

Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity

Overview

Federal Agency Name: Corporation for National and Community Service

Funding Opportunity Title: AmeriCorps State and National and Indian Tribes Planning Grants

Announcement Type: Amended announcement. Initially issued August 31, 2010

Corrected October 25, 2010

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance: 94.006

Dates: Applications are due **November 4, 2010** at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Successful applicants will be notified by January 31, 2011.

Overview:

The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic participation through service and volunteering. For more than fifteen years, the Corporation—through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs—has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

On April 21, 2009, President Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, the most sweeping expansion of national service in a generation. This landmark law not only expands service opportunities, but also focuses national service on key outcomes; builds the capacity of individuals, nonprofits, and communities to succeed; and encourages innovative approaches to solving problems.

In alignment with the Serve America Act, this AmeriCorps State and National *Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity* will focus AmeriCorps grantmaking in six Focus Areas identified by the Act:

- Disaster Services
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Futures
- Opportunity
- Veterans and Military Families

In order to carry out Congress' intent and to maximize the impact of the investment in national service, the Corporation is seeking to fund programs that can demonstrate an evidence-based approach to creating community impact and solving community problems.

In the AmeriCorps State and National competition this year, the Corporation especially seeks to focus investment on national service programs that improve academic outcomes for children, youth and young adults. This focus reflects the extensive experience and past success of national service programs in education, and aligns with the reform efforts of the Department of

Education. In addition, the Corporation seeks to increase its investment in programs that serve veterans and military families, or that engage veterans in service.

This [*Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity \(Notice\)*](#) should be read together with the [AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR Sections 2520 – 2550](#) and the [Application Instructions](#).

The Corporation embraces the Obama Administration's emphasis on open government and is moving toward greater openness and transparency in grant making. This amended *Notice* includes a description of the review and selection process in Section V., below.

In addition, the following information pertaining to this competition will be published on the [AmeriCorps website](#) following the January 25 competitive application deadline:

- A detailed description of the review and selection process.
- Blank review worksheet templates.

The following information will be published for new and recompetite applications after final funding notifications at the end of May, 2011:

- List of all applicants considered for funding.
- Executive summaries of all applications considered for funding.
- Full text of approved applications.
- Results of internal review for approved applications.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. What is the purpose of AmeriCorps State and National and Indian Tribes Planning Grants?

The purpose of planning grants is to support the development of AmeriCorps programs so applicants are better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle. Planning grants may not be used to support AmeriCorps members.

The Corporation's purpose is to maximize the power of service and volunteering to improve lives in communities across the country. In the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, Congress directed the Corporation to focus national service in areas where service can make a major impact, including improving education; energy conservation; the health of all Americans; economic opportunity for economically vulnerable individuals; increasing service by and for veterans; and providing disaster services.

The Corporation is carrying out Congress's intent by targeting AmeriCorps State and National funding in these six focus areas, and is developing strategic objectives for each. In accordance with the Act, through this *Notice* and its other activities, the Corporation seeks to:

- Direct the power of national service to solve a common set of challenges.
- Expand opportunities for all Americans to serve.
- Build the enduring capacity of individuals, organizations and communities to effectively use service and volunteering to solve community problems.
- Embrace innovative solutions that work.

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations to recruit, train, and manage AmeriCorps members who address community needs. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who is enrolled in an approved national service position and engages in community service.

Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service members receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust. AmeriCorps planning grantees will engage in a year of planning in order to apply for an AmeriCorps grant in the following year.

B. What are the 2011 AmeriCorps State and National funding priorities?

1. Focus Areas and National Performance Measures

As in 2010, in the 2011 competition the Corporation expects to invest a significant amount of available funding to programs working in the six Focus Areas of **Disaster Services, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, Opportunity, and Veterans and Military Families.**

In particular, the Corporation seeks to target its grantmaking in the Education Focus Area for greater impact and increase its investment in the Focus Area of Veterans and Military Families. To meet these goals, the Corporation will give priority consideration to the following, in descending order of preference:

- Education programs that plan to improve academic outcomes for children, youth, and young adults, particularly those in low-performing schools; and programs that serve veterans and military families.
- All other programs planning activities within one or more Focus Areas.

Applicants proposing programs that receive priority consideration are not guaranteed funding. The Corporation will pursue a balanced portfolio across the Focus Areas, and other considerations outlined below in **Section VI. B. What are the goals of the review and selection process?** Brief descriptions of the six Focus Areas follow:

Disaster Services:

Grants in the Disaster Services Focus Area will help communities with disaster mitigation, preparation, response and recovery. In order to be considered aligned with this Focus Area, applicants must submit self-identified performance measures that demonstrate community and member impacts as they relate to one or more of the functional aspects of disaster services. The application instructions include definitions and examples for each of the functional areas. The measures identified by successful applicants through this *Notice* will inform the development of national disaster services performance measures in future years.

