

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING AVAILABILITY

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

Important Dates

- Applications are due to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) by **Tuesday, June 2, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time**. State/Territory Commissions' deadlines may be significantly before the CNCS deadlines, so prospective Single State applicants are encouraged to contact the Commission in the state or territory where they intend to apply as soon as possible
- Successful applicants will be notified by **August 31, 2015**.
- **Disclosure:** Publication of this Notice of Federal Funding Availability (Notice) does not obligate CNCS to award any specific number of grants or to obligate any particular amount of funding.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This Notice will support funding for a program jointly sponsored by the Department of Justice's Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR) and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to improve the efficient and effective adjudication of immigration court proceedings involving certain unaccompanied children.

EOIR is a federal agency within the United States Department of Justice (DOJ). Under delegated authority from the Attorney General, EOIR interprets and administers federal immigration laws by conducting immigration court proceedings, appellate reviews, and administrative hearings. EOIR is committed to providing fair, expeditious, and uniform application of the nation's immigration laws in all cases (including cases involving detained aliens, criminal aliens, and aliens seeking asylum as a form of relief from removal), while ensuring the standards of due process and fair treatment for all parties involved.

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

1. Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities (e.g., based on a proposed program's performance and evaluation data or research demonstrating the effectiveness of a similar intervention). 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 will receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust.

For two decades, CNCS has invested in community solutions across the nation - working hand in hand with local partners to improve lives, expand economic opportunity, and engage millions of Americans in solving problems in their communities.

With its unique structure as a public-private partnership and its model of engaging citizens and requiring resources from outside parties, national service benefits the recipients of service, those who serve, local communities, and our nation.

Through 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.

Through AmeriCorps and its other programs, CNCS brings vital leadership, resources, and coordination to some of the most pressing challenges facing America: educating students for jobs of the 21st century; assisting individuals, families, and neighborhoods on the road to economic recovery; addressing the needs of military families and a new generation of veterans; helping communities rebuild after natural disasters; increasing energy efficiency and improving at-risk ecosystems; and providing information to improve the health and welfare of individuals in disadvantaged communities.

2. Purpose of justice AmeriCorps funding

The purpose of this program is to use the AmeriCorps service model to improve the efficient and effective adjudication of immigration court proceedings involving certain unaccompanied children. Grants awarded in response to this Notice will enable grantees to enroll lawyers and paralegals¹ to serve as AmeriCorps members (“AmeriCorps members” or “members”) providing direct legal representation and other legal services to this vulnerable population.

Specifically, the program is intended to provide direct representation to children under the age of 16 who: (1) are not in the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) or the Department of Homeland Security; (2) have received a Notice to Appear in removal proceedings before EOIR; (3) have not had their cases consolidated with removal proceedings against a parent or legal guardian (Unaccompanied Children or Unaccompanied Child); and (4) for continuation of existing programs, have their initial Master Calendar hearing in immigration court scheduled on or after January 2, 2015, one month prior to any new program’s start date. EOIR may consider exceptions to the date listed in (4). Applicants are encouraged to visit the Program FAQ page:

http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/justice_AmeriCorps_FAQ_FINAL_7914.pdf for program updates. The legal services shall be limited to representation of the Unaccompanied Child (and not to any other family members, legal guardians, or sponsors) in immigration or custody proceedings before EOIR Immigration Courts; appellate proceedings before the Board of Immigration Appeals; proceedings before United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), including applications for asylum, Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) status, and/or T or U nonimmigrant status; and state court proceedings seeking orders

¹ “Paralegals” include any individual who will provide legal support to lawyers participating in the program. Such individuals need not have completed any prior legal training or certification programs in order to be eligible to serve, though applicants are encouraged to consider such credentials when evaluating member candidates.

necessary to support applications for SIJ status (Immigration Proceedings). Immigration Proceedings shall not include any claims, litigation, or other proceedings before federal district courts, courts of appeals, or the Supreme Court.

Proposed programs must provide direct representation and other legal services to certain Unaccompanied Children in Immigration Proceedings thereby increasing the effective and efficient adjudication of immigration court cases involving those children. Direct representation must be provided regardless of the child's potential eligibility for relief, gender, nationality, or other factors (except for the eligibility requirements stated above.) In addition, programs should facilitate the identification of Unaccompanied Children who have been victims of human trafficking or abuse and decrease the risk that those children may be trafficked upon return to their country of nationality or last habitual residence; screen Unaccompanied Children for abuse, trafficking, and trauma; refer suspected cases of abuse, trafficking, and trauma to appropriate law enforcement authorities and/or appropriate support services; build *pro bono* capacity to support the populations of unaccompanied children in the immigration court location(s) in which AmeriCorps members will serve; and strengthen national service so that participants engaged in CNCS-supported programs consistently find satisfaction, meaning and opportunity. For further guidance regarding the scope of pro bono capacity building see: http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp.

Immigration judges are able to conduct hearings more effectively when Unaccompanied Children are assisted by competent legal representatives. A legal representative is responsible for identifying any relief for which the child may be eligible and developing a record supporting any application for relief. Having a competent representative prepare and present the child's testimony in the proceedings helps facilitate the child's communication with the court. A legal representative can help an Unaccompanied Child to understand his or her rights in an Immigration Proceeding and the immigration consequences of his or her decisions. We expect that the availability of justice AmeriCorps members to answer questions and explain the adjudicative process to Unaccompanied Children will enhance their understanding of the proceedings and save the court valuable time during hearings. When Unaccompanied Children are provided counsel and effectively represented, we expect that courts will be able to reduce the number of continuances granted for the purpose of obtaining counsel and/or evidence.

Grantees and sub grantees are required to collect and enter data into a software system for purposes of program evaluation. Appendix B details the specific type of data that each grantee or sub-grantee is required to report. As a grantee or sub-grantee, and a recipient of federal funding, your justice AmeriCorps program is required to collect and report this data to the Vera Institute of Justice, a vendor with which EOIR has contracted for purposes of evaluating this program.

