

NOTICE OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Federal Agency Name: Corporation for National and Community Service
Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2020 AmeriCorps State and National Grants
Announcement Type: Initial Announcement
CFDA Number: 94.006

Disclosure: Publication of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (*Notice*) does not obligate the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to award any specific number of grants or to commit any particular amount of funding. The actual level and timing of grant funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

Important Dates

- Deadline: Applications are due in eGrants, **Wednesday, March 4, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.**
- Application Notification: Successful applicants will be notified **by Friday, June 26, 2020.**

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding

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

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

2. Funding Priorities

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

- Economic Opportunity – evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange in order to qualify for this priority, the applicant must be assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence by the reviewers OR increasing economic opportunities for communities by engaging opportunity youth to prepare them for the workforce.
- Education - evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange. In order to qualify for this priority, the applicants must be assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence by the reviewers.
- Healthy Futures – evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange. In order to qualify for this priority, the applicants must be assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence by the reviewers OR 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.
- Rural intermediaries - organizations that demonstrate measureable impact and primarily serve rural communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure.
- Faith-based organizations.

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

3. National Performance Measures

All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output and outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. This may be a National Performance Measure or an applicant-determined measure. Additional performance measures, including output-only National Performance Measures, may also be included if

desired; however, all performance measures must be consistent with the program's Theory of Change and represent significant program activities. CNCS does not expect applicants to select performance measures to correspond to each and every potential member activity or community impact. CNCS values the quality of performance measures over the quantity of performance measures.

CNCS expects applicants to use National Performance Measures as part of their comprehensive performance measurement strategy if the National Performance Measures are part of the applicant's theory of change. Applicants should use both performance and evaluation data to learn from their work as well as make tactical and strategic adjustments to achieve their goals. For more information, please refer to the National Performance Measure Instructions.

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

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

2. Estimated Award Amount

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

3. Project and Award Period

The project period is generally one year, with a start date proposed by the applicant. The grant award covers a three-year project period unless otherwise specified. 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 satisfactory performance.

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

4. Type of Award

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

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement	Fixed Amount			
Available Subtypes	Traditional	Full-time	Education Award Program (EAP)	Professional Corps See Sec. 12.6 for further requirements	No Cost Slots
Maximum Cost per MSY	\$15,479	\$15,479	\$800	\$1,000	\$0
Type of Slots in the National Service Trust	Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum Time	Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum Time	Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum Time	Full-time only	Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum Time

Budget Submission Required	Yes	No	Yes, if requesting operating funds	No
Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSYs	No	Yes		No
Special Requirements	N/A	N/A	Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries and benefits must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in budget.	N/A
Financial Reporting Requirements	Yes	No		
Available to new Applicants	Yes	No	Yes	

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

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

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

Types of Applicants

State and Territory Service Commissions (for Single-State Applicants)

Organizations that propose to operate in only one state must apply through the Governor-appointed State or Territory Commissions. Each commission administers its own selection process and submits the applications it selects to compete for funding directly to CNCS. Single-State applicants must contact their Commissions to learn about their state or territory processes and deadlines. State deadlines may be significantly earlier than the CNCS deadlines and may have additional requirements. The list of Commissions can be found on the CNCS website. A Single-State application from a State or Territory with a Commission that is submitted directly to CNCS by the applicant rather than the Commission will be considered noncompliant and will not be reviewed. See the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for descriptions of National Direct and Single-State applicants.

2. Threshold Issues

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

- Professional Corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a Professional Corps by CNCS must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.

- If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: 45 CFR §2522.910-.940), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.
- All applicants must propose program designs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. Applicants assessed as lower than the Preliminary evidence tier (i.e., Pre-Preliminary) must provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality review criteria in order to be considered for funding.

3. Cost Sharing or Matching

Fixed Amount Grants

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

Cost Reimbursement Grants

Applicants are required to match funds based on the funding chart below. The applicant's match can be federal or non-federal cash and/or in-kind contributions. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet the match requirement at the time of application submission. See Section D.6. Funding Restrictions for more information.

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

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

Section 121(e)(5) of 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 circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in the regulations at 45 CFR §2521.60(b). To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Application Instructions. Applicants who plan to request an alternative match schedule must submit a request at the time the application is submitted. State programs submit requests for alternative match to the Commission. Commissions submit on behalf of their state applicants and National Directs submit their requests directly to ACAlternateMatchRequests@cns.gov.

