



AmeriCorps State and National Commission Virtual Learning Community – 2015 Series

Recorded on March 17, 2015



Technology Check



- To hear the audio portion of the presentation, access the recording at www.nationalservice.gov/resources/americorps
- All participants will be in a listen only mode until the operator opens the line for comments and questions.
- Use the Chat Box to ask a question at any time during the presentation.

Today's Agenda



Session Focus: Subgrantee Selection

- Opening Remarks: Bill Basl
- CNCS and Subgrantee Selection: Jill Graham
- Commission Subgrantee Selection: Emily Haber and Jessica Kessler
- Commission Input and Questions
- Closing Remarks

AmeriCorps State and National



BILL BASL, DIRECTOR

William C. Basl became the Director of AmeriCorps following an 18-year tenure as the Executive Director of the Washington Commission for National and Community Service. He notes that his passion lies with “developing new strategies where service and volunteerism can be recognized as major efforts that bring our country together,” and his extensive list of accomplishments bears out that philosophy.

Bill began his national service career as a VISTA volunteer in 1970-1971 helping migrant farm workers in eastern Washington establish their own businesses and continued as a VISTA volunteer leader in 1971-1972 where he helped form a regional service network. He continued to make his mark in the national service movement by founding the Washington Service Corps in 1983, the first state-wide youth service initiative in the nation designed to address priority local education and human service needs, and helped develop national service legislation. Basl also founded the nation's first veterans' corps and is noted for establishing a collaborative regional network to provide AmeriCorps training across the Pacific Northwest. He is a past chair and board member of the American Association of State Service Commissions and was selected by the White House as a Champion of Change – Service Innovator in June 2011. A native of Pittsburgh, PA, Bill received a B.S. degree in Business Administration from the University of Rhode Island.

2015 Series



The 2015 Commission Virtual Learning Community is designed to support the leadership of all State Service Commissions. The topics for each webinar will focus on key areas where CNCS and commissions work as grant-making partners.

- February 5, 3:00-4:30 pm Eastern
Topic: New grantee outreach
- March 17, 3:00-4:30 pm Eastern
Topic: Subgrantee selection
- June 15, 3:00-4:30 pm Eastern
Topic: Board development and executive leadership
- August 25, 3:00-4:30 pm Eastern
Topic: Subgrantee monitoring

