

**RESOLUTION OF THE  
HEALTH, EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
OF THE NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL**

**23<sup>rd</sup> NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL - First Year, 2015**

**AN ACTION**

**RELATING TO HEALTH, EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES; AUTHORIZING DNA-PEOPLE'S LEGAL SERVICES, INC. TO PURSUE AMERICORPS FUND ON BEHALF OF THE NAVAJO NATION TO DEVELOP MEDICAL-LEGAL PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN THE NAVAJO NATION**

**WHEREAS:**

- A. The Health, Education and Human Services Committee ("HEHS") is established as a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council and as such has the power to establish Navajo Nation policy governing health services. 2 N.N.C. §§ 164(A)(9), 400(A), 401(B)(1)(2012); *see also* CO-45-12.
- B. DNA-People's Legal Services, Inc. ("DNA") is a legal aid organization with offices located within the Navajo Nation, and it provides qualifying individuals with free legal services.
- C. DNA operates medical-legal partnerships with the Navajo Area Indian Health Service and the Tuba City Regional Health Corporation that serve hundreds of low-income patients per year, including vulnerable children, adults with disabilities, victims of domestic violence and elders.
- D. The Navajo Nation recognizes that collaborative partnerships between legal services programs and healthcare institutions provide low-income patients with means to address critical health-impacting legal needs. *See* "Medical-Legal Partnership in Indian Country" attached as Exhibit A; *see also* Four Corners Legal Care attached as Exhibit B.
- E. DNA seeks to submit an application on behalf of the Navajo Nation to the Corporation for National and Community Services for an AmeriCorps Indian Tribes Planning Grant in an effort to expand its medical-legal partnership efforts and implement new partnerships within the Navajo Nation.
- F. In order to submit an application for a grant, DNA must be identified as a "tribal organization" and must be authorized to act on behalf of and include the tribe in a CNCS grant application for the purpose of conducting the activities and providing the services described in the application. *See* Announcement of Federal Funding Availability, and specifically

the section titled Eligibility Information requiring a tribal government resolution, attached as Exhibit C.

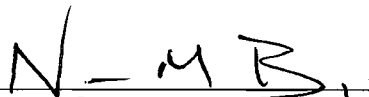
- G. DNA-People's Legal Services, Inc. will assume full responsibility for the fiscal integrity as well as program development and implementation of this application, including full responsibility for any required matching funds.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

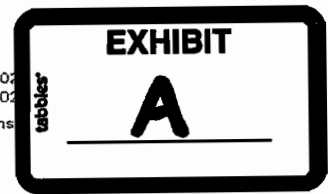
- A. The Navajo Nation hereby sanctions DNA-People's Legal Services, Inc. as a tribal organization for purposes of applying for this grant and authorizes it to serve as the legal applicant for federal funding through the Corporation for National and Community Service, on behalf of and including the Navajo Nation in the proposed grant activities.

**C E R T I F I C A T I O N**

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly considered by the Health, Education and Human Services Committee of the Navajo Nation Council at a duly called meeting at Chinle, Navajo Nation (Arizona), at which a quorum was present and that the same was passed by a vote of 3 in favor and 0 opposed, this 01st day of April, 2015.

  
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Honorable Norman M. Begay, Vice-Chairperson  
Health, Education and Human Services Committee

Motion: Honorable Nelson BeGaye  
Second: Honorable Tuchoney Slim, Jr.



## Medical-Legal Partnership in Indian Country: A Collaboration to Improve Health

*Carolyn, a 62-year-old Navajo woman, was seen by her doctor for a routine checkup at a small Navajo reservation health center. A screening of Carolyn's vitals revealed abnormally high blood pressure. After linking Carolyn's hypertension to the stress caused by a recent job loss, Carolyn's doctor referred her to an on-site medical-legal partnership attorney. During the intake interview, the attorney learned that Carolyn had been laid off after seventeen years of continuous employment as a housekeeper with an off-reservation hotel. Carolyn's biggest concern was that her unemployment insurance claim had been denied, leaving her with no source of income. Her family was relying on garage sales to purchase food, heating fuel, gasoline, and household necessities.*

*An investigation revealed that the hotel manager had reported Carolyn's job separation as a voluntary decision to quit. This untruthful statement led to Carolyn's unemployment denial. The medical-legal partnership attorney requested a hearing on Carolyn's claim and, with legal representation, Carolyn won her appeal. Several weeks of Carolyn's missed benefits were restored and she began receiving weekly unemployment payments. This financial recovery of over \$4,000.00 significantly reduced stress for Carolyn and her family. Carolyn explained that, without her doctor's referral to a lawyer, she would not have sought legal help or even challenged her unemployment denial.*

### Medical-Legal Partnership – Background

Across the United States, medical-legal partnerships (MLPs) are improving the health and well-being of vulnerable people by transforming the healthcare system to address health-harming legal needs. MLP is a healthcare delivery model that integrates legal assistance into healthcare settings. At MLPs, lawyers and medical staff work together to screen for and address the pervasive and intertwined health and legal needs of people like Carolyn. For American Indians and Alaska Natives living on or near reservations, MLP can be an avenue to link vulnerable families with safe and affordable housing, critical income supports, and protection from domestic violence.

With over 250 hospitals and health centers partnering with multiple members of the legal community – including legal aid agencies, law firms and corporate law offices, and law schools – the impact and scope of the MLP model continue to increase. The National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership, housed in the Department of Health Policy at the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, provides leadership on research and policy activities for the burgeoning MLP Network, as well as resources for active and emerging partnerships. Research shows that integrating legal services in the healthcare setting can improve health outcomes, positively impact staff and patient satisfaction, and potentially reduce health care costs.

National health and legal organizations including the American Medical Association, the American Bar Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics have cited MLP as an innovative model with substantial positive outcomes for vulnerable individuals and families. MLPs have also won acclaim from the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and have been recognized by the White House as a 2011 "Champion of Change" at a ceremony co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice's Access to Justice Initiative.

