

# Appendix A: Glossary of Terms & Legal Terminology

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## **AmeriCorps**

On the whole, a network of three programs—AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), and AmeriCorps State and National—which support nearly 75,000 Americans in service to meet critical needs in the six priority Focus Areas of: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, and Veterans and Military Families; as well as Capacity Building. For the purpose of this grant review, all AmeriCorps references pertain to the justice AmeriCorps Legal Services for Unaccompanied Children Notice (in alignment with the State and National program).

## **Asylum**

Lawful status that may be granted to an individual who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality, or last habitual residence in the case of a person having no nationality, because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. *See* 8 U.S.C. §§ 1101(a)(42), 1158.

## **Bias**

Bias is a preference or inclination that may inhibit impartial judgment or objectivity. One's bias is not limited to a negative judgment, or dislike of an application; it is more often found in favor, or an unfounded positive preference of an applicant or an aspect of an application. We ask that all Review Participants remain vigilant in Panel Discussions to ensure that bias is not introduced in the assessments.

## **Conflicts of Interest (COI)**

A conflict of interest is a situation in which conflict exists between one's private interest and official responsibilities. Such competing interests can make it difficult for a Reviewer to fulfill his/her duties impartially. CNCS considers both actual and perceived COIs in the interest of fairness to applicants, and preserving the integrity of the review process.

## **Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS)**

A federal agency that engages more than 5 million Americans in service through programs like Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and the Social Innovation Fund; and leads President Obama's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For the purpose of this review, CNCS is the agency that is responsible for the respective grant competition.

## **Docket**

The official schedule of proceedings in lawsuits pending in a court of law.

## **eGrants**

The CNCS Web-based online grants management system for grant-related administration. Reviewers will use eGrants for <sup>1</sup>entering their Reviewer Profile (External Reviewers only), and <sup>2</sup>entering their respective banking information in order to receive the honorarium. For the justice AmeriCorps competition, eGrants will not be utilized for additional activities.

## **Extant**

In existence; still existing; not destroyed or lost.

## **Grant Review Application Process (GARP) Liaison**

Primary contact for process-related guidance and logistical support. For the purpose of this review, the GARP Liaison is essentially the Panel Coordinator's personal review assistant that ensures that they are connected, responsive, and prepared with all of the proper resources to complete the review.

## Immigration Proceedings

Include immigration or custody proceedings before EOIR Immigration Courts; appellate proceedings before the Board of Immigration Appeals; proceedings before United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), including applications for asylum, special immigrant juvenile (SIJ) status, and/or T or U nonimmigrant visa status; and state court proceedings seeking orders necessary to support applications for SIJ status, and shall not include any claims, litigation, or other proceedings before federal district courts or United States Courts of Appeals, or any claims, litigation, or other proceedings in any fora against the federal government.

### Individual Reviewer Form (IRF)

The form designed to document a Reviewer's assessment through ratings and comments (that identify strengths and weaknesses in relation to the Selection Criteria) for an application. The IRF is the primary (and most important) review product and deliverable, as several other aspects and products depend on the quality of this document.

### Mid-Review Quality Control (MRQC)

A process that occurred in previous External Reviews to ensure that there is a high-quality discussion applied to the assessment of each application. **The MRQC will not be utilized in the 2014 Blended Review process.** However, Panel Coordinators now bear an increased load to ensure that each application receives a thorough discussion on the required Criteria and Standards—especially in cases of wide variance in Reviewer Ratings. CNCS makes every effort to encourage discussion and consideration to ensure that the Selection Criteria are considered and applied to the application appropriately.

### Post-Review Quality Control (PRQC)

The review process that occurs after the External Review has concluded to reassess applications that were subject to panel anomalies: wide range in Ratings between Reviewers on the panel, issues with Reviewer bias, etc. This process is designed to ensure that each application receives a fair review and is not disadvantaged from any issues that panels may have experienced. PRQC Reviewers are selected from the original Review Participants that had good performance results and high-quality IRFs, to review a separate set of applications.

### Reviewer

Evaluates the grant applications according to the Selection Criteria, and completes an Individual Reviewer Form for each application. There are three Reviewers on each panel (External, DOJ Staff, and CNCS Staff).

### Review Participant

General reference that refers to BOTH Panel Coordinators, and Reviewers (External *and* Federal)—any person that is participating in the review.

### Review Rubric

The document that provides the metrics for how each Criterion should be rated. This is available as an appendix to the Review Handbook, and as a Tab in the IRF.

The available ratings are below —and each selected Rating should align with the comments that are provided for a particular section in the IRF.

#### 5-Rating scale

Greatly Exceeds the Standard

Exceeds the Standard

Meets the Standard

Partially Meets the Standard  
Does Not Meet the Standard

### **3-Rating scale**

Meets the Standard  
Partially Meets the Standard  
Does Not Meet the Standard

### **2-Rating scale**

Satisfactory  
Unsatisfactory

## **Panel Coordinator (PC)**

The panel manager that implements the schedule and other panel logistics throughout the review, remains objective and impartial, facilitates the Panel Discussions between Reviewers, and ensures that Reviewers produce high-quality IRFs. The PC serves as the primary liaison between panel members and GARP Liaisons regarding the issues and progress of the panel. Aside from reviewing the IRFs, the PC completes the Panel Coordinator Notes.

## **Program Officer Liaison (POL)**

For the purpose to the justice AmeriCorps Blended Review, **the CNCS Staff Reviewer will serve as the primary resource for AmeriCorps-programmatic consultations.** An additional Program Officer is available for the PC to contact as needed.