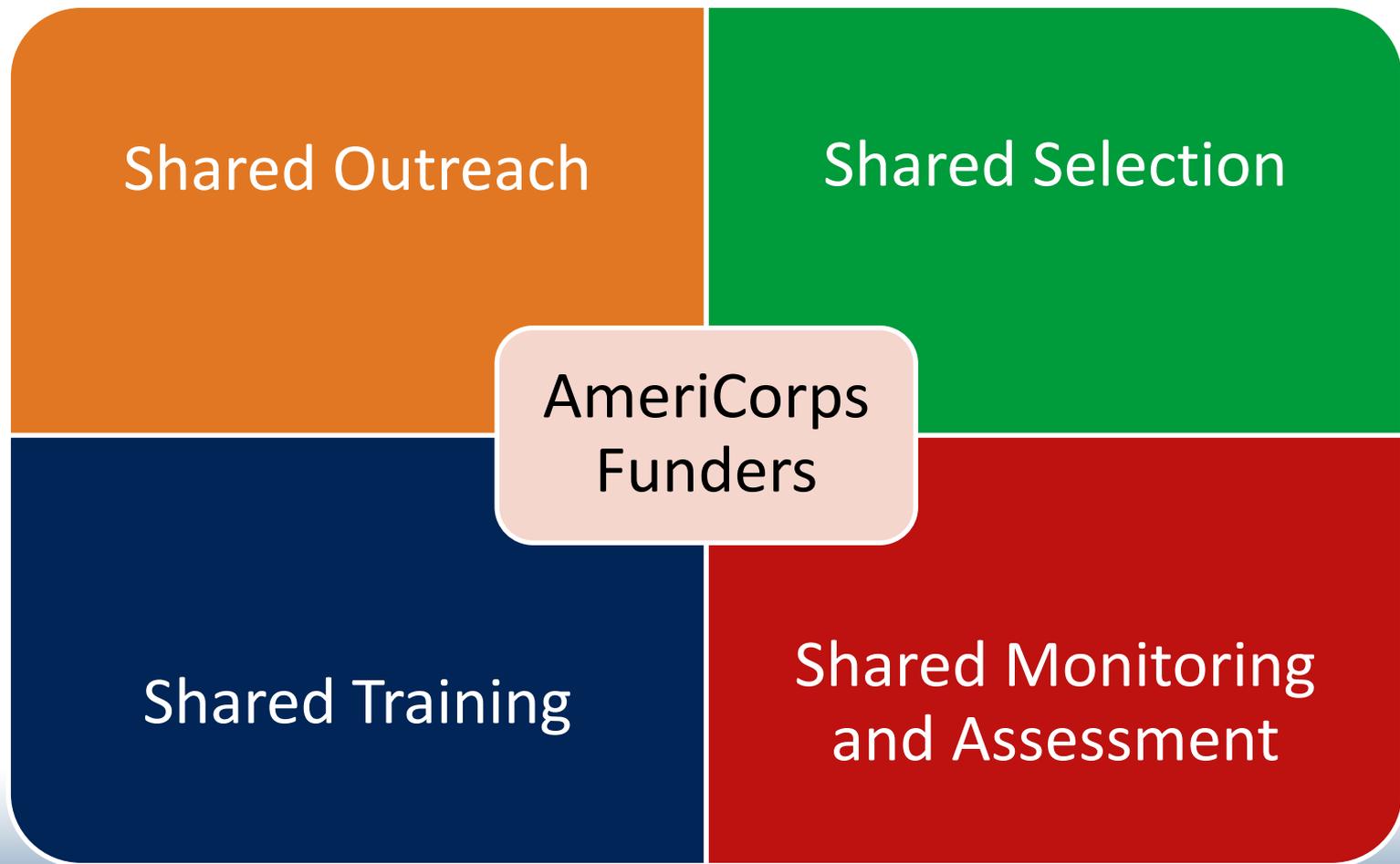
AmeriCorps State and National



JILL GRAHAM, SPECIAL PROGRAM AND PROJECT SPECIALIST

- ✓ AmeriCorps Alumna
- ✓ Former AmeriCorps Program Director
- ✓ Former AmeriCorps Portfolio Manager for National Direct Grantee
- ✓ Former AmeriCorps State and National Program Officer at CNCS

CNCS and Commission Grant-making Shared Functions



CNCS Prime Grant Timeline

<i>Task:</i>	<i>Approximate Timing:</i>
Notice of Funding Opportunity Released	October
Technical Assistance Calls, Webinars	November – December
Competitive Prime Applications Due	January
Competitive GARP	February – April
Competitive Awards Announced	May
Competitive Awards Made	June – until complete
Formula Allocations Released	Late winter/spring
Formula Prime Applications Due	June
Formula GARP	July
Formula Awards Announced	August
Formula Awards Made	August – September
Annual Grant Awards Announced	August – September

What is required for commissions?

Excerpted: 45 CFR §2550.80 What are the duties of the State entities?

