

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Federal Agency Name: Corporation for National and Community Service
Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2021 RSVP Continuation
Announcement Type: Initial Announcement
Assistance Listing Number: 94.002

Disclosure: Publication of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (Notice) does not obligate the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to award any specific number of grants or to commit any particular amount of funding.

Important Dates

- Applications are due Sunday, **November 8, 2020** by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.
- Successful applicants will be notified by February 2021.
- Successful applicants will be issued awards by February 2021.

FULL TEXT OF THE NOTICE

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A.1. Purpose of RSVP Funding

The mission of CNCS (**to rebrand as AmeriCorps*) is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. Through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps (**to rebrand as AmeriCorps Seniors*), and the Volunteer Generation Fund, CNCS (AmeriCorps) has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

Established in 1971 and now one of the largest senior volunteer organizations in the nation, RSVP engages adults age 55 and over in a diverse range of volunteer activities. Volunteers tutor children, renovate homes, assist victims of natural disasters, provide independent living services, recruit and manage other volunteers, and serve in their communities in many other ways. Senior Corps (AmeriCorps Senior) RSVP volunteers chose how, where, and how often they want to serve, with commitments ranging from a few hours to a maximum of 40 hours per week. While serving, RSVP volunteers improve their own lives by staying active and civically engaged.

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act of 2009, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core of issue areas. In order to carry out Congress's intent and to maximize the impact of investment in national service, CNCS (AmeriCorps) has the following Focus Areas: Disaster Services; Economic Opportunity; Education; Environmental Stewardship; Healthy Futures; and Veterans and

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Military Families. CNCS's (AmeriCorps) six Focus Areas and the key goal of Capacity Building are described below:

Disaster Services

Grants will help individuals and communities prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate disasters and increase community resiliency. Activities may include assisting in disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and/or mitigation.

Economic Opportunity

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of individuals who are economically disadvantaged. Activities may include providing housing-related assistance for economically disadvantaged people, including homeless individuals.

Education

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for people who are economically disadvantaged, especially children, and for children with special and/or exceptional needs. Activities may include providing support and/or facilitating access to services and resources that contribute to school readiness; providing support that improves academic performance; and providing support that improves academic engagement.

Environmental Stewardship

Grants will provide services that contribute to increased energy and water efficiency, renewable energy use, or improved at-risk ecosystems. Grant activities will support increasing citizen behavioral change leading to increased efficiency, renewable energy use, and ecosystem improvements particularly for economically disadvantaged households and communities. Activities may include improving at-risk acres (land and/or water) in national, state, city or county parks, or other public or tribal lands.

Healthy Futures

Grants will assist with meeting health needs within communities including: access to care, aging in place, and childhood obesity. Activities may include supporting the ability of adults who are homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities, to live independently and assisting individuals with access to food resources.

Veterans and Military Families

Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength. Activities may include supporting veterans, veterans' family members, military service members, and military service members' families.

Capacity Building

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In addition to the Focus Areas described above, grants will also provide support for volunteer capacity building activities provided by national service participants. These activities are indirect services that enable CNCS(AmeriCorps) -supported organizations to recruit and manage community volunteers.

A.2. Funding Priorities

Incumbent projects that currently receive an RSVP grant are invited to submit applications for the RSVP grant sponsored by their organization. Incumbent agencies are invited to apply for grant continuation based on the determination that your project is continuing to meet the eligibility criteria as detailed in this document.

CNCS's(AmeriCorps) priorities for this grant cycle are:

- CNCS (AmeriCorps) is committed, in this grant competition, to focus on programs that actively engage in removing structural racial inequities, advancing racial equality, and increasing opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities.

Senior Corps (AmeriCorps Senior) encourages grant applications to include work plans that advance justice and equality in areas such as education, access to food and healthcare, workforce development, elder justice, and living independently.

- CNCS (AmeriCorps) encourages applicants to focus on efforts to help local communities respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants may propose programming in any CNCS (AmeriCorps) focus area to aid communities as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Senior Corps (AmeriCorps Senior) prioritizes grant making in the focus areas identified by the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act. Applicants are required to address one or more of the six Focus Areas. CNCS (AmeriCorps) will not consider applications that do not address any of the Focus Areas. In addition to the Focus Areas, CNCS (AmeriCorps) is particularly interested in supporting applications that propose to include one or more of the specific priorities listed below.
 - **Disaster Services:** Work plans that focus Senior Corps (AmeriCorps Senior) RSVP Volunteers to aid communities as they recover from COVID -19 or improving community resiliency through disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation.
 - **Evidence-based Program Implementation:** Work plans, in any focus area, in which Senior Corps (AmeriCorps Senior) RSVP volunteers support the implementation of evidence-based program models. Evidence-based programs are models in which a set of activities and practices is supported by a theory of change tested through a rigorous program evaluation.

