

**Corporation for National and Community Service  
Policies and Procedures**

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**Revision Number:** 7

**Subject:** Grant Competition Posting Policy and Procedure

Purpose: This document lists the documents which are published before, during, and after each grant competition to provide transparency in the grant application review process.

Who is Covered: All CNCS competitive grantmaking programs.

Policies Replaced: All versions of CPO-2010-03 issued prior to the date of this revision are superseded.

Originating Office: Office of Grants Policy and Operations (OGPO)

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**Approved By:**



**Asim Mishra  
Chief of Staff**

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## **Grant Competition Posting Policy and Procedure**

### **What is the purpose of this policy?**

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is committed to open government. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that CNCS staff conduct grant application reviews in a transparent manner while protecting privacy and safeguarding the deliberative process to ensure a fair and robust grantmaking process.

The policy establishes which documents related to the grant application reviews will be made available to the public for every grant competition conducted by CNCS. The policy includes a timeline for making these documents available to the public. CNCS may also choose to make additional documents available to the public relating to any grant application review.

### **What awarding instruments are covered by this policy?**

This policy applies to all CNCS grant competitions for which the application review includes external peer review, staff review, or both, and that result in new or recompeting grant awards including cooperative agreements.

### **What awarding instruments are not covered by this policy?**

This policy does not apply to continuation awards; non-competitive grants and awards including VISTA cost-share awards; memoranda of understanding or agreement; NCCC sponsor agreements; or contracts.

### **What documents will be made public and when and where will these documents be published?**

The following chart lists the documents that will be made public and when and where they will be published.

<b>What</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Where/When</b>
Annual forecast of grant competitions.	List of anticipated CNCS grant competitions for each fiscal year, including key dates. Continuing resolutions and availability of funds may affect actual grant competitions and dates.	Via web posting on the Open Government page; annually.
Agency-wide description of the review and selection process.	Overview of the review and selection process.	Via web posting on the Open Government page; annual revisions.
Selection criteria, funding priorities and considerations, and selection factors used for portfolio balancing.	The criteria against which internal and/or external reviewers will assess applications.	In each Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity/Availability ( <i>Notice</i> )

<b>What</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Where/When</b>
Blank external review worksheets when applicable.	Worksheets used by non-CNCS reviewers to assess applications.	Via web posting; as soon as practicable but no later than 90 business days after all grants are awarded for a particular <i>Notice</i>
List of compliant applications submitted (except applications withdrawn by the legal applicant during the review and selection process).	Names of organizations submitting applications, including sub-applicants (if applicable) and program names.	Via web posting; as soon as practicable but no later than 90 business days after all grants are awarded for a particular <i>Notice</i> .
Executive summaries of all compliant applications (except applications withdrawn by the legal applicant during the review and selection process).	Executive summary prepared by the applicant as part of the application.	
Names of external peer reviewers who completed the review process.	Individual external reviewers that reviewed the grant applications	
Successful applications.	The official cover sheet (SF-424) and program narratives submitted by applicants (not including budgets).	
Applicant feedback summary report for successful applicants.	Summary external reviewer comments when applicable.	

**What documents will not be made public and why?**

CNCS reserves the right not to release documents and information that would pose a threat to an individual’s privacy, as well as pre-decisional, deliberative documents, and information that CNCS concludes would cause a foreseeable harm to the integrity and strength of future grant competitions. Among other items, CNCS will not release staff review forms, external review comments except in summary form, ratings, rankings, and full grant applications including budget information. Information on non-compliant applications will not be released.

For competitions that use a Blended Review model (with review panels comprised of a combination of CNCS staff, other Federal agency staff, and expert external reviewers), CNCS will not publish reviewer’s comments. CNCS will not release or publish internal review comments. However, when it is determined to be in the best interest of the agency, internal review comments in summary form may be provided to individual applicants as feedback for the purpose of improving the quantity and quality of future applications in CNCS’ grant competitions.

In addition, CNCS reserves the right to delay publication of items described in this policy based on the availability of resources.

