies them for the moderate or strong evidence tier, but the evaluation did not include the applicant's proposed sites, the applicant must describe how they are replicating the evidence-based program with fidelity at all of the sites included in the application. In this case, an application for sites included in the evaluation would receive moderate or strong evidence, and an application for the sites not included in the evaluation would receive preliminary evidence.

**MODERATE EVIDENCE (6-7 points)** means the applicant has submitted up to two well-designed and well-implemented studies 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 (e.g., Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT) or quasi-experimental design evaluations (QED) with statistically matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups. The ability to generalize the findings from the RCT or QED beyond the study context may be limited (e.g., single-site). The studies were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.

**STRONG EVIDENCE (8-15)** means the applicant has demonstrated that the intervention has been tested nationally, regionally, or at the state-level (e.g., multi-site) using a well-designed and well-implemented Randomized Control Trial (RCT) or quasi-experimental design (QED). Alternatively, the proposed intervention's evidence may be based on multiple (up to two) well-designed and well-implemented QEDs or RCTs in different locations or with different populations within a local geographic area. The overall pattern of study findings is consistently positive. Findings from the RCT or QED studies may be generalized beyond the study context. The studies were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.

If the applicant is not a current grantee, then more than two studies will not be considered.

#### **5. Notice Priority (5 points)**

- The applicant proposed program fits within one or more of the 2017 AmeriCorps funding priorities as outlined in the *Funding Priorities* section and more fully described in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance.
- The proposed program meets all of the requirements detailed in the *Funding Priorities* section and in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance.

#### **6. Member Training (8 points)**

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

#### **7. 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.

**8. Member Experience (10 points)**

- AmeriCorps members will gain skills and experience as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed.
- AmeriCorps members will have access to meaningful service experiences.
- AmeriCorps members will have access to opportunities for reflection and connection to the broader National Service network.
- The program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the programs operate.

**9. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification (4 points)**

- Members will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- Staff and community members where the members are serving will know they are AmeriCorps members.

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

*\*Only NC CVCS Staff Review*

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

**1. Organizational Background and Staffing (10 points)**

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

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

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

- The organization will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities at the grantee, subgrantee (if applicable), and service site locations.
- The applicant's organization, in implementation and management of its AmeriCorps program, will prevent and detect compliance issues.
- The applicant will hold subgrantees (if applicable) and service site locations accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified.

**D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 Points)**

*\*Only NC CVCS Staff Review*

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

**1. Cost Effectiveness**

- The budget is sufficient to carry out the program effectively. \*
- The budget aligns with the applicant's narrative. \*
- The program design is cost effective and the benefits justify the cost.
- The applicant has raised or describes an adequate plan to raise non-CNCS resources to fully support the program.

- The applicant, if recompeting, has a lower cost per Member Service Year (MSY – see Glossary) than approved in previous grants, or provides a compelling rationale for the same or increased cost including why this increase could not be covered by the grantee share.

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

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

## **2. Budget Adequacy**

- 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.

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

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

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

If the applicant is competing for the first time, please enter N/A in the “Evaluation Summary or Plan” field since it pertains only to recompeting grantees. 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 eGrants. If the applicant is recompeting for a subsequent time, the program must submit its evaluation report (see the *Submission of Additional Documents* section for more information), as well as an evaluation plan for the next three-year period in the “Evaluation Plan” field in eGrants. Evaluations plans submitted outside of eGrants will not be reviewed.

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

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



- The estimated budget.

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

The evaluation requirements differ depending on the amount of the grant, as described in 45 C.F.R. §2522.710:

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

A program will be considered a recompeting application if it satisfies the CNCS definition of "same project" (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) and has been funded competitively for at least one complete three-year cycle. If the project satisfies the definition of same project and the applicant has completed one funded three-year cycle, it will be required to submit an evaluation plan. If the project satisfied the definition of same project and the applicant has completed two or more competitively funded three-year cycles, the applicant will be required to submit an evaluation report as well as an evaluation plan for the upcoming three-year grant. If the project does not satisfy the definition of recompeting, it will not be required to submit an evaluation plan, or completed evaluation report.

