



Managing the CNCS Partnership

Overview of the e-Course Series

- AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities
- AmeriCorps Allowable/Unallowable Activities
- Demonstrating the Impact of Service
- Grant Amendments
- Managing the CNCS Partnership
- Member Management
- Member Position Descriptions
- Overview of the CNCS Partnership
- Subgrantee and Service Site Management
- Sustainability Planning

Important Reminder

The information in this e-Course is for informational purposes and does not represent all requirements for AmeriCorps State and National grantees.

Grantees are responsible for knowing, understanding, and complying with all federal and state laws and regulations, and, accordingly, must consult the primary sources for information related to their grant award. Tribes, national programs, and commissions should speak with the assigned CNCS Program Officer about any questions on grant-related activities.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Examine the organizational structure of the Corporation for National and Community Service
- Review the role of the AmeriCorps State and National Program Officer
- Discuss a variety of ways to build a strong working relationship with CNCS

Course Design



Terminology and Acronyms

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Grantee Progress Report (GPR)

Federal Financial Report (FFR)

Prime Grantee

Subgrantee

Terminology and Acronyms

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Grantee Progress Report (GPR)

Federal Financial Report (FFR)

Prime Grantee

Subgrantee

**Notice of Funding Opportunity
(NOFO)**

A document published annually by CNCS that provides details on the appropriate use of AmeriCorps funds for a particular grant year

Terminology and Acronyms

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Grantee Progress Report (GPR)

Federal Financial Report (FFR)

Prime Grantee

Subgrantee

Grantee Progress Report (GPR)

A report submitted in eGrants that details progress toward achievement of approved performance targets within a specific timeframe

Terminology and Acronyms

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Grantee Progress Report (GPR)

Federal Financial Report (FFR)

Prime Grantee

Subgrantee

Federal Financial Report (FFR)

A report submitted in eGrants that details the status of CNCS and Grantee funds within a specific timeframe

Terminology and Acronyms

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Grantee Progress Report (GPR)

Federal Financial Report (FFR)

Prime Grantee

Subgrantee

Prime Grantee

A direct recipient of the AmeriCorps grant. Multi-state programs, tribal programs or planning grantees, and State Service Commissions are Prime Grantees of CNCS

Terminology and Acronyms

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Grantee Progress Report (GPR)

Federal Financial Report (FFR)

