

NOTICE OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY OVERVIEW

Federal Agency Name: Corporation for National and Community Service

Funding Opportunity Title: Learn and Serve America School-Based Competitive FY 2009

Announcement Type: Initial announcement

CFDA Number: 94.004

Date: Applications are due on Tuesday, April 14, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. EDT. Awards are expected to be announced by the end of August 2009.

Funding Opportunity Description: Subject to the availability of appropriations for fiscal year 2009, the Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) announces the anticipated availability of approximately \$5.7 million for qualified organizations to provide financial resources, training, and other assistance to local partnerships to implement school-based service-learning projects. These funds will be awarded to an estimated eight to ten eligible applicants, with awards ranging from approximately \$300,000 to \$450,000 annually for a project period of up to three years. Eligible applicants include: (1) Grantmaking Entities (GMEs), defined as public or private non-profit organizations that have been in existence at least one year and that propose to make subgrants in two or more states; (2) State Education Agencies (SEAs); and (3) Indian Tribes. A key role for grantees is to support and manage subgrantee partnerships between Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and their local partners through frequent communication, training and technical assistance, and financial oversight.

The Corporation's mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. *Learn and Serve America School-Based* grants are designed to involve school-age youth in service-learning projects that simultaneously support student development and address community problems in areas such as the environment, education, public safety, and other human needs.

Key agency priorities for the 2009 School-Based grant competition include:

- (1) promoting the use of high-quality service-learning to address STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) objectives in middle schools with high percentages of youth from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- (2) expanding the use of service-learning as a teaching strategy to increase students' motivation to learn, community problem solving skills, and readiness for careers and post-secondary education; and
- (3) engaging young people in service-learning activities that address community needs in order to build healthier communities.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Program Description

For more than a decade, the Corporation for National and Community Service—through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs—has mobilized a new generation of engaged citizens. This year, more than 1.8 million individuals of all ages and backgrounds will serve through these programs. They will help thousands of national and community non-profit organizations, faith-based groups, schools, and local agencies meet local needs in environment, education, public safety, and other human needs.

The 2009 Learn and Serve America School-Based grants will support programs that involve middle school students in service-learning activities that address STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) objectives. This focus responds to the Corporation’s strategic goals to spread service-learning to 50% of K-12 schools and to provide more service-learning opportunities for youth from disadvantaged circumstances. Consequently, applicants should target their awarding of subgrants to schools in which more than half the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

A crucial part of a grantee’s role is to ensure high-quality implementation (as defined by the new [K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice](#)) among subgrantees and to promote effective and efficient use of resources at the subgrantee level. Specifically, this role involves promoting and monitoring program quality, overseeing subgrantee expenditures, identifying grantee and subgrantee staff roles, and providing needed training and technical assistance.

Successful applicants will describe a program design that:

- Provides student participants with the opportunity to use the knowledge and skills of one or more STEM disciplines to identify and address community problems.
- Allows students to see how STEM content can be applied beyond the classroom in order to encourage greater numbers of disadvantaged youth to investigate STEM careers and motivate them to pursue further studies in these academic subjects.
- Engages students in meaningful service activities that address social needs as a means to create healthy communities (e.g., including but not limited to, nutrition education and community gardens, peer mentoring in STEM subjects of youth at risk of dropping out, testing streams and cleaning up local watersheds, identification of the unique health needs of veterans and how to meet them).

B. Authority

The Learn and Serve America School-Based programs are authorized by Title I subtitle B of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 12521, et seq.

C. Applicable Regulations

Applicable regulations include the Learn and Serve America School-Based program regulations, 45 CFR Part 2516 and the uniform administrative requirements for grants and agreements with institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other nonprofit organizations, 45 CFR Part 2543 or

the uniform administrative requirements for grants and cooperative agreements to state and local governments, 45 CFR Part 2541.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Number of Awards and Award Amount

Approximately eight to ten grants will be awarded. Funding will range from approximately \$300,000 to \$450,000 annually for a project period of up to three years.

The Corporation is not bound by any estimate in this notice. Publication of this announcement does not obligate the Corporation to award any specific number of grants or to obligate the entire amount of funds available, or any part thereof, for grants under Learn and Serve America.

B. Project/Award Period

The project period for Learn and Serve America School-Based grants is up to three years. Proposals should include a detailed three-year project overview, as well as proposed activities and a budget for the first year of operation. If the application is approved, the Corporation will award a multi-year grant award agreement and provide funding for one or more years of your program.