**Who is responsible for publishing grant application review materials?**

The Office of Grants Policy and Operations (OGPO) is responsible for publishing agency wide grant competition material. Each program office is responsible for publishing grant competition material for their competitive grant programs and for working with OGPO, the Office of Information Technology, and the External Affairs Digital Media Team to publish the *Notice* and

the grant application review documentation for their grant competitions as described in this policy.

**Where will the review material be posted?**

*Notices* are published on the appropriate program page on [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov). All other grant competition review material is published on the CNCS Open Government page. (<http://nationalservice.gov/about/open/grants.asp>) and linked to the appropriate program web page.

**How long will the review material be posted on the website?**

Information on each competition will be posted on the website for a period of one year, or whenever the subsequent competition information is posted, whichever comes first. Information will be archived for a period of three years.

**What is the communication plan related to this policy?**

The Policy Coordinator will inform all CNCS staff when this policy is cleared and posted on the Intranet. The Policy Coordinator also updates the policy posted on the public web site.

**What is the training plan related to this policy?**

Training for all CNCS staff on this policy and procedures is available via CNCS's Learning Management System. This training is particularly important for all the offices involved in posting grant competition material. OGPO will work with program offices to provide additional guidance through the process as needed. Also, OGPO will revise the training annually to ensure alignment with changes in the policy.

**What are the procedures for the implementation of this policy?**

***Prior to Grant Competition:***

The following materials will be published prior to grant competitions:

- Annual forecast of competitions.
- Agency-wide description of the review and selection process.
- Selection criteria, funding priorities and considerations, and selection factors used for portfolio balancing (in the *Notice* for each competition).

**1. Developing and publishing the annual forecast of competitions.**

- a. Who executes: OGPO will develop and publish the annual forecast of competitions. Each program will verify the key dates and information for their competitions.
- b. Timing: The annual forecast of competitions will be published as soon as it is finalized and will be updated as needed.
- c. Clearance: The annual forecast of competitions will be cleared in the manner required by Policy CEO-2012-02, Clearance Guidance.

**2. Developing and publishing the agency-wide description of the review and selection process.**

- a. Who executes: OGPO will revise and publish the agency-wide description of the review and selection process.
- b. Who else is involved: The agency-wide description of the review and selection process will be revised with input (as needed) from program directors, the Office of Grants Management, Field Financial Management Center, Chief Information Officer, Office of Government Relations, the Office of External Relations, and the Office of General Counsel.
- c. Timing: The agency-wide description of the review and selection process will be revised annually, as needed.
- d. Clearance: The agency-wide description of the review and selection process will be cleared in the manner required by Policy CEO-2012-02, Clearance Guidance.

**3. Developing and publishing the selection criteria, funding priorities and considerations, and selection factors used for portfolio balancing (in the *Notice* for each competition).**

- a. Who executes: Programs will develop, clear and publish the selection criteria, funding priorities and considerations, and selection factors used for portfolio balancing in their *Notices*.
- b. Timing: *Notices* will be published as determined by the programs and in compliance with standard operational procedures.
- c. Clearance: *Notices* will be cleared as described in CNCS Policy on Preparing Policies and Procedures and the Clearance Guidance.

**A. Following Grant Award:**

The following materials will be published as soon as practicable and no later than 90 business days following the award of grants (See Attachment: Post-Grant Publishing Procedure):

- Blank external peer review worksheets and names of external peer reviewers who completed the review process, when applicable.
- Summary external reviewer comments for approved applications, when applicable.
- All compliant applications:
  - Framing language, which includes a briefing of the program and the competition. A Framing Language Template is available in Attachment 4.
  - List and executive summaries of all compliant applicants.
  - SF 424 and narratives of successful applicants.

**1. Blank External Peer Review Worksheets, names of external peer reviewers who completed the review process.**

- a. OGPO will develop the blank external peer review worksheets in collaboration with the programs and clear it through OGC according to standard procedures.
- b. OGPO will develop the list of external reviewers. The list will reflect names as entered by reviewers in eGrants, or as provided by reviewers in their Resumes, if their information is gathered outside eGrants. OGPO staff will conduct quality control for accuracy, including participation status, from eGrants reports and reviewer tracking charts.
- c. OGPO will provide programs with the blank external peer review worksheets and the list of external reviewers for posting purposes.

