

Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity

Overview

Federal Agency Name: Corporation for National and Community Service
Funding Opportunity Title: Learn and Serve America Higher Education FY2010
Announcement Type: Initial Announcement
CFDA Number: 94.005

Dates: Applications are due on **March 9, 2010**, 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Successful applicants will be notified by the end of July 2010.

Contact: lsahighered@cns.gov or 202-606-7510

I. Funding Opportunity Description

What is the purpose of Learn and Serve America Higher Education Grants?

The purpose of the Learn and Serve America Higher Education program is to support institutions of higher education that use innovative service-learning programming to meet the needs of local communities. Our programs promote institutional commitment to the local community while promoting lifelong civic engagement for student participants.

Learn and Serve America Higher Education programs:

- Create or expand organized service-learning programs that increase social responsibility and commitment to the community in which the institution is located;
- Promote student-initiated and student-designed projects as part of service-learning programming;
- Support service-learning programs that will demonstrably address local community issues;
- Improve student engagement in academic coursework through service-learning; and
- Strengthen the service-learning infrastructure within institutions of higher education in the United States.

What types of Higher Education grants are available?

The Learn and Serve America Higher Education program funds two different types of grants:

1. **Individual Institution grants** to support innovative and potentially replicable service-learning programs at a single institution of higher education.
2. **Consortia grants** to support a group of institutions of higher education who will be implementing similar service-learning programs. Funding for consortia grants will be used to support both program implementation on the different campuses via subgrants as well as the training and monitoring of subgrants.

Both types of grant applicants must demonstrate that they will participate in service-learning projects in partnership with community-based organizations, local government agencies, non-profits, K-12 schools, and/or student organizations.

What are the priorities for this grant competition?

For the FY2010 grant competition, Learn and Serve America will fund programs that focus on **one** of the following priorities:

1. **Embedding Service-Learning in Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Training**

The Corporation promotes service-learning as a strategy that actively engages students in learning to increase the likelihood of school success. To this end, this competition will provide funds to programs that include service-learning as a key component of pre-service teacher curricula and/or professional development provided to in-service teachers. Programs and activities should strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers to provide service-learning at the elementary and secondary levels. The goal of these programs should be to engage the teachers in high quality service-learning, providing demonstration, guidance, and support as they, in turn, implement service-learning in a K-12 classroom or school setting. Programs should explain how they will evaluate the effects of service-learning on teachers and the K-12 students who participate.

2. **Service-Learning in STEM-focused disciplines**

The Corporation supports the integration of high-quality service-learning into academic disciplines as a strategy to provide real-world context for classroom content and motivate post-secondary students to persist in their studies and graduate from college. This competition will provide grants to support innovative programs that will institutionalize service-learning in the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Program activities may include community-partnership development, faculty training, student-led service-learning opportunities, or other related initiatives. The program should identify and address a specific community need (e.g. an environmental or health issue facing the community) which service-learning activities will address. Applicants must explain how they will evaluate the success of their program in effectively addressing this identified need and in promoting college student retention and achievement in one or more STEM disciplines.

What is the background of Learn and Serve America?

For over fifteen years, 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.

Learn and Serve America fosters collaboration among schools, faith-based and other community organizations, and institutions of higher education to meet immediate community needs and strengthen the capacity of communities to address long-term needs.

Learn and Serve America grants are used to create new programs or replicate existing programs, as well as to provide training and professional development to educators and volunteers. Service-learning programs allow schools, community groups and colleges to combine community service activities with educational, civic, and/or leadership objectives.

What is service-learning?

The Corporation defines service-learning as an educational method that:

- is conducted in and meets the needs of a community;

- is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program, and with the community; and
- helps foster civic responsibility; and that
- is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the educational components of the community service program in which the participants are enrolled; and
- provides structured time for the students or participants to reflect on the service experience.

II. Award Information

How much funding is available?

Subject to the availability of appropriations for fiscal year 2010, the Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) announces the anticipated availability of approximately \$7.3 million to award new Learn and Serve America Higher Education grants. Grants will be awarded to an estimated seven to nine individual institutions ranging from approximately \$85,000 to \$200,000 annually for a project period of up to three years, and an estimated seven to eleven consortia ranging from approximately \$200,000 to \$500,000 annually for a project period up to three years.

When will the grants be awarded?

Contingent upon FY2010 appropriations, grants will be awarded by the end of July 2010.

III. Eligibility Information

Who is eligible for this funding?

1. Eligible applicants for *Individual Institution* grants include: (1) an institution of higher education; or (2) a partnership comprised of a single institution of higher education and other public or private nonprofit organizations.
2. Eligible applicants for *Consortia* grants include: (1) two or more institutions of higher education; or (2) one or more public or private non-profit entities working in partnership with two or more institutions of higher education.

All institutions of higher education that receive funding from the Corporation under the grant proposal must meet the Federal Work Study community-service minimum requirement of 7% or have received a waiver for those requirements from the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

How does the Corporation define “institution of higher education”?