Prime Grantee

Subgrantee

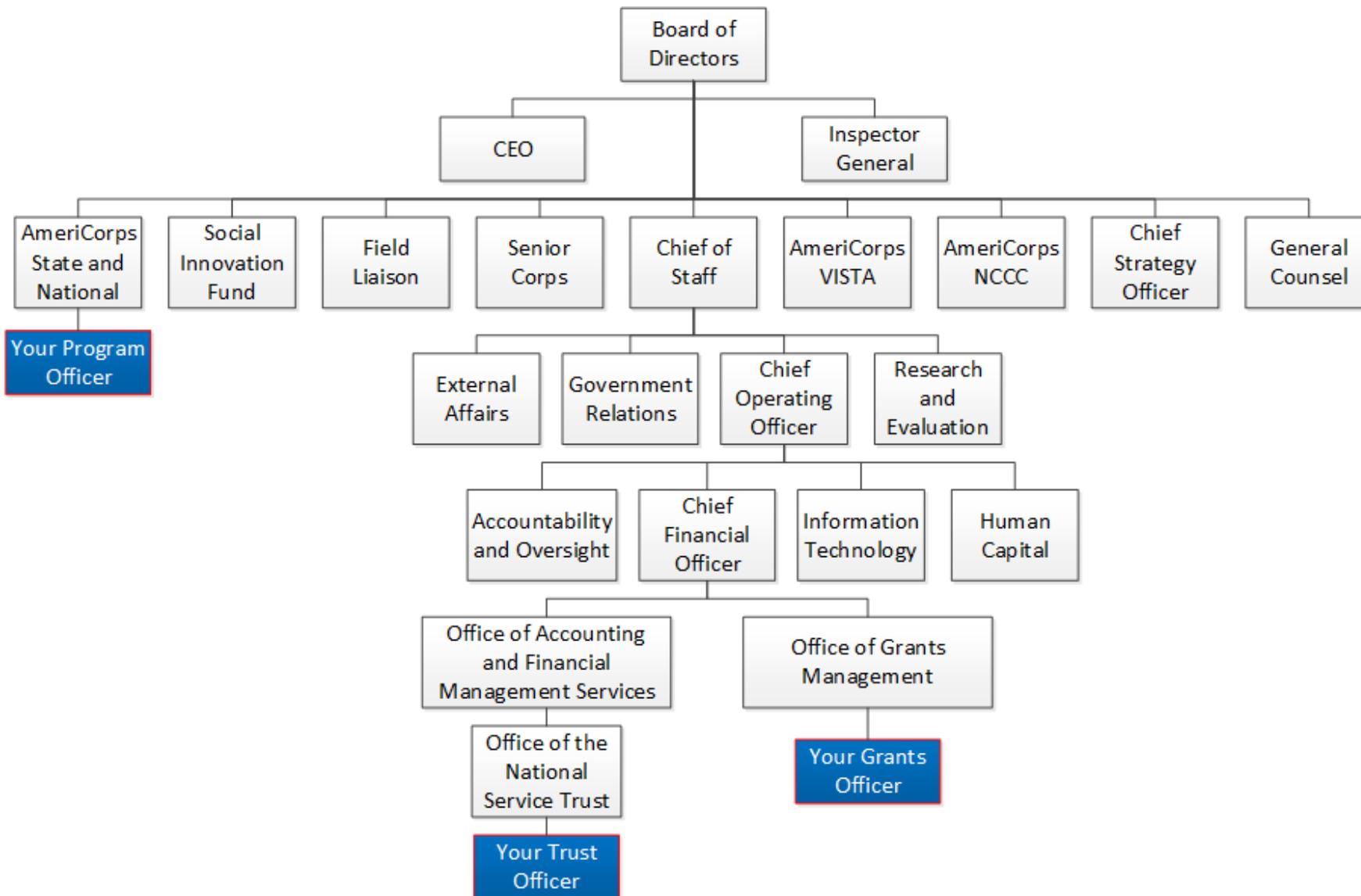
Subgrantee

An organization that receives AmeriCorps grant funds or member positions from a Prime Grantee of CNCS. State or local programs funded in the Competitive or Formula grant cycles are subgrantees of State Service Commissions