3. Strategic Partnership with the Department of Justice

CNCS and DOJ/EOIR are contributing funds and services that will support an AmeriCorps program that will provide direct representation and other legal services to certain Unaccompanied Children in Immigration Proceedings. CNCS is also making the AmeriCorps VISTA program resources available to Grantees on an as needed basis and to the extent that the AmeriCorps VISTA members can enhance the capacity of Grantees to provide effective service to Unaccompanied Children. Under this Notice, Grantees will:

a. Recruit lawyers and paralegals as AmeriCorps members who will provide direct representation and other legal services to certain Unaccompanied Children in Immigration Proceedings.

Successful applicants must have processes in place to identify, recruit, screen, and oversee the AmeriCorps members. These processes include background screening for members who will have contact with children and youth. Applicants must also have plans for monitoring and ensuring the safety of Unaccompanied Children who will have contact with AmeriCorps members. Applicants should have processes in place to assess AmeriCorps members' performance and steps that will be taken if performance or conduct does not meet acceptable standards. Applicants should have a supervisory structure that will provide oversight to assess the AmeriCorps members' performance and conduct. Successful applicants should have experience implementing programs that provide legal services, including recruiting, training, and supervising lawyers and paralegals. Experience practicing in immigration proceedings is highly preferred.

b. Make members available to participate in a national training program to be conducted in or around November or December 2015.

The national training program will address:

- Immigration laws and regulations applicable to Unaccompanied Children;
- Practice and Procedure for Immigration Proceedings;
- Ethics for professionals working with children and youth;
- Identification of signs of human trafficking and/or abuse; and
- Trauma-informed and culturally-appropriate models of interacting with Unaccompanied Children.

Attendance at the training is required. Programs are encouraged to recruit and place members prior to the training. In the event that a member cannot attend the training, the program must present a plan to provide training that is comparable to the national training. Applicants are encouraged to propose additional, supplemental training that will facilitate the successful delivery of legal services to Unaccompanied Children by AmeriCorps members.

c. Provide direct representation to a specified population of Unaccompanied Children with contingency plans to address the potential growth of that population.

By the end of the year, grantees will be responsible for showing that they provided legal services in Immigration Proceedings to Unaccompanied Children in each immigration court location in which the grantees are operating their programs.

d. Collect data to assess the impact of the services provided by AmeriCorps members and share best practices among grantees and/or project sites.

In addition to reporting outcomes and progress toward approved Performance Measures, the grantee will collect and report two types of data: outcome data from cases, and performance indicators. Grantees will be required to report both kinds of data as described in Appendix B below.

Successful applicants will have clear sources of data to address performance indicators and will seek and obtain appropriate access to such data (*i.e.*, having well-defined agreements with data owners). Applicants must also have appropriate mechanisms in place to protect the confidentiality and security of project data; plans for collecting and sharing information (with

CNCS facilitation). Grantees will be required to collect and share this information in an electronic format with our evaluation contractor, Vera Institute of Justice.

4. Program Objectives

The objectives for this funding are to:

- Provide legal services to Unaccompanied Children in Immigration Proceedings;
- Increase the effective and efficient adjudication of immigration court cases involving those children;
- Facilitate identification of Unaccompanied Children who have been victims of abuse, trafficking, or trauma or who may be abused, trafficked, or traumatized upon return to their country of nationality or last habitual residence;
- Refer suspected cases of abuse, trafficking, and trauma to appropriate law enforcement authorities and/or appropriate support services;
- Build pro bono capacity to support and represent the population of unaccompanied children in the immigration court location(s) in which members will serve; and
- Strengthen national service so that participants engaged in supported programs consistently find satisfaction, meaning, and opportunity to continue to serve this population at other times in their legal careers.

5. Additional Program Model—Encore Programs

Congress set a goal that 10 percent of AmeriCorps funding should support encore service programs that engage a significant number of participants age 55 or older. CNCS and DOJ seek to meet that 10 percent target in this competition and encourage encore programs to apply. CNCS and DOJ believe that experienced lawyers and paralegals that enroll as members could provide valuable mentoring to younger members and enhance the quality of and member experience in the program.

6. National Performance Measures

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. CNCS's five-year Strategic Plan established an ambitious set of objectives that guided the development of 16 agency-wide National Performance Measures. National Performance Measures allow CNCS to demonstrate aggregated impact of all national service programs, including AmeriCorps State and National. Applicants are required to use the specific performance measures outlined in this Notice to assess the outcomes of their funded project, Appendix D. For more information, please refer to the National Performance Measure Instructions, for this Notice.

7. National Evaluation

Grantees must participate in a national evaluation to be conducted the Vera Institute of Justice. As part of the evaluation, grantees will be asked to collect the data identified in Appendix B.

8. Program Authority

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, (42 U.S.C. § 12501 et seq.).
The Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 4950 et seq.). 45 C.F.R. §§ 2520–2550

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimated Available Funds

According to FY15 appropriations, \$2 million is available for justice AmeriCorps grants. CNCS reserves the right to prioritize providing funding to existing awards over making new awards.

Awards will be provided to fund AmeriCorps member slots and other program operating costs necessary to successfully implement the components of the program described in the budget section of the application instructions.

2. Award Period

The grant award covers a two-year project period. CNCS generally makes an initial award for the first year of operation. The application should be submitted with a one-year budget. Continuation funding for subsequent years is not guaranteed and may be dependent upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance. CNCS reserves the right to adjust the amount of an award or elect not to continue funding.

3. Project Period

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.

4. Type of Award

AmeriCorps grants can be awarded on a fixed amount or cost reimbursement basis.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply: 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); government-recognized veteran service organizations; labor organizations; partnerships and consortia; and Indian tribes.

An Indian tribe is defined as an 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 is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States under federal law to Indians because of their status as Indians. Indian tribes also include tribal organizations controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by an entity described above. An entity that desires to apply for an award 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 Indian tribe. The resolution must identify the entity by name as a tribal organization and indicate whether it is controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by an Indian tribe(s). It must authorize the entity to be the legal applicant and act on behalf of and include the Indian tribe(s) in a CNCS application for the purpose of conducting the activities and providing the services described in the application.

Previously receiving funds from CNCS or another federal agency is not a prerequisite to apply to this Notice.

Organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive 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.

a. New Applicants

CNCS and DOJ encourage eligible organizations that have never received funding from CNCS or DOJ 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 recipients. New applicants are not eligible to receive Full-Time Fixed Amount grants. Fixed Amount grants (non EAP) are available for programs that enroll full-time members or less than full-time members that are serving in a full time capacity only. These grants provide a fixed amount of funding per Member Service Year (MSY) that is substantially lower than the amount required to operate the program. Organizations use their own or other resources to cover the remaining cost.

New applicants are eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement and Education Award Program (EAP) grants. Existing sub recipients/operating sites of Fixed Amount recipients that can demonstrate a track record and capacity to manage a Fixed Amount grant are considered to have AmeriCorps experience and therefore can apply for Fixed Amount grants.

b. Continuation applicants

Organizations that have current justice 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. Type of Applicants

a. Single State Applicants

Organizations that propose to operate in only one state or territory must apply through the Governor-appointed State or Territory Commissions. Each state and territory administers its own selection process and puts forward to CNCS the applicants it selects to compete for funding. Applicants operating in one state must contact their State Commissions to learn about their state or territory processes and deadlines which may be significantly before the CNCS deadlines and may have additional requirements. The list of State and Territory Commissions can be found here: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions>

b. Direct Applicants

Single State Applicants directed by their State Commission to apply directly to CNCS should do so. Please note that, after reviewing applications, CNCS may discuss awarding the grant to the State Commission in order for the Commission to award a sub-grant to the applicant.

Alternatively, CNCS may award the grant directly to the successful applicant, but also may work cooperatively with the State Commission to oversee and monitor performance of the grant.

Multi-state: Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one state or territory apply directly to CNCS.

Federally-recognized Indian Tribes: As defined above on page 8; may apply directly to CNCS or through a state commission.

Territories without Commissions: Applicants in American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands apply directly to CNCS because these Territories have not established a State Commission.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Fixed Amount Grants and Education Award Program Grants

There is no specific match requirement for Fixed Amount and Education Award grants, but CNCS does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program. Applicants must raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.

Cost Reimbursement Grants

A first-time successful applicant is required to match federal funds 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. 113-235, Division G, Title IV, § 402
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/83/text>

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. Recipients 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 **May 20, 2015** directly to ACAlternateMatchScheduleRequests@cns.gov.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

This Notice should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 C.F.R. §§ 2520–2550, the Application Instructions, and the Performance Measure Instructions. These documents are available online at: http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp.

1. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants should refer to the CNCS website to obtain the necessary information to apply. Applicants can also send an email to americorpsgrants@cns.gov or call (202) 606-7508 for a printed copy of the application package. The TTY (Text Telephone) number is (800) 833-3722.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

What are the steps that organizations need to take to apply?

- Determine whether you should apply directly to CNCS or through a State Commission
- Submit a request for an alternative match schedule, if applicable
- Submit a Notice of Intent
- Get a DUNS number
- Establish an eGrants account
- Coordinate with either State Commission or National Direct applicant
- 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

Please note that state applicants that apply to a State Commission may have different deadlines (likely earlier than those listed in this Notice), may have additional narrative questions and/or supplemental materials to submit as determined by the State Commission, and may have different directions and/or systems in which to submit their applications.

Coordination among State Commissions and Multi-State Applicants

CNCS expects State Commissions and National Direct applicants to consult and coordinate activities at the local level, as specified in Section 131 of the NCSA [42 U.S.C. § 12583]. This consultation is designed to ensure the most effective use of national service resources and lead to enhanced coordination. The list of State and Territory Commissions can be found here: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions>. To ensure coordination:

Multi-State applicants, *except* federally-recognized Indian Tribes, must:

Before application submission:

- Consult with the State/Territory Commission of each state and/or Territory in which the organization knows it will operate and describe this consultation in their applications. Contact the State/Territory Commissions for details about the consultation process. Provide information that connects the proposed activities to the current State/Territory Service plan and/or State logic model.

After Award:

- Provide the State/Territory Commission with contact information for Multi-State programs in the state and/or Territory and update these lists on an annual basis.
- Participate in the State/Territory Commission's annual needs assessment and training plan development activities, and in the development of its state/territory service plan, as well as appropriate training and other events.
- Include the State/Territory Commission on the Multi-State's mailing list and invite it to appropriate training and other events.

State/Territory Commissions must:

Before application submission:

- Consult in a timely manner with the Multi-State applicants, except Indian Tribes, that contact them prior to application submission.

After Award:

- Consider the schedules and needs of Multi-State applicants, including Indian Tribes, operating in their states when planning annual events and technical assistance activities.
- Include Multi-State programs, including Indian Tribes, in their annual needs assessment and training plan development activities, and in the development of their state/territory service plan.
- Add staff of multi-state programs in their state/territory to their mailing/email distribution list and invite them to appropriate training and other events.

CNCS will solicit State/Territory Commission input on Multi-State applicants, except Indian Tribes, proposing to operate in their state/territory. Via eGrants, Commissions have the opportunity to select support, do not support, or neutral and provide comments. Participation by State/Territory Commissions in providing this input is strongly encouraged.

How to Submit an Application in eGrants

Applicants must submit applications electronically via eGrants, CNCS's web-based system (<https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp>). CNCS recommends 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 document, then copy and paste the document into the appropriate eGrants field no later than 10 days before the deadline.

Contact the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via (https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask_eg) if a problem arises when creating an account or preparing or submitting the application. National Service Hotline hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the Notice to which the organization is applying. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit via eGrants.

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. 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 G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s), via overnight carrier. Applicants must use a non-U.S. Postal Service carrier to avoid security-related delays. **All deadlines and requirements in this Notice also apply to paper applications.** Paper applications must include a cover letter detailing the circumstances that make it impossible to submit via eGrants. **CNCS does not accept applications submitted via fax or email.**

Application Fields and Page Limits

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. The page limit on the Narratives does not include the narrative portion of the evaluation plan or the Logic Model, budget, performance measures, or the supplementary materials, if applicable. However, the Logic Model may not exceed three landscape-formatted pages 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 limits for the Narrative and Logic Model portions of the application.