Education:

Grants in the Education Focus Area will include programs that seek to contribute to the number of students who graduate from high school and college or university. In order to achieve that goal, the Corporation seeks to increase its investment in national service programs that improve academic outcomes for young children, youth, and young adults, particularly those in the lowest-performing schools. Specifically, the Corporation seeks research- and evidence-based programs that help children and youth prepare for school; perform at grade-level; graduate from high school ready for college, work, and life; and succeed in college and university through academic engagement and civic participation.

Environmental Stewardship:

Grants in the Environmental Stewardship Focus Area will include programs that protect human health and the health of ecosystems by conserving natural resources and restoring the nation's air, water, and land. Environmental Stewardship programs may include activities that encourage organizations and individuals to use energy efficiently and utilize cost-effective renewable energy technologies; minimize waste disposal; restore watersheds and aquatic ecosystems; improve at-risk public use lands; restore critical wildlife habitat; increase soil stabilization and quality; mitigate the environmental consequences of disasters; and promote environmental sustainability.

Healthy Futures:

Grants in the Healthy Futures Focus Area will meet health needs within communities including access to care, aging in place, and addressing childhood obesity. Access to care is broadly defined and may include health insurance, culturally appropriate health care interventions, transportation, language translation, access to disease and disability prevention, health promotion initiatives, health literacy and efforts to address health disparities. Grants may support older adults, homebound individuals and disabled individuals with activities such as food delivery, transportation or other services that allow them to live independently, including evidence-based programs supported by other partner agencies such as the U. S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Veterans Affairs. The Corporation seeks to fund programs that target risk factors for childhood obesity, including poor nutrition and physical inactivity, and that reflect the recommendations of the National Prevention Council and the White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity.

Opportunity:

Grants in the Opportunity Focus Area will meet the needs of economically vulnerable Americans, their families and their communities. Opportunity programs may include activities that assist individuals and families that are homeless or at risk of homelessness; provide financial literacy training and tools designed to improve financial security; and expand employment possibilities. Opportunity programs include those that engage economically vulnerable Americans as AmeriCorps members leading to positive employment and/or educational outcomes. The Corporation will also support programs that undertake community-based strategies to redevelop local areas that are struggling with under-investment and other barriers to economic opportunity.

Veterans and Military Families:

Grants in the Veterans and Military Families Focus Area will meet the needs of veterans and family members of active duty and deployed military personnel. Veterans and Military Families programs may include activities in the areas of health, education and economic opportunity, including the elimination of veteran homelessness, educational programs for children in military families, and economic opportunities for military spouses and veterans. The Corporation is also interested in supporting programs that target disadvantaged, homeless, or formerly homeless veterans and programs that align with the efforts of the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Veterans Affairs, Labor, Defense, and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness.

2. Encore Programs

Congress set a goal that 10 percent of AmeriCorps funding should support encore service programs. The Corporation seeks to meet that 10 percent target in this competition and encourages programs that plan to engage a significant number of participants age 55 or older to apply.

II. Award Information

A. How much funding is available?

Funding for 2011 is contingent upon appropriations, and is estimated to be \$500,000 for AmeriCorps State and National Planning grants and \$500,000 for Indian Tribes Planning grants. Applicants may apply for up to a maximum of \$50,000.

B. When will the grants be awarded?

The Corporation will award grants following the grant selection announcement, contingent on appropriations. We anticipate announcing the results of this competition by January 31, 2011.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Who is eligible for this funding?

1. AmeriCorps State and National Planning Grants

Public or private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations; institutions of higher education; government entities within states or territories (e.g., cities, counties); Indian Tribes; labor organizations; partnerships and consortia; and intermediaries planning to subgrant funds awarded are encouraged to apply. Organizations that have been convicted of a Federal crime are disqualified from receiving the assistance described in this *Notice*.

Single-state planning applicants must not have previously received an AmeriCorps State grant. Multi-state planning applicants must not have previously received a multi-state AmeriCorps grant. Applicants may have received funding through Learn and Serve America, NCCC, Senior Corps, or VISTA.

2. Indian Tribes Planning Grants

Indian Tribes Planning Grant applicants must not have received an AmeriCorps grant in the past and must be an Indian Tribe. Applicants may have received funding through Learn and Serve America, NCCC, Senior Corps, or VISTA.

“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.

Note: Indian Tribes are eligible to apply to any Corporation competition, including State or National Planning Grants.