An institution of higher education is defined in the Higher Education Act of 1965 as an educational institution in any State that:

- (1) admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
- (2) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;

- (3) provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides no less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full-credit toward such a degree;
- (4) is a public or other nonprofit institution; and
- (5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of pre-accreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is a satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

Are current or previous Learn and Serve America grantees eligible?

Previous Learn and Serve America Higher Education grantees are eligible to apply. However, to be competitive they should demonstrate how: 1) the previous program built sustainable institutional support for service-learning activities; 2) the current proposal builds upon accomplishments of the previously funded activities; 3) the proposed activities are substantially different from those previously supported by Learn and Serve America; and 4) the program has significantly increased direct financial support from the lead applicant and/or other non-Corporation sources for proposed activities. Former individual institution grantees that have received two or more Learn and Serve America grants are expected to be largely sustained by sources other than Corporation funds.

What are the matching requirements?

Learn and Serve America Higher Education grants require that programs provide one dollar of cash or in-kind match for every dollar of Corporation funding they receive (a \$1 to \$1 match). The total program budget will be the sum of Corporation awarded funds plus the cash or in-kind match provided (total program funds = Corporation funds + matching funds).

Grantees must provide the matching share of the program through payment in cash or in-kind, including facilities, equipment or services from State or local sources, including private funds or donated services.

Are there limitations on the placement of participants?

Prior to the placement of a participant, the applicant will consult with the appropriate local labor organization, if any, representing employees in the area who are engaged in the same or similar work as that proposed to be carried out by such program, to prevent the displacement and protect the rights of such employees; and the applicant will comply with non-duplication and non-displacement provisions and the notice, hearing, and grievance procedures required under national service laws.

IV. Application and Submission Information

When are applications due?

Applications are due no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on March 9, 2010. Applications must arrive at the Corporation by the deadline in order to be considered. Any applications that arrive late will not be considered. For this reason, you are strongly encouraged to begin your application early and to submit well before the deadline.

Where can I request application information?

This *Notice* may be found on the Corporation's website:

http://www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp or by contacting lsahighered@cns.gov or 202-606-7510.

Are letters of intent to apply required?

If you intend to apply, please send an email to: lsahighered@cns.gov by February 1, 2010.

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.

What is a DUNS number and is it required to apply?

The Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is used as a Universal Identifier. Applications must include a DUNS number on the Standard Form 424. 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 without DUNS numbers or with invalid DUNS numbers will be rejected.

How are applications submitted to the Corporation?

The Corporation requires that all applicants make every effort to submit their applications electronically utilizing its web-based application system, eGrants.

The eGrants website is: <https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp>

If extenuating circumstances make this impossible, send a hard copy of your application to the following address, via overnight carrier (non-U.S. Postal Service because of security-related delays in receiving mail from the U.S. Postal Service). All requirements described herein apply to hard copy applications.

Corporation for National and Community Service
Attn: Office of Grants Policy and Operations/LSA Application
1201 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20525

Late applications may be accepted only if the applicant submits a letter explaining the extenuating circumstance which caused the delay. Such letter must be sent to the Corporation via email to lsahighered@cns.gov no later than one business day after the application due date. Late applications are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

We strongly recommend that you 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.

Contact the eGrants Help Desk at 888-677-7849 (talk to an associate or leave a detailed message) or e-mail egrantshelp@cns.gov immediately if a problem arises while you are creating your account, preparing, or submitting your application. Be prepared to provide your application ID. If technical issues are preventing you from submitting your application in eGrants by the deadline, you must 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 cannot be resolved by the deadline, you must continue working with the eGrants Help Desk to submit your application.

In the event of prolonged unavailability of the eGrants system on the date of submission, the Corporation reserves the right to extend the eGrants submission deadline. A notice will be posted in eGrants and on <http://www.nationalservice.gov>.

What must be included in an application?

Please carefully read this *Notice* and the Application Instructions for this competition. All documents are available at:

http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding

The application must provide a well-designed plan with a clear and compelling justification for awarding the requested funds. In evaluating your application, reviewers will assess the narrative on the basis of your program design, organizational capacity, and budget adequacy/cost effectiveness.

Application Instructions are approved under OMB Control#: 3045-0046, Expiration Date 9/30/2011. They are formatted to correspond to fields in eGrants and clarified through this *Notice*.

Please note that character limits include spaces. When drafting narrative responses, we recommend using word processing software that will check spelling and count characters. 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.

The completed application will consist of the following components, described in detail below:

1. Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Facesheet
2. Executive Summary
3. Narratives
 - a. Program Design
 - b. Organizational Capacity
 - c. Budget/Cost Effectiveness
4. Performance Measures
5. Budget Narrative
6. Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications
7. Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity (*Optional*)

Is this program subject to Executive Order 12372?

This program is NOT subject to Executive Order 12372 - Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

What are the funding restrictions?

Grants under this program are subject to the applicable Cost Principles under OMB Circulars A-21 (2 CFR part 220), A-122 (2 CFR part 230), or A-87 (2 CFR part 225) and the Uniform Administrative Requirements for grants under A-102 (45 CFR part 2541) or A-110 (45 CFR 2543).

