Let's start with a few quick notes about why CNCS asks all of its grantees to submit regular progress reports. Progress reports allow CNCS to keep its finger on the pulse of what is happening with its programs, both at the individual level and at a nationwide level. CNCS uses progress reports to keep track of each grantee and commission subgrantee's progress, but also to roll up this information into a broader picture of the accomplishments of the entire national service portfolio. This big picture information is shared with internal stakeholders to help guide decision making, and also with external stakeholders such as elected officials to help them understand the impact that AmeriCorps has across the country.

GPR due dates are determined each year by the AmeriCorps Provisions; the link to the 2014 Provisions is on the slide. Most AmeriCorps State and National programs follow the due dates in this particular document, but it's important to remember that other grants such as Commission Support Grants, Volunteer Generation Fund grants, or special partnership initiatives may have different Provisions and/or have special conditions on their awards setting different report due dates.

The Provisions are re-released each year and are specific to a particular grant year, so make sure that you read the new Provisions and check the reporting due dates every time you are awarded a new grant (either recompete or continuation). Policies about due dates do sometimes change, so don't assume that you will have the same GPR due dates for all three years of your grant.

It's also important not to assume that the GPR and FFR have the same due dates. They may in some cases, but not always.

Here is a chart showing the types of GPRs you will need to submit as an AmeriCorps State and National program. The chart also shows the reporting periods and due dates for each type of GPR.

The mid-year GPR, also called semi-annual GPR, is the first progress report you will submit for your new grant. It is due on April 30th of each year, and should report on data you have collected from the start of the grant year through March 31st.

The end-of-year, or annual, GPR is due on October 31st of each year. It is cumulative for as much of the grant year as you are able to report; depending on your start date, this may be the whole grant year or it may be something less than one year. Take for example a program whose 2014 grant year starts on July 1, 2014, and runs through June 30, 2015. This program will be able to report data from the entire year (July 1 – June 30) because the grant year ends before September 30th. However, a program whose 2014 grant year runs from December 1, 2014, until November 30, 2015, will only be able to report data from December 1 - September 30. (The remaining performance measure data from the 2014 grant year will be reported in the narrative section of the following year's GPR.)

The final GPR covers the entire final grant year, including any no-cost extension periods the program has received. The report is due 90 days after the end of the grant period, so all grantees should be able to report a full set of data for the entire last year of the program. The final GPR is NOT cumulative for the entire three-year project period.

It is very important to submit progress reports on time. Late GPRs are taken into consideration during future grant reviews and also factor into CNCS's assessment of grantees' compliance with their grant requirements. But can be challenging to assemble large amounts of data for a GPR in a short time window, especially for grantees with a large number of operating sites or subgrantees. To help you

accomplish this successfully, state commissions and national direct grantees need to work backwards from their own GPR due date and set earlier due dates for their subgrantees/sites. For example, if an end-of-year GPR is due to CNCS on October 31st, you might want to give your subgrantees an internal due date of September 30th, or even earlier, to send their data and narrative information to you. Creating an internal reporting template for your sites will help you get consistent and clear information from all of them. It's also critically important that you review the data carefully and clarify any unclear or questionable information before you compile it to send to CNCS. Reporting high-quality, accurate, and verifiable data is one of your fundamental responsibilities as a grantee.

Just like you used eGrants to submit your application to CNCS, you will use eGrants to complete and submit your GPRs. The screenshot shows the link on your eGrants home screen that will take you to the GPR module. CNCS POs also review the GPRs in eGrants and use fields in the GPR module to send you feedback and comments. They may also send the GPR back to you with questions or requests for additional information, similar to the clarification questions you received during the grant application review process. You will be able to respond to your PO's questions in the GPR itself, then resubmit the GPR in eGrants.

Here are some hints for how to tell which GPR is which in eGrants. A GPR whose "PR Type" is Progress Report Lite Semiannual may be a mid-year GPR or a final GPR, because both types of reports use the same GPR setup. To figure out which specific type it is, look at the due date. Mid-year GPRs are due on April 30th, while final GPRs are due 90 days after the end of the grant. In the example on the screen, you actually see two mid-year GPRs, one for the 2013 grant year and one for the 2014 grant year.