This section lists the duties that apply to both State commissions and AAEs—collectively referred to as State entities....The duties are as follows:

- (b) *Selection of subtitle C programs and preparation of application to the Corporation.* Each State must:
 - (1) Prepare an application to the Corporation to receive funding or education awards for national service programs operating in and selected by the State.
 - (2) Administer a competitive process to select national service programs for funding. The State is not required to select programs for funding prior to submission of the application described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

Submitting Prime Applications

Commissions have several important tasks:

- Strategic:
 - Maximize investment of AmeriCorps resources in state
 - Support state initiatives/priorities
 - Foster excellent AmeriCorps program implementation and member experiences
- Technical:
 - Attach subgrant applications to Prime
 - Complete narratives as instructed
 - Rank applications, when requested, and provide justification for ranking

Reality Check



- ✓ Commissions have best information about local grant applicants – and how they align with CNCS priorities.
- ✓ State rules about grant application review vary and may impact a commission’s ability to edit, correct, or improve subgrant submissions.
- ✓ CNCS publishes detailed application guidance and training material to help commissions submit strong subapplications.

CNCS Resources



- Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- Glossary
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Technical Assistance Calls
- Training Materials on Performance Measurement, Evaluation, etc.

CNCS Website – Funding Opportunities

The screenshot shows the website for the Corporation for National & Community Service. The main navigation bar includes links for Programs, Focus Areas, Special Initiatives, Newsroom, National Service Blog, Knowledge Networks, and About CNCS. The current page is titled "AmeriCorps State and National Grants FY 2015". A sidebar on the left lists "Build Your Capacity" with sub-links for Grants, Learning and Best Practices, New to National Service, and FAQs. The main content area features a "Table of Contents" section, which is circled in red. A large red arrow points from the right towards this section. Below the table of contents, there is a paragraph about the FY 2015 competition and a list of priority areas.

Corporation for
NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE ★★ ★

FAQs | Contact Us | Search

Programs | Focus Areas | Special Initiatives | Newsroom | National Service Blog | Knowledge Networks | About CNCS

Home

Build Your Capacity

- Grants
- Learning and Best Practices
- New to National Service
- FAQs

AmeriCorps State and National Grants FY 2015

NOFA/NOFO End Date: Wed, 01/21/2015
CFDA number: 94.006

Contact Information
americorpgrants@cns.gov

Table of Contents

- Application Deadline
- Intent to Apply
- State Commission Competition Contacts and Due Dates
- Funding Announcement, Glossary and Application Instructions
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQS)
- Performance Measure Instructions
- Technical Assistance Information
- Technical Assistance Documents
- Technical Assistance Call Schedule and Registration

In the FY 2015 AmeriCorps competition, CNCS seeks to prioritize the investment of national service resources in:

- Disaster Services -- improving community resiliency through disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation
- Economic Opportunity -- increasing economic opportunities for communities, specifically opportunity youth, both as the population served and as AmeriCorps members.
- Education -- improving student academic performance including STEM
- Environment -- 21st Century Service Corps
- Veterans and Military Families -- positively impacting the quality of life of veterans and improving military family strength
- Governor and Mayor Initiatives

CNCS Website – Knowledge Network

The screenshot shows the CNCS website's 'Performance Measurement' page. The browser address bar displays 'http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measur...'. The page header includes the CNCS logo and navigation links for 'FAQ', 'Contact Us', and 'Search'. A dark blue navigation bar contains links for 'Programs', 'Focus Areas', 'Special Initiatives', 'Newsroom', 'National Service Blog', 'Knowledge Networks', and 'About CNCS'. The main content area is titled 'CNCS Performance Measurement' and includes a paragraph explaining the framework. Below this is a circular diagram with 'CNCS STRATEGIC PLAN' at the center and three segments labeled 'GOAL 1', 'GOAL 2', and 'GOAL 3'. A 'Resources' sidebar on the left lists various categories, with 'Performance Measurement' highlighted in red. A red arrow points to this sidebar, and a red circle highlights the 'Performance Measurement Core Curriculum' link. The 'Program Measures' section at the bottom right features logos for AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and VISTA. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the time as 3:56 PM on 3/12/2015.

CNCS and Subgrantee Selection



*What questions
do you have?*

Massachusetts Service Alliance



Emily Haber, Chief Executive Officer

Emily Haber has been the CEO of the Massachusetts Service Alliance, a private, nonprofit organization that serves as the state commission on community service and volunteerism since March 2008. MSA invests public and private funds in community-based organizations and builds capacity of volunteer programs and nonprofit agencies across the Commonwealth.