C. Continuation Funding

Funding for the second and third years of an approved program is contingent upon: 1) satisfactory progress; 2) the availability of funds via Congressional appropriation; 3) the timely submission of continuation applications; 4) consistent, timely compliance with all reporting requirements; and, 5) any other criteria established in the award agreement.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

1. Eligible applicants include Grantmaking Entities (GMEs), State Education Agencies (SEAs) and Indian Tribes.

For School-Based programs, the term *grantmaking entity* means a public or private nonprofit organization that—

- Submits an application to make grants to qualified organizations to implement, operate, expand, or replicate school-based service-learning programs that provide for educational, public safety, human, or environmental service by school-age youth **in two or more states**; and
 - Was in existence at least one year before the date on which the organization submitted the application.
2. For the purposes of the 2009 School-Based competition, eligible applicants must describe a program plan that clearly addresses the stated statutory and programmatic priorities described under Section V. of this *Notice*. Specifically, the applicant must describe a school-based service-learning program for middle school students.

B. Subgrant Selection (not required at the time of primary grant application)

1. Local partnerships are eligible to receive subgrants.
 - a. The local partnership must include an LEA and one or more community partners.
 - b. The local partnership may include a private for-profit business or private elementary or secondary school.
 - c. The community partners must include a public or private nonprofit organization that has demonstrated expertise in the provision of services to meet educational, public safety, human, or environmental needs; was in existence at least one year before the date on which the organization submitted an application under this part; and will make projects available for participants.
2. Priority for Local Applications

In providing assistance (subgrants) to local programs, grantees shall give priority to local partnership applications that:

- a. involve participants in the design and operation of the program;
- b. reflect the greatest need for assistance, such as programs targeting low-income areas;
- c. involve students from public schools and students from private schools, serving together;
- d. involve students of different ages, races, sexes, ethnicities, abilities and disabilities, or economic backgrounds, serving together;
- e. are integrated into the academic program of the participants;
- f. best represent the potential of service-learning as a vehicle for education reform and school-to-work transition;
- g. develop civic responsibility and leadership skills and qualities in participants;
- h. demonstrate the ability to achieve the goals of the program in terms of quality, innovation, replicability and sustainability; and
- i. address priorities established by the Corporation for the grant period.

C. Other Restrictions

The Corporation will reject any application that requests funding for a project already included in another application pending before the Corporation.

In addition, Learn and Serve America will not fund organizations or groups to:

1. provide religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any form of proselytizing;
2. assist, promote, or deter union organizing;
3. finance, directly or indirectly, any activity designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office; or
4. impair existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements.

D. Match Requirements

The grantee share of the total cost (*Corporation Share + Grantee Share*) of carrying out a program must be at least:

- 10 percent for the first year
- 20 percent for the second year
- 30 percent for the third year
- 50 percent for the fourth and any subsequent year(s). The 50% match requirement applies to any recipient that has received a previous three-year grant from Learn and Serve America.

The grantee's share of the program cost can be in cash or in-kind, which may include facilities, equipment, or services. The grantee's share may come from private, state, or non-Corporation federal sources. **Note:** The Corporation's legislation permits the use of non-Corporation federal funds as match for the grantee share of the budget. However, it may be advisable to discuss with the other federal agency your intention to report expenditures as costs on both grants (matching on the Corporation grant and direct on the other agency's grant).

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. How to Request Application Information

This *Notice* and the Application instructions are available at:

www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/index.asp.

These documents can also be obtained by contacting Learn and Serve America at 202-606-7510 or lsaschool@cns.gov.

B. Contents of the Grant Application

Your completed application consists of the following required components:

1. Standard Form 424 Facesheet
2. Applicant Info
3. Application Info
4. Narrative
5. Performance Measures
6. Documents
7. Budget
8. Funding/Demographics
9. Review and Submit
10. Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants (*Optional*)

C. Submission Deadline

The deadline for eGrants application submissions is **Tuesday, April 14, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time**. We anticipate making award decisions by the end of August 2009.

D. Funding Restrictions

Grants under this program are subject to the applicable OMB Cost Principles under OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A-122, codified respectively at 2 CFR Parts 220, 225, and 230; and FAR 31.2.

Applicants are advised to consult the appropriate Cost Principles in preparing their applications. Links to these referenced cost principle documents are available at

www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html. The applicable FAR provisions are codified at 48 CFR Subpart 31.2.

