Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Grant Competition
Frequently Asked Questions
Updated June 5, 2015

1. The Funding Opportunity Title is 2015 Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Grants, but 2015 Martin Luther King Jr. Day has already occurred. Are funds awarded through this grant competition for the 2016 Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service?

   Yes.

2. Where can I find information about the results of previous Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Grant competitions?

   Results can be found at: http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/open-government-initiative/transparency/results-grants-competition

3. Are State Service Commissions eligible to apply to this competition?

   Yes.

4. My organization is not interested in applying for the minimum funding amount of $50,000. Are there any options for my organization to receive funding through this competition?

   To receive funding directly from CNCS, you must apply for at least $50,000. Your organization may become engaged as a partner organization with an applicant organization and receive support from the partner organization if the partner organization is selected for funding. See page 4 of the NOFA for more information.

5. Can you please clarify the eligibility requirement described on page 3 of the NOFA:
   Eligible applicants are capable of carrying out multi-state, nationally focused (10 or more states), or comprehensive regional initiatives involving at least ten (10) projects in a region. Successful applicants must have submitted an application that meets one of the two criteria set forth in the preceding sentence. Regional initiatives are multiple states in a region.

   Applications awarded must have either:
   - Multi-state, nationally focused: projects in 10 or more states
   - Comprehensive regional: projects in 10 or more locations involving multiple (more than 1) states

6. How exactly do I apply for this competition in eGrants?

Once you have set up your eGrants account, select the NOFA name, 'FY 2015 Martin Luther King Jr Day of Service Grants.' For additional eGrants technical assistance, please contact the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677.

Added May 12, 2015

7. What amount should we put in as our award request in our budget?

The budget amount should reflect the funds necessary to meet the program objectives for a one year budget period.

8. Would travel expenses for youth participants be considered allowable?

It depends on the specific details of the Federal award and project. Any cost must be necessary and reasonable for the performance of the Federal award and be allocable under 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E. To determine if a cost meets these criteria, you should consider 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E for more details. See especially 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.403, 200.404, 200.405.

9. Where can I learn what budget items are allowable and unallowable?

Pleases review the NOFA carefully and consider if the cost is reasonable, necessary, allocable and allowable per 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E. In considering these items see especially 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.403, 200.404, 200.405.

10. If our organization only holds one project within our city limits, but holds at least nine other projects outside of the city, does this meet the eligibility requirements described in the NOFA to have at least ten projects?

Yes.

11. Does an application first have to be submitted to a state service commission for review?

No. Applications should be submitted directly to CNCS through eGrants.

12. How do I know if my proposed project is a good proposal for this competition?

Individual feedback on proposals is not provided in an open competition. To help you assess whether your proposal is viable for this competition, review your idea against the funding priorities section of the NOFA on page 2, the performance measures on page 2 of the NOFA, and the selection criteria in the NOFA.

Added May 15, 2015

13. Other than the three Capacity Building performance measures listed in the NOFA, what performance measures will applicants see in the performance measures module in eGrants?

Healthy Futures:
H2: Number of clients to whom information on health insurance, health care access and health benefits programs is delivered.
H4: Number of clients participating in health education programs.
H10: Number of individuals receiving emergency food from food banks, food pantries, or other nonprofit organizations.

Environmental Stewardship:
EN2: Number of AmeriCorps members trained and/or certified for green jobs including the conducting of energy audits.
EN4: Number of acres of national parks, state parks, city parks, county parks, or other public and tribal lands that are treated.
EN5: Number of miles of trails or waterways (owned/maintained by national, state, county, city or tribal governments; nonprofits when for public use or the public good; and public easements) that are treated and/or constructed.

Disaster Services:
D1: Number of individuals that received CNCS-supported services in disaster preparedness.
D4: Number of individuals that received CNCS-supported services in disaster mitigation.

Economic Opportunity:
O1 Number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving financial literacy services.
O2: Number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving job training and other skill development services.
O3: Number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving job placement services.
O4: Number of housing units developed, repaired, or otherwise made available for low income individuals, families or people with disabilities.
O5 Number of economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, receiving housing services.

Education:
ED29: Number of children served in child safety, welfare, and health programs.