## **Health Disparities and Social Conditions in Indian Country**

American Indian and Alaska Native communities face overwhelming health disparities, including greater mortality rates across a variety of causes: diabetes (182% higher than the general U.S. population), alcoholism (522% higher), unintentional injuries (138% higher), homicide (83% higher), suicide (74% higher), and maternal death at childbirth (50% higher). Tuberculosis rates in recent years have been five times higher for AI/ AN persons than the white population in the United States. Disparities in mental health are also found in tribal communities. American Indians and Alaska Natives suffer from severe psychological distress as a rate 1.5 times higher than the general population, with depression, anxiety, and substance abuse among the most prevalent mental health conditions.

Health disparities among American Indians and Alaska Natives cannot be separated from adverse socioeconomic conditions, especially on reservations. Nationwide, approximately one in four American Indian/ Alaska Native persons live below the federal poverty line. Unemployment rates for AI/ AN persons are double that of the general U.S. population and as high as 50% on some rural reservations. Housing availability on reservations is scarce, which leads to overcrowding at six times the national rate. Domestic violence is rampant on reservations, with a recent CDC study showing that 39% of native women surveyed identified as victims of intimate partner violence. Access to health care is another critical issue. Due to poverty, geographic isolation, and low rates of insurance enrollment, the majority of America's 3.4 million American Indians and Alaska Natives rely upon the Indian Health Service for comprehensive health care. The annual expenditures for a patient utilizing the IHS health care system are three times lower than the expenditures for an average American (\$2,741 versus \$7,239).

### **The Need for Medical-Legal Partnership**

The Indian Health Service recognizes the need for a multidisciplinary approach to health care: "Health status is not just a health care issue. It is about ensuring that there are educational opportunities; safe communities; adequate housing; and adequate economic and employment opportunities. These things and more, all work in concert to affect health status."<sup>1</sup> Although IHS hospitals, 638 facilities, and urban Indian health centers presently utilize medical social workers, benefits coordinators, and others to target the social determinants of health, the inclusion of a lawyer is often necessary to protect patient's rights to critical supports (e.g. preventing an unjust housing eviction, overcoming a Social Security denial, obtaining a protective order in court). In rural reservation areas, where poor road conditions and long travel distances keep families from accessing locally-available resources, the on-site services of an MLP may be the only option for bringing timely legal assistance to vulnerable children and adults. By offering training and consultations, MLPs also build stronger relationships between health and legal professionals, increasing healthcare engagement and capacity, and leading to increased prevention opportunities.

While IHS facilities and legal aid programs overlap in at least 12 regions of the U.S., medical-legal partnerships have been formed only in two of these regions (Navajo Nation and Alaska). Outcomes from the Navajo Nation program (see attached sheet) show that the MLP model can and should be a standard practice in reservation-based health care. The Native American Rights Fund, DNA-People's Legal Services, Inc., and the National Association of Indian Legal Services are working together to support the creation of new medical-legal partnership in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. For more information, contact Ellen Lawton, Co-Principal Investigator, National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership, [ellawton@gwu.edu](mailto:ellawton@gwu.edu), or Matt VanWormer, Medical-Legal Partnership Director at DNA-People's Legal Services, [mvan@dnalegalservices.org](mailto:mvan@dnalegalservices.org).

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<sup>1</sup> Indian Health Service, A Quick Look, [http://www.ihs.gov/factsheets/index.cfm?module=dsp\\_fact\\_quicklook](http://www.ihs.gov/factsheets/index.cfm?module=dsp_fact_quicklook)



## **Four Corners Legal Care**

### ***Improving Health through Legal Aid***

DNA-People's Legal Services has requested the Navajo Nation Council's approval of a Supporting and Sanctioning Resolution that will allow DNA to apply for AmeriCorps Tribal Grant funds. DNA's grant application would bring up to \$75,000 in federal funds to explore the development of new medical-legal partnerships on the Navajo Nation and in other tribal communities. No funding from the Navajo Nation is requested under the proposed resolution. We hope that the following information is helpful in considering DNA's proposed resolution. DNA's grant application must be submitted to AmeriCorps by April 29, 2015.

Medical-legal partnerships use legal advocacy as a tool to connect patients with supports and services that promote better health. With this objective in mind, DNA and the Navajo Area Indian Health Service partnered in May 2009 to create Four Corners Legal Care (formerly known as the Diné Bít'íís báá Ah'jiteí Program). Attorneys from Four Corners Legal Care represent low-income patients in cases that involve public benefits, housing, domestic violence, and other issues that impact patient health. Four Corners Legal Care was originally launched at the Northern Navajo Medical Center in Shiprock. In October 2012, Four Corners Legal Care expanded to offer legal services at Tuba City Regional Health Care. Although medical-legal partnerships now exist in over 250 hospitals and health centers throughout the United States, Four Corners Legal Care is the first partnership to focus on serving low-income American Indians or Alaska Natives.

Over the past three years, Four Corners Legal Care received 1,056 patient referrals from medical providers and provided direct legal assistance to 833 low-income patients. The following positive outcomes were measured:

- **Financial Outcomes:**
  - Increased income or resources for 148 families.
  - 1.1 Million in one-time financial recoveries for patients.
  - 5.7 Million in total financial recoveries, including ongoing monthly benefits.
  
- **Non-Financial Outcomes:**

○ New or additional health insurance	94 patients
○ Obtained/ maintained stable housing	52 families
○ Obtained protection from abuse	34 families
○ Medical decision-making (POA, guardianship)	78 patients
○ Stronger special education services	30 children

Four Corners Legal Care has increased the well-being of vulnerable families on the Navajo Nation and brought critical resources into the local economy. So far, these impacts have been concentrated around our partnership sites in Shiprock and Tuba City. A Supporting and Sanctioning Resolution from the Navajo Nation Council will promote the replication of these outcomes in communities throughout the Navajo Nation.



## ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING AVAILABILITY

**Federal Agency Name:** Corporation for National and Community Service  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** AmeriCorps Indian Tribes Grants FY 2015  
**Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement  
**CFDA Number:** 94.006

### Key Dates

Applications are due **Wednesday, April 29, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time** to CNCS. CNCS expects that successful applicants will be notified no later than **July 1, 2015**.

Submission of a Notice of Intent to Apply by **Wednesday, April 8, 2015** is encouraged, but not required, for this competition.

### A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service (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.

Only federally-recognized Indian tribes and tribal organizations are eligible to apply to this Announcement of Federal Funding Availability (*Notice*), as described below in Eligibility Information, section C. 1.

Publication of this *Notice* does not obligate CNCS to award any specific number of grants or to obligate the entire amount of funding available.

#### **Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding**

CNCS may award an AmeriCorps planning grant or an AmeriCorps program grant under this announcement. A planning grant provides support to a grant recipient for the development of an AmeriCorps program that will engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to solve community problems. Grant recipients are awarded up to \$75,000 for a 12-month planning period and are expected to be better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle. A planning grant may not be used to support AmeriCorps members.

AmeriCorps program grants are awarded to eligible applicants 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.

In most cases, applicants will apply for a Cost Reimbursement grant. On a limited basis, certain applicants may be eligible for a Fixed Amount grant. See Section II and Glossary for more information.

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

### **CNCS Focus Areas**

In order to carry out Congress' intent and to maximize the impact of investment in national service, CNCS has the following focus areas:

#### **Disaster Services**

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

#### **Economic Opportunity**

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

#### **Education**

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

#### **Environmental Stewardship**

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

#### **Healthy Futures**

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

#### **Veterans and Military Families**

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

### **2015 AmeriCorps Funding Priorities**

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

- Disaster Services -- improving community resiliency through disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation
- Economic Opportunity -- increasing economic opportunities for communities, specifically opportunity youth (see Glossary), both as the population served and as AmeriCorps members.
- Education -- improving student academic performance including STEM
- Veterans and Military Families -- positively impacting the quality of life of veterans and improving military family strength
- Healthy futures – positively impacting behavioral health outcomes and/or increasing the capacity of tribal communities to offer behavioral health prevention and support services

In order to receive priority consideration, applicants must demonstrate that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes and must include a high quality program design. Responses that propose programs for the purpose of receiving priority consideration are not guaranteed funding.

In addition to the funding priorities listed above, AmeriCorps is partnering with the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) to create the **Indian Education Fellows** program. The purpose of the Indian Education Fellows grant program is to provide academic support, tutoring and mentoring to Native children and youth in BIE funded schools. The Fellows will serve as mentors, tutors and educators providing an array of academic support to Native students. The program aims to improve student academic performance and engagement while preparing students for lifelong success.

The partnership between AmeriCorps and BIE is in response to the President's announcement of Generation Indigenous (Gen I), a Native youth initiative focused on removing the barriers that stand between Native youth and their opportunity to succeed. Gen I will take a comprehensive, culturally appropriate approach to help improve the lives and opportunities for Native youth and the Indian Education Fellows grant program contributes to this goal.

BIE's mission is to provide quality education opportunities from early childhood through life in accordance with a tribe's needs for cultural and economic well-being, in keeping with the wide diversity of Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages as distinct cultural and governmental entities.

Fellows will serve in teams of two or more at the tribally-controlled BIE funded schools performing interventions and activities before, during and/or after school that lead to one or more of the following desired outcomes:

- Improved student academic achievement\*
- Improved student academic engagement\*
- Improved high school graduation rates\*
- Improved student preparation for post-high school opportunities

Applicants may also identify their own outcomes.

\*national performance measure outcomes

Grant applicants for the Indian Education Fellows program may create member positions for Fellows incorporating one or more of the following interventions, or identify appropriate interventions in conjunction with the school(s) where members will serve:

- Delivering a hands on, engaging curriculum before, during and/or after school
- Teaching, tutoring and/or mentoring of students before, during and/or after school



- Creating opportunities for students that strengthen the connection between academic success, college and career by recruiting and/or managing volunteers from the community (businesses, nonprofits, colleges, and other local organizations) to share their experiences and opportunities with students
- Establishing a school culture and environment that uses data to inform instructional/program decisions, creates a safe learning environment, and/or fosters regular communication with families

Eligible grant applicants for the Indian Education Fellows program include tribally-controlled BIE schools (see Glossary) and those applicants eligible to apply for grants under this Notice (see Eligibility Information, section C.1.).

### **National Performance Measures**

CNCS expects organizations to use National Performance Measures as part of a comprehensive performance measurement strategy that relies on both performance and evaluation data to learn from its work as well as make tactical and strategic adjustments to achieve its goals. For more information, please refer to the National Performance Measure Instructions.

## **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

CNCS expects a highly competitive AmeriCorps FY 2015 grant competition. The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations, which have not yet been made. Grant awards for programs 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. Grant awards for planning grants do not include member positions and will not exceed \$75,000.

### **Award Period**

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

Planning grants are for a one year (12-month) project period.

### **Project Period**

The project period is proposed by the applicant and is generally one year. The project start date may not occur prior to the date CNCS awards the grant. For program grants, AmeriCorps members may not enroll prior to the start date of the award. AmeriCorps members may not begin service prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period as designated in the grant award. A program may not certify any hours a member performs prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period.

## **C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **1. Eligible Applicants**

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

A nonprofit that desires to apply for a grant as a “tribal organization” on behalf of a federally-recognized tribe, or multiple specific federally-recognized tribes, must submit a sanctioning resolution adopted by the Tribal Council (or comparable tribal governing body) of each tribe. The resolution must identify the nonprofit by name as a “tribal organization” and it must authorize the nonprofit organization to act on behalf of and include the tribe in a CNCS grant application for the purpose of conducting the activities and providing the services described in the application.

Organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime are disqualified from receiving the assistance described in this *Notice*. Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Section 501 (c)(4) of the Internal Revenue code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. § 501 (c)(4), that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply.

