

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The Nevada Commission on Service (Nevada Volunteers (NVV) is pleased to submit this proposal as the lead applicant for the Pacific Region of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and geographically aligned states from the Southwest Cluster to facilitate the planning, implementation, and financial oversight of the 2015-16 Pacific Cluster National Service Conference (PCNSC). NVV, in collaboration with America's Service Commissions (ASC), proposes a multi-day regional conference for AmeriCorps State/National, Senior Corps and commissions program staff and leadership. The PCNSC structure will include tracks specific to these stakeholders comprised of collaborative sessions to facilitate cross-stream training and dialogue. Training will focus on CNCS competencies in performance measurement, evaluation, grant compliance, program and financial management and other topics vital to effective program impact.

ASC, the Washington D.C.-based national association of state service commissions, will provide significant support through a contractual agreement for the planning, development, and implementation of the conference. ASC will work closely with NVV to ensure all of the deliverables are met and that the conference aligns with the other regions.

The amount of funding requested is \$75,000. Additional costs for the conference will be covered by registration fees and event sponsorship.

## Program Design

### RATIONALE FOR PROPOSED REGION:

Nevada Volunteers in Reno, Nevada will serve as the lead applicant for the 2015-16 PCNSC. Our consortium will include the states incorporated into the CNCS Pacific Cluster along with states geographically aligned with Nevada from the Southwest Cluster, which does not have a lead applicant for the regional conference. Consortium states include: WA, OR, CA, NV, ID, MT, WY, UT, AZ, AK, HI, CO, NM, OK, American Samoa, Guam, and Northern Mariana Islands. The Consortium also includes ASC and is further comprised of stakeholders representing AmeriCorps State/National and Senior Corps programs in the region, CNCS State offices and representation from the full CNCS Program Network (VGF, Social Innovation Fund and AmeriCorps National Direct, Indian tribes, VISTA and NCCC).

### PLAN AND INFRASTRUCTURE:

Our conference planning strategy will be to build upon the success of the 2013 and 2015 National Service conferences held in Portland and Salt Lake City respectively. Under the leadership of ASC we

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have already communicated with leadership from many of the states included in this proposed PCNSC conference to ensure their commitment to a Nevada location. Nevada Volunteers will provide logistical support for the 2016 PCNSC. Nevada is currently receiving bids for conference locations from Las Vegas, Nevada, Stateline, Nevada and Reno, Nevada. NVV staff will contact the local Convention and Visitors Bureaus to identify host site options. Facilities will be assessed based on their cost effectiveness and on their capacity to host a multi-day conference for a minimum of 600 participants and a maximum of 700, dispersed among potentially 7-8 break out rooms, up to 10, at any given time, as well as their capacity to be fully accessible for persons with disabilities. We will attempt to select event sites that are capable of providing lodging and meals at the government per diem rate or shall identify alternative locations for individuals needing the government per diem rate. All locations being considered in Nevada are centrally located to many of the states in both the Pacific Cluster and the additional Southwest Cluster, and can be accessed by car within a reasonable amount of time from multiple states included in the consortium. The airports in both Las Vegas and Reno are hubs for major airlines. We plan to schedule the conference between March and April, working to insure the timing is distinct from the other regional conferences to assure that ASC and CNCS staff have the greatest opportunity to offer support and expertise.

### **OUTREACH, MARKETING AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN:**

NVV and ASC will promote the 2016 PCNSC through CNCS area managers, state officers, Senior Corps Associations, tribal entities and commissions. Contact with tribal entities will be done in collaboration with commissions and state offices with relationships with Intertribal Councils, along with direct outreach by NVV. We will provide a draft agenda, trainer credentials and registration information. These materials will be posted on the ASC, Nevada Volunteers, and CNCS websites, social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) and through e-blast communications. Marketing and outreach material will contain a statement that materials can be requested in alternative formats to reach the largest audience possible. Regional branding will be created in addition to CNCS branding required by the cooperative agreement.

Consortium members will forward marketing materials to their key stakeholders. In both the planning and implementation phases of the conference we will keep state commissions and CNCS State Offices up-to-date through regularly scheduled conference calls, and emails so that state commission staff and CNCS staff can stay up-to-date on the planning progress, contribute to decision-making and share information with programs. The minimum target registration for the PCNSC is

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600, including 225 Senior Corps Staff, 300 AmeriCorps and National Service Staff and 25 State Commission staff and 50 other invited stakeholders.

### PLAN FOR CONFERENCE DESIGN:

NVV and ASC will invite representatives from the consortium commissions, state offices, Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and other national service programs to participate in the PCNSC planning committee. The committee will begin to meet regularly upon CNCS's notification that NVV has been selected as one of the regional leads for a cooperative agreement. The ASC Deputy Director, Rachel Bruns, will coordinate or support the following aspects of conference planning with the support of Matthew Johnson, NVV Program Officer and Peggy Dupey, NVV Training and Community Engagement specialist: coordinate and lead an inclusive conference planning committee; agenda development; sponsorship solicitation from national organizations with interest in supporting multiple regional conferences; event promotion including save the dates, registration invitations, promotion on ASC website and social media; pre/post event email(s) to attendees and post-event attendee survey; development and maintenance of central website for regional conferences; support in identification and solicitation of keynotes; support of set-up, tear down, and registration check-in for event; purchase, launch, and management of online registration system including providing applicable reports; presenter solicitation/outreach for workshops; presenter communication; collection and posting of presenter materials to central website; and presenter contracting, as applicable; collection of registration fees via check and credit card; facilitation of lead state planning calls; participation in CNCS regional training hosted calls; coordination with CNCS on CNCS trainer/presenter/keynotes; coordination of event on-site staffing including volunteers and state service commission's staff; and customer service support for event attendees.