Before joining MSA, Emily served as program director of Boston Main Streets, a public-private initiative of the City of Boston established to revitalize Boston's many neighborhood commercial districts. Emily is on the board of the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network and the Association of America's State Service Commissions. Ms. Haber has a B.A. from Vassar College and a Masters in City Planning from M.I.T.

Massachusetts Service Alliance

- Established in 1991, MSA is a private, nonprofit organization that serves as the state commission on community service and volunteerism. Its mission is to catalyze the innovation and growth of service and volunteerism by creating partnerships that maximize resources, expertise, capacity, and impact.
- In support of our mission, MSA invests public and private funds in institutions and organizations; convenes and mobilizes individuals, nonprofits, corporations, and government entities to link strategies related to service and volunteerism; builds capacity of programs and agencies through training and technical assistance; and advocates for the development and promotion of public policies and private initiatives that incorporate service and volunteerism as effective strategies to address community needs.

MSA: 2014 – 2015 Activities

- MSA is supporting 23 AmeriCorps programs with close to 1,200 members.
- We have 35 Commonwealth Corps members serving at 15 host site organizations.
- Through our Volunteer Generation Fund, we supported National Days of Service projects for 9/11, MLK Day, and National Volunteer Week and capacity building for nonprofits in volunteer management through trainings and the implementation of the Service Enterprise Initiative.
- We will host our bi-annual state-wide conference on service and volunteering on June 1.

MSA Funding Priorities



- Geographic and programmatic diversity
- Effective solutions that meet community needs
- Meaningful member service experiences
- Volunteer generation
- Demonstrable impact
- Early Childhood Literacy

MSA Subgrantee Outreach and Selection Timeline: 2015 – 2016

August 19, 2014	AmeriCorps Concept Paper RFP Released
August 27 and September 4, 2014	Technical Assistance Sessions
September 5, 2014	Intent to Apply Form Due (optional online form)
September 19, 2014	Concept Papers due to MSA by <u>noon</u>
Late Sept/Early Oct	Community review of all Concept Papers
Late October 2014	Notification of status
November 2014	Draft of Full Applications due to MSA
Late December 2014	Full Application entered into eGrants
Early January 2015	MSA submits applications to CNCS
May/June 2015	Notification of Competitive Award
Late June 2015	Notification of Formula Award

MSA Staffing and Activities

- MSA has a staff of 11.5 FTE including a Director of Programs and Innovation, a Program Team consisting of a Senior Program Officer and 3 Program Officers for AmeriCorps and a Commonwealth Corps Program Manager and Program Associate.
- The AmeriCorps Program Team provides support to the current portfolio of 23 AmeriCorps programs through one-on-one consultations, quarterly Program Director meetings, and AmeriCorps Kick-off Orientation meeting in August.
- They work closely with the applicants selected to submit full proposals, providing feedback on several drafts and working with them on performance measures.

Lessons Learned/Recommendations

- MSA can provide a lot of guidance and feedback to applicants while they are working on their full proposals, but the applicant really has to own the program design – make sure they are not putting content in their proposals to “appease” us but that they don’t really have the capacity or commitment to implement if funded.
- Support expansions when appropriate – it is easier to achieve overall growth by supporting the expansion of successful programs than by supporting the start-up of a new program.
- New programs are exciting though, so as you travel around your state keep your eyes and ears open for potential new programs to introduce to AmeriCorps – it could take a few years to get an organization ready for AmeriCorps and the first step is understanding the opportunity.

Massachusetts Service Alliance Subgrantee Outreach and Selection

*What questions
do you have?*

Serve Wisconsin



JESSICA (KEWIN) KESSLER, PROGRAM OFFICER

Jessica Kessler has served as a Program Officer with Serve Wisconsin since 2012. In this time, she has managed a diverse portfolio of AmeriCorps programs and the state's Volunteer Generation Fund. Jessica has managed the state's Request for Proposals process for three grant cycles, and has extensive experience with applicant technical assistance and grant making.