4. Other Eligibility Requirements

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

Applications that propose to engage in activities that are prohibited under CNCS's statutes, regulations, or the terms and conditions of its awards to receive CNCS funding.

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

- that has been assessed,
- for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed
- that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, that corporation is not eligible for an award under this Notice. However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has made a determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interest of the federal government

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

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

This *Notice* should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520–2550, the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, Application Instructions, and the National Performance Measure Instructions which are

incorporated by reference. These documents can be found on the CNCS website. The full Regulations are available online at www.ecfr.gov.

1. Content and Form of Application Submission

a. Application Content

In CNCS's web-based management system, 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 system
- Narratives
 - Executive Summary
 - Program Design
 - Organizational Capability
 - Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
 - Evaluation Plan (if applicable)
- Logic Model
- Standard Form 424 Budget
- Performance Measures
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certification

b. Page Limits

There are page limits for the Narrative and Logic Model.

Narrative

Applications must not exceed 10 double-opened pages for the Narratives. In determining whether an application complies with page limits, Serve Connecticut will count the following for the narrative:

- SF 424 Face Sheet
- Executive Summary
- Program Design, Organizational Capacity, and Cost Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy narrative.

The application page limit does not include the Budget, Performance Measures, or any required additional documents.

Serve Connecticut will consider the number of pages only as they print out from the "Review" tab in CNCS's web-based grant management system (where you will see the "View/Print your application" heading) when determining compliance for page limits. Serve Connecticut will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods in determining whether an application complies with the applicable page limits. Serve Connecticut strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the "Review" tab prior to submission to check that the application does not exceed the page limit. The application page limit does not include the Budget, narrative portion of the Evaluation Plan, the Logic Model, performance measures, or the supplementary materials, if applicable.

Logic Model

The Logic Model may not exceed three pages when printed with the application from the "Review" tab in CNCS's web-based management system.

Please note the length of the application as a word processing document may differ from the length of the document printed out from eGrants. **Serve Connecticut strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the "Review and Submit" tab in eGrants prior to submission in order to confirm that the application does not exceed the page limit.**

Serve Connecticut will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods when determining if an application complies with the page limit. Reviewers will also not consider material that is over the page limit, even if eGrants allows applicants to enter and submit additional text.

2. Dun and Bradstreet University Numbering System (DUNS) Number & System for Award Management (SAM)

Applications must include a DUNS number **and** an Employer Identification Number. The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number. DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number

request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online: [DUNS Request Service](#). CNCS recommends registering at least 30 days before the application due date.

After obtaining a DUNS number, all applicants **must** register with the System for Award Management (SAM) at www.sam.gov and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If an applicant is awarded a grant, it must maintain an active SAM registration throughout the life of the award.

SAM registration must be renewed annually. **Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and address on all eGrant applications to CNCS.**

Applicants who do not comply with these requirements may become ineligible to receive or maintain an award. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees at https://sam.gov/sam/transcript/Quick_Guide_for_Grants_Registrations.pdf

3. Submission Dates and Times

a. Application Submission Deadline

Applications are due in eGrants March 4, 2020 by 11:59 pm Eastern Time.

b. Additional Documents Deadline

Additional documents are due by the application submission deadline.

c. Late Applications

All applications received after the submission deadline published in this Notice are presumed to be non-compliant. To overcome this presumption, the applicant must:

- submit a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that caused the delay, including:
 - the timing and specific cause(s) of the delay
 - the ticket number if a request for assistance was submitted to the National Service Hotline
 - any information provided to the applicant by the National Service Hotline
 - any other documentation or evidence that supports the justification
- ensure that Serve Connecticut receives the justification and any other evidence that substantiates the claimed extenuating circumstance(s) via email to ServeCTgrants@ctohe.org no later than 24 hours after the application deadline stated in the Notice.

Communication with Serve Connecticut staff, including an applicant's program officer, is not a substitute for the letter. Applicants are required to continue working in CNCS's web-based application system and with the National Service Hotline to submit the application. Serve Connecticut will determine whether or not to accept a late application on a case-by-case basis. Applicants that do not submit a justification or any other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the published timeframe will not be reviewed or selected for award.

Please note: Serve Connecticut will not consider an advance request to submit a late application. Applicants are encouraged to carefully review and follow the guidance in this section and submit your application as soon as possible.

4. Intergovernmental Review

This *Notice* is not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

5. Funding Restrictions

a. Award Funding Requirements

1. Member Living Allowance

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

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

Table: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1,700	\$14,279	\$28,558
Three Quarter-time	1,200	n/a	\$20,159
Half-time	900	n/a	\$15,119
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	\$11,339
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$7,559
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$5,040

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 and benefits including child care are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve, and are not included in the budget request to CNCS (federal or matching share.)