The PCNSC will be three days in length with potential pre and post half-day conferences to allow for travel flexibility. Each day will begin with a plenary, followed by a series of breakout sessions, and conclude with a large group reflection, networking activity or service project. Opportunities for specific stakeholders to host independent meetings, orientations and trainings may be offered upon request and contingent upon facility capacity. The PCNSC will include the following learning tracks: AmeriCorps State and National, Senior Corps, Commissioners and effective volunteer management. Required trainings regarding performance measure data collection, applying evidence-based theories of change, program evaluation and program/financial management will also be offered. Additionally, the regions's common and critical needs in relation to national service will be identified through a

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needs assessment survey to all national service programs included in the consortium/cluster. NVV will utilize peer trainers in order to tap into the subject matter expertise available in the field. Peer trainers may be identified by the committee, CNCS State Office staff, and programs. National T/TA providers will be sought for expertise and facilitation, particularly for the CNCS required topics. CNCS leadership will also be invited and requested as potential keynote presenters.

### **OUTPUTS, SATISFACTION AND KNOWLEDGE GAINS:**

NVV will work with ASC to administer an online evaluation to be conducted at the close of the conference to measure both participant satisfaction and ability to apply new learning. These surveys will be compiled, analyzed and provided to CNCS.

### **TIMELINE:**

September 2015: CNCS notification, negotiation and approval of cooperative agreement

October-December 2015: Regional planning committee development and begins to meet regularly, facility contract executed, trainers secured, and marketing materials developed.

January 2015: Registration system opens, marketing and logistics coordination continues.

Three weeks prior to the event: Registration closes. March-April PCNSC is held. Exact dates will be determined with ASC to coordinate with the timing of the other regional conferences.

Fourteen days after PCNSC: Learning materials submitted to the knowledge network. 30 days after PCNSC: Outputs and evaluation data returned (if aligned with CNCS requirements). 90 days after PCNSC: Financials reconciled, reported to CNCS.

### **CAPACITY AND STAFF ROLES:**

NVV will contract with ASC to lead the conference planning committee, agenda development, registration, presenter solicitation, and coordination with CNCS. This role will be consistent throughout each region to ensure consistency throughout all the regional events. NVV will manage the budget, allowable costs, secure the conference facility, and print materials. The planning committee will advise conference development, secure trainers, and assist with promotion. NVV will respond to all requests for reasonable accommodation and ensure accessibility. Executive directors of NVV and ASC will work to secure cash or in-kind sponsorship to increase revenue. NVV will increase the Training and Community Engagement Specialist hours to support implementation during the critical planning and preparation period leading up to the PCNSC. Staff from participating consortium/cluster states will be strongly encouraged to volunteer to support various conference related activities each day. Those responsibilities will include serving as break out session hosts, staffing registration, or information table and other logistical support as needed. NVV also plans to

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actively engage commissions involved in putting on NVV other special events in the logistical support and planning of the PCNSC.

### **RATIONALE FOR APPROACH:**

NVV intends to replicate the successful elements of the 2013 and 2015 regional conferences. We hope to enhance the conference by adding workshops that relate to new CNCS priorities, provide development opportunities for nonprofit organizational capacity growth as it relates to service and volunteerism, leadership and strategy for commissions and increase the overall capacity of the PCNSC event. Ability to expand or contract event size will be a key assessment factor to site selection.

### **Organizational Capability**

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY:**

NVV, in partnership with ASC, is eager to improve upon the model in the coming months with the support of CNCS. NVV has proactively sought to address the needs of AmeriCorps State and National, Senior Corps and nonprofit capacity building in all of its training and educational opportunities. NVV has historically held statewide conferences, but that has not happened since the loss of PDAT funding. We have, however, had an active role in the planning and implementation in partner conferences with statewide organizations, including the Alliance for Nevada Non-Profits. We host a special event with 300 to 400 attendees each fall and hosted a single day multi-track corporate engagement summit in January 2013. NVV will be working closely with ASC to ensure that past lessons learned by states hosting the regional conferences is applied to the 2016 PCNSC. NVV holds multiple training events annually with target audiences similar to the PCNSC audience. Additionally, we are well positioned with a Commissioner, Susan Haas, who is executive directors of Nevada Rural Counties, RSVP program and NVV Executive Director Amber Martin-Jahn who is a board member for Seniors in Service, a Senior Corps Corps-FGP and SC program. Additional Senior Corps representation will be sought from other states. NVV has the commitment from Senior Corps programs and AmeriCorps programs to helping get the work done for Nevada to host this event. NVV is accustomed to routinely presenting education opportunities with large audiences, multiple tracks of learning, and often multiple days in length. NVV has a wealth of experience in design and facilitation of personalized and targeted learning interventions for smaller cohorts of AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and other service programs. The topics of trainings have included financial grants management, grant compliance, performance measurement, theory of change, and methods of data collection.