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- **Access to Care - Opioid Abuse:** Work plans that focus Senior Corps (AmeriCorps Senior) RSVP volunteers on assignments that increase access to care and participation in health education activities designed to prevent or reduce prescription drug and opioid abuse.
- **Addressing Food Insecurity – Health Futures:** Work plans that focus Senior Corps (AmeriCorps Senior) RSVP volunteers on assignments that increases community members access to free healthy foods.
- **Ageing in Place – Elder Justice:** Work plans that focus Senior Corps(AmeriCorps Senior) RSVP volunteers on assignments addressing elder justice including activities that mitigate the potential that clients and caregivers will be victims of financial fraud, abuse, and/or neglect and/or that provide assistance and support services to victims of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- **Ageing in Place – Independent Living:** Work plans that focus Senior Corps (AmeriCorps Senior) RSVP volunteers on assignments addressing independent living for older adults and individuals with disabilities including activities such as companionship that ease loneliness and social isolation and/or activities that give respite to informal caregivers.
- **Economic Opportunity – Workforce Development:** Work plans that focus Senior Corps (AmeriCorps Senior) RSVP volunteers on assignments that support programs designed to increase the number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving job training and other skill development services.
- **Education – Intergenerational Programming:** Work plans that focus Senior Corps (AmeriCorps Senior) RSVP volunteers on assignments that address ways to increase older adult engagement with young people in the areas of school readiness and K-12 success.
- **Veterans and Military Families:** Work plans that focus Senior Corps (AmeriCorps Senior) volunteers on positively impacting the quality of life of veterans and improving family military strength

To receive priority consideration, applicants must show that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes, and must include a high-quality program design. Proposing programs that receive priority consideration does not guarantee funding.

**In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, flexibilities have been made to facilitate safe volunteer practices. Please note these program flexibilities are temporary and can be rescinded at any time. For more information on Senior Corps (AmeriCorps Senior) response to COVID-19, please visit the COVID -19 section on our Manage Senior Corps page at : <https://nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps/manage-senior-corps-grants>*

A.3. Performance Goals or Expected Outcomes

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National Performance Measures

CNCS (AmeriCorps) expects applicants to use National Performance Measures as part of a comprehensive performance measurement strategy that relies on both performance and evaluation data to learn from their work, and make tactical and strategic adjustments to achieve their goals.

Applicants are required to use the specific performance measures outlined in this Notice. For more information, please refer to the National Performance Measures Instructions at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement>. Program-specific evaluation requirements can be found at <https://nationalservice.gov/documents/2015/fgp-appendix-b-performance-measure-instructions>

Applicants must identify a Primary Focus Area. Work plans must include at least one service activity in the selected Primary Focus Area. The Primary Focus Area should represent the area in which the incumbent aims to make the most impact.

This funding opportunity requires applicants to demonstrate cost-effective practices in achieving performance goals through the services described in the proposed work plans. Applications must include work plans that meet the following minimum requirements:

- Work plans, when combined, must —at minimum—include the total number of unduplicated volunteers* listed in Appendix A for the geographic service area affected.
- For every \$1,000 in annual base federal funding, at least one unduplicated RSVP volunteer* must be placed in work plans that result in national performance measure outcomes.

**Unduplicated RSVP Volunteers: Each volunteer can only be counted once when assigned to a service activity. The volunteer should be counted in the area where he/she will make the most impact – in terms of the Focus, the type of service, or the scope of service, (such as the most number of hours served).*

A.4. Program Authority

Awards under this Notice are authorized by the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, ([42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.](#)) and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended ([42 U.S.C. 4950 et seq.](#)).

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

B.1. Estimated Available Funds

CNCS (AmeriCorps) anticipates approximately \$29,000,000 for FY 2021 RSVP awards. The actual level of funding is subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

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B.2. Estimated Award Amount

Award amounts will vary, as determined by the scope of the projects. CNCS (AmeriCorps) expects to make awards in the range of \$50,000 to \$737,000.

B.3. Period of Performance

Successful applicants will be issued awards by February 2021.

CNCS (AmeriCorps) anticipates making three-year grant awards. CNCS (AmeriCorps) generally makes an initial award for the first year of the period of performance, based on a one-year budget. Continuation awards for subsequent years are not guaranteed; they depend upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance.

Continuation funding for years 2 and 3 is not guaranteed and may be dependent upon:

- Satisfactory performance that signals the grantee is on track to achieve its proposed performance measures at the end of the grant;
- Demonstrated capacity to manage the grant;
- Compliance with grant requirements, including terms and conditions, criminal history checks, reporting and securing the required non-federal share; and/or;
- Availability of Congressional appropriations

CNCS (AmeriCorps) reserves the right to adjust the amount of an award or elect not to continue funding.