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.

Table: Maximum Cost per MSY

Grant Program	Maximum
Individual Competitive State (cost reimbursement)	\$15,479*
Multi-state (cost reimbursement)	\$15,479*
Professional Corps Fixed Amount Applicants/Grantees	\$1,000*
Education Award Program Fixed Amount Grant	\$800
Full-time Fixed Amount Grant	\$15,479

*Cost reimbursement programs operating in rural communities (as defined in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) and cost reimbursement programs that recruit opportunity youth as AmeriCorps members may request up to \$15,647 cost per MSY for the AmeriCorps members who will be serving in rural areas or who are opportunity youth.

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

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

applicant has sufficiently demonstrated that they cannot e sources, and as a result has levels of unrestricted funding that is in excess of the requested level of CNCS funding, CNCS may choose to not provide operational grant funding.

c. Segal AmeriCorps Education Award

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

d. Indirect Costs

Application budgets may include indirect costs. Based on qualifying factors, applicants will either use a federally approved indirect cost rate, a 5/10 percent fixed option, a 10 percent *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly as outlined in 2 CFR § 200.413. States, local governments and Indian Tribes may use approved indirect cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across federal awards. Applicants that have a federal negotiated indirect cost rate or that will be using the 10 percent *de minimis* rate must enter that information in the Organization section in the CNCS's web-based management system. However, under section 121(d) of the NCSA and CNCS's regulations at 45 CFR 2521.95 and 2540.110, no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps grants.

e. Pre-Award Costs

Pre-award costs, where authorized, are allowed after receiving written approval from the Office of Grans Management and/or Office of Grants Administration.

6. Other Submission Requirements

a. Electronic Application Submission in CNCS's web-based management system

Applicants must submit applications electronically via CNCS's web-based system. CNCS recommends that applicants create an 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 field no later than ten days before the deadline.

The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must be using CNCS's web-based management system 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 [Questions](#) if a problem arises when creating an account or preparing or submitting the application. 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 CNCS's web-based management system.

b. Submission of Additional Documents

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

All applicants

- Evaluation briefs, reports, studies. Please refer to the *Evidence Base* section and Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for detailed instructions by evidence tier.

Re-competing applications

- Evaluation report, if required. Please see the *Evidence Tiers* definitions in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance and Section E. Evaluation Plan for further information.
- Labor union concurrence (if applicable)
- Federal debt delinquency (if applicable)

Rural Intermediaries (New and re-competing)

- Letters of support from the consortium members

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

- Sanctioning resolution adopted by the tribal council of each Indian Tribe. (See the *Eligible Applicants* section.)

New and Re-competing applications

- Financial Management Survey (FMS) located on the Serve Connecticut website.

Additional Documents must be emailed to ServeCTgrants@ctohe.org with the labels outlined below. Emails should include the following information:

- Subject line: [Legal Applicant Name]– [Application ID number]
- Body of the email should identify:
 - The legal applicant name and its point of contact information
 - The application ID number
 - A list of documents that should be attached to the email
- Attachments to emails should include
 - Individually saved files that are clearly labeled
 - Each file should also include a header or title within the body of each additional document to include the legal applicant name and application ID number.

Do not submit other items not requested in this Notice or Application Instructions. Serve Connecticut will not review or return them.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Review Criteria

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

A. Executive Summary (Required - 0 percent)

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

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

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

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

Fixed-Amount grant applicants (EAP, Full-cost Fixed, No Cost Slots) should list their Other Revenue (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still raise significant additional resources to operate the program.

B. Program Design (50 percent)

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

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

The Theory of Change shall address:

- The proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community problem.

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

The Logic Model shall depict:

- A summary of the community problem.
- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:
 - Locations or sites in which members will provide services
 - Number of AmeriCorps members who will deliver the intervention
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
 - The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention)
 - The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
 - The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level)
- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served, types and number of activities conducted.) If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as output indicators
- Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

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

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

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

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

2. Evidence Base (20 points)

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

Evidence Tier (12 points):

An evidence tier will be assessed for each applicant for the purpose of applying the strategic characteristics (moderate/strong evidence) and understanding the relative strength of each applicant's evidence base and the likelihood that the proposed intervention will lead to outcomes identified in the logic model.