### **New Applicants**

CNCS encourages Indian Tribes and tribal organizations that have never received funding from CNCS or AmeriCorps to apply for the grants described in this *Notice*. New organizations should submit applications with the understanding that the general practice is to award no more than 50 member slots for new grantees. New applicants are not eligible to receive fixed amount grants.

### **Continuation applicants**

Organizations that have current AmeriCorps awards that do not end in FY15 must submit a continuation application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. **Please see the Application Instructions.** Requests by existing continuation applicants for increases in the level of funding or number of positions will be assessed using the criteria under this *Notice*.

## **2. Cost Sharing or Matching**

Match requirements for tribes are different than for other grantees. Funds received through P.L. 93-638 are considered tribal funds, and as such, may be used for match purposes. This means that grant funds received by a tribe from one federal agency may be used to meet cash or in-kind requirements for a grant from another federal agency.

Entities applying on behalf of a federally-recognized tribe must obtain prior approval from another federal agency to utilize their grant funds as match for the AmeriCorps grant. The following link identifies agencies that allow their funds to be used as match for AmeriCorps grants:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/ASNgrants#budget>

### **Fixed Amount Grants**

There is no specific match requirement for Fixed Amount grants, but CNCS does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program. Tribes must raise the additional revenue required to operate the fixed amount grant program.

### **Cost Reimbursement Grants (Including Planning Grants)**

A first-time successful applicant is required to match at 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in 45 CFR §2521.60 and Pub. L. 113-76, Division H, Title IV, § 402 <https://beta.congress.gov/113/plaws/publ76/PLAW-113publ76.htm>

Section 121(e)(5) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, requires programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant to report the amount and source of these funds to CNCS on a Federal Financial Report. Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout.

### **Alternative Match**

Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in the regulations at 45 CFR §2521.60(b). To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Application Instructions. Applicants that plan to request an alternative match schedule must submit a request by April 29, 2015 directly to [ACAlternateMatchScheduleRequests@cns.gov](mailto:ACAlternateMatchScheduleRequests@cns.gov).

### **Match Waiver Requests**

Indian Tribal Government programs are subject to the same matching requirements. However, in accordance with Executive Order 13175, "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments," the Corporation may expedite approving waivers of matching requirements. Tribal governments that require a waiver must submit a written request by April 29, 2015 to [TribalMatchWaiver@cns.gov](mailto:TribalMatchWaiver@cns.gov).

**The request** for a waiver of a match requirement for an NCSA grant program shall be submitted in writing and addressed to the Office of Grants Management. The waiver must include the following:

- A statement that the grantee's match requirement cannot be met due to a lack of available financial resources at the local level.
- A concise explanation of what steps the grantee has taken to raise match or ascertain its future ability to raise match.
- A statement of how much of the match has been/is expected to be raised.
- A request for a specific amount of match to be waived.
- Any other information that may be helpful in considering this application.

Upon receipt of an application for a waiver of a match requirement the assigned grants official in the Office of Grants Management shall review the request, seeking clarification from the applicant as needed. If the waiver is approved in whole or in part, the assigned grants official shall:

- Revise the budget in eGrants to reflect the new match amount.
- Execute an amendment to the award, if needed.
- Document the decision in the official grant file.
- Notify the applicant in writing of the decision (this can be incorporated into the Notice of Grant Award for new awards).

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

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

Organizations should refer to the CNCS website to obtain the necessary information to apply.

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

#### **What are the steps to apply?**

- Submit a request for an alternative match schedule or match waiver, if applicable
- Submit a Notice of Intent (optional)
- Get a DUNS number
- Establish an eGrants account
- Write a high quality application responsive to the *Notice*
- Provide required supplemental materials via email, if applicable
- Submit the application via eGrants by the deadline

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

Applicants must submit their applications electronically via the CNCS web-based system, eGrants. Because it is a unique system, it is recommended that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the

application creation process at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word document and copy and paste the document into the appropriate eGrants fields no later than 10 days before the deadline. Please note the length of a document in word processing software may be different than what will print out in eGrants.

Contact the National Service Hotline at 800-942-2677 or <https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask> if a problem arises while creating an account or while preparing or submitting an application in eGrants.

National Service Hotline hours are Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET. If you contact the Hotline, be prepared to provide the application ID, organization name, and the *Notice* to which your organization is applying.

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

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

Additional documents may include (if applicable): evaluation reports and up to two evaluation briefs, reports, and/or peer reviewed articles if the applicant has a moderate or strong evidence base.

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

**In eGrants, before Starting Section I you will need to:**

- Start a new Grant Application
- Select a Program Area (AmeriCorps)
- Select a NOFA. The available NOFAs for the FY2015 competition are:
  - AmeriCorps Indian Tribes (New and Continuation)
  - AmeriCorps Indian Tribes Fixed Amount (New and Continuation)
  - AmeriCorps Indian Tribes Planning Grants

**Program Grant Application Fields and Page Limits** – The following information applies to applicants submitting an AmeriCorps program grant. **Applicants submitting a planning grant application should refer to page 14 of this *Notice*.**

In eGrants, applicants will enter text in the following fields:

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

Applications may not exceed 15 pages for the Narratives including the Executive Summary and SF 424 Facesheet, as the pages print out from eGrants. CNCS strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the “Review and Submit” page prior to submission to check that the application does not exceed the page limit. This limit does not include the narrative portion of the evaluation plan or the logic model, budget, performance measures, or the supplementary materials, if applicable. However, please note that there is a specific three-page limit maximum length for the logic model itself.

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

### **Assessment Criteria**

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

### **Threshold Issues**

Applications should reflect that they meet the threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying. For example: If an applicant is applying for a Fixed Amount grant, the application should reflect that only full-time or less than full-time positions serving in a full-time capacity will be permitted. If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: 45 CFR §2522.910-.940), the applicant must clearly describe how the program will meet these requirements.

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

### **Application Fields**

#### **A. Executive Summary (Required - 0 percent)**

Please fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary.