Prior to Serve Wisconsin, Jessica worked with the American Medical Association Foundation, and though she is not an AmeriCorps alumna, she had the pleasure of working with VISTA participants at a rural community action program to help in neighborhood revitalization efforts.

Jessica graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a degree in Women's Studies. She was very recently married, and lives with her husband and their two cats in Madison.





Serve Wisconsin



- Independent Agency attached to Wisconsin Department of Administration
- Governor-appointed Board of 21 Commissioners
- Staff of 5
 - 4 Program Officers and 1 Executive Director
 - Each PO has a portfolio of 6 or 7 AmeriCorps State programs + Volunteer Generation Fund
- All staff are classified State employees
- Executive Director reports directly to Board

Subgrantee Outreach



- ✓ Limited outreach necessary to get applicants
 - Upon release of NOFO:
 - Send ~2,500 postcards notifying release of State RFP
 - Post notice in Sunday WI State Journal for 2 or 3 weeks

- ✓ WI State Request for Proposals is reviewed by Department of Administration
 - Board approves changes recommended by the Program Evaluation & Development Committee

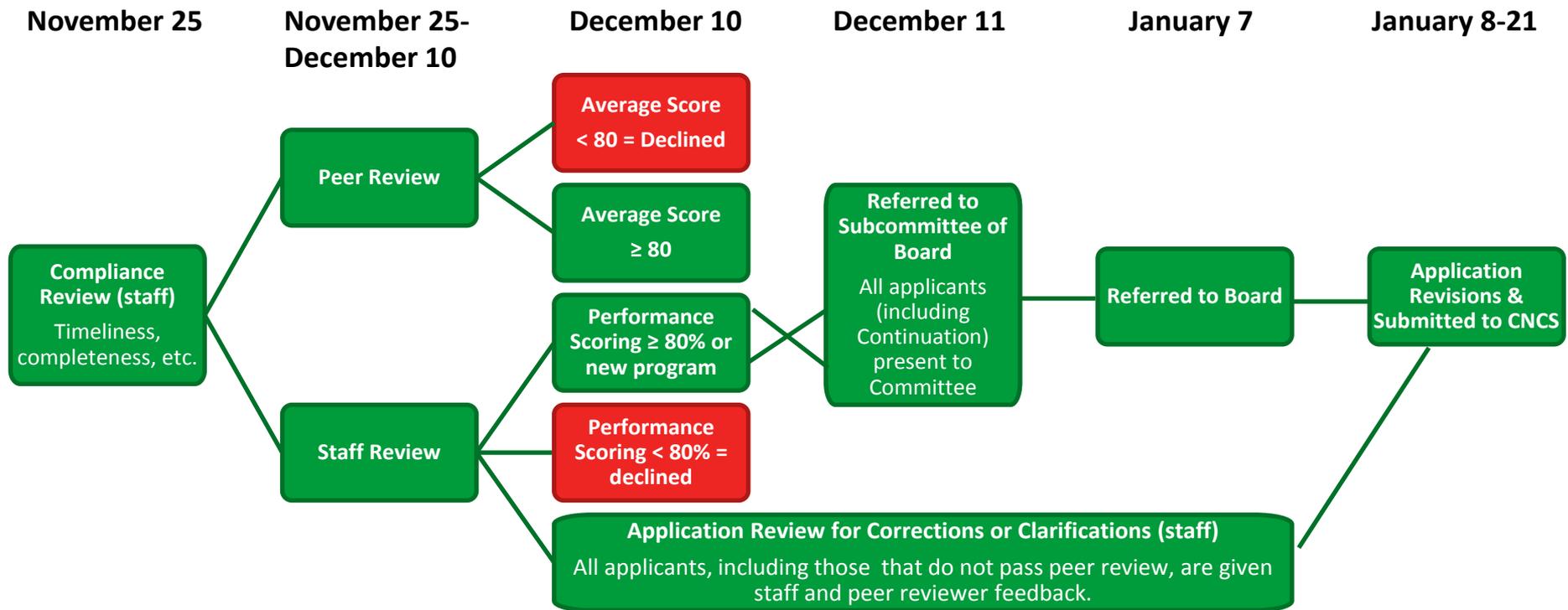
- ✓ Serve Wisconsin Program Officer serves as RFP Manager