V. Application Review Information

What is the selection process and criteria for these grants?

In evaluating applications for funding, reviewers will assess program design, organizational capacity, and cost-effectiveness and budget adequacy. The weights assigned to each category are listed in the chart below. Reviewers will assess application narratives against these criteria and the extent to which the applicant responds to the priorities in this *Notice* and the questions in the Application Instructions. Please read both documents carefully to ensure that you are fully and appropriately responding to the information requested in the application. (All documents are available at www.learnandserve.gov)

Basic Selection Criteria: Categories and Respective Weights

Category	Percentage
Program Design	70%
Organizational Capability	20%
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	10%

What other considerations will be taken into account during the review process?

In making Higher Education grant decisions, the Corporation will take into consideration whether applicants:

1. Demonstrate the commitment of the institution of higher education involved, outside of student participation, to supporting the community service projects carried out under the program;
2. Specify the manner in which the institution will promote faculty, administration, and staff participation in the community service projects;
3. Specify the manner in which the institution will provide service to the community through organized programs, including, where appropriate, clinical programs for students in professional schools and colleges;
4. Describe any partnership that will participate in the community service projects, such as a partnership among the institution; a community-based agency; a local government agency; a K-12 school; a nonprofit entity that serves or involves school-age youth, older adults, or low-income communities; and a student organization; a department of the institution; or a group of faculty from different departments, schools, or colleges at the institution;
5. Demonstrate community involvement in the development of the proposal and the extent to which the proposal will contribute to the goals of the involved community members;

6. Demonstrate a commitment to perform community service projects in underserved urban and rural communities;
7. Describe research on effective strategies and methods to improve service utilized in the design of the projects;
8. Specify that the institution or partnership will use the assistance provided through the grant or contract to strengthen the service infrastructure in institutions of higher education;
9. With respect to projects involving delivery of services, specify projects that involve leadership development of school-age youth; or
10. Describe the needs that the proposed projects are designed to address, such as housing, economic development, infrastructure, health care, job training, education, crime prevention, urban planning, transportation, information technology, or child welfare.

What other special considerations will be given to grant applications?

To the extent practicable, in making grants, the Corporation will give special consideration to applications submitted by, or applications from partnerships including, institutions serving primarily low-income populations, including:

- Alaska Native-serving institutions;
- Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander serving institutions;
- Hispanic-serving institutions;
- Historically black colleges and universities;
- Native American-serving, nontribal institutions;
- Native Hawaiian-serving institutions;
- Predominantly Black Institutions;
- Tribally controlled colleges and universities; and
- Community colleges serving predominantly minority populations.

Are there other review requirements?

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. Applicants must satisfactorily resolve any questions or issues identified during review. Failure to respond to requests for information in a timely fashion will result in the removal of applications from consideration.

VI. Award Administration Information

When will applicants be notified of awards?

We anticipate making awards by the end of July 2010. Applicants may be asked for clarification as part of the review process.

What is the Project/Award Period?

The Corporation generally makes grant awards for three years, with funding in annual increments. Grantees will be eligible for continuation funding in the second and third years contingent on the availability of appropriations, compliance, and satisfactory performance.

What documents govern the grant?

Grant provisions are incorporated in the Notice of Grant Award (NGA). The NGA also includes the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant.

What are the reporting requirements for these grants?

Grantees are required to supply annual performance and bi-annual financial reports. The performance report includes implementation level data collection. All grantees provide expense reports to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services via the Payment Management System.

The Grantee must cooperate fully, and must compel their subgrantees to cooperate fully, with all Corporation evaluation activities, such as the collection of participant data, subgrantee information or performance forms and other information required by the Corporation.

When are background checks required?

A criminal history check is required for all individuals receiving a living allowance, stipend, national service educational award, or salary through a program receiving assistance under the national service laws—regardless of the type of service the individual is performing or the individual's access to vulnerable populations.

What types of activities are prohibited under this grant program?

Prohibited activities under this grant program are set out in the applicable regulations, grant provisions, and any special conditions that may apply to a particular award. Examples include:

Political Activities

Any effort to influence legislation; organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts or strikes; assisting, promoting or deterring union organizing; impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements; engaging in partisan political activities or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office; and participating in, or endorsing, events or activities which are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials.

Religious Activities

Engaging in religious instruction; conducting worship services; providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship; constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship; maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship; or engaging in any form of religious proselytization.

Non-Domestic Service Activities/Beneficiaries

Generally, grant funds may not be used for international travel or projects where the primary beneficiaries of an activity are outside the United States.

VII. Agency Contact

This *Notice* is available at http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp. The TTY number is 202-606-3472. For further information or for a printed copy of this *Notice*, send an email to lsahighered@cns.gov or call (202) 606-7510.

For technical questions and problems with the eGrants system, contact the eGrants Help Desk at 888-677-7849 (talk to an associate or leave a detailed message) or e-mail egrantshelp@cns.gov.