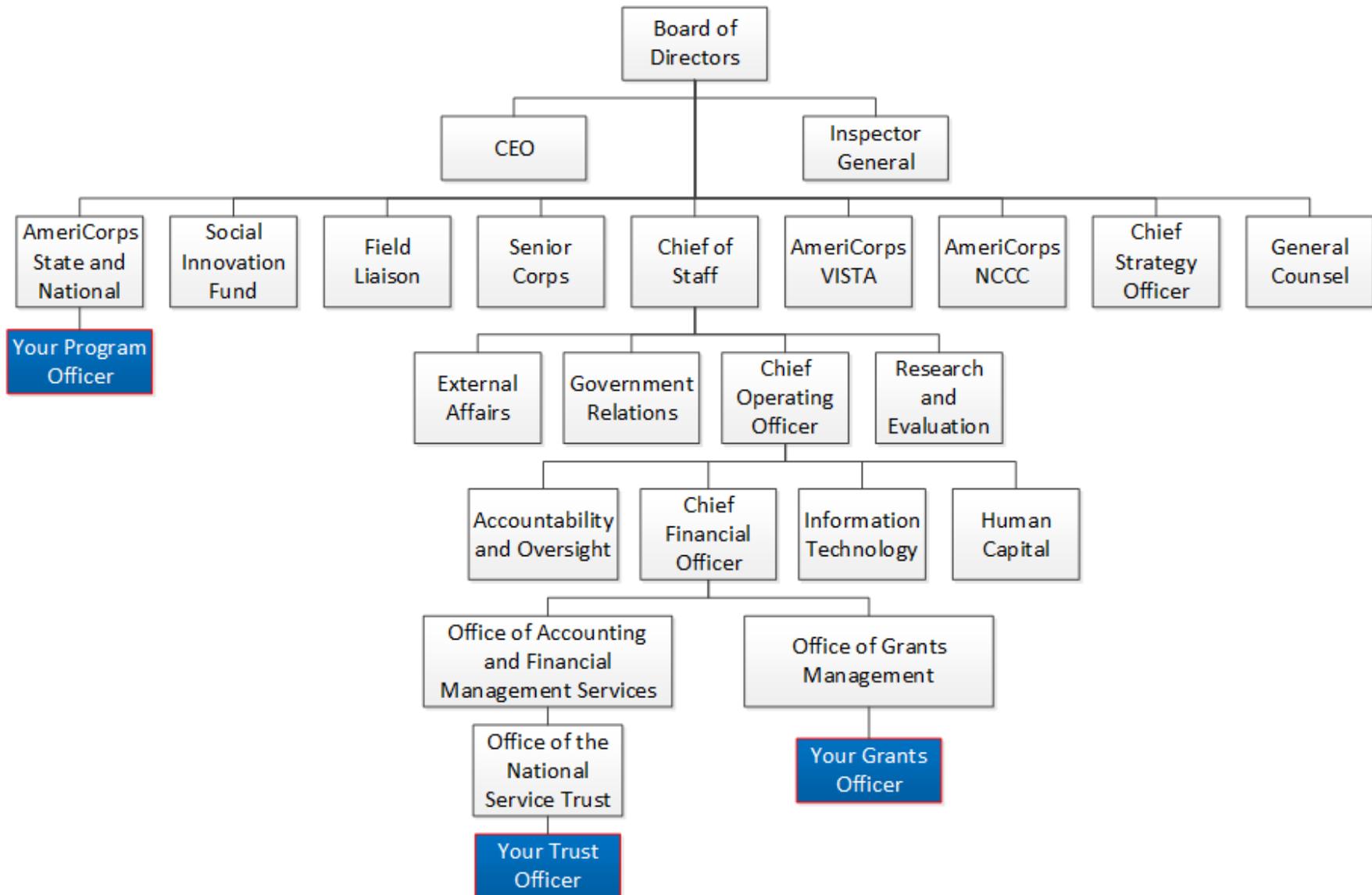
How CNCS Works

- Independent federal government agency
- Budget is subject to annual budget appropriations based on the federal fiscal year (Oct 1 – Sep 30)
- Significant impact of the Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and Congress
- Charged with grant-making, national days of service, awards, research
- Staff are combination of career federal employees and Presidential appointees
- Staff include AmeriCorps alumni and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
- Multiple CNCS units implement annual work plans that impact AmeriCorps State and National grantees

CNCS Organizational Units



Interaction with CNCS Units

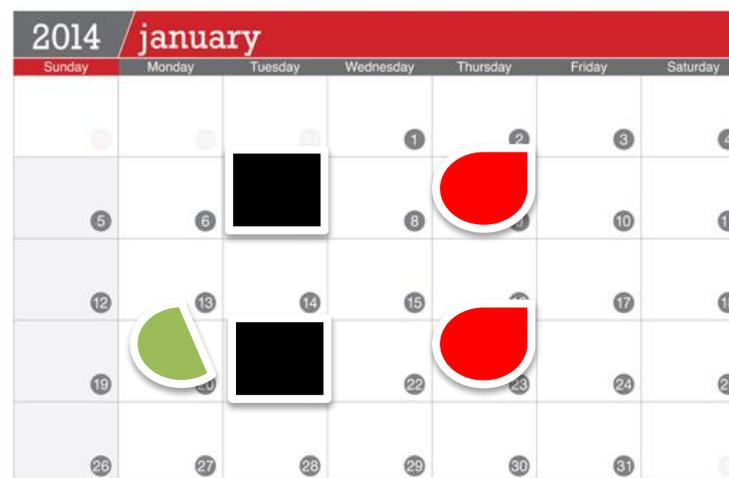


Sample CNCS Calendar

 **1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month:** Commission and Direct Program Conference Calls (led by the Office of External Affairs); 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month: Commission Conference Call (led by the Office of Grants Management)

 **2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month:** Performance Measurement Training for AmeriCorps State and National Grantees (led by the Office of Research and Evaluation)

 **3rd Monday of the month:** CNCS Listening Session on Agency Strategic Plan (led by the Office of CEO)



Implications for Grantees

Pros:

- Multiple layers of expertise to support program and commission functions
- Diverse CNCS staff offer variety of insights and resources

Challenges:

- May receive frequent updates/requests from multiple CNCS units
- May have difficulty prioritizing or meeting overlapping deadlines

Role of the AmeriCorps State and National Program Officer

The AmeriCorps State and National Program Officer (PO) can help grantees manage the communications and requests from multiple CNCS units. The PO is the primary point of contact for direct programs and State Service Commissions.

These are the key elements of the PO's job:

- Portfolio management
- Grant process support
- AmeriCorps State and National committee work
- CNCS cross-unit committee work

Portfolio Management

Each PO has a group of AmeriCorps State and National direct and commission grantees that he or she manages. In this capacity, the PO:

- Monitors grantee performance such as Portal compliance and progress on approved performance measures
- Reviews and clarifies Grantee Progress Reports
- Connects grantees with resources and opportunities to support their work
- Helps troubleshoot grant or program issues

Communication Basics (1 of 3)

Types of communication with your PO:

- Online/database contact information
- Phone
- Email
- In-person



Communication Basics (2 of 3)

Be sure to:

- Verify eGrants contacts each month
- Provide 2 contacts for the internal AmeriCorps distribution list when requested
- Review and update the internal AmeriCorps distribution list when requested
- Sign up for alerts on the CNCS website
- Maintain a schedule of monthly check-in calls with your PO
- Participate in recurring and episodic conference calls scheduled by CNCS
- Always copy your PO on emails sent to other CNCS staff
- Whenever possible, engage your PO in program or commission events, service projects, trainings, etc. This may be a challenge due to federal travel restrictions or budget limits, but it is important to keep it in mind as you move through the grant year.