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

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

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

Fixed Amount grant applicants should list their leveraged resources because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still must raise significant additional resources to operate the program.

CNCS will post all Executive Summaries of awarded grant applications on [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov) in the interest of transparency and Open Government.

### **B. Program Design (50 percent)**

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

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

- The applicant clearly describes how the community need/problem is prevalent and severe in communities where members will serve and the need has been well documented with relevant data.
- The applicant clearly describes how the community problem/need will be addressed by the program.

#### **2. Theory of Change and Logic Model (17 points)**

- The applicant clearly describes the proposed intervention (service activities) including the roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) the roles of leveraged volunteers.
- The applicant clearly describes how the intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change.
- The applicant clearly describes how the AmeriCorps members will produce significant and unique contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.

The logic model shall depict:

- Logical alignment of all elements.
- A summary of the community problem outlined in the narrative.
- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including:
  - Number of locations or sites where 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, description of who/what is being served).
- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries from the target population served.) Identify which National Performance Measures or other 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.

The logic model shall be no more than three pages in length.

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.

#### **3. Evidence Base (8 points)**

Applicants will be awarded up to 8 points for providing evidence that their proposed intervention will lead to the outcomes identified in the theory of change. Applicants shall provide a description of the

studies and evaluations conducted that provide evidence that the proposed intervention is effective for the proposed population and community challenge, and should describe how this evidence places them in one of the five evidence levels listed below. Applicants must fully describe how they meet the requirement of that level, using results from studies and evaluations. Applicants are strongly encouraged to describe the evidence that supports the strongest evidence tier, and all relevant evidence presented must be included in this section. This section must include specific citations of studies and/or evaluation and research reports. Applicants classifying their evidence as Moderate or Strong must submit up to two studies, evaluation reports, briefs, or peer-reviewed articles cited in this section as separate attachments. Studies should be sent to [AdditionalDocuments@cns.gov](mailto:AdditionalDocuments@cns.gov) by the application deadline and include in the subject line the application ID and “evaluation studies.”

For each report cited, include the date of the report, a description that shows its relevancy to the proposed program model, the methodology used in the study, and the strength of the findings (e.g. confidence level.)

For current grantees that are required to submit an evaluation report: The evaluation report will be considered as part of the evidence base of the program. Grantees may opt to include that evaluation report as one of the two studies, or submit two separate studies in addition to the evaluation report. In the latter case, all three studies will be reviewed against this criterion.

Reviewers will assess one of the five tiered evidence levels as follows:

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

**Pre-preliminary evidence** (1 point): The applicant presents evidence that it has collected quantitative or qualitative data from program staff, program participants, or beneficiaries that have been used for program improvement, performance measurement reporting, and/or tracking. An example could be gathering feedback from program participants following their receipt of the intervention.

**Preliminary evidence** (2 points): The applicant presents an initial evidence base that can support conclusions about the program’s contribution to observed outcomes. The evidence base consists of at least one non-experimental study conducted on the proposed program (or another similar program that uses a comparable intervention). A study that demonstrates improvement in program beneficiaries over time on one or more intended outcomes OR an implementation (process evaluation) study used to learn and improve program operations would constitute preliminary evidence. Examples of research that meet the standards include: 1) outcome studies that track program beneficiaries through a service pipeline and measure beneficiaries’ responses at the end of the program; and 2) pre- and post-test research that determines whether beneficiaries have improved on an intended outcome.

**Moderate evidence** (4 points): The applicant presents a reasonably developed evidence base that can support causal conclusions for the specific program proposed by the applicant with moderate confidence. The evidence base consists of one or more quasi-experimental studies conducted on the proposed program (or another similar program that uses a comparable intervention) with positive findings on one or more intended outcomes OR two or more non-experimental studies conducted on the proposed program with positive findings on one or more intended outcomes OR one or more experimental studies of another relevant program that uses a similar intervention. Examples of research that meet the standards include: well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies that compare outcomes between the group receiving the intervention and a matched comparison group (i.e. a similar population that does not receive the intervention).

**Strong evidence** (8 points): The applicant presents an evidence base that can support causal conclusions for the specific program proposed by the applicant with the highest level of confidence. This consists of

### **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 (7 points/10 points for new applicants)**

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

#### **2. Compliance and Accountability (11 points/15 points for new applicants)**

- The applicant clearly describes how in implementation and management of its AmeriCorps program, it will prevent and detect compliance issues.
- The applicant clearly describes how it will hold itself, subgrantees, and service site locations (if applicable) accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified.
- The applicant clearly describes how it will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities at the grantee, subgrantee, and service site locations (if applicable). The prohibited activities (45 CFR §§ 2520.65) can be accessed here: [http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/page/AmeriCorps\\_Regulations\\_9\\_11\\_13.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/page/AmeriCorps_Regulations_9_11_13.pdf)

#### **3. Past Performance for Current Grantees and Former Grantees Only (7 points for re-competing applicants): Any applicant that has received competitive or state formula funding for the same project in any of the past three years must address this criteria.**

- The applicant clearly describes how it has met performance measurement targets during the last three years of program operations, or, if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.
- The applicant clearly describes how it achieved 100% member enrollment, in the most recent full year of program operations, or if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.
- The applicant clearly describes how it achieved 100% member retention, in the most recent full year of program operations, or, if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.
- The applicant clearly describes any compliance issues or areas of weakness/risk identified during the last three years of program operations (if applicable) and describes an effective corrective action plan that was implemented.

### **D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)**

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

#### **1. Cost Effectiveness (18 points)**

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

Having a low Cost Per Member Service year (MSY) is a competitive advantage. New applicants that propose a low cost per MSY and re-competing applicants that submit with a lower cost per MSY than



one or more well-designed and well-implemented experimental studies conducted on the proposed program with positive findings on one or more intended outcomes.