2. **Summary external reviewer comments for approved applications when applicable.**
  - a. From the deliverables from the review, OGPO will provide programs with an Applicant Feedback Summary Report for each application reviewed, when applicable.
  - b. Program staff will conduct final review of the Applicant Feedback Summary reports, in particular, for competitions in which the program has not reviewed reviewer's worksheet during the review.
  
3. **Framing language, list and executive summaries of compliant applications, 424 Facesheets and Narratives of approved applications**
  - a. The Office of Information Technology will generate a report for each competition for all compliant applications submitted. This report lists the legal applicants and sub-applicants names (if applicable), program names, and executive summaries.
  - b. This report reflects information exactly as submitted by applicants.
  - c. Programs will review the SF-424 and narratives of all funded applications.
  - d. Programs, the Office of Grants Management and/or the Field Financial Management Center, and OGPO will conduct quality control as follows:
    - i. After compliance decisions are made, OGPO staff rejects non-compliant applicants in eGrants following established procedures and ensures non-compliant applications are accurately identified.
    - ii. After funding decisions are made:
      1. Program staff reject applications not recommended for funding following standard procedures.
      2. Program staff reject applications not recommended for funding following clarification.
      3. Program Office staff proceed with grant certifications following standard procedures.
      4. Office of Grants Management/Field Financial Management Center staff proceed with grant certifications following standard procedures and ensures all grants are awarded.
      5. Program staff conduct quality control to ensure application statuses are up-to-date and accurate.
      6. OGPO conducts an audit of application submissions to ensure applications submitted past the deadline are rejected.
    - iii. Program staff conduct Quality Control to ensure that:
      1. Non-compliant applications are not included.
      2. All compliant applications are listed.
      3. Awarded applications are aligned with the Funding Decision Certified package.
      4. No amount is indicated for non-awarded applications.

Clearance of the materials listed above (*Section B. Following Grant Awards*) will be conducted as one package owned by the respective program. The package will be cleared in the manner required by Policy CEO-2012-02, Clearance Guidance.

**What is the approval process for publishing, for a given competition, additional documents not covered in this policy?**

The program consults with OGPO, OGC and CoS on the material they intend to publish. The program prepares a clearance package in the manner required by Policy CEO-2012-02, Clearance Guidance.

**What is the timeframe for the implementation of the Post Grant Award procedures?**

The implementation of Post Grant Award procedures will take place within a 90 business days after grants are awarded. The timeline is presented in the attachment.

**What happens to the clearance package once it has been signed?**

The originator delivers the original signed package to the OGPO. OGPO staff scan the approved package, save it on the Shared Drive and informs via e-mail all signatories that the package has been cleared and signed.

**Attachment 1 – Post Grant Award Procedure Timeline (All days are business days)**

	<b>Task</b>	<b>By</b>					<b>When</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1	Program chairs kick-off meeting of OIT, New Media Team, OGPO and program contact to review timeline and competition characteristics	Program					Day 1	
2	Submit HelpDesk request to OIT to generate Award Tracking Report. See Attachment 2 for form to submit.	Program					Day 1	Send to: oithd@cns.gov. Subject line: "Request to generate Award Tracking Report"
3	Prepare Blank External Review Worksheet.		OGPO				Day 3	In coordination with the programs
4	Prepare list of External Reviewer Names, if applicable.		OGPO				Day 3	
5	Submit Award Tracking Report to Program Director.			OIT			Day 7	
6	Review and correct Award Tracking Report and submit to OGPO.	Program					Day 14	
7	Prepare Applicant Feedback Summary Reports, if applicable.		OGPO				Day 14	Compiled from Individual Review Forms for each approved application.
8	Submit framing language to OGC program attorney. See Attachment 4 for framing language template.	Program					Day 14	For legal clearance.
9	Submit cleared framing language to Program Director.				OGC		Day 15	
10	Submit Applicant Feedback Summary Reports to Program Director, if applicable.		OGPO				Day 18	
11	Review and approve Applicant Feedback Summary Reports, if applicable.	Program					Day 22	
12	Initiate and complete final clearance of package for posting.	Program					Day 38	Following Policy CEO 2-12-02, Clearance Guidance.
13	New Media posts all forms, names of reviewers, new text. OIT is tasked with pulling in any data from the database and feeding into the web page.					Digital Media	Day 38	In coordination with OIT Web Services
14	OIT Web Services posts to staging site and requests review and approval from Program Director.			OIT			Day 40	
15	Program Director approves and requests approval to post from OGPO, CoS.	Program					Day 45	
16	Program Director submits final Web Change form to New Media to post package. New Media Team responsible for web page text.	Program					Day 50	Coordinates any requested changes with New Media Team and OIT
17	New Media Team tasks OIT to post data and informs Program Director.			OIT		Digital Media	Day 55	
18	OIT posts and informs Program Director.			OIT			Day 55	Closed HelpDesk request
19	Program informs field of posting.	Program					Day 55	Procedure Complete

