

2018 Community Conversations Research Competition Overview

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) 2018 Community Conversations Research grants were awarded, after a competitive process, to institutions of higher education that engaged communities in conversations about their civic health using participatory research approaches to facilitate civic engagement and strengthen community capacity to address local issues. This competition was only open to scholars (i.e., academics, researchers, and postdoctoral researchers) with a proven track record and standing in their respective fields at institutions of higher education.

A participatory research approach includes actively engaging residents and other local stakeholders to learn about and research community conditions, as well as developing and implementing action plans that are culturally competent and reflect the needs and situation of a local community. This research approach can assist in building skills and the local capacity of community members and stakeholders, and also increases collaboration among stakeholders. This approach also contributes to strengthening civic infrastructure.

The grants funded research in three priority areas:

Priority 1: Communities that are already working collaboratively to tackle a locally identified issue. This includes groups of people such as residents, local stakeholders, organizations or other institutions that are already working collectively toward a common goal or issue.

Priority 2: Communities that have experienced a disaster. This includes communities that have experienced a natural or manmade disaster and are in a recovery phase.

Priority 3: Communities in social crisis. This includes communities that are experiencing a type of social crisis e.g., persistent poverty, rising unemployment, increasing opioid use.

Grantees are expected to disseminate results from their studies to inform the public, practitioners and other researchers.