The description of evidence in this section should include as much detailed information as possible. Applicants are advised to focus on presenting high-quality evidence from their strongest studies rather than only cursory descriptions of many studies. Reviewers will examine criteria that may include: a) how closely the program model evaluated in the studies matches the one proposed by the applicant; b) the methodological quality of the studies presented (e.g., statistical power, internal and/or external validity, sample size, etc.); c) the recency of the studies, with a preference towards studies that have been conducted within the last six years; and d) strength of the findings, with preference given to findings that show a large and persistent positive effect on participants demonstrated with confidence levels.

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

- The applicant clearly describes how its proposed program is within one or more of the 2015 AmeriCorps funding priorities as outlined on page 3.
- Not applicable if program is not proposing to work in one of the focus areas described on page 3.

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

- The applicant clearly describes how members will receive high quality training to provide effective service.
- The applicant clearly describes how members and volunteers will be aware of, and will adhere to, the rules including prohibited activities.

**6. Member Supervision (3 points)**

- The applicant clearly describes how supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations.
- The applicant clearly describes how supervisors will provide members with excellent guidance and support throughout their service.

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

- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will have access to meaningful service experiences and opportunities for reflection.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will have opportunities to establish connections with each other and the broader National Service network to build esprit de corps.
- members
- The applicant clearly describes how the program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the communities in which the programs operate.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will gain skills and experience as a result of their training and service that can be valuable to future employers after their service term is completed.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will develop an ethic of and skills for active and productive citizenship including continuing to engage in public and community service after their AmeriCorps term.

**8. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification (3 points)**

- The applicant clearly describes how members will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- The applicant clearly describes how the staff and community members where the members are serving will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will be provided with and will wear service gear that prominently displays the AmeriCorps logo daily.

previously funded may receive higher priority for funding. Applicants requesting a higher cost per MSY than 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.

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

- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors.
- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget is in compliance with the budget instructions.

Applicants must fill out the budget and ensure the following information is included:

- 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 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 Plan field in eGrants. If the applicant is recompeting for a subsequent time, the program must submit its evaluation report via email to [AdditionalDocuments@cns.gov](mailto:AdditionalDocuments@cns.gov) by the application deadline, as well as an evaluation plan for the next three-year period in the Evaluation Plan field in eGrants.

Evaluation plans must include the following:

- A description of the theory of change, or why the proposed intervention is expected to produce the proposed results.
- Clear and measurable outcomes that are aligned with the theory of change and will be assessed during the evaluation.
- Concrete research questions (or hypotheses) that are clearly connected to the outcomes.
- A proposed research design for the evaluation.
- Qualifications needed for the evaluator.
- The estimated budget for evaluating the program.

The evaluation requirements differ depending on the amount of the grant, as described in 45 CFR §2522.710:

- If the applicant has an average annual CNCS program grant of \$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 §2522.730 of this subpart.
- If the applicant has an average annual CNCS program grant of less than \$500,000 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 §2522.730 of this subpart.

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

The Evaluation Plan field of eGrants does not count towards the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit. Applicants should print out the report to ensure the narrative is not cut off.

Grantees with an average annual CNCS program grant of \$500,000 or more that are re-competing 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.nationalserviceresources.gov/files/guidance\\_for\\_grantees\\_approval\\_of\\_alternative\\_evaluation\\_approach.pdf](https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/files/guidance_for_grantees_approval_of_alternative_evaluation_approach.pdf).

**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.

**Planning Grant Application Fields and Page Limits**

If you are applying for a Planning Grant, you will need to complete the following sections in eGrants:

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

You may not exceed 10 double-spaced pages in the Narratives, including the Executive Summary and Cover Page, as the pages print out from eGrants. Reviewers will not consider material submitted over the page limit, even if eGrants allows you to enter and submit text over the limit. From the Review and Submit page, print out your application prior to final submission to ensure it is not over the 10 page limit. This limit does not include the budget and performance measures.

**Selection Criteria**

**A. Executive Summary (fill in the blanks) (0 percent):**

The [Name of the tribe] proposes to develop an AmeriCorps program serving in [the location(s) the AmeriCorps program will serve] that 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. No AmeriCorps members will be needed to execute this plan.

Each applicant must clearly describe a plan and timeline for developing a project that will subsequently be able to deploy AmeriCorps members effectively to solve a significant community problem. We urge your organization to submit a high quality planning grant application following the guidance in this *Notice* carefully. The quality of your application will be an important factor in determining whether your organization will receive funding.

### **B. Program Design (50 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. Problem/Need (15 points):**

- The applicant provides a clear explanation for why a planning grant is needed and what will be achieved during the one year planning period.
- The applicant clearly describes how the community need/problem is prevalent and severe in communities where the program plans to serve and the need has been well documented with relevant data.
- The applicant clearly describes how it will develop an AmeriCorps program that will be able to address the community problem/need that the program plans to address in the future.
- The applicant provides a preliminary description of how AmeriCorps members might be used to meet the identified community need.

#### **2. Planning Process/Timeline (35 points):**

- The applicant describes a clear and logical planning process, including:
  - A detailed description of the planning process and who is leading it.
  - A well-developed timeline for planning activities.
  - A clear description of how the planning period will be used to develop the necessary components to effectively manage an AmeriCorps program in the future.
- The applicant includes development of the following program elements in the planning process/timeline:
  - Theory of Change/Logic Model
  - Evidence base for the intervention
  - Member selection and training plan
  - Member supervision plan
  - Commitment to AmeriCorps Identity
  - Compliance and Accountability
  - Securing Match Support for the Program

### **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(25 points)**

- The applicant clearly describes how it has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan the proposed program.
- The applicant clearly describes how it has relevant experience administering federal grants or other grant funds.
- The applicant clearly describes its prior experience in the proposed area of programming.
- The applicant clearly describes its plans to engage community members and partner organizations in the planning process.

### **D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)**

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

**1. Cost Effectiveness (15 points):**

- The budget is sufficient to carry out the planning process effectively.
- The budget aligns with the applicant’s narrative.
- The planning process 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 planning process.