Reviewers will not consider submitted material that is over the page limits 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 demonstrate the use of AmeriCorps members to serve as attorneys or paralegals to provide direct representation to children under the age of 16 who: (1) are not in the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) or the Department of Homeland Security; (2) have received a Notice to Appear in removal proceedings before EOIR; (3) have not had their cases consolidated with removal proceedings against a parent or legal guardian (Unaccompanied Children or Unaccompanied Child); and (4) for continuation of existing programs, have their initial Master Calendar hearing in immigration court scheduled on or after January 2, 2015, one month prior to any new program’s start date. EOIR may consider exceptions to the date listed in (4). EOIR may consider exceptions to the date listed in (4). Applicants are encouraged to visit the Program FAQ page: http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/justice_AmeriCorps_FAQ_FINAL_7914.pdf for program updates. The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization 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 Full-Time 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.

Executive Summary (Required - 0 percent)

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

The [Name of the organization] will have a total of AmeriCorps members ([Number of] lawyers and [Number of] paralegals) who will provide legal services to Unaccompanied Children, build pro bono capacity to support that population, and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of immigration courts in the location(s) in which members will serve. By the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for providing legal services in Immigration Proceedings to the population of Unaccompanied Children in the immigration court in which the grantee proposes to operate the program.

In addition, AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional number of volunteers who will support the provision of legal services to Unaccompanied Children in Immigration Proceedings.

This program will focus on the CNCS partnership with DOJ to enhance legal services for Unaccompanied Children in Immigration Proceedings.

Fixed Amount grant applicants should list their external 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 in the interest of transparency and Open Government.

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)

Indicate the immigration court location(s) you propose to serve. Describe the relevant community needs the AmeriCorps members will be addressing. Provide any information (above and beyond the proposed population numbers of Unaccompanied Children in the immigration court locations you propose to serve) about the extent/severity of the need in the community(ies) where your proposed AmeriCorps members will serve and cite specific relevant data such as the inadequacy of *pro bono* or low cost legal services – as well as additional support services for Unaccompanied Children – available in the area.

Applicants are expected to provide legal services to their proposed population of Unaccompanied Children in the immigration court locations they propose to serve. Potential applicants are

encouraged to learn more about the estimated size of the docket in these immigration court locations, and should contact CNCS via email at americorpsgrants@cns.gov or phone at 202/606-7508 for additional information.

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 increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the immigration court system through representation of Unaccompanied Children.

The Logic Model shall depict:

- Logical alignment of all elements.
- A summary of the community problems outlined in the narrative.
- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including:
 - Number of locations or sites in which members would be providing legal services to Unaccompanied Children.
 - Number of AmeriCorps members that will deliver the intervention (identifying the specific number of lawyers and paralegals you would propose to enroll);
- 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 core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will be implementing or delivering (e.g., representation in immigration proceedings; screening for abuse, trafficking, and trauma; and referral to appropriate authorities and/or support services to address any such cases).
 - Available resources to support the intervention (e.g., the number of volunteer interpreters, pro bono lawyers and support services to be recruited from the community; legal clinics or law schools to be recruited to help support lawyers in immigration cases; immigration law training materials and resources).

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.

3. Evidence Base (8 points)

Applicants will be awarded up to 8 points for providing evidence that their proposed intervention will lead to the community 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 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.)

Specifically, applicants should discuss the impact of legal services on the effectiveness and efficiencies of legal proceedings involving young children. In addition, applicants should discuss how evidence concerning cultural competence and trauma-informed care shall inform their project design. Culturally competent care recognizes cultural differences; emphasizes self-awareness of practitioners about their own cultural perspectives; seeks to understand the dynamics of cultural differences; appreciates the child’s cultural perspective; and tailors practice to fit the cultural context of the child (*see., e.g.,* Steve Walker, 2002, “Culturally Competent Protection of Children’s Mental Health,” available at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/app/publications/abstract.aspx?ID=199084>).

Within the past decade science has greatly informed our understanding of stress, brain chemistry, and the impact of severe and / or chronic stress on children’s development. Numerous studies have documented the trauma that many unaccompanied children have been exposed to in their home countries and the incidence of trafficking, trauma, and abuse faced by them during migration. Experts agree that unaccompanied children arriving in the United States should be screened for trauma exposure and treated appropriately to avoid potential for trafficking or abuse and mitigate the effects of past trauma. Applicants should demonstrate their familiarity with this literature and how it might apply in this project. This section must include specific citations of studies and/or publicly available evaluation and research reports.

For current recipients that are required to submit an evaluation report: The evaluation report will be considered as part of the evidence base of the program. Recipients 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 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 will improve the efficient and effective adjudication of immigration court proceedings involving certain unaccompanied children.

5. Member Training (4 points)

- The applicant clearly describes how the justice AmeriCorps members will receive high quality training to provide effective service to the community. What are the anticipated training topics and the timeline for member training? How will the applicant ensure that

members are prepared to provide legal services focused on immigration law? Applicants should describe any additional, supplemental training that will facilitate the successful delivery of legal services to certain Unaccompanied Children, both before and after the national training that will occur in or around November or December 2015.

- The applicant clearly describes how members and volunteers will be aware of, and will adhere to, the rules including prohibited activities. 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
- Please articulate how the program will ensure members will not engage in activities prohibited by AmeriCorps rules and recognize and acknowledge they are AmeriCorps members.

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; and oversee the work of AmeriCorps members as they appear in Immigration Proceedings.

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.
- 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.

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 practicing in Immigration Proceedings generally and on behalf of Unaccompanied Children specifically (and/or plans to acquire necessary experience and expertise in these areas of law, such as by partnering with organizations that have extensive experience and expertise in these areas); and launching and/or scaling new initiatives.
- 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, subrecipients, 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 recipient, subrecipient, and service site locations (if applicable).

3. Past Performance for Current Recipients and Former Recipients 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.

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 all Fixed Amount and Cost Reimbursement grants.

Having a low cost per Member Service year (MSY) is a competitive advantage. New applicants that propose a low cost per MSY 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.

Evaluation Plan (Required for recompeting recipients - 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 recipients. 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.

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.

Recipients with an average annual CNCS program grant of \$500,000 or more that are recompeting for funds are eligible to apply for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. Recipients 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 recipient 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.