The "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field of the Narrative does not count towards the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit of 10,000 characters. Applicants should print out the plan to ensure the narrative does not exceed the character limits when entered in eGrants. State/Territory subgrantees and/or National Direct Grantees with an average annual CNCS program grant of \$500,000 or more that are recompeting for funds are eligible to apply for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. Grantees requesting approval of an alternative evaluation approach should submit a request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach along with their evaluation plan in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in eGrants. The request should clearly explain: (a) the evaluation constraints faced by the program, (b) why the proposed approach is the most rigorous option feasible, and (c) how the proposed alternative approach will help the grantee build their evidence base. Evaluation plans should include, at a minimum, the required elements listed in this *Notice*. The evaluation plan must be consistent with the information submitted in the competitive funding application and in the request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. More information on alternative evaluation approaches can be found at:

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

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

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

**E. NC CVCS APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

*\*State formula Review*

**Peer Review Process**

The Commission's review process involves identifying individuals who can review grant applications and provide feedback to the Commission. Qualifications for peer reviewers include knowledge or some familiarity of national service programs; willingness to read and provide feedback of grant applications; excellent oral and written skills. Reviewers must also submit a resume and sign a conflict of interest form.

Each new and re-compete application (3 year grant ending, submitting a new proposal) will be reviewed by a team of three peer reviewers. To ensure the integrity of the review process, no one who is directly involved in the planning and or submission of an AmeriCorps program proposal will be allowed to evaluate an application. Examples of direct or indirect involvement include; being a volunteer, staff or board member of an organization submitting a proposal; being a member of a planning group that developed a proposal.

Commission staff provides training on the application process, criteria of quality programs, and instruction on how to complete the ranking forms, prior to the scheduled peer review. Reviewers are required to read and individually rank proposals before the date of the peer review in-person session.

On the day of the review, reviewers are divided into teams and a lead facilitator is selected for each application. Peer reviewers each rank the proposal and provide a group score and written feedback. At the end of the day, Commission staff collects the written feedback and written scores.

**Staff Review Process**

Each new and re-compete (3 year grant ending, submitting a new proposal) application will be read by two or three staff members. The two or three scores are averaged to come up with an average score of the two or three staff scores. Also, while Commission staff members are reviewing each new and re-compete application, they request clarification from any applicant who wasn't entirely clear in the application.

**Recompete Applicants**

Recompete programs will be evaluated based on peer/staff reviews and program performance the past two or three years. If program performance is poor, program may not be recommended for funding by the Program Committee.

**Continuation Applicants**

Legal applicants within a three-year funding cycle are required to submit a continuation AmeriCorps application each year. The legal applicant may be required to also include a copy of its most recent A-133 audit report or other audited financial statements. The Commission will conduct a staff review of continuation applications by reviewing the budget, performance measures and all continuation changes.

Continuation programs will have continued funding for their three year grant unless program performance is extremely poor. The Commission will also conduct a Program Performance Evaluation (Excel Sheet) and programs will be given a rating. The following factors will be considered when making funding recommendations for continuation applications: member recruitment and retention rates, progress towards meeting approved performance measurements, results of fiscal and programmatic site visits, ability to meet deadlines and submit quality work products, ability to meet required match, 30 day Enrollment and Exit Compliance. A funding recommendation report will be provided to the Program Management Committee. The Program Management Committee will use the funding recommendation report to make a funding recommendation to the full Commission. Programs that receive a poor or weak rating may be eliminated or receive cuts to their requested MSYs or budget.

### **New Applicants**

Programs that have never received an AmeriCorps grant or that weren't funded the previous year will be evaluated mainly by their peer and staff review scores, cost per MSY, AmeriCorps Readiness Assessment and focus area(s).

### **3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates**

NC CVCS will notify successful state Formula applicants of recommended funding and official award in **June-July 2017** if their applications have been recommended by the NC Commission Board and approved by CNCS.

## **G. CNCS FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

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

CNCS will make awards following the grant selection announcement. CNCS anticipates announcing the State formula awards by the end of July or early August contingent on timely full year appropriations. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions via email by the NC CVCS. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The Notice of Grant Award signed by the Grant Officer is the authorizing document for grant activities. Unsuccessful applicants will also receive a notification that their application was not approved for funding.

An awardee may not expend federal funds until the start of the Project Period identified on the Notice of Grant Award. CNCS generally makes an initial award for the first year of operation.

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

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

The Notice of Grant Award incorporates the approved application as part of the binding commitments under the grant award, as well as the requirements of applicable sections of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 and other applicable statutes. Awards will also be subject to the specific terms and conditions established for AmeriCorps grants and/or defined in the Terms and Conditions or Special Conditions attached to the award.