***Attachment 2: Request to Initiate Award Tracking Form***

**Open Government Grant Competition Information Posting: Request to Initiate Posting**

Name of Program:

Title of Competition:

Number of Compliant Applications:

Number of Awarded Applications:

Internal and External Review

Internal Review Only

If External Review, link to pdfs:

Point of Contact:

Point of Contact e-mail:

Point of Contact phone:

Date:

Target Date for Publication on the Web:

Deadline for Publication on the Web:

### ***Attachment 3: Components of the Award Tracking Report and Naming Conventions***

The Award Tracking Report generated by OIT will be an excel spreadsheet with the following column headers:

<b>Column Header</b>	<b>Description</b>
tbl_grants_appid	Application ID from eGrants
tbl_grants_nofaname	Name of the NOFA
tbl_grants_orgname	Applicant's Name
tbl_grants_orgaddress	Applicant's Street Address
tbl_grants_orgcity	Applicant's City name
tbl_grants_orgstate	Applicant's State abbreviation
tbl_grants_orgzip	Applicant's Zip Code
tbl_grants_orgzipplus	Applicant's Zip Code 4 digit extension
tbl_grants_orgphone	Applicant's Phone number
tbl_grants_orgemail	Applicant's Email address
tbl_grants_cnscsnumber	CNCS number used in eGrants
tbl_grants_fedaward	Dollar amount of Grant awarded
tbl_grants_summary01	Executive Summary from application
tbl_grants_summary03	Place holder for 424 information indicator – '424' is entered if fedaward is greater than \$0
tbl_grants_summary04	Place holder for external review FEEDBACK indicator – 'FEEDBACK' is entered if fedaward is greater than \$0 AND an external review of the application was conducted.

#### **Naming Conventions:**

1. If a 424 document is required for a particular Application (only in the case where the grant was awarded) the resulting PDF document will follow this naming convention: appid\_424.pdf. Example: 11CB130845\_424.pdf
2. If an awarded application was reviewed by external reviewers the resulting FEEDBACK document will follow this naming convention: appid\_FEEDBACK.pdf. Example: 11CB130845\_FEEDBACK.pdf. These 'feedback' documents are created by and stored in a folder on the Shared drive. That folder location is included with the final web posting request sent to OEA.

#### **Assumptions:**

1. Continuation grants will not be posted.
2. If the fedaward amount is \$0.00 for a particular application, the contact information for that applicant will NOT be shown on the Grant's Results web page.

### ***Attachment 4: Framing Language Template***

[Year/Name/Type of Competition][Example: 2013 AmeriCorps National Direct Continuations]

[Name of competition] grants are awarded to [eligible organizations] to [purpose of program].

[Additional information on the particular program that will be of interest to the public].

[Example: An AmeriCorps member is an individual who is enrolled in an approved national service position and engages in community service. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service members receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust.

Commission State or Territory grants are awarded to organizations that are proposing a project that operate in only one state and that are put forward to the Corporation by Governor-appointed State or Territory Commissions. National Direct grants are awarded to organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one state and apply directly to the Corporation. State Commission or Territory and National Direct grants are made on a standard cost reimbursement basis. Some grants are awarded for a fixed amount per each full time AmeriCorps member with use of funds contingent on member enrollment and completion of service.]