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### **EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE OF KEY STAFF:**

NVV intends to contract with ASC to maximize the capacity to design and achieve an excellent conference. Qualifications of the key staff from ASC and NVV assigned to the training are as follows:

Rachel Manuel Bruns is the deputy director for ASC. Other leadership roles have included the director of Volunteer Wisconsin and Iowa Campus Compact. Rachel has played a lead role in the coordination of the 2013 and 2015 regional training events. Amber Martin-Jahn has served as the Executive Director of Nevada Volunteers since 2013. Prior to this she was the AmeriCorps Program Officer and responsible for grants management, compliance monitoring and training and technical assistance for programs. Prior to joining national service she worked for a local municipality and the University of Nevada, Reno where she was responsible for special events with attendees ranging up to 350 in both of those positions. Matt Johnson, the Program Officer for NVV has been actively involved in conference planning from both the AmeriCorps\*State side and training development and grants oversight for AmeriCorps VISTA as the Program Specialist for the CNCS Nevada State Office. Additionally, Johnson has the added perspective of being a national service member and a program director of an AmeriCorps program. Peggy Dupey, Training and Community Engagement Specialist has an extensive education background having been the Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs for the University of Nevada Medical School and an Adjunct Assistant Professor for the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology. Her perspective on learning environment and structure will be instrumental in designing a conference with significant learning gains for participants. She has served on planning committees for regional and national conferences, several with more than 1,200 participants.

### **SYSTEMS, STRUCTURE, AND STAFFING:**

All core staff is experienced in the grant requirements and developmental needs of AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs and many are subject experts with the ability to train at the PCNSC. NVV staff regularly collaborate with national service program managers and the CNCS state offices, although that office is currently in transition.

### **FISCAL OVERSIGHT:**

NVV has managed multiple federal grants since its inception, including CNCS PDAT, ADMIN and American Recovery and Reinvestment grants, along with Department of Education grants, and state level grants including Nevada humanities grants and general State Grants. NVV adheres to GAAP and undergoes annual A-133 audits. NVV recently underwent the 2014 A-133 audit with no findings

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and underwent a CNCS OIG audit with no commission level findings. NVV has sound fiscal, program and personnel policies that are reviewed and updates on a regular basis. NVV will ensure fiscal oversight and compliance with federal requirements. NVV will review and approve the cooperative agreement with CNCS and the subsequent contracts with ASC, Facility and trainers.

### PROPOSED PROJECT MANAGER:

The project management duties of conference will be designated between Rachel Bruns (ASC) and Peggy Dupey (NVV) with active involvement and direction provided by Matt Johnson.

### Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

The registration fee proposed is \$200, but may need to be increased due to the increase in minimum participants at CNCS request. We may attempt to include a sliding scale rate based on distance traveled to attend the PCNSC if the contract money and registration fees are able to cover event costs. This is a significant concern with the 600 minimum. Reasonable expenses factored into the fee include meeting room rental, five meals, lodging, travel and fees for trainer's fees and AV. Any revenue beyond local registration fees will be acquired through sponsorships yet to be determined. The Executive Directors of NVV and ASC will be tasked with the acquisition of cash or in-kind sponsorships.

The budget provided is sufficient to provide the participants with an excellent conference and effective learning. Expenditures and revenues are tracked and allocated appropriately in NVV financial management system. Financial oversight is provided by the executive directors, contracted bookkeeper and contracted CPA.

### Clarification Summary

1. Attendee projections have been revised to reflect 600 individuals. This may lead to increased conference costs, and decreased subsidizing impact of the CNCS funds. While all attempts will be made to minimize impact to participants, this event will need to be cost covering through CNCS funds and registration fees, along with sponsorships.
2. Outreach to tribal entities was added to the narrative. Outreach will be completed through state offices and commissions, along with direct outreach to interagency tribal groups.
3. Commissioner Susan Haas is the Executive Director of Nevada Rural Counties RSVP. Commissioner Viviana Dickieson oversaw senior programs for Catholic Charities of Southern

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Nevada, which included Senior Corps programs but has since submission of this grant changed positions. Amber Martin-Jahn sits on the board for Seniors in Service which hosts a senior companion and foster grandparent program.

4. eGrants translates apostrophes into ? in its internal system. We believe these eGrants errors have been corrected. The final application was reviewed but unable to be printed for additional verification due to the timing of this clarification and staff working remotely

5. In order to take on this project staff budgeted within the admin grant will be reduced to reflect actual work on this project, the 2016 admin grant will be submitted to reflect no more than 100% per position across all CNCS funded grants. Commission grants do not require approval for budget changes under the 10% rule so these adjustments will be made internally as allowable until 2016 to insure not more than 100% is charged to CNCS funds for any individual personnel.