In applying the cost-effectiveness criteria, CNCS will take into account the following circumstances of individual programs: program age, or the extent to which your program brings on new sites; whether your program or project is located in a resource-poor community, such as a rural or remote community, a community with a high poverty rate, or a community with a scarcity of corporate or philanthropic resources; whether your program or project is located in a high-cost, economically distressed community, measured by applying appropriate Federal and State data; and whether the reasonable and necessary costs of your program or project are higher because they are associated with engaging or serving difficult-to-reach populations, or achieving greater program impact as evidenced through performance measures and program evaluation.

**2. Budget Adequacy (10 points)**

- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors.
- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget is in compliance with the budget instructions.

**E. Evaluation Plan (0 percent)**

Enter N/A.

**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.

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

Applications must include a DUNS number and an Employer Identification Number. The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number. DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online:

<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. The website indicates a 48-hour e-mail turnaround time on requests for DUNS numbers; however, CNCS suggests registering at least 30 days in advance of the application due date. After obtaining a DUNS number, all applicants must be registered with the System 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/>.

#### **4. Indirect Cost**

CNCS allows applicants to include administrative (indirect) costs in grant budgets. Based on qualifying factors, applicants have the option of using a federal or state approved indirect cost rate, a 10% de minimus rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain administrative costs directly. For AmeriCorps programs applicants may use 5% federal share and 10% match for administrative costs. All methods must be applied consistently across federal awards.

Applicants who hold a state or federal negotiated indirect cost rate or will be using the 10% de minimus rate must enter that information in the Organization section in eGrants.

#### **5. Submission Dates and Times**

##### **Notice of Intent to Apply**

Submission of a Notice of Intent to Apply is encouraged, but optional for this competition and is due **Wednesday, April 8, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time**. Please send the intent to:

[IntentToApply@cns.gov](mailto:IntentToApply@cns.gov)

The Notice of Intent to Apply should include contact information (name of the applicant organization, address, contact person, email address, and phone number) and the focus area(s) the anticipated application will address and whether it will be for a program grant or a planning grant.

Continuation grantees that are only submitting continuation applications should not submit a Notice of Intent to Apply.

##### **Application Submission Deadline**

Applications are **due Wednesday, April 29, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time** to CNCS.

CNCS will not consider applications received after the deadline, except when noted below. CNCS reserves the right to extend the submission deadline and any notice of such extended deadline will be posted. This deadline applies to new, re-competing, and continuation applicants.

##### **Late Applications**

CNCS may, at its discretion, consider an application received after the deadline, but only if the applicant submits a letter to [LateApplications@cns.gov](mailto:LateApplications@cns.gov) explaining the extenuating circumstance that caused the delay. Communication with CNCS staff, including the program officer of a current grantee, is not a substitution for the above protocol. The letter must be received no later than one business day after the application deadline. If the applicant experiences technical difficulties with eGrants that are unresolved, the correspondence must include the National Service Hotline ticket number. CNCS determines whether or not to accept a late application for review on a case-by-case basis.

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

#### **6. Funding Restrictions**

##### **A. Types of Grants**

AmeriCorps grants can be awarded on a cost reimbursement or fixed amount basis. CNCS will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year. See Glossary.

### General Summary

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement		Fixed Amount
	Planning Grant	Traditional	
Available Subtypes			Full-Time/Less than FT serving in a full time capacity
Maximum Cost per MSY	\$0	\$13,730	\$13,430
Type of Slots in the National Service Trust	No slots	All	Full-Time or Less than Full-Time serving in a full time capacity Only
Budget Submission Required	Yes	Yes	No
Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSY	No	No	Yes
Special Requirements	CNCS request may not exceed \$75,000	None	None
Match Requirements	Yes	Yes	No. However organizations must raise the additional revenue to operate the program.
Financial Tracking Requirements	Yes	Yes	No
Available to New Applicants	Yes	Yes	No

#### **B. Member Living Allowance**

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

Cost reimbursement programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time terms of service. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time member, it must comply with the maximum limits in Table 1 below. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either CNCS or grantee share. (EXCEPTION: as noted in Section B.1.)

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

**Table 1: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance**

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1700	\$12,530	\$25,060
One-year Half-time	900	n/a	\$13,265

Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	\$9,950
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$6,635
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$4,420

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

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

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

Maximum Costs per MSY are set forth in Table 2 below. The CNCS cost per MSY is determined by dividing the CNCS share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested. It does not include child care or the value of the education award a member may earn. The maximum cost per MSY is determined on an annual basis.

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

**Table 2: 2015 Maximum Cost per MSY**

Grant Program	Maximum
Indian Tribe (cost reimbursement) Grant	\$13,730
Fulltime Fixed Amount Indian Tribe Grant	\$13,430

Programs operating in rural communities (as defined in the Glossary) and programs that recruit opportunity youth as AmeriCorps members may request up to \$13,930 cost per MSY for the AmeriCorps members that will be serving in rural areas or who are opportunity youth.

At its discretion, CNCS may award a grant with a cost per MSY at a higher level than published in this Notice. An applicant requesting a cost per MSY that exceeds the maximum levels identified above must provide a convincing justification if it intends to request a higher cost per MSY.

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

AmeriCorps members serving in programs funded with FY 2015 dollars who successfully complete a term of service will receive an Education Award from the National Service Trust of \$5,730 for a year of full-time service, with correspondingly smaller awards for less than full-time service. The amount of the Education Award is linked to the value of the Pell Grant. A member has up to seven years after his or her term of service to use the Education Award.

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

Term of Service	Minimum # of Hours	FY15 Education Award
Full Time	1700	\$5,730.00
One-Year Half Time	900	\$2,865.00
Reduced Half Time	675	\$2,182.78
Quarter Time	450	\$1,515.55
Minimum Time	300	\$1,212.44



## **E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **1. Criteria**

The assessment of applications involves a wide range of factors and considerations. CNCS staff will apply their experience and expertise in evaluating applications. In the end, the review and selection process will produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and selection factors described in this *Notice*.