Amendment Justification (0 percent)

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

Clarification Information (0 percent)

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

Continuation Changes (0 percent)

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

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. Submission Dates and Times

a. Application Submission Deadline

Applications are due to CNCS **Tuesday, June 2, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time** to CNCS. CNCS will not consider applications received after the deadline, except as 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 and continuation applicants.

b. 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 explaining the extenuating circumstance that caused the delay. Communication with CNCS staff, including the program officer of a current grantee/recipient, 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.

5. 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		
	Traditional	Professional Corps	Full-Time/Less than FT serving in a full time capacity	EAP	Professional Corps
Maximum Cost per MSY (see section 3)	\$13,730	Up to \$1,000*	\$13,430	\$800	Up to \$1,000*
Type of Slots in the National Service Trust	All	All	Full-Time or Less than Full-Time serving in a Full Time capacity Only	All	Full-Time Only
Budget Submission Required	Yes		No		Yes, if requesting operating funds
Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and/or retention of awarded MSY	No		Yes		
Special Requirements	N/A	Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of	N/A	N/A	Must place qualified professionals in

		such professionals. Member salaries must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in the budget.			communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. No CNCS funds may be used to pay member living allowance or salary.
Match Requirements	Yes	Yes; Living allowance or salary paid to members may not be counted toward the match requirement.	No, but organizations must raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.		
Financial Tracking Requirements	Yes		No		
Available to New Applicants	Yes		No	Yes	Yes

*CNCS assumes that Professional Corps will be covering the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non CNCS funds and thus will not be requesting operating funds as part of their applications. CNCS will consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate in its narrative and supporting budget materials significant organizational financial need and substantial challenges to raising non CNCS resources.

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. Programs are strongly encouraged to provide lawyers participating in the program the maximum living allowance of \$25,060 and to provide paralegals a minimum living allowance of \$15,000. In addition, programs are strongly encouraged to consider and propose additional means to provide financial support to all members living and working in locations with particularly high costs of living. Note that members are eligible for qualified student loan forbearance while they are serving. Upon the successful completion of a term of service, CNCS will pay the interest that accrued on these loans during that term of service.

All lawyers participating in the program are expected to be full-time members (or may be part-time serving in a full-time capacity). Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for paralegals serving in less than full-time terms of service. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time paralegal, it must comply with the maximum limits in Table 1

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 limits in Table 1. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either CNCS or grantee/recipient 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	Statutory Minimum Living Allowance	Minimum Living Allowance for Paralegals	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time (Lawyers and Paralegals)	1700	\$12,530	\$15,000	\$25,060
One-year Half-time (Paralegals only)	900	n/a	\$7,950	\$13,265
Reduced Half-time (Paralegals only)	675	n/a	\$5,960	\$9,950
Quarter-time (Paralegals only)	450	n/a	\$3,975	\$6,635

EAP Recipients are not required to provide a living allowance, but if a living allowance is provided, it must comply with the maximum requirements set forth in the Living Allowance Table above.

Professional Corps Recipients must provide members a living allowance or salary, which must meet the minimum, but may exceed the maximum living allowance set in the Living Allowance Table above. Professional Corps member salaries and benefits are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve, and are not included in the budget.

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.

Table 2: 2015 Maximum Cost per MSY Grant Program	Maximum
Individual Competitive State/Territory Program (Cost Reimbursement)	\$19,890
Multi-state (Cost Reimbursement)	\$19,890
Professional Corps Grant (Cost Reimbursement)	Up to \$1,000*
Professional Corps Fixed Amount Grant	Up to \$1,000*
Education Award Program Fixed Amount Grant	\$800
Full-time Fixed Amount Grant	\$13,430

*CNCS's assumption is that Professional Corps programs will be covering the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non CNCS funds and thus will not be requesting operating funds as part of their applications. CNCS will consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate in its narrative and supporting budget materials significant organizational financial need and substantial challenges to raising non CNCS resources.

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 and EOIR 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:

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

Yield a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:

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

2. Review and Selection Process

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.

Selection of Applications for Blended Review

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

Blended Review

Panels comprised of CNCS staff, EOIR staff, and External Reviewers will assess grant applications. The panels will assess the quality of each application against the criteria described in this Notice.

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 and EOIR staff in making final recommendations. Applications may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked clarification questions. During clarification, CNCS may ask an applicant to submit a budget for a planning grant. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to requests for additional information in a timely fashion may result in the removal of applications from consideration.

Reviewers will determine which applications to recommend for selection based on their assessment of the applicants in Blended Review and clarification in light of the Notice's priorities and strategic considerations.

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 management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in applicable OMB Guidance
- applicant's record in managing previous CNCS awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
 - timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements
 - accuracy of data reported
 - validity of performance measure data reported
 - conformance to the terms and conditions of previous federal awards
 - if applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
 - information available through OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as:
 - Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)

- DUNS and SAM
- “Do Not Pay”
- reports and findings from single audits performed under Subpart F – Audit Requirements, 2 CFR Part 200 and findings and reports of any other available audits
- IRS Tax Form 990
 - applicant organization’s annual report
 - publicly available information, including information from the applicant organization's website
 - applicant’s ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on award recipients

Selection for Funding

With the goal of a diversified portfolio based on the Notice priorities and strategic considerations and after consultation with EOIR, the Chief Executive Officer of CNCS will select the final portfolio based on the results of the application review process. In selecting grantees (recipients), CNCS and EOIR will factor in strategic considerations to ensure a diverse portfolio of quality programs.

Feedback to Applicants

Following grant awards, each applicant will receive summary feedback on their application. Feedback will be based on the review of the original application and will not reflect any information that may have been provided during clarification.

CNCS is committed to transparency in grant making. The following information pertaining to this competition for new 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 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 August 31, 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

a. 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.

b. 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.

3. National Service Criminal History Check Requirements

The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. The law requires recipients to conduct and document NSCHCs on any person (including award-funded staff, national service participant, or volunteer) receiving a salary, living allowance, stipend or education award through a program receiving CNCS funds. An individual is ineligible to serve in a position that receives such CNCS funding if the individual is registered, or required to be registered, as a sex offender or has been convicted of murder. The cost of conducting NSCHCs is an allowable expense under the award.