In 2019, the evidence tiers of successful AmeriCorps State and National applicants that were competing were as follows: Strong 20%, Moderate 18%, Preliminary 30%, and Pre-Preliminary 35%. As these figures indicate, CNCS values and funds programs at all points along the evidence continuum and expects programs to progress along the evidence continuum over time. Thus, do not be deterred from applying for funding due to your current evidence level.

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

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

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

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

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

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

If the evaluation reports submitted by the applicant do not meet the definitions in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, the applicant may be considered for a lower evidence tier.

Evidence Quality (8 points):

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Notice Priority (0 points)

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

4. Member Experience (6 points)

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

C. Organizational Capability (25 percent)

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

1. Organizational Background and Staffing (9 points)

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

2. Compliance and Accountability (8 points)

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

3. Culture that Values Learning (5 points)

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

4. Member Supervision (3 points)

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

D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)

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

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

1. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 points)

- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors and proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award.
- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget is in compliance with the budget instructions.
- Match is submitted with adequate information to support the amount written in the budget.

- The budgeted match is equal to or more than the required match for the given program year.
- The cost per MSY is equal to or less than the maximum cost per MSY.

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

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

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

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

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

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

First-time applicants should be aware that CNCS may require submission of data collection instruments if a grant is approved for funding. For more information about how to develop a high-quality data collection plan, visit the CNCS Knowledge Network.

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

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(s) of interest - clear and measurable outcomes that are aligned with the theory of change and will be assessed during the evaluation
- Research questions to be addressed by the study - concrete research questions (or hypotheses) that are clearly connected to the outcomes
- Proposed research design for the evaluation including a rationale for the design selected, an assessment of its strengths and limitations, and a description of the main components;
- Description of the data sources, sampling methods, measurement tools, and data collection procedures that will be used in the evaluation
- Analysis plan that clearly describes the methodology/ies that will be used to analyze the collected data
- A timeline for the evaluation that describes how the evaluation will cover at least one year of CNCS-funded activity and will be completed within the three-year timeframe of the grant
- Qualifications needed for the evaluator
- The proposed budget

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

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

The evaluation requirements differ depending on the amount of the grant, as described in 45 CFR §2522.700-710:

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

For purposes of compliance with evaluation plan and report requirements, an application will be considered a re-competing application if it satisfies the CNCS definition of “same project” (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) and has been funded competitively for at least three years. If the applicant has received competitive funding for at least three of the last five years, it will be required to submit an evaluation plan. If the project satisfied the definition of same project and the applicant has completed, including at least six years of competitive funding for the same project, the applicant will be required to submit an evaluation report as well as an evaluation plan for the upcoming 3-year grant. If the applicant does not satisfy the definition of re-competing, it will not be required to submit an evaluation plan or completed evaluation report.

The “Evaluation Summary or Plan” field of the Narrative does not count toward the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit of 10,000 characters.

State/Territory subgrantees and/or National Direct Grantees that are re-competing for funds may be 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 the system. 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. CNCS guidance on alternative evaluation approaches can be found on the CNCS website.

The “Evaluation Summary or Plan” field of the Narrative does not count toward the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit of 10,000 characters. If the request for the alternative evaluation approach plus the Evaluation Plan itself will exceed the character limit of the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in the system, the applicant should do the following:

- Enter the Evaluation Plan in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in the system.
- Include a note in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field stating that the applicant is requesting an alternative evaluation approach.
- Include the alternative evaluation approach at the END of the application narrative with the heading “REQUEST FOR ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION APPROACH.” This section of the application narrative will not count against the page limit.

F. Amendment Justification (0 percent)

Enter N/A. This field will be used if the applicant is awarded a grant and needs to amend it.

G. Clarification Information (0 percent)

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter information that requires clarification in the post-review period.

H. Continuation Changes (0 percent)

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter changes in the application narratives in continuation requests.

2. Review and Selection Process

Serve Connecticut will make determinations about applicants utilizing the data provided within the application and supplemental materials. These determinations may be different than what the applicant self-determined upon submission of its application.

The stages of the review and selection process follow:

a. Compliance and Eligibility Review

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

- Is an eligible organization
- Submits an application by the submission deadline
- Submits an application that is complete, in that it contains all required elements and follows the instructions provided in this *Notice*.

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

Internal Review

Serve Connecticut staff will assess Program Design, particularly focusing on the theory of change and evidence-basis for the proposed solution(s) to the identified community problem(s), appropriateness of AmeriCorps service as a solution, and potential quality of the member experience; Organizational Capability; and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy.