B. What are the matching requirements for these grants?

Applicants must provide 24% of the total project cost in match. Match may be cash or in-kind. 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 request at least 60 days before the AmeriCorps application is due. For full information on applying for a Tribal waiver, send a request for instructions to TribalMatchWaiver@cns.gov.

IV. Application and Submission Instructions

A. What do I need to do before I apply?

1. Notice of Intent to Apply

Applicants are encouraged to send an e-mail by October 4, 2010 to americorpsnational@cns.gov for National and Indian Tribes applicants, or americorpsapplications@cns.gov for State Commissions stating intent to apply.

Although submission of the Notice of Intent is not mandatory, submitting it will help the Corporation plan more efficiently for review. Include the name of the applicant organization, address, contact person, and phone number in the Notice of Intent. State Commissions are encouraged to include an estimate of the number of programs planned for submission to the state planning competition. Providing an e-mail address will also allow the Corporation to contact applicants directly if application materials are updated.

2. Universal Identifier

Applications must include a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and register with the Central Contractor's Registry (CCR). **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 24-hour e-mail 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 following instructions found here: <http://smallbusiness.dnb.com/establish-your-business/12334338-1.html>.

CCR is the primary registrant database for the U.S. Federal Government. CCR collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data in support of Federal agency contracts, grant awards, cooperative agreements, and other forms of federal assistance. All Corporation recipients are required to maintain a valid registration, which must be renewed annually.

We urge applicants that are not already registered with the CCR 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 the CCR. It typically takes 3-5 days to finalize CCR registration. To register online go to www.bpn.gov/CCR.

B. What is the Content and Form of the Application Submission?

1. Submitting in eGrants

The Corporation requires that all applicants submit applications electronically via the Corporation's web-based application system, [eGrants](#). Applications must arrive at the Corporation by November 4, 2010 at 5 p.m. ET in order to be considered. The Corporation reserves the right to extend the submission deadline. Any notice of such extended deadline will be posted in eGrants.

We recommend that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word processing document, then copy and paste the document into eGrants no later than 10 days before the deadline.

Contact the eGrants Help Desk at 888-677-7849 if a problem arises while creating an account, preparing, or submitting an application. Be prepared to provide the application ID. eGrants Help Desk hours are 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET Monday through Friday.

If technical issues will prevent an applicant from submitting an application on time, please contact the eGrants Help Desk 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 eGrants Help Desk to submit via eGrants.

2. Late Applications

The Corporation may consider an application after the deadline, but only if the applicant submits a letter explaining the extenuating circumstance which caused the delay. The letter must be sent to LateApplications@cns.gov within the 24-hour period following the deadline. Late applications are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

If extenuating circumstances make the use of eGrants impossible, applicants may send a hard copy of the application to the address below in Section VII. Agency Contacts, via overnight carrier. Please use a non-U.S. Postal Service 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. Hard copy applications must include a cover letter detailing the circumstances that make it impossible to submit via e-Grants. **Do not submit supplementary materials such as videos, brochures, letters of support, or any other item not requested in these application instructions. The Corporation will not review or return them.**

3. Character Limits

In eGrants, applicants will enter text for

- Executive Summary: Maximum 500 characters (a brief paragraph, about a quarter-page). Executive Summaries of all compliant applications will be published on the Corporation website following grant notifications.
- Program Design.
- Organizational Capability.
- Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy.

You may not exceed 30,000 characters, or about 15 double spaced pages in the Narratives, including the Executive Summary. The character count includes spaces and punctuation. Reviewers will not consider material submitted over the character limits.

C. Coordination among State Commissions and Multi-state Applicants

The Corporation expects State Commissions and multi-state grantees to consult and coordinate activities at the local level, as specified in Section 131. [42 U.S.C. 12583] of the National Community Service Act (NCSA). This consultation is designed to ensure the most effective use of national service resources and lead to enhanced coordination among grantees. The list of State Commissions can be found here:

<http://www.americorps.gov/about/contact/statecommission.asp>.

Multi-state applicants and grantees are expected to:

- Consult with the State Commission of each state in which the organization knows it will operate **prior to application submission**.
- Provide the State Commission with contact information for multi-state programs in their state **after grants are awarded**, and update these lists on an annual basis.
- Participate in the State Commission's annual needs assessment and training plan development activities, and in the development of their state service plan, as well as appropriate training and other events.
- Include the State Commission on the multi-state grantee's mailing list and invite them to appropriate training and other events.

State Commissions are expected to:

- Consult with the multi-state applicants and grantees that contact them prior to application submission.
- Consider the schedules and needs of multi-state programs in their states when planning annual events and technical assistance activities.
- Include multi-state programs in their annual needs assessment and training plan development activities, and in the development of their state service plan.
- Add AmeriCorps staff of multi-state programs in their state to their mailing list and invite them to appropriate training and other events.