1. **Administrative Costs.** For any fiscal year, grantees and subgrantees collectively may spend no more than 5% of the total grant funds on administrative costs (see definition of administrative costs in the budget instructions).
2. **Payments to Participants.** Minor expenses for identification of Learn and Serve America participants or recognition of outstanding service are allowable. However, grantees may not provide stipends, allowances, or other financial support to any program participant (excluding teachers) except as reimbursement for transportation, meals, and other reasonable out-of-pocket expenses directly related to program participation.
3. **Planning and Capacity-Building.** SEAs and Indian Tribes must spend at least 10% and no more than 15% of the Corporation share of the budget for Planning and Capacity-Building; However, SEAs and Indian Tribes can request a waiver to use up to 20% of the Corporation share of the budget for Planning and Capacity-Building.
4. **Domestic Programming.** Grant funds may not be used for international travel or projects where the primary beneficiaries of an activity are outside the United States.

E. Other Submission Information

1. **Notice of Intent to Apply.** If you intend to apply, please send an email 60 days prior to the deadline to: lsaschool@cns.gov.

Although submission of the notice of intent to apply is not mandatory, your email will help the Corporation to plan more efficiently for review. In your email, please include the name of your organization, address, contact person, and phone number.

2. **Equal Opportunity Survey:** Applicants are asked to complete the Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants. You may complete the survey in eGrants while preparing your application for submission or contact the Corporation (Section VII., below) to obtain a copy.

3. **Universal Identifier:** Applications must include a Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. The DUNS number is an identifier that helps the federal government improve statistical reports on federal grants and cooperative agreements. The DUNS number does not replace your Employer Identification Number.

DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online at www.dnb.com. The website indicates a 24-hour email turnaround time on requests for DUNS numbers; however, we suggest registering at least 30 days in advance of the application due date. Expedited DUNS numbers may be obtained by telephone at a cost of \$99 by calling the DUNS number request line.

Applications with invalid DUNS numbers are subject to potential rejection.

F. How to Apply

Applying Online using the eGrants System

The Corporation requires that applicants make every effort to submit their applications electronically using eGrants, the Corporation's integrated, secure, web-based system for grants application and management. Go to <http://www.learnandserve.gov/egrants/> and create an eGrants account (if you do not already have one) to begin the process of submitting your application online. Instructions on how to create an account are available at this website.

Using eGrants:

- We suggest you first prepare and save your application as a word processing document, then copy and paste the document into eGrants.
- **We strongly encourage you to create your eGrants account and begin your application at least three weeks prior to the final submission deadline and begin pasting your application into eGrants no later than ten days before the deadline.** This will allow you time to address technical issues prior to the deadline. Technical issues are more likely to be considered as a factor in allowing a late submission if you begin entering your application within this time frame.
- Use only UPPERCASE letters for all section headings and other information you would like to highlight in your narrative. Bold face, bullets, underlines, or other types of formatting, charts, diagrams, and tables will not copy into eGrants.
- Adhere to all the character limits indicated in the application instructions. Characters include all the letters, punctuation, and spaces in your document.
- Do not submit any other supplementary materials such as videos, brochures, letters of support, or any other item not requested in the application instructions. We will not review or return them.

Technical Difficulties with eGrants

Contact the eGrants Help Desk at 888-677-7849 or email egrantshelp@cns.gov immediately if a problem arises while you are creating your account or preparing or submitting your application. If you think you may be unable to submit your application by the deadline due to technical issues, contact the eGrants Help Desk prior to the 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time deadline to explain your technical issue and get a ticket number.

If your issue is not resolved within the next 24 hours, you will be asked to submit a hard copy application according to the directions below. You will be required to provide the ticket number in the event that technical problems prevent you from accessing the system or submitting your application in eGrants by the deadline.

If you are unable to access eGrants at all, please submit a hard copy application and a copy of your application on disk or CD. Submit these items via overnight carrier (non-U.S. Postal Service because of security-related delays in receiving mail from the U.S. Postal Service) or hand delivery to the address below.

Your hard copy application must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the deadline – April 14, 2009. Please make sure your overnight carrier stamps the package with the date and time it was sent.

Submit required information to:
Corporation for National and Community Service
Learn and Serve America Grants
1201 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, 20525.

In the event of prolonged unavailability of the eGrants system on the date of submission, the Corporation reserves the right to extend the eGrants submissions deadline. A notice will be placed in eGrants and on http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp with the extended deadline.