Following staff assessment, some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information and/or make changes to their application including the budget. Applications may be recommended for external review even if they are not asked clarification questions. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to requests for additional information in a timely fashion will result in the removal of an application from consideration.

Risk Assessment Evaluation

Commission staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant, including conducting due diligence to ensure an applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility or the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. The Financial Management Survey will also be reviewed at this time. If the Commission ultimately determines to fund the application, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award. In evaluating risks, the Commission may consider the following:

- Financial capability and capacity to manage Federal funds
- Quality of financial management systems and ability to meet the administrative standards prescribed in applicable OMB Guidance
- History of performance as reflected in the applicant's record in managing previous CNCS awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
 - Timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements,
 - If applicable, meeting matching requirements, and
 - If applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
- Information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as—
 - Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS),
 - U.S. Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services
 - Dun and Bradstreet,
 - "Do Not Pay," and /or
 - System for Award Management
- Reports and findings from single audits performed under Uniform Administrative Guidance and findings of any other available audits

- IRS Tax Form 990
- An applicant organization's annual report
- Publicly available information including information from an applicant organization's website
- Responses to the Financial Management Survey and supporting documentation.
- Amount of funding requested by the organization

Serve Connecticut staff will assess re-competing sub grantees' past performance. This assessment is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding or the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this assessment will inform funding decisions. In evaluating programmatic performance, Serve Connecticut will consider the following for applicants that are current formula and competitive grantees:

- Grant progress reports – attainment of Performance Measures
- Enrollment and retention
- Compliance with 5-day enrollment and 30-day exit requirements in the AmeriCorps portal
- Site visit or other monitoring findings (if applicable)
- Significant opportunities and/or risks of the grantee related to national service

Additionally, Serve Connecticut may use the results of the review of the risk assessment evaluation in determining which applications to fund. If Serve Connecticut concludes that the reasons for applicants having poor risk assessment evaluations are not likely to be mitigated, those applications may not be selected for funding.

Selection for Funding

Upon completion of the entire review process, recommendations for funding will be made to the Commission membership. Final funding decision are made by the Commission membership. Final funding decisions cannot be appealed.

Feedback to Applicants

Following grant awards, each applicant will receive the results of the review pertaining to their application. Feedback to all applicants will be provided by September 30, 2020.

Anticipated Announcement of Federal Award

We anticipate announcing the results of this competition no later than June 26, 2020.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

CNCS will make awards following the grant selection announcement. All applicants, successful or not, will be notified of funding decisions via email.

Notification of an award 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. An awardee may not expend federal funds until the start of the Project Period identified on the Notice of Grant Award.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

a. Uniform Guidance

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

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

All awards made under this *Notice* will be subject to the 2020 CNCS General Terms and Conditions, and the 2020 AmeriCorps Program Specific Terms and Conditions. These Terms and Conditions contain detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the CNCS General and Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/terms-and-conditions-cnccs-grants>.

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. This includes staff that receive part of their salary through a subgrant. An individual is ineligible to serve in a position that receives such CNCS funding if the individual is registered, or required to be registered, as a sex offender or has been convicted of murder. The cost of conducting NSCHCs is an allowable expense under the award. Grantees should utilize the two vendors CNCS has engaged to conduct the required NSCHCs. Failure to conduct an NSCHC may result in significant disallowed costs.

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

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

- A nationwide name-based search of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) and
- Either
 - A name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the person’s state of residence and in the state where the person will serve/work; *or*
 - A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check.

Special Rule for Persons Serving Vulnerable Populations. Award-funded staff, national service participants, and volunteers *with recurring access to vulnerable populations* (i.e., children age 17 or younger, individuals age 60 or older, or individuals with disabilities) must undergo NSCHCs that include:

- A nationwide name-based check of the [NSOPW](#); and
- Both
 - A name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the person’s state of residence and in the state where the person will serve/work; *and*
 - A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check.

See 45 CFR § 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 CFR §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 annual progress reports, semi-annual financial reports, r, end of year, and final 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. A final financial report is due 90 days after the end of the grant agreement.

Fixed Amount grantees are required to provide an annual and final 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 on all sub awards over \$25,000 and may be required to report on executive compensation for your organization and for your sub grantees. Recipients and sub recipients 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 grantee 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.

In addition to 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.) The full list of required and optional demographic indicators for AmeriCorps programs can be found on the AmeriCorps Grantee Progress Report webpage.

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

5. Continuation Funding Information and Requirements

Organizations that have current AmeriCorps awards that continue beyond FY 2020 must submit an application in order to be eligible to received 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*.