B.4. Type of Award

Award recipients will be assigned to a CNCS (AmeriCorps) Portfolio Manager, who will be responsible for reviewing recipient performance, providing training and technical assistance, and serving as the CNCS (AmeriCorps) primary point of contact.

The FY 2021 RSVP grants will be awarded on a cost reimbursement basis.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1. Eligible Applicants

Through this Notice, only RSVP incumbent applicants who currently receive federal funds for an RSVP grant may apply for funding in the currently awarded geographic service area.

The following non-federal entities (all of which are defined in 2 CFR 200.69) are eligible to apply:

- Indian tribes

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- institutions of higher education
- local governments
- nonprofit organizations
- states

In addition to Indian tribes as defined in 2 CFR 200.54, tribal organizations that are controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by federally recognized Indian tribes are also eligible to apply. If an entity applies for an award as a tribal organization that is controlled or chartered by one or more Indian tribes, the organization must provide copies of, or links to, documentation which demonstrates that the organization is controlled or chartered by a federally recognized Indian tribe. If an entity applies as an organization sanctioned by a federally recognized tribe, or multiple specific federally recognized tribes, it must submit a sanctioning resolution, adopted by the Tribal Council (or comparable tribal governing body) of each Indian tribe. The resolution(s) must identify the entity applying for a CNCS (AmeriCorps) award by name as a tribal organization that is sanctioned by the Indian tribe(s) for the purpose of applying for CNCS (AmeriCorps) funding (or federal grant funds generally).

Entities must have a valid SAM registration and DUNS and/or Unique Entity Identifier to receive an award. See Section D.3. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) for more information.

C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Applicants are required to match funds equal to at least 20 percent in Year 2, and at least 30 percent match in Year 3 and subsequent years of the total program budget. The applicant's match can be non-CNCS (AmeriCorps) cash and/or in-kind contributions. Applicants must indicate whether the match is proposed or secured. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet the match requirement at the time of application submission. See Section D.6. *Funding Restrictions* for more information.

C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements

Applications that propose to engage in activities that are prohibited under CNCS's (AmeriCorps) statutes, regulations, or the terms and conditions of its awards are not eligible to receive CNCS (AmeriCorps) funding.

Note that under appropriations provisions annually enacted by Congress, if CNCS (AmeriCorps) is aware that any corporation has any unpaid federal tax liability—

- that has been assessed
- for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed
- that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability—

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that corporation is not eligible for an award under this Notice. However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has made a determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the federal government.

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501 (c)(4) that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for CNCS (AmeriCorps) funding.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

This Notice should be read together with the RSVP regulations, 45 CFR §§ Part – 2553, RSVP Grant Application Instructions, Appendix A: List of Funding Opportunities, and the RSVP Performance Measures. These documents are available online at <https://nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps/manage-senior-corps-grants>.

D.1. Address to Request an Application Package

All information associated with this funding opportunity is available through the CNCS (AmeriCorps) Funding Opportunities webpages. Applicants should refer to CNCS Funding Opportunities for more information and instructions on how to fully respond to this Notice. Applicants can also send an email to the assigned CNCS (AmeriCorps) Portfolio Manager in the Regional Office for a printed copy of the Notice and Guidance. CNCS (AmeriCorps) also offers live text chat at <https://www.NationalService.gov/contact-us>.

D.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

D.2.a. Application Content

Complete applications must include the following elements:

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: This is automatically generated when applicants complete the data elements in the eGrants system.
- Narrative Sections:
 - Executive Summary: This is a brief description of the proposed program.
 - Program Design
 - Organizational Capability
 - Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy
- Standard Form 424A Budget
- Performance Measures
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications (<https://egrants.cns.gov/cnsmisc/ECERTS.HTM>, and <https://egrants.cns.gov/cnsmisc/EASSUR.HTM>)

D.2.b. Page Limits

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Applications may not exceed **15** double-spaced pages as the pages print out from eGrants. The application sections that count towards the page limit are the:

- SF-424 Face Sheet
- Executive Summary
- Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy narratives.

The application page limit does not include the Budget, Performance Measures, or any required additional documents.

Please note that the length of the application as a word processing document may differ from the length of the document printed out from eGrants. The character limits in eGrants do not align with page limits set in the Notice. **CNCS (AmeriCorps) strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the “Review and Submit” tab in eGrants prior to submission in order to confirm that the application does not exceed the page limit.**

CNCS (AmeriCorps) will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods when determining if an application complies with the page limit. Reviewers will also not consider material that is over the page limit, even if eGrants allows applicants to enter and submit additional text.