Recipients must perform the following checks –

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

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

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

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

See 45 CFR § 2540.200–§ 2540.207 and <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/criminal-history-check> for complete information and FAQs.

Use of Material

To ensure that materials generated with CNCS funding are available to the public and readily accessible to recipients and non-recipients, 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 recipients 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 recipients 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 45 CFR §§2522.500-2522.540 and 45 CFR §§2522.700-2522.740.

Recipients will be required to report on the Performance Indicators (pages 6 and 7) on a periodic basis as set forth in the Notice and/or grant provisions.

All recipients, including Fixed Amount recipients, 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 on all subawards over \$25,000 and may be required to report on executive compensation for your organization and for your subgrantees (subrecipients). 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, recipients will be expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are providing CNCS with high quality performance measure data. At a minimum, recipients should have policies and practices which address the following five aspects of data quality:

- The data measures what it intends to measure.
- The recipient collects data in a consistent manner.
- The recipient takes steps to correct data errors.
- The recipient ensures that the data reported is complete.
- The recipient 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. Also, applicants judged by reviewers to need additional time to complete planning for implementing a justice AmeriCorps program may be awarded a planning grant.

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 (800) 833-3722. 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. The mailing address is:

Corporation for National and Community Service
ATT: Office of Grants Policy and Operations/justice AmeriCorps
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.

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

Asylum: lawful status that may be granted to an individual who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality, or last habitual residence in the case of a person having no nationality, because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. *See* 8 U.S.C. §§ 1101(a)(42), 1158.

Cost Reimbursement Grants: fund a portion of program operating costs and member living allowances with flexibility to use all of the funds for allowable costs regardless of whether or not the program recruits and retains all AmeriCorps members.

Education Award Program (EAP) Fixed Amount Grants: Programs apply for a small fixed amount per MSY, can enroll less than full-time members, and use their own resources to cover all other costs. Programs can access funds under the grant based on enrolling the full complement of members supported under the grant. As with full-time fixed amount grants, there are no specific match or financial reporting requirements for EAP fixed amount grants.

Fixed Amount Grant (Full-Time /Less Than Full-Time Serving in a Full-Time Capacity) (Non-EAP) Grants: Fixed amount grants are available for programs that enroll full-time members or less than full-time members who are serving in a full-time capacity only. These grants provide a fixed amount of funding per member Service Year (MSY) that is substantially lower than the amount required to operate the program. Organizations use their own or other resources to cover the remaining costs. Programs are not required to submit budgets or financial reports, there is no specific match requirement, and programs are not required to track and maintain documentation of match. However, CNCS provides only a portion of the cost of running the program and organizations must raise the additional resources needed. Programs can access all of the funds, provided they recruit and retain the members supported under the grant, based on the MSY level awarded. Applicants new to CNCS funding are NOT eligible to apply for these grants.

Immigration Proceedings: Include immigration or custody proceedings before EOIR Immigration Courts; appellate proceedings before the Board of Immigration Appeals; proceedings before United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), including applications for asylum, special immigrant juvenile (SIJ) status, and/or T or U nonimmigrant visa status; and state court proceedings seeking orders necessary to support applications for SIJ status, and shall not include any claims, litigation, or other proceedings before federal district courts or United States Courts of Appeals, or any claims, litigation, or other proceedings in any fora against the federal government.

Member Service Year (MSY): the equivalent of a full-time AmeriCorps position (at least 1700 service hours).

Paralegals: include any individual who will provide legal support to lawyers participating in the program. Such individuals need not have completed any prior legal training or certification programs in order to be eligible to serve, though applicants are encouraged to consider such credentials when evaluating member candidates.

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status: lawful status that USCIS may grant to a child who has obtained a state court order declaring that: the child is a dependent of the court or that the child should be legally placed with a state agency, private agency, or a private person; it is not in the best interests of the child to return to his or her home country or last country of habitual residence; and the child cannot be reunited with a parent because of abuse, abandonment, neglect, or any similar reason under state law. The child must be under the age of 21 at the time of his or her application for special immigrant juvenile status and unmarried at the time of application and adjudication. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(27)(J).

Unaccompanied Children: children under the age of 16 who: (1) are not in the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement or the Department of Homeland Security; (2) have received a Notice to Appear in removal proceedings before EOIR; and (3) have not had their cases consolidated with removal proceedings against a parent or legal guardian.

APPENDIX B: DATA COLLECTION

As noted in Section V. 2b. above, all grantees will be required to collect and report the data identified below. Grantees will be required to report this data on a monthly basis to the Vera Institute of Justice.

- The number of Unaccompanied Children accepted as clients, identified by name, gender, date of birth, and alien numbers.
- The number of hours spent on each Unaccompanied Child client's case.
- The number of Unaccompanied Children clients assigned to each AmeriCorps member.
- Whether and how many Unaccompanied Children were referred to and successfully paired with counsel other than an AmeriCorps member (such as a non-AmeriCorps lawyer in the applicant's organization or pro bono counsel outside the organization).
- The number and nature of outreach efforts to build *pro bono* capacity to support and represent the population of unaccompanied children in the immigration court location(s) in which members serve.
- The fora in which the AmeriCorps member represented each Unaccompanied Child (immigration court, the Board of Immigration Appeals, state court, USCIS).
- Number of cases in which the Unaccompanied Child pleaded to the allegations in the Notice to Appear.
- Number of charges contested and the outcome.
- Whether the Unaccompanied Child requested immigration relief or relief from removal and the disposition of any such applications.
- Number of other court/agency orders sought and the disposition of the orders (e.g., State court for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status /USCIS).
- Type of motions filed and the disposition of those motions.
- Disposition of any appeals filed.
- Whether any expert testimony was proffered and/or allowed.
- Whether an AmeriCorps member sought or obtained the appointment of a child advocate for an Unaccompanied Child.
- Whether special accommodations (such as testimonial aids, closed hearings, or other means to facilitate the adjudication) were sought or utilized.
- Results of interviews designed to capture an Unaccompanied Child's understanding of Immigration Proceedings before and after receiving program services.
- The number of Unaccompanied Children, if any, 1) screened (whether as part of the program or outside of it) and 2) identified as victims of trafficking or abuse.
- The number of Unaccompanied Children referred to or provided with support services for victims of trafficking or other abuses.