Grant Applicant Support

Technical Assistance:

- RFP, Instructions, and other materials posted on website all year for reference – complete transparency
- Staff consults with potential applicants until RFP released
- 3 types of Technical Assistance webinars provided:
 - New, Continuation, and Recompete/Experienced Applicants
- In 2015 – 2016, provided grant-writing webinars presented by Amy Salinas
- Staff accepts questions until 3 or 4 days before due date
 - All questions submitted in writing

Serve Wisconsin Selection Timeline



Continuation applications are not peer reviewed. Staff reviews applications and performance.

Commission Peer Review

-Peer Reviewers receive training and assistance prior to review.

-They utilize a scoring form that uses NOFO/RFP language (largely taken from ServeMinnesota).

-Serve WI staff uses a similar form for their reviews.

-All applicants receive two levels of feedback and are able to use it to improve their applications.

2015-2016 AmeriCorps*State Application Peer Review Form

Legal Applicant:	<input type="text"/>	Reviewer Number:	<input type="text"/>
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Executive Summary (Required – 0 points)

Question	Satisfactory Answer: Y/N	Comments including both strengths and weaknesses
Please review the required CNCS template for Executive Summaries in Attachment A. Did the applicant follow the CNCS template for the Executive Summary?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>

Problem/Need (18 points)

Please briefly describe the problem(s) and/or need(s) identified in this proposal.

Question	Satisfactory Answer: Y/N	Comments including both strengths and weaknesses
The applicant clearly describes how the community problem/need will be addressed by the program.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
The applicant clearly describes how the community need/problem is prevalent and severe in the communities where members will serve and the need has been well documented with relevant data.	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Out of 18 maximum points, my score for this section is:		<input type="text"/>

Theory of Change and Logic Model (34 points)

Please briefly describe the intervention and theory of change proposed.

Commission Formula Funding

- All applicants that are not funded Competitively are considered for State Formula funding
 - Formula funding is for 1 year
 - Formula applicants must re compete in following year
 - Going through Competitive process gives Formula applicants multiple levels of feedback: State peer and staff & CNCS peer and staff
- If Formula allocation is larger than requests, Board may release a Formula Funding RFP
 - Gives opportunity to fund programs addressing State priorities
 - 2014 – 2015 Program Year prioritized Capacity Building
 - Considering Education & Rural Program Focus for 2015 – 2016

Lessons Learned/Recommendations

1. Closely duplicating CNCS process helps applicants
2. Performance as funding consideration makes performance a priority for programs
3. Applicants appreciate appropriate Technical Assistance
4. Very condensed timeline, but try to give applicants as much time as you can
5. Continuously educate Board on the process
6. Subcommittee makes recommendations to Board – keeps staff out of decisions and makes process more efficient
7. Clear and succinct State Service Plan makes it easier to align with programs

Serve Wisconsin Subgrantee Outreach and Selection



*What questions
do you have?*

Wrap Up



- Find CNCS resources at www.nationalservice.gov
 - Grant application support materials
 - National Service Knowledge Network resources
- Learn more about the Massachusetts Service Alliance at www.mass-service.org and Serve Wisconsin at www.servewisconsin.wi.gov
- Next Commission Webinar: June 15, 3:00 – 4:30 pm Eastern; Board and Leadership Development

Thank you!