A GPR whose "PR Type" is Progress Report Annual is an end-of-year GPR. You'll notice that the due date on the screen is 10/31, which is correct for an end-of-year report.

DO NOT look at the Reporting Dates for any of these GPRs; these are frequently inaccurate and are not the same as the Reporting Period specified in the Provisions. The Provisions are the authoritative source on reporting periods, not eGrants.

A couple of other notes about GPRs: You will be receiving detailed instructions for filling out the GPR, including definitions of key indicators you will be asked to report on. We don't have the instructions posted online, since they do change from year to year, but they will be emailed to you well prior to the due date (and we will also go over the essential elements of the report during today's webinar).

It's also important to note that open amendments on your grant award "lock down" the GPR and prevent you from completing or submitting the report. To avoid that type of complication, don't initiate any amendments during the GPR submission and review period, and make sure any existing amendments are awarded or withdrawn before you submit the GPR.

Now let's get into the progress report content itself. This slide shows an overview of the types of information you need to enter on each type of GPR. The mid-year and final GPRs request performance measure actuals for the reporting period, plus associated explanations for any targets that were not met. The end-of-year GPR also requests PM actuals, plus a broader scope of information including demographic indicators, MSY and member actuals, performance indicators such as enrollment and retention, and narratives.

Here are the details about the Demographic Indicators section of the end-of-year GPR. There are two demographic indicators that all AmeriCorps programs are required to report on: (read bullets). You may also be asked to break out the "number of volunteers" indicator by whether they are episodic (one-time) volunteers or ongoing volunteers.

Here are the other demographic indicators requested on the end-of-year GPR. These indicators are optional for grantees; however, if your program collects data on one or more of these indicators, you must report them on the GPR.

The end-of-year GPR may also contain additional demographic indicators that are specific to particular partnership initiatives. The ones you see on the slide are for School Turnaround AmeriCorps programs. Do not respond to these unless you are part of that specific initiative.

The end-of-year GPR requests information about the actual number of Member Service Years (MSY) and the actual number of members that the program allocated to each strategic plan objective. Remember that members can be double-counted across different objectives, but MSY cannot.

If you are a National Direct grantee or competitive subgrantee, and your actual MSY or members for each objective is significantly different than what you had planned (either higher or lower), you need to provide an explanation. Formula grantees do not need to provide these types of explanations, but they do still need to report on their MSY and member actuals.

The Performance Indicators section of the end-of-year GPR is designed to auto-populate with your program's current enrollment rate and retention rate. It will also pull in data on the percentage of your members that were enrolled and/or exited within the required 30-day windows. The auto-population will happen the first time you click on this particular tab on the GPR interface (more on that shortly). It's important not to open this tab too soon, because the data will not refresh when you open it again. So if you click on this tab in July, but you don't finish enrolling your members until September, then your GPR will show an enrollment rate that is too low. (You can provide an explanation about this in the GPR itself, so it's not the end of the world, but it's best to avoid this situation if you can.)

Like with MSY and members, for Nat Dir grantees and competitive subgrantees, explanations are required for enrollment and retention rates that are below 100%. You also need to provide a corrective action plan for how you will raise these rates to be as close to 100% as possible. Formula subgrantees do not need to provide these explanations/plans, though their enrollment and retention rates will also auto-populate in the GPR.

The Performance Measures section is common to all AmeriCorps State and National GPRs and is required for every type of grantee or subgrantee. However, as in previous slides, requirements are slightly different for competitive grantees vs. formula grantees. (Summarize 1st 3 bullets.)

We also strongly encourage programs whose performance measure actuals exceed their targets by a large amount – for example, by 400% or more – to provide an explanation. This is to make sure that the program is collecting data accurately and has correctly interpreted the instructions for the performance measure. If you don't provide these types of explanations for particularly large actuals, you are likely to have those explanations requested by your PO via GPR clarification.

Finally, we have the narrative sections of the end-of-year GPR. Three of the narratives are required, and one is optional. Specific instructions for completing these narratives, including guiding questions that you will need to respond to in each narrative, will be in the GPR instructions that are emailed to you later this year.