APPENDIX C: PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

All grantees will be required to evaluate their performance in light of the Performance Indicators identified below. Applicants are encouraged to propose additional indicators to inform an assessment of the program’s impact, and to propose a plan for collecting and sharing information about promising practices with other grantees and, in the case of a grantee administering more than one project site, among project sites.

Goal	Outcome	Performance Indicator	
		To be collected by Grantee	To be collected by EOIR
	(1) Representation for Unaccompanied Children		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number (further broken down by gender and date of birth) of Unaccompanied Children represented through the grantee.
Increase effectiveness and efficiencies of the Immigration Court system through representation.	(2) Increase in the appearance rate of Unaccompanied Children scheduled for Immigration Court hearings.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and percent of program cases resulting in <i>in absentia</i> orders. Number and percent of change of venue motions filed. Number and percent of change of address motions filed.
	(3) Increase in the Unaccompanied Child’s ability to effectively present his or her legal case.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of cases in which the Unaccompanied Child pleaded to the allegations in the Notice to Appear. Number of charges contested and the outcome. Whether the Unaccompanied Child requested immigration relief or relief from removal and the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Motions filed. Number of Appeals filed.

		<p>disposition of any such applications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of other court/agency orders sought and the disposition of those orders (e.g., State court for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status /USCIS). • Type of motions filed and the disposition of those motions. • Disposition of any appeals filed. • Whether any expert testimony was proffered and/or allowed. • Whether an AmeriCorps Member sought or obtained the appointment of a child advocate for an Unaccompanied Child. • Whether special accommodations (such as testimonial aids, closed hearings, or other means to facilitate the adjudication) were sought or utilized. 	
	(4) Increase in the Unaccompanied Child's understanding of Immigration Proceedings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of interviews designed to capture Unaccompanied Child's understanding of Immigration Proceedings before and after receiving program services. 	
	(5) Decrease in length of overall court proceedings.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of continuances and the reasons behind the requests (including for lack of counsel pre-representation by a program attorney). • Number of days from filing of initial NTA to Immigration

			<p>Court disposition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of days between first court appearance and Immigration Court disposition. • Number of days from filing NTA to entry of appearance by program attorney. • Number of master calendar hearings. • Number of individual hearings. • Number of bond hearings.
Increase identification of Unaccompanied Children that have been a victim of human trafficking or abuse and decrease the risk that children may be trafficked upon return to their country of nationality or last habitual residence	(6) Increase in screenings of Unaccompanied Child clients to identify whether a child has been a victim of human trafficking or abuse and whether there is a risk that the child may trafficked upon return to his or her country of nationality or last habitual residence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of screenings of Unaccompanied Child clients to identify whether a child has been a victim of human trafficking, abuse, or trauma and whether the child may trafficked, abused, or traumatized upon return to his or her country of nationality or last habitual residence. • The number of Unaccompanied Child clients referred for support services associated with trafficking, abuse, or trauma concerns. 	
Build pro bono capacity to support and represent the population of Unaccompanied Children in the immigration court location(s) in	(7) Increase in the amount of pro bono capacity to represent unaccompanied children in the immigration court location(s) in which	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number and nature of outreach efforts to build <i>pro bono</i> capacity to support and represent the population of unaccompanied children in the immigration court location(s) in which members serve. 	

<p>which members will serve</p>	<p>members will serve.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of unaccompanied children referred to and successfully paired with pro bono counsel. 	
<p>Strengthen national service so that participants engaged in CNCS-supported programs consistently find satisfaction, meaning and opportunity.</p>	<p>(8) Percent of service participants engaged in CNCS-supported programs who report having an experience that expands educational, employment, or civic opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of AmeriCorps Members who report they will utilize their education award. • Number of service participants that report that they value the skills gained from national service. • Number of service participants reporting gains in leadership skills. • Number of service participants reporting increased self-efficacy. 	

APPENDIX D: NATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Each applicant will have one required performance measure. Applicants may include additional measures, as appropriate.

Required:

Output	<i>Number of Unaccompanied Children receiving legal services in Immigration Proceedings</i>
Definition of Key terms	Legal services must be provided to children under the age of 16 who: (1) are not in the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) or the Department of Homeland Security; (2) have received a Notice to Appear in removal proceedings before EOIR; and, (3) have not had their cases consolidated with removal proceedings against a parent or legal guardian (Unaccompanied Children or Unaccompanied Child). The legal representation shall be limited to immigration or custody proceedings before EOIR Immigration Courts; appellate proceedings before the Board of Immigration Appeals; proceedings before United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), including applications for asylum, Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) status, and /or T or U nonimmigrant status; and state court proceedings seeking orders necessary to support applications for SIJ status (Immigration Proceedings). Immigration Proceedings shall not include any claims, litigation, or other proceedings before federal district courts, courts of appeals, or the Supreme Court.

APPENDIX E: LOGIC MODEL WORKSHEET

Legal Applicant name: eGrants Application ID#:

Project Resources	Core Project Components	Evidence of Project Implementation and Participation	Evidence of Change		
INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	Outcomes		
			Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
What we invest (# and type of AmeriCorps members)	What we do	Direct products from program activities	Changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, opinions	Changes in behavior or action that result from participants' new knowledge	Meaningful changes, often in their condition or status in life

APPENDIX F: GUIDANCE FOR STATE COMMISSIONS

Each State Commission is responsible for developing an application process that includes the review and selection of AmeriCorps programs for submission to CNCS for funding. If a Commission chooses not to solicit applications for funding under this *Notice*, it should instruct interested single-state applicants to apply directly to CNCS

Resources

The AmeriCorps regulations 45 C.F.R. §§ 2520 – 2550, contain program specific information and requirements that you need to understand and incorporate into your application instructions.

The *Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity (Notice)* for the AmeriCorps State and National funding contain specific information about how much funding will be available for AmeriCorps grants, applicant eligibility, how to apply, and special considerations and priorities for funding that are not included in the application instructions.