D.3. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

All applicants **must** register with the System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/> and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If an applicant is awarded a grant, it must maintain an active SAM registration throughout the life of the award. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees at: [https://sam.gov/SAM/transcript/Quick Guide for Grants Registrations.pdf](https://sam.gov/SAM/transcript/Quick%20Guide%20for%20Grants%20Registrations.pdf).

SAM registration must be renewed annually. CNCS (AmeriCorps) suggests that applicants finalize a new registration or renew an existing one at least three weeks before the application deadline, to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise. **Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and address on all grant applications to CNCS (AmeriCorps).**

CNCS (AmeriCorps) will not make awards to entities that do not have a valid SAM registration and DUNS. If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time CNCS (AmeriCorps) is ready to make a Federal award, CNCS (AmeriCorps) may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Applications must include an Employer Identification Number.

Applications must include a DUNS number. Applicants can obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online at the **DUNS**
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Request Service. CNCS (AmeriCorps) recommends registering at least 30 days before the application due date.

The Federal government is implementing Unique Entity Identifiers (UEI) as part of the SAM registration process to eventually replace DUNS numbers. CNCS (AmeriCorps) may ask applicants to add the UEI to their application as part of the clarification or pre-award process. CNCS (AmeriCorps) is adding a field to capture the UEI in eGrants. If you already have a UEI and the UEI field is available in eGrants, you can enter it at the time you submit your application.

D.4. Submission Dates and Times

D.4.a. Application Submission Deadline

Applications are due **Sunday, November 8, 2020 by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.**

CNCS (AmeriCorps) will not consider applications submitted after the deadline, except as noted in Section *D.4.c. Late Applications*. CNCS (AmeriCorps) reserves the right to extend the submission deadline. CNCS (AmeriCorps) will post a notification in the event of an extended deadline on CNCS(AmeriCorps)'s website.

D.4.b. Additional Documents Deadline

Additional documents are due by the application submission deadline. See *Sections D.4.a. Application Submission Deadline* and *D.7.b. Submission of Additional Documents* for more information.

D.4.c. Late Applications

All applications received after the submission deadline published in this Notice are presumed to be non-compliant. To overcome this presumption, the applicant must:

- submit a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that caused the delay, including:
 - the timing and specific cause(s) of the delay
 - the ticket number if a request for assistance was submitted to the National Service Hotline
 - any information provided to the applicant by the National Service Hotline
 - any other documentation or evidence that supports the justification
- ensure that CNCS (AmeriCorps) receives the written explanation or justification and any other evidence that substantiates the claimed extenuating circumstance(s), via email to the grants assigned Portfolio Manager no later than 24 hours after the application deadline stated in the Notice.

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Communication with CNCS (AmeriCorps) staff, including an applicant's portfolio manager, is not a substitute for a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance that caused the delay as outlined above. Applicants are required to continue working in [eGrants](#), [CNCS's web-based application system](#) and with the National Service Hotline to submit the application.

Please note: CNCS (AmeriCorps) will *not* consider an advance request to submit a late application. Please carefully review and follow the guidance in this section and submit your application as soon as possible.

D.5. Intergovernmental Review

This Notice is not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

D.6. Funding Restrictions

D.6.a. Award Funding Requirements

Awards under this Notice are subject to cost share or matching requirements. The amount of CNCS (AmeriCorps) funding provided will be limited to at least 70 percent of the total allowable costs for the funded activity, as determined under [2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E-Cost Principles](#).

There are also limitations on the use of federal funds to recover indirect costs. As provided in [2 CFR 200.306\(c\)](#), unrecovered indirect costs may be included as part of an applicant's cost sharing or matching requirements.

D.6.b. Indirect Costs

Application budgets may include indirect costs. Based on qualifying factors, applicants may either use a federally-approved indirect cost rate, a 10 percent *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly, as outlined in [2 CFR 200.413](#). States, local governments, and Indian tribes may use previously-approved indirect cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across all federal awards. Applicants that have a federal negotiated indirect cost rate or that will be using the 10 percent *de minimis* rate must enter that information in the Organization section in eGrants. The instructions for how to enter the organization's indirect cost rate are located here: [eGrants Indirect Cost Rate User Instructions](#). Applicants should not submit documentation addressing the indirect cost rate agreement via email.

Please note: To request a Federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, when CNCS (AmeriCorps) is the applicable cognizant agency for an organization's indirect costs, the applicant must submit a request to IndirectCostRate@cns.gov. The applicant may also obtain instructions and additional information by contacting the email address above.

D.6.c. Pre-Award Costs

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Pre-award costs are not authorized for this funding opportunity.