Applications submitted by fax or email will not be accepted.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW

A. Criteria for Evaluating Applications

1. In reviewing the merits of an application, the Corporation evaluates quality, innovation, replicability, and sustainability of the proposal on the basis of the following criteria as defined in the Learn and Serve regulations at 45 CFR §2516.500:
 - a. Quality, as indicated by the extent to which—
 - i. the program will provide productive, meaningful, educational experiences that make use of service-learning methods;
 - ii. the program will address community needs and involve individuals from diverse backgrounds (including economically disadvantaged youth) who will serve together to explore the root causes of community problems;
 - iii. the principal leaders of the program will be well qualified for their responsibilities; and
 - iv. the program has sound plans and processes for training, technical assistance, supervision, quality control, evaluation, administration, and other key activities.
 - b. Innovation, as indicated by the extent to which the program will advance knowledge about how to implement effective service-learning programs that enhance the broader middle school and STEM education fields.
 - c. Replicability, as indicated by the extent to which the program will assist others in learning from experience and replicating the approach of the program.
 - d. Sustainability, as indicated by the extent to which—
 - i. the applicant demonstrates the ability and willingness to coordinate its activities with the State Plan required under 45 CFR §2513 and with other federally-assisted activities;
 - ii. the program will foster collaborative efforts among local educational agencies, local government agencies, community-based agencies, businesses, and State agencies;
 - iii. the program will enjoy strong, broad-based community support; and

- iv. there is evidence that financial resources will be available to continue the program after the expiration of the grant.
2. In addition, successful applicants will be selected based on the degree to which they submit an application that addresses the middle school STEM initiative described in this *Notice* and the associated Application Instructions found on the Learn and Serve website: http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp.

The sections of the application are weighted as follows:

- Program Design – 70%
- Organizational Capacity – 20%
- Budget/Cost Effectiveness – 10%.

Additional guidance for completing these sections is provided in the Application Instructions.

B. Review and Selection Process

Learn and Serve America will use a multi-stage review process that includes outside experts and Corporation staff to determine which proposals should be funded. Grant approvals are made by the Corporation's Chief Executive Officer.

All proposals will be evaluated using the selection criteria as indicated above to determine which applicants best responded to the 2009 School-Based middle school STEM initiative described in this *Notice* and the associated Application Instructions. In addition, the statutory and current agency priorities, as well as geographic diversity, including whether programs will be operating in both urban and rural areas, will be considered in the review and selection process.

Corporation program officers may call applicants to seek clarification, resolve questions and issues, negotiate performance measures, and request revised budgets as part of the pre-award review process. Failure to respond to requests for information in a timely fashion could result in the removal of applications from consideration.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices

We anticipate making awards by the end of August 2009. Applicants may be asked for clarification as part of the review process. Applicants must satisfactorily resolve any questions or issues identified during the review within the time period specified before the application will be approved for award.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The Learn and Serve America regulations and other specific conditions are incorporated in the Notice of Grant Award (NGA). The NGA incorporates the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant.

C. Monitoring Responsibilities

Grantees are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the grant and subgrant-supported activities to ensure compliance with applicable federal requirements and achievement of performance goals.

D. Reporting

Grantees must submit annual performance reports and semi-annual financial reports. A final report is required at the end of the three-year program cycle. All grantees must also complete, and ensure that their subgrantees complete, the annual Learn and Serve System Information Exchange (LASSIE) Survey, which captures site-level performance data.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions about School-Based Competitive grant applications, please contact Learn and Serve America at 202-606-7510 or lsaschool@cns.gov.

VIII. Additional Information

- A. Annual Grantee Training.** Grantees must attend the annual Learn and Serve America Grantee training. The program budget must cover costs associated with attendance (either grant funds or matching funds).
- B. MLK Day of Service.** The Corporation is charged by Congress to promote service on Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, the third Monday in January, helping to make it “A Day On, Not a Day Off.” All Learn and Serve America grantees/subgrantees are expected to include information about Dr. King as part of their projects and to take part in an MLK Day of Service project. A toolkit and other resources are available at www.mlkday.gov.
- C. Program Information for Participants.** Grantees must provide information to all Learn and Serve America participants concerning: (1) their participation in Learn and Serve America and its purposes, and (2) other Corporation programs.
- D. Materials provided to the Corporation.** The Grantee is responsible for ensuring that a copy of any materials created through the grant is sent to the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse.
- E. Training and Technical Assistance Calls.** Learn and Serve America will provide a series of teleconferences to answer questions and clarify program guidance. Details will be posted at http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/index.asp when they are available. Participation on these calls is NOT mandatory.