The Application Instructions for the State and National competitions are linked from the *Notice* web pages.

Requirements for Competitive Submission

Your State Commission Prime Application Package(s) for State Commission 2014 justice AmeriCorps for Legal Services to Unaccompanied Children, State Commission justice AmeriCorps Unaccompanied Children Fixed Amount Grants, and/or State Commission justice AmeriCorps for Unaccompanied Children Education Awards Program grant funding must include:

- Applicant information from the State Commission (prime application)
- Assurances and Certifications signed by the appropriate authorizing official
- The AmeriCorps State and National program applications you are recommending for funding
- Commission ranking of applications as outlined in the AmeriCorps regulations 45 C.F.R. § 2522.465
- Recommendation summaries for each application submitted

In addition, State Commissions are responsible for ensuring that each recommended application complies with all of the submission requirements set forth in the *Notice* and Application Instructions. This means that in addition to the prime and sub-applications, the commission will ensure that required Evaluations, and Labor Union Concurrences will also have been submitted to CNCS by the submission due date, if applicable.

Do not submit supplementary materials such as videos, brochures, letters of support, or any other item not requested in the Application Instructions or the *Notice*. CNCS will not review or return them.

State Competitive New or Re-Competing Selection Process

This is to assist you in developing your commission specific application materials and developing your selection processes for State Commission 2015 justice AmeriCorps Unaccompanied Children, State Commission justice AmeriCorps Legal Services for Unaccompanied Children Fixed Amount Grants, and/or State Commission justice AmeriCorps Unaccompanied Children Education Awards Program funding. State Commissions must follow state law requirements regarding requests for proposals and the selection of programs within their state. Commission outreach and review processes should be consistent with board approved policies. Commissions should provide information on the following topics to program applicants:

- Funding availability
- State Commission 2015 justice AmeriCorps Unaccompanied Children, State Commission justice AmeriCorps Legal Services for Unaccompanied Children Fixed Amount Grants, and/or State Commission justice AmeriCorps Unaccompanied Children Education Awards Program
- State maximum cost per MSY and budget guidelines
- State priorities
- Corporation priority areas
- Selection criteria
- Other information the commission or state may require

The State Commission is responsible for:

- Submission of applications to CNCS for funding consideration
- Thoroughly reviewing the recommended applications to ensure they are complete, accurate, and in compliance with all program and budget requirements before submitting them to CNCS in eGrants
- Preparing ranking and recommendations for new/re-competing programs to fund
- Preparing recommendations for continuing programs to fund
- Reviewing Federal Financial Reports to monitor and report on continuing and re-competing programs' progress toward the matching requirements stipulated in the AmeriCorps rule 45 CRF § 2521.35-2521.91
- Reading, understanding, and signing all assurances, certifications, and restrictions, including the certification of each program's progress toward the matching requirements

Be sure to set a due date for applications that allows adequate time before CNCS's due date to review program applications, analyze budgets, and work with the programs on revisions to budgets, proposed activities, and performance measures, as necessary.

Commission Review Requirements

Commissions are required to conduct a competitive review to assess grant applications. Commissions must certify in eGrants that the selection process complied with the NCSA, as amended, AmeriCorps regulations, and all state laws and conflict of interest rules.

The AmeriCorps regulations, 45 C.F.R. § 2522.460 and § 2522.475, describe the extent to which commissions must use CNCS's selection criteria and priorities when selecting programs and to what extent commissions may consider priorities other than those stated in the regulations or in the *Notice*. Include the criteria the commission will use to evaluate and select applications in your application materials.

State Commission Ranking and Recommendation Summaries

The AmeriCorps regulations, 45 C.F.R. § 2522.465, include requirements regarding ranking applicants for State Competitive funding. Submit the rankings in eGrants using the "Manage Subs" screen in the prime application to enter information on each of the new or re-competing sub-applications. Once the information for each sub-application has been entered, save and close. The main Manage Subs page will now include all subs listed under "For Competitive Submissions" with a "Rank: Select a Rank" drop down menu next to each.

Provide rankings in order of funding priority in the sub-applications section of the Prime Application in eGrants. Each ranked program must have a different rank (i.e., no "ties"). If a state is responding to more than one *Notice* and thus will rank the programs in each *Notice*, please note applicant rank order in the Commission Rank Justification field of the commission competitive Prime Application. It is not currently possible to rank Fixed Amount applications in eGrants. If your state is also submitting Fixed Amount applications, please submit your rank order of the combined cost reimbursement and Fixed Amount applications to your CNCS program officer.

Summarize the criteria and process used by the commission to arrive at the submitted rankings in the Commission Rank Justification field of the commission Competitive Prime Application. There is a character limit of 1,000 characters. In order to be able to avoid eGrants error that will not allow you to submit your application, please complete these tasks in the following order: 1) the drop-down menu for rank and save, 2) the rank justification, and 3) the recommendation summaries.

For each application that is being submitted to CNCS, provide a "Recommendation Summary" including the information listed below:

- Provide a summary of the program's service activities.
- Describe the program's strengths and how it will complement the commission's existing portfolio and address needs identified in the State Service Plan.

- Discuss potential challenges to success and the commission’s strategy for meeting the challenges through training and technical assistance.
- For continuing and re-competing programs, discuss any programmatic compliance issues, including enrollment, retention, performance and progress toward impact. If programmatic issues are identified, describe how the program will address them and what steps the commission will take to ensure success.
- For continuing and re-competing programs, discuss each program’s record for submitting forms and reports in a timely manner (including 30-day enrollment, 30-day exits, fiscal reporting deadlines, and progress reporting deadlines).
- For re-competing programs, provide either an assessment of each program’s evaluation efforts to date or a completed evaluation, as applicable.

Matching Requirements

The State Commission is responsible for meeting an aggregate overall match requirement based on the subgrantees’ individual match requirements. See 45 C.F.R. §§ 2521.50-2521.90 and additional guidance from CNCS for the matching requirements that apply to a given commission and its sub-grants. Section 121(e) of the National Community Service Act (NCSA) requires that grantees that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant report the amount and source of these funds to the Corporation. If a grantee uses federal funds as match, they will be required to report the sources and amounts on the FFR.