Communication Basics (3 of 3)

Be sure your Program Officer has:

- Adequate backstory and context on the program or commission work (especially details that are not part of CNCS-required reports)
- An understanding of special circumstances that impact your ability to be successful
- All your great news as soon as possible; don't wait until your GPR to share news of a great accomplishment or meaningful service story; POs love great news!
- An immediate heads up on any unexpected developments (for example, a member grievance or notice of investigation from the Inspector General)



Beyond the Basics

- In addition to maintaining regular and positive communication with your Program Officer, there are other ways that you can engage CNCS in program and commission business or help inform the Corporation's work.
- Each year, there are multiple opportunities for you to share, advise, and volunteer.

Share

- Be pro-active about collecting and sharing powerful stories and images that depict the impact of national service. You can share these stories with CNCS via your Program Officer, on the CNCS website, and through social media.
- This builds our ability to tell the national service story to potential AmeriCorps members, Congress, the general public, etc., and it keeps us all connected to our shared mission of service.



Advise

- Each year, CNCS asks for input on core agency functions via the Federal Register, written surveys, or conference calls.
- It is critical that grantees engage in this type of feedback, since the results of the proposed grant guidance, regulations, or policies will directly impact the communities and members served.
- Sign up for the official email distributions on the CNCS website; and check with your Program Officer about all upcoming opportunities to provide input to CNCS.



Volunteer

- There are also various opportunities to volunteer to help design or deliver aspects of CNCS or AmeriCorps State and National work each year.
- You will receive invitations to help test new grant reports or training materials, speak on panels or webinars, coordinate service projects, and more.
- Check with your Program Officer about all upcoming opportunities to volunteer, and, if your schedule permits, get involved in one or more of these opportunities.



Scenario 1: Award Recipient

- An AmeriCorps member enrolled in an AmeriCorps State and National Direct program receives the AARP Andrus Award for Community Service at the agency's annual awards banquet. The member is recognized for service she contributed outside of her AmeriCorps service year.

In this scenario, what could the National Program Director do?



Scenario 1: Award Recipient

Share with CNCS:

- ✓ Program Officer
- ✓ Office of External Affairs
- ✓ Corporation State Office

Share outside of CNCS:

- ✓ State Service Commission
- ✓ AmeriCorps Alums

Scenario 2: Public Comment Period

- On June 1, CNCS releases a draft Notice of Funding Opportunity for Tribal program and planning grant applicants. The request for public comment is published in the Federal Register, and the deadline to submit comments is June 30.



In this scenario, what could a Tribal Program Director do?

Scenario 2: Public Comment Period

Advise:

- ✓ Create a plan for soliciting input from all tribal partners and compiling it for CNCS
- ✓ Convene stakeholders for listening sessions or focus groups to examine the Notice of Funding Opportunity draft and compile feedback for CNCS
- ✓ Submit a single, organized response on behalf of the tribe and its partners by the deadline and as directed in the Federal Register

Scenario 3: Portal Testing

- CNCS issues a request for AmeriCorps members and recent alumni to test new functions within the AmeriCorps Portal. The testers will need to represent a variety of program designs, education levels, and ages. The testing will be conducted online.

In this scenario, what could a State Service Commission Director do?



Scenario 3: Portal Testing

Volunteer:

- ✓ Reach out to commission subgrantees (Competitive and Formula) as well as national programs operating in the state to recruit members and program alumni
- ✓ Reach out to the local or state chapter of AmeriCorps Alums to recruit alumni testers
- ✓ Confirm all members and alumni will be able to complete the testing as required
- ✓ Submit the contact list of volunteer testers to CNCS as requested

Additional Resources

The Corporation's website contains links to statutes, regulations, provisions, FAQs, and other resources to support strong management of AmeriCorps programs and State Service Commissions: www.nationalservice.gov

Summary

You should now be able to:

- Examine the organizational structure of the Corporation for National and Community Service
- Review the role of the AmeriCorps State and National Program Officer
- Discuss a variety of ways to build a strong working relationship with CNCS

Thank You!

Congratulations!

You've successfully completed the Managing the CNCS Partnership module.