Specifically, the review and selection process will:

#### **A. Identify eligible applications that satisfy the following considerations:**

- High alignment with narrative assessment criteria
- High alignment with priorities outlined in the *Notice*
- Relative risk and opportunity

#### **B. Yield a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:**

- Meaningful representation of
  - Geographic diversity
  - Rural communities (see definition in Glossary)
  - Small and medium sized programs
- Focus area representation
- Programs that recruit and engage traditionally underrepresented populations as AmeriCorps members

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

#### **A. Compliance Review**

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

- Submit an application and all required additional documents by the application submission deadline.
- Submit an application that is complete, in that it contains all required elements and additional documents and follows the instructions provided in this *Notice*.
- Submit an application that complies with the page limits in this *Notice*.

#### **B. Selection of Applications for Internal Review**

Applications will advance to Internal Review based on the results of the Compliance Review.

#### **C. Internal Review**

CNCS staff will assess the entire application. Some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information and/or make changes to their application including changes to the budget. This information is used by CNCS staff in making final recommendations. Applications may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked clarification questions. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to requests for additional information in a timely fashion will result in the removal of applications from consideration.

CNCS staff will determine which applications to recommend for selection based on their assessment of the applicants in Internal Review and Clarification in light of the *Notice*'s priorities and strategic considerations.

#### **E. Risk Assessment Evaluation**

CNCS staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant, including conducting due diligence to ensure an applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding or the quality of its application on the basis of the

Selection Criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If CNCS determines that an award will be made, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award. In evaluating risks, CNCS may consider the following:

- Financial stability;
- Quality of financial management systems and ability to meet the administrative standards prescribed in applicable OMB Guidance;
- History of performance as reflected in the applicant’s record in managing previous CNCS awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
  - Timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements, and
  - If applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards;
- Information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as—
  - Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS),
  - Dun and Bradstreet, or
  - “Do Not Pay”;
- Reports and findings from single audits performed under OMB Circular A-133 and findings of any other available audits;
- IRS Tax Form 990;
- An applicant organization's annual report;
- Publicly available information including information from an applicant organization's website; and
- The applicant’s ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

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

With the goal of a diversified portfolio based on the *Notice* priorities and strategic considerations, the staff will recommend a portfolio for consideration to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO.) The CEO will select the final portfolio.

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

Following grant awards, each applicant will receive the results of Internal Review pertaining to their application. Feedback will be based on the review of the original application and will not reflect any information that may have been provided in response to clarification questions, if any.

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

- A list of all compliant applications submitted.
- Executive summaries of all compliant applications submitted by the applicants as part of the application.
- Data extracted from the Standard Form 424 Face Sheet (SF424) and Program Narrative submitted by applicants for successful applications.

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

CNCS will award grants following the grant selection announcement. We anticipate announcing the results of this competition depending on the availability of appropriations. CNCS expects that successful applicants will be notified **no later than July 1, 2015**.

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

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

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

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

#### **Documents that Govern the Grant**

The Notice of Grant Award incorporates the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant as well as the AmeriCorps regulations and grant terms and conditions.

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

Grants under this program are subject to 2 CFR Chapter I, Chapter II, and XXII supersedes and streamlines OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, and A-122 (the former Cost Principles), the Administrative Requirements in Circulars A-102 and A-110, the Circulars A-50 and A-133 (Audit) and Circular A-89 on the CFDA.

#### **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. CNCS regulations requires grantees to check any person receiving a living allowance, stipend, national service education award, or salary through a program receiving CNCS funds, regardless of their level of contact with a vulnerable population and to perform the NSCHC on people with recurring access to a vulnerable population. Vulnerable populations include children 17 years of age or younger, persons age 60 and older, or people with disabilities. [[https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/files/fedregister\\_final\\_rule\\_oct\\_5\\_2012.pdf](https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/files/fedregister_final_rule_oct_5_2012.pdf)].

All NSCHCs must include two components (45 CFR 2540.203):

- A nationwide name-based check of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW). The NSOPW is a centralized system that identifies people who are registered as sex offenders in states, territories, or with many federally recognized Tribes
- Either a name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the candidate's state of residence and in the state where the person will serve or work; OR a fingerprint-based FBI check.

For people with recurring access to vulnerable populations, programs must conduct an NSCHC with three components (45 CFR 2540.203(b)):

- A nationwide name-based check of the NSOPW
- Either a name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the candidate's state of residence and in the state where the person will serve or work; AND
- A fingerprint-based FBI check.

#### **Use of Material**

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

### **3. Reporting**

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

Fixed Amount grantees are required to provide mid-year and end of year progress reports and an internal or external evaluation report as required by the AmeriCorps regulations §§2522.500-2522.540 and §§2522.700-2522.740.

Planning grantees are required to provide an end of year progress report and semi-annual financial reports.

All grantees, including Fixed Amount grantees, submit quarterly financial reports to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Payment Management System.

If you receive an award directly from CNCS, you will be required to report at [www.FSRS.gov](http://www.FSRS.gov) on all subawards over \$25,000 and may be required to report on executive compensation for your organization and for your subgrantees. You must have the necessary systems in place to collect and report this information. See 2 CFR Part 170 for more information and to determine how these requirements apply.

While applications will not be evaluated on these criteria, grantees will be expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are providing CNCS with high quality performance measure data. At a minimum, grantees should have policies and practices which address the following five aspects of data quality:

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

#### **Progress Report Data**

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

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

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

#### **G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)**

This *Notice* is available at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities>. The TTY number is 202-606-3472. For further information or for a printed copy of this *Notice*, call (202) 606-7508. For questions, please call (202) 606-7508 or send an email to [americorpsgrants@cns.gov](mailto:americorpsgrants@cns.gov). The mailing address is:

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

#### **H. OTHER INFORMATION**

In addition to consulting the Application Instructions, Supplementary Materials, and AmeriCorps regulations as directed in this *Notice*, applicants are encouraged also to consult the CNCS web site for a schedule of technical assistance conference calls, and Frequently Asked Questions – that are updated during the competition period.