D.6.d. Budget Guidance

All applicants must include a line item in the budget for training of the Project Director, which may include any training events approved by CNCS (AmeriCorps). Applicants may budget for an additional staff member to attend the training events, if funds permit. The recommended amount, for budgeting purposes is \$1,000. Long distance travel funds may be re-budgeted later in the year, depending on actual training activities.

D.7. Other Submission Requirements

D.7.a. Electronic Application Submission in eGrants

Applicants must submit applications electronically via eGrants, CNCS's web-based application system. CNCS (AmeriCorps) 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 text into the appropriate eGrants field no later than 10 days before the deadline.

The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must use their own eGrants account to sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Applicants should contact the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via eGrants Questions if they have a problem when they create an account, prepare, or submit the application. National Service Hotline hours are posted at <https://questions.nationalservice.gov/>

Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the competition 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 circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit in eGrants, applicants may send a paper copy of the application via overnight carrier below. Applicants must include a written explanation and any other documentation or evidence that support their inability to submit their application electronically.

Corporation for National and Community Service
ATTN: Office of Grant Administration (OGA)/ FY 2021 Q3 RSVP Application
250 E Street, SW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20525

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Please 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. CNCS (AmeriCorps) does not accept applications submitted via fax or email.**

D.7.b. Submission of Additional Documents

Applicants are required to submit the following additional documents by the application submission deadline:

- All renewal applicants requesting over \$75,000 are required to submit an Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS) located at: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management/financial-and-grants-management> - select Applicant Operational and Financial Management Survey under the Pre-Award/Application Certification Forms Section. Please submit the OFMS as a Word document. Forms submitted as a PDF or any other document format may not be accepted.

Failure to submit the required additional documents by the deadline will have a negative effect on the assessment of your application.

Additional documents must be emailed to AdditionalDocuments@cns.gov with the following subject line: “*Legal Applicant Name*” – “*Application ID Number.*” Emails should include:

- the legal applicant name and its point of contact information
- the application ID number
- a list of documents that are attached to the email
- individually attached files that are clearly labeled, and that include the legal applicant name and application ID number within the heading of each document. To ensure that all required additional documents are received, please provide each document as an individual file. Please do not send all documents as one scanned file.
- If the size of an applicant’s files requires multiple emails, please also include an ordering system in the subject line, such as “(1 of 3)”

Do not submit any items that are not requested in this Notice and Application Instructions. CNCS (AmeriCorps) will not review or return them.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1. Review Criteria

Applications should include a well-designed plan with clear and compelling justifications for receiving the requested funds. Reviewers will assess the quality of applications by using the selection criteria described below and will rate them accordingly. They will also consider the weights assigned to each criterion.

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Categories/Subcategories	Percentage
Program Design	50
• Strengthening Communities	35
• Recruitment and Development	15
Organizational Capability	30
• Program Management	15
• Organizational Capability	15
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	20
• Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	20

E.1.a. Program Design (50 percent):

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the proposed project addresses:

Strengthening Communities (35%)

Reviewers will assess the extent of the work plan proposed in the application through the following criteria:

Q1. Work plans describe and demonstrate the community need.

Q2. Work plans articulate a theory of change – meaning, how service activities will address the community needs, and how the service activity described provides a significant contribution to the outcomes listed in the work plan. This question will focus on work plans that lead to National Performance Measure outcomes. (For more information see Appendix B)

Q3. Work plans logically connect four major elements to each other:

- 1.The community need(s) identified
- 2.The service activities that will be carried out by RSVP volunteers
- 3.The instrument description and data collection plans
- 4.Work plans include target numbers that lead to outcomes or outputs, and are appropriate for the total number of volunteers assigned to the work plan

Q4. Work plan outputs and outcomes are aligned with National Performance Measure instructions

Q5. Work plans have outputs and outcomes that are achievable, based on resources, program design and the number of volunteers engaged.

Q6. Work plans have performance measure outputs and outcomes that were reported in alignment with National Performance Measure requirements and data collection plans as stated in approved prior application as submitted in the most recent required Project Progress Reports and Project Progress Reports Lite.

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Q7.The program is achieving its RSVP volunteer recruitment goals in the current grant cycle.

Recruitment and Development of Volunteers (15%)

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the narrative demonstrates a plan and infrastructure for effective RSVP volunteer recruitment and management through the presence of the following:

Q8.Narrative demonstrates a plan and infrastructure to ensure RSVP volunteers receive training needed to succeed in the service activities described in the work plan.

Q9. Narrative describes the demographics of the community served and plans to recruit a volunteer pool reflective of the community served. This could possibly include:

- 1.Individuals from diverse races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, or degrees of English language proficiency
- 2.Veterans and military family members as RSVP volunteers
- 3.RSVP volunteers with disabilities
- 4.RSVP volunteers between the ages of 55 and 70 years old

Q10. Narrative demonstrates a plan and infrastructure to retain and recognize RSVP volunteers.