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

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

### c. CNCS Terms and Conditions

Grants under this program are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), now consolidated in 2 C.F.R. Parts 200 and 2205. This final guidance supersedes and streamlines requirements from OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, and A-122 (the former Cost Principles), A-110 and A-102 (the former Administrative Requirements), A-133 and A-50 (the former Audits and Audit Follow up), and A-89 (the former Federal Domestic Assistance Program Information).

### 3. National Service Criminal History Check Requirements

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

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

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

1. A nationwide name-based search of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW)
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 C.F.R. § 2540.200–§ 2540.207 and [CNCS Criminal History Check Resources](#) for complete information and FAQs.

### 4. Use of Material

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

### 5. Reporting

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Progress Report Data**

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

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

For further guidance and training resources see – [Resources: Data Collection and Instruments](#).

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

Organizations that have current AmeriCorps awards that do not end in FY17 must submit an application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. Please see the Application Instructions. Requests by existing continuation applicants for increases in the level of funding or number of positions will be assessed using the criteria under this *Notice*.

## **H. GRANT APPLICANTS APPEALS PROCESS**

### **Introduction**

This policy defines the appeals process for two categories of appeals: (1) the non-award of AmeriCorps\*State grants from the Commission; and (2) Commission findings involving discrimination and/or the harassment of individuals, or a group of individuals, in an AmeriCorps\*State program funded by the Commission. The North Carolina Commission endeavors to assure that all grant awards fully reflect sound judgment and compliance with all NOFO) terms and conditions, and all appropriate AmeriCorps, Federal, State, and Commission regulations and policies. In addition, the NC Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service have zero tolerance for the harassment of any individual or group of individuals for any reason. The Commission ensures that harassment incidents within AmeriCorps\*State programs are judged in accordance with its Grant Program Civil Rights and Non-Harassment Policy and structured appeals process. The Commission will make every effort to resolve appeals in either of these categories as they occur.

**Purpose**

(1) it offers dissatisfied grant applicants a process to appeal a grant award decision; and Having a structured appeal process helps to assure that decisions made by the Commission are perceived as accurate, fair, and reasonable. Such perception helps to ensure that prospective and existing programs have confidence in the Commission’s procedures for (1) soliciting and awarding grants

**Basis for a Non-Award Grant Appeal**

For the Commission to consider an award appeal the applicant must:  
Show an issue of fact concerning bias, discrimination or conflict of interest; and/or  
Show non-compliance with procedures described in the NOFO document.

**Steps for Requesting a Non-Award Grant Appeal**

Applicants wanting an appeal to a grant award decision must:

Submit a letter of appeal to the Executive Director of the North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service within thirty (30) days after receiving formal notice that their application was denied; and

The appeal letter must:

Clearly explain the factor(s) that cause the applicant to conclude that the application should have been approved;

Outline the specific area(s) in the proposal the applicant believes significantly addresses the RFP requirements;

Identify specific information in the application that the applicant believes the Commission overlooked or misinterpreted.

**Action Taken by the Commission for all Appeals**

The Executive Director and/or other designated state Commission staff person(s) will review all the information pertinent to the appeal process. The Commission staff person(s) will review the appeal request within 5 business days of its receipt. If the Executive Director, or designee, determines the appeal letter merits a complete review, a Commission panel will review the application. The panel will include: The Chairperson of the Commission, Chair of the Program Management Committee, and the Executive Director of the Commission

The Commission will provide a final written decision regarding the appeal review within 14 business days after the decision is made by the Commission panel. The Commission panel makes the final decision and ruling. The Commission will handle each situation on an individual basis.

NOTE: The result of grant-funding appeals will be dependent upon the availability of funding received by the Commission from the Corporation for National and Community Service.

\*in accordance with a similar policy of the Corporation for National and Community Service

**I. NC COMMISSION ON VOLUNTEERISM CONTACT**

All communication relating to this notice should be directed via email or phone to:

NC Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service

Email: [Kyle.Vandusen@nc.gov](mailto:Kyle.Vandusen@nc.gov) and [Susan.Dean@nc.gov](mailto:Susan.Dean@nc.gov)

Phone: 919-814-2063

Availability: 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, Monday through Friday

All emails and phone calls will be responded to within a reasonable amount of time. Applicants are encouraged to submit their questions well in advance of the submittal deadlines, as the NC Commission is not obligated to respond to questions that are received 48 hours prior to the due date.