The Corporation will solicit State Commission input on multi-state applicants proposing to operate in their state. Participation by State Commissions is optional. This input will be provided via eGrants.

D. 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 or 2 CFR part 21).

E. Other Submission Requirements

Equal Opportunity Survey. Applicants are asked to complete the Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants. Applicants may complete the survey in eGrants while preparing the application for submission or contact the Corporation to obtain a hard copy.

V. Application Review Information

A. What are the Selection Criteria?

In evaluating applications for funding, staff reviewers will assess Program Design (50%), Organizational Capability (25%), and Cost-effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25%). Staff reviewers will assess application narratives against these criteria and weight them accordingly.

Section 2522.450 of the AmeriCorps regulations describes types of programs or program models that may receive special consideration in the selection process. Section 2522.455 describes how you can find out about additional priorities governing the selection process. Section 2522.470 describes other factors or information the Corporation may consider in making final decisions.

B. What are the goals of the review and selection process?

The Corporation's review and selection process is designed to:

- Give every eligible application full and fair consideration.
- Select a high-quality, well-balanced portfolio of grantees that will engage in a year of planning in order to apply for an AmeriCorps State and National grant in the following year.

The Corporation's assessment of applications involves a wide range of factors and considerations. The review and selection process will produce a balanced set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and selection factors described in this *Notice*.

Specifically, the review and selection process is designed to:

1. Identify eligible applications that satisfy the following considerations:

- **High-quality response to criteria.**
- **Priorities, in the order of preference outlined in Section B, above.**
- **Additional Considerations:**
 - State Commission rank and recommendations on single-state applications.
 - State Commission input on multi-state applications.
 - Relative risk and opportunity.
- **Strategic Characteristics:**
 - Expanding opportunities to serve; particularly for new Americans, low-income individuals, rural residents, older Americans, veterans, members of faith-based organizations, communities of color, Native Americans, and people with disabilities.
 - Building capacity for individuals, nonprofits and communities to solve problems.
 - Embracing innovative approaches to solving problems.

2. Compile a balanced portfolio based on the following characteristics:

- Geographic representation.
- Equitable treatment of
 - Rural and urban communities.
 - Single and multi-state programs.
- Involvement of underserved and economically disadvantaged communities.

C. What are the stages in the review and selection process?

1. Compliance Review

Corporation staff will review all applications to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completeness requirements. Applications that are submitted by eligible organizations, submitted by the deadline, and that are complete, will advance to Internal Review.

2. Internal Review

Corporation staff will assess Program Design; Organizational Capability; and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy. Following staff assessment, some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information. Clarification information is used by Corporation staff in making final recommendations. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to requests for information in a timely fashion will result in the removal of applications from consideration. Corporation staff will determine which applications to recommend for selection based on the results of Internal Review, and Clarification; and the priorities, balancing characteristics, additional considerations, and strategic characteristics listed above.

3. Selection

The Chief Executive Officer will select the final portfolio based on staff recommendation, and considering overall quality, priorities, balancing characteristics, additional considerations, and strategic characteristics listed above.

D. What feedback will applicants receive?

Following grant awards, each applicant will receive the results of the internal review pertaining to their application.

E. How long will the selection and review process take?

Processing and selecting applications for funding will require approximately three months.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. When will grants be awarded?

The Corporation will award grants following the grant selection announcement. We anticipate announcing the results of this competition by January 31, 2011.

B. What is the project period for these grants?

The project period for these grants is up to one year. **The project start date may not occur prior to the date the Corporation awards the grant**

C. What documents govern the grant?

The AmeriCorps regulations and grant provisions are incorporated in the Notice of Grant Award. The Notice of Grant Award incorporates the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant.

D. What are the reporting requirements for these grants?

Grantees are required to provide annual performance and bi-annual financial reports. All grantees provide quarterly expense reports to the Payment Management System at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

If you receive an award, you will be required to report at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over \$25,000 and may be required to report on executive compensation for your organization. You must have the necessary systems in place to collect and report this information. See 2 C.F.R. Part 170 for more information and to determine how these requirements apply.

VII. Agency Contacts

This *Notice* is available at www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp. The TTY number is 202-606-3472. For further information or for a printed copy of this *Notice*, call (202) 606-7508. For questions regarding multi-state or Indian Tribes applications to be submitted directly to the Corporation, please call (202) 606-7508 or send an e-mail to americorpsnational@cns.gov. If you have questions concerning a single-state application, e-mail americorpsapplications@cns.gov or contact the State Commission. A list of all State Commissions can be found here: <http://www.americorps.gov/about/contact/statecommission.asp>.

The mailing address is:

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