E.1.b. Organizational Capability (30 percent):

Reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant demonstrates:

Program Management (15%)

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the incumbent demonstrates that it has:

Q11. Plans and infrastructure to ensure management of volunteer stations in compliance with RSVP program regulations.

Q12. Plans and infrastructure to develop and/or oversee volunteer stations to ensure that volunteers are performing their assigned service activities.

Q13. Demonstrated an organizational track record in work plans that lead to National Performance Measure outcomes (see Appendix B).

Q14. Met applicable reporting deadlines.

Q15. Demonstrated a pattern of consistent communication and receptiveness to instructions from CNCS (AmeriCorps) over the life of the grant.

Organizational Capability (15%)

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the incumbent demonstrates that it has:

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Q16. Plans and infrastructure to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight (both financial and in-kind) and day-to-day operational support to ensure the following: 1) compliance with RSVP program requirements (statutes, regulations, and applicable OMB circulars); 2) accountability, and 3) efficient and effective use of available resources.

Q17. Demonstrated clearly defined paid staff positions, including identification of current staff assigned to the project, (name, title and brief position description) and how these positions will ensure the accomplishment of program objectives.

Q18. Demonstrated organizational capacity to develop and implement internal policies and operating procedures to provide governance and manage risk, such as accounting, personnel management, and purchasing.

E.1.c. Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (30 percent):

Reviewers will consider the completeness and reasonableness of the budget:

Q19. Have a reasonable cost per volunteer in proposed work plans that lead to National Performance Measure requirements (for more information, see Appendix B).

Q20. Have plans and infrastructure to secure the non-federal share, including dedicated staff, grant proposal process, and other plans.

E.2. Review and Selection Process

CNCS (AmeriCorps) will engage Staff Reviewers with relevant knowledge and expertise to assess and provide input on the eligible applications. The review and selection process is intended to produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and strategic considerations described in this Notice. The determinations made by CNCS (AmeriCorps) reviewers may be different from what the applicant self-determined upon submission of its application. The stages of the review and selection process follow:

E.2.a. Initial Application Compliance and Eligibility Review

CNCS (AmeriCorps) will conduct an initial Compliance and Eligibility Review to determine if an application meets the eligibility requirements published in this Notice and advances to the next stage of the review process.

An application is compliant if the applicant:

- is an eligible organization
- submitted an application by the submission deadline
- submitted an application that complies with the following program-specific requirements:
 - submitted required additional documents by the submission deadline:
 - submitted an application for the entire geographic service area as described in Appendix A; as only the areas listed in Appendix A are eligible for funding.

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Reviewing for eligibility is intended to ensure that only those applications that are eligible for award are further reviewed. However, determinations of eligibility can take place at any point during the application review and selection process. Applicants that are determined to be ineligible will not receive an award.

E.2.b. Application Review

Internal Review

CNCS (AmeriCorps) Staff Reviewers will assess the applications based on the Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy Selection Criteria. Staff Reviewers will also consider the priorities and strategic considerations detailed in this Notice. CNCS (AmeriCorps) will recruit and select Staff Reviewers on the basis of demonstrated expertise in Senior Corps (AmeriCorps Senior) programming and/or the Focus Areas, as well as experience assessing applications. All Staff Reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

Post-Review Quality Control

After the initial review process is complete, CNCS (AmeriCorps) staff will review the initial results for fairness and consistency. Some applications may be selected for a Post-Review Quality Control assessment. This additional level of review will be used to ensure fairness and provide assurances that an application was not disadvantaged in the original review.

E.2.c. Applicant Clarification

CNCS (AmeriCorps) may ask an applicant for clarifying information. CNCS (AmeriCorps) staff will use this information to make funding recommendations. A request for clarification does not guarantee an award. Applicants may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked for clarifying information. An applicant's failure to respond to a request for clarification adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of its application from consideration. CNCS (AmeriCorps) staff may conduct a site visit inspection as part of the clarification process, as appropriate.

E.2.d. Pre-Award Risk Assessment

CNCS (AmeriCorps) staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant to assess an applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to assessments of the applicant's eligibility and the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If CNCS (AmeriCorps) determines that an award will be made to an applicant with assessed risks, special conditions that correspond to the degree of assessed risk may be applied to the award. Additionally, if CNCS (AmeriCorps) concludes that the reasons for applicants having poor risk assessment are not likely to be mitigated, those applications may not be selected for funding.