Veterans and Military Families:
V1: Number of veterans that received CNCS-supported assistance.
V8: Number of veterans' family members that received CNCS-supported assistance.
V9: Number of military service members that received CNCS-supported assistance.

If the applicants' activities do not fit within these measures, they may develop their own performance measure based upon an applicant defined output within any of the six focus areas to describe their activities.

Added May 26, 2015

14. The grant award covers a two year project period. Should my application describe my activities for both year one and year two or just for the first year?

The application should primarily describe activities for the first year. However, please share the overall plans for the second year of the project including how you see growing the project in year two.

15. Can all of the matching funds be in-kind?

Yes.

16. Can staff time be counted as in-kind towards the match?

Yes.

17. Can our local sites provide part of the match in-kind?

Yes, local sites can be a source of in-kind match. For specific treatment of costs, please refer to 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E for more details.

18. According to the NOFA, it states annual grants of $50,000-$300,000 will be awarded with the minimum request being $50,000.

Then it goes on to state this is a two-year grant period.

Is the minimum $50,000 to cover the two year period ($25,000 each year) or is the minimum request really $100,000 ($50,000 each year)?

The minimum is $50,000 per year. In the second year, an application could be submitted for continuation funding.

19. We have a negotiated Indirect Cost Rate agreement. Can we use it as match on this grant?

Yes. Indirect Cost Rates are an allowable source of match but should not be the only source.

20. When should activities occur?

Service activities should occur primarily around the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday or no more than one to two weeks before or after the holiday.

21. Can staff time be an allowable expense in the budget?

Yes.

22. What should be selected for Project Initiative in eGrants?

This field should be left blank, or 'none' should be selected.

23. Can you share the names of other organizations applying in my area?

No. This information is not public at this time.

24. After we submit our notice of intent to apply, do we need to wait until it is reviewed and accepted by CNCS before we submit our application as the next step?

No. You should submit your application in eGrants. You do not need to await further instruction from CNCS after submitting your notice of intent.

25. What is a disability inclusion plan?

A disability inclusion plan shows that the applicant has a plan of action on reaching out to the disability community and ensuring that there will be volunteers with disabilities participating in the day of service event. The plan should describe which organizations or recruitment sources they have relationships with or could have relationships with.

26. Do national service criminal history checks need to be completed on staff members who are only providing their time as part of the required match for Martin Luther King Day of Service grants?

Yes, they do. Anyone receiving a salary or stipend on a MLK grant, whether from Federal or Grantee/Match share, is a covered position and thus subject to National Service Criminal History Checks. For more information, please visit the Criminal History Check section of the CNCS website:
http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/criminal-history-check

Updated June 5, 2015:
27. Is a competitive sub granting process allowed for this year's competition?

Yes. You may also engage partner organizations.

28. What should a partnership engagement plan detail?

The plan should identify the partners, how you plan to structure the partnership, and the planned funding arrangement.

Added May 28, 2015

29. Can partner organizations provide part of the match for the grant?

Yes and all match must be documented the same as required for the federal share.

30. Is there a maximum percentage for salary coverage for this grant?

No. But keep in mind that funds provided should be used primarily for events held in January and not for year round programming. Additionally salaries must be documented per 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

31. Please provide an example of what it means to match 70% of the total project budget?

An applicant must provide at least 70% of the total project budget. If $80,000 in CNCS funding were requested from CNCS, $187,241 in non federal funding would need to be provided by the applicant as match. This brings the total project budget to $267,241. The applicant share of $187,241 is 70% of the total project budget, meeting the required 70% non federal share.

Added May 29, 2015

32. Does this competition require applicants to partner with organizations that are currently funded by CNCS?

No.

33. The Capacity Building Performance Measures G3-3.1 and G3-3.2 appear to indicate a preference for partnering with existing CNCS funded organizations. Is that a correct interpretation?

No. If your organization were funded through this competition, then your organization is the CNCS funded organization. An additional partnership is not required for the purpose of completing the performance measure. Your organization is the entity required with completing the performance measure and meeting the target set in the measure.

34. Is there a preference in application scoring if participation increases not only in the community, but in current CNCS funded organizations?

Additional information about scoring is not provided in an open competition.

Added June 5, 2015

35. Are applicants required to either subgrant or partner with organizations in order to apply to this competition?

No.