Here is a screenshot of what the eGrants GPR Module looks like. This screenshot shows the General Information screen that displays when a GPR is opened in eGrants. Underneath the orange bar at the top, you will also see tabs that correspond to the types of information requested on the GPR. This is an end-of-year report, so you see a large number of tabs. Mid-year and final GPRs have fewer tabs.

Here is the Demographics tab, which shows the demographic indicators we discussed earlier. Demographic actuals are entered in the boxes on the right. Remember that only the first two are required for all programs.

This is the MSYs and members tab, with space to enter MSY and member actuals that correspond to each Objective. The Grantee Narrative field below is where you can enter explanations about the numbers. There are also fields for the Program Officer to enter feedback and clarification items about the information on this tab, and for you to respond to the PO's clarification questions. This is true on every tab, though those fields aren't visible in all of the screenshots in this presentation.

This is the Performance Indicators tab with the auto-populated information about enrollment, retention, etc. It's hard to tell from the screenshot, but there is a scroll bar at the bottom to allow you to see the rest of the values. For competitive grantees, there is also space to enter explanations and corrective action plans for enrollment and retention rates that are below 100%.

One thing to note here: CNCS understands that not all programs will achieve 100% retention; equally effective programs with different program designs may end up with different retention rates. However, you will still be asked to explain any retention rate below 100% and explain the steps you are taking to increase it.

This is the PM tab, where performance measure actuals and associated explanations are entered. There will be a separate heading for each aligned PM. You can see MSYs and members on the slide here as well, but you are not required to enter actuals for MSY and members at the PM level.

Finally, here is the Narratives tab for the end-of-year GPR. You can enter narrative text by clicking on each heading. Remember that it's best to compose the text in a word-processing program first and paste it into the GPR.

The Summary tab contains a visual summary of the data you have entered on the previous screens. This is also the screen where you will find the "Submit" button (not visible on this screenshot) and can locate and print a PDF version of the report.

Here are some "tricks of the trade" for effective GPR submissions.

- Don't wait: GPRs, particular end-of-year ones, contain a lot of data and require a significant time investment to complete them accurately and well. Don't put off starting the GPR until the day it is due, or even the week it is due. Start early.
- Follow directions: remember that directions can be different from year to year and from grant type to grant type.

- Review and clarify: need to make sure that the data you submit to CNCS is complete, accurate, and reliable.
- Set internal deadlines: we talked about this earlier; it's related to the earlier bullets on starting the process early and taking sufficient time to ensure that you have high-quality data from your subgrantees and sites.
- Ensure traceability: Data quality is very important to CNCS. We want to make sure that all of the numbers reported to us are backed up by reliable sources. During future site visits, you might be asked to explain or even to show documentation on the sources of your GPR actuals. Make sure that the primary data sources are maintained and that you have a clear understanding of where the data came from and how it was verified. Also, consider implementing data quality review protocols with your subgrantees or sites if you haven't already.

When you compile your data from your sites or subgrantees, please watch out for common data errors or warning signs that we sometimes call "red flags."

- Numbers that are inconsistent…Make sure you follow the NPM instructions for the performance measures and the definitions for the demographic indicators.
- Outcomes exceeding outputs…Generally speaking, that shouldn't happen with most PMs. Outputs are the "denominator" of outcomes, so the outcome actual should be a subset of the output actual. If only 100 people participate in an environmental science program, it wouldn't make sense to report that 120 people showed a positive change in their knowledge.
- Actuals that duplicate….This suggests that the data might be estimated rather than measured precisely. CNCS needs actual values, ot estimates.
- Actuals that are much higher….(talked about this earlier)
- Actuals that seem inconsistent….it's unlikely that 10 members could provide disaster services training to 200,000 people. Your numbers should reflect what is feasible.
- Numbers that are double-counted….Each output, outcome, and demographic data point should be reported only once to CNCS. Don't report the same output data on two different AC GPRs, or the same volunteers on both an AC and a Volunteer Generation Fund GPR. Otherwise, when the numbers are aggregated at the portfolio level, the totals will be inflated.

Reminder: detailed GPR instructions and definitions for demographic indicators will be emailed to grantees prior to the due date.