In evaluating risks, CNCS (AmeriCorps) may consider the following criteria:

Due Diligence:

- federal debt delinquency

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- suspension and debarment
- 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)
 - U.S. Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services
 - System for Award Management (SAM)
 - “Do Not Pay”
- reports and findings from single audits performed under Uniform Administrative Guidance and findings of any other available audits or investigations
- IRS Tax Form 990
- Oversight.gov
- Public Litigation Records

Operational and Financial Management:

- financial stability
- Operational and Financial Management Survey

Past Performance:

- applicant’s record in managing previous CNCS(AmeriCorps) 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
- applicant’s ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on award recipients
- meeting matching requirements
- the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
- criminal history check compliance. Note that CNCS (AmeriCorps) is best able to determine compliance with criminal history check requirements for grant recipients using the CNCS (AmeriCorps) -approved contracted vendors

Other Programmatic Risks:

- publicly available information, including information from the applicant organization's website
- amount of funding requested by the organization

E.2.e. Consideration of Integrity and Performance System Information

Prior to making any award that exceeds the \$250,000, CNCS (AmeriCorps) is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (See 41 U.S.C. 2313).

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Additionally, CNCS (AmeriCorps) may expand upon these requirements and use its discretion to review and consider information about any applicant receiving an award, including those under \$250,000.

Any applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through FAPIIS and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through FAPIIS.

CNCS (AmeriCorps) may consider comments by any applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing its review of risk posed by the applicant under the Risk Assessment Evaluation section of this Notice.

E.2.f. Selection for Funding

The review and selection process is designed to:

- identify how well eligible applications are aligned with the application review criteria
- build a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:
 - CNCS (AmeriCorps) Funding Priorities (See Section A.2. *Funding Priorities*)
 - meaningful representation of
 - geographic diversity
 - rural communities
 - small and medium programs
 - single and multi-state programs
 - faith-based organizations
 - Focus Area

Based on the evaluation of these strategic considerations, applications may be selected for funding over applications with a greater degree of alignment with the review criteria. In selecting applicants to receive awards under this Notice, the Program Director will endeavor to include a diverse portfolio of applications based on staff recommendations and strategic considerations.

CNCS (AmeriCorps) reserves the right to award applications in an amount other than at the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so.

CNCS (AmeriCorps) reserves the right to adjust or make changes to the review process, if unforeseen challenges or urgent circumstances make it impossible, impracticable, or inefficient to conduct the review process as planned. Any such adjustments or changes will not affect the selection criteria that will be used to assess applications.

E.3. Feedback to Applicants

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Applicants will receive feedback from the Staff Review of their compliant applications. This feedback will be based on the review of the original application and will not reflect information provided during clarification.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1. Federal Award Notices

CNCS (AmeriCorps) will make awards following the selection announcement. CNCS (AmeriCorps) anticipates announcing the results of this funding opportunity by mid- February 2021 contingent on the availability of congressional appropriations. All applicants, successful or not, will be notified of funding decisions via email.

Notification of an award is not an authorization to begin activities. The Notice of Grant Award signed by the Office of Grant Administration is the authorizing document. An awardee may not expend federal funds until the start of the Period of Performance identified on the Notice of Grant Award.

F.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

F.2.a. Uniform Guidance

All awards made under this Notice will be subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 2205.

F.2.b. Requests for Improper Payment Information

CNCS (AmeriCorps) may request documentation from recipients in order to monitor the award or to comply with other legal requirements, such as the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002, as amended. Failure to make timely responses to these requests may result in award funds being placed on manual hold, reimbursement only status, or other remedies may be applied as appropriate.

F.2.c. CNCS Terms and Conditions

All awards made under this Notice will be subject to the 2021 CNCS (AmeriCorps) General Terms and Conditions, and the 2021 Program-Specific Terms and Conditions for the particular program. These Terms and Conditions contain detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the CNCS (AmeriCorps) General and Program-Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/terms-and-conditions-cnsc-grants>.

F.2.d. National Service Criminal History Check Requirements

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The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a specific screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. The law requires grantees to conduct and document NSCHCs on persons (including award-funded staff, national service participant, or volunteer) receiving a salary, living allowance, stipend, or education award through a program receiving CNCS (AmeriCorps) funds. This includes staff that receive part of their salary through a subgrant. An individual is ineligible to serve in a position that receives such CNCS (AmeriCorps) 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.

Grantees should utilize the two vendors CNCS (AmeriCorps) has engaged to conduct the required NSCHCs. Information regarding use of these two vendors can be found at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/2018/nschc-using-fieldprint-and-truescreen-manual>

Failure to conduct compliant NSCHC may result in significant disallowed costs.

Unless CNCS (AmeriCorps) has provided a grant recipient with a written exemption or written approval of an alternative search procedure, recipients **must** perform the following checks:

All award-funded staff and volunteers must undergo NSCHCs that include:

- A nationwide name-based search of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW);
and
- Either
 - A name- or finger-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:

- A nationwide name-based check of the NSOPW; and
- 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 [CNCS Criminal History Check Resources](#) for complete information and FAQs.

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F.2e. Official Guidance

All CNCS (AmeriCorps) active Guidance is available on the agency's Guidance webpage: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/official-guidance>. The contents of these documents do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way unless incorporated into a contract or grant agreement. These documents are intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

F.3. Use of Material

To ensure that materials generated with CNCS (AmeriCorps) funding are available to the public and readily accessible to recipients and non-recipients, CNCS (AmeriCorps) 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).

F.4. Reporting

Recipients are required to submit a variety of reports which are due at specific times during the life cycle of an award. All reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time.

Recipients are required to provide annual progress reports and semi-annual financial and narrative progress reports through eGrants, CNCS's (AmeriCorps) web-based grants management system. All recipients must submit quarterly financial reports to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Payment Management System.

In addition, at the end of the award period, recipients must submit final financial and progress reports that are cumulative over the entire award period and consistent with the close-out requirements. The final reports are due 120 days after the end of the project period.

Award recipients will be required to report at <https://www.FSRS.gov> on all subawards over \$30,000, and may be required to report on executive compensation for the recipient organization and its subrecipients. Recipients 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.

Once the grant is awarded, recipients will be expected to have data collection and data management policies, processes, and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are reporting high quality performance measure data. At a minimum, recipients should have policies, processes, and practices that address the following five aspects of data quality for themselves and for subrecipients (if applicable):

- the data measures what it intends to measure
- the data reported is complete
- the recipient collects data in a consistent manner

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- the recipient takes steps to correct data errors
- the recipient actively reviews data for accuracy prior to submission.

Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the recipient's ability to secure future CNCS (AmeriCorps) funding.

For further guidance and training resources see: [Resources: Data Collection and Instruments](#)

F.5. Continuation Funding Information and Requirements

Organizations that have current FGP awards that continue beyond FY 2021 must submit an application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. Please see the Application Instructions.

The review will also be based on progress reports, the federal financial report, evaluation plans, additional requirements, and CNCS (AmeriCorps) staff's knowledge of the grant program. To be approved for continuation funding, recipients must demonstrate satisfactory performance with respect to key program goals and requirements, as well as compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant.

CNCS(AmeriCorps) reserves the right to award applications in an amount other than at the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

For more information, call or email the grant's assigned Portfolio Manager. CNCS (AmeriCorps) also offers live text chat at www.NationalService.gov/contact-us.

For technical questions and problems with the eGrants system, call the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677. National Service Hotline hours are posted at <https://questions.nationalservice.gov/>. Potential applicants can also use this link: [eGrants Questions](#). Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the name of the Notice to which the organization is applying.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

H.1. Technical Assistance

CNCS(AmeriCorps) will host technical assistance calls to answer questions about the funding opportunity and eGrants. CNCS(AmeriCorps) strongly encourages all applicants to participate in these sessions. Call-in information for the technical assistance calls is on the Senior Corps (AmeriCorps Senior) Training Calendar from the [Managing Senior Corps Grants](#) page.

H.2. Re-Focusing of Funding

CNCS (AmeriCorps) reserves the right to re-focus program dollars estimated for this continuation and renewal process in the event of disaster or other compelling needs.

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I. IMPORTANT NOTICES

Public Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for collection of information under this Notice of Funding is estimated to average six hours per submission, including reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing the application and reporting forms. CNCS (AmeriCorps) informs people who may respond to this Notice of Funding that they are not required to respond unless the OMB control number and expiration date are current valid. (See 5 C.F.R. 1320.5(b)(2)(i).) The OMB Control Number for the information collection is 3045-0187. It expires on 9/30/2020.

Privacy Act Statement: The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C 552a) requires that we notify you that the information requested under this Notice of Funding is collected pursuant to the funding purposes set forth at 42 U.S.C. 5001(a) of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 as amended. Purposes and Uses - The information requested is collected for the purposes of reviewing grant applications and granting funding requests. Routine uses may include disclosure of the information to federal, state, or local agencies pursuant to lawfully authorized requests. In some programs, the information may also be provided to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to determine the existence of any prior criminal convictions. The information may also be provided to appropriate federal agencies and contractors that have a need to know the information for the purpose of assisting the government to respond to a suspected or confirmed breach of the security or confidentiality or information maintained in this system of records, and the information disclosed is relevant and unnecessary for the assistance. Effects of Nondisclosure - The information requested is voluntary; however, to be a recipient of this grant program, disclosure of personal or sensitive information is required to receive federal benefits.

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