## **Special Immigrant Juvenile Status**

Lawful status that USCIS may grant to a child who has obtained a state court order declaring that: the child is a dependent of the court or that the child should be legally placed with a state agency, private agency, or a private person; it is not in the best interests of the child to return to his or her home country or last country of habitual residence; and the child cannot be reunited with a parent because of abuse, abandonment, neglect, or any similar reason under state law. The child must be under the age of 21 at the time of his or her application for special immigrant juvenile status and unmarried at the time of application and adjudication. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(27)(J).

## **Unaccompanied Children**

Children under the age of 16 who: (1) are not in the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement or the Department of Homeland Security; (2) have received a Notice to Appear in removal proceedings before EOIR; and (3) have not had their cases consolidated with removal proceedings against a parent or legal guardian.

# Appendix B: Links to Additional Reference Materials

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## **CNCS**

[www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov)

## **justice AmeriCorps Reviewer Resource Webpage**

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities/justice-ameriacorps-review>

**eGrants** (used for Reviewer Profile and Banking Information only)

<https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp>

## **AmeriCorps List of Prohibited Activities**

[AmeriCorps List of Prohibited Activities](#)

## **Notice of Funding Opportunity FY2014 (the *Notice*)**

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/JusticeAmeriCorpsNOFO.pdf>

## **AmeriCorps State and National Application Instructions FY2014**

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/AppinstructionsFINAL.pdf>

# Appendix C: Completing the Individual Review Form (IRF) – DETAILED GUIDANCE

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**\*\*NOTE** – The following guidance aligns with the sequence of the Individual Review Form. **\*\*** Specific fields pertain only to the CNCS Staff Reviewer. Those fields are in **highlighted text**.

**Individual IRF:** The individual Review Form captures the reviewer’s assessment of an application, significant strengths and weaknesses used for applicant feedback, and any necessary clarification items.

The Individual Review Form (IRF) can be found on the Reviewer Resource Webpage. Please be sure to review the detailed “Instructions and Tips” tab of the IRF.

The standards in this handbook mirror the Individual Review Form. These standards were derived from the *Notice*, but the standards themselves are not present in the *NOTICE*. If a reviewer experiences uncertainty related to a particular criterion/standard, they should consult with the Panel Coordinator. **Reviewers are not permitted to seek additional information through the Internet or social media.**

## APPLICATION OVERVIEW SECTION

**It is important that you first enable macros and save the IRF before you complete any fields. This step should be done for each new IRF that you produce.** Complete each field in the Application Overview Section of the IRF as follows:

- a) Reviewer Role: Select your reviewer role from the drop-down menu.
- b) Reviewer Name: Enter your last name.
- c) Panel Number #: Select your respective panel number from the drop-down list.
- d) 2014 Application ID: Enter the application ID per the 424 face sheet. Be sure to enter the ID exactly as it appears. Do not enter any spaces. (It is recommended that you copy and paste the App ID into the Formula Bar to avoid incorrect entries.)
- e) Legal Applicant: Enter the legal applicant name per the 424 face sheet.
- f) Program Name: Enter the program name per the 424 face sheet.
- i) Previous Grantee Status: Select either Previous or New from the drop-down list, based on what the applicant selected in Section 8 of the cover page. [CNCS Staff Reviewer Only]
- j) Organization State: For state commission subapplicants or single-state applicants applying directly to CNCS, select the state in which the program will operate. For Multi-State applicants, leave this field blank.
- k) Type of Grant: Select whether the type of grant is cost-reimbursement or fixed from the drop-down list. [CNCS Staff Reviewer Only] For justice AmeriCorps, all should be Cost-Reimbursement.

## LOGIC MODEL COMPLETENESS

For fields A-F in this section, select ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ from the drop-down lists to indicate whether each of these items is included in the respective applicant’s logic model.

Consider: Reviewers should assess presence and not quality for each of these fields. This information must be in the logic model; it is not enough for the applicant to provide this information in the application narrative. If the item is present, select ‘Yes’ for the indicator.

Application logic models and organizational charts have been provided to you with the application materials.

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY [CNCS Staff Reviewer Only]**

Review the Executive Summary within each application and develop a Pre-Notification Clarification statement (Bucket #1) if there are any changes that need to be made. As per page 17 of the *NOTICE*, the executive summary should follow this format:

*The [Name of the organization] will have a total of AmeriCorps members ([Number of] lawyers and [Number of] paralegals) who will provide legal services to Unaccompanied Children, build pro bono capacity to support that population, and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of immigration courts in the location(s) in which members will serve. By the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for providing legal services in Immigration Proceedings to the projected population of Unaccompanied Children in each immigration court in [the locations where the grantee proposes to operate the program]. In addition, AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional number of volunteers who will support the provision of legal services to Unaccompanied Children in Immigration Proceedings. This program will focus on the CNCS partnership with DOJ to enhance legal services for Unaccompanied Children in Immigration Proceedings.*

**\*\*Note:** If the clarification funding amount and/or # of members and/or PM targets end up being less than the applicant’s request, please include a clarification item for the applicant to adjust the executive summary accordingly.\*\*

## **2. RATIONALE AND APPROACH/PROGRAM DESIGN**

### **2a. Problem/Need**

All Reviewers should assess the following two problem/need standards and select ratings from the five-rating rubric scale options in the IRF.

*2a.i Standard: The community problem/need is prevalent and severe in the communities where members will serve. The applicant indicates the court location(s) they propose to serve and describes the relevant community needs that AmeriCorps members will be addressing.*

Consider: Look for information about the court location(s) the applicant proposes to serve and discussion of the relevant needs in those locations.

*2a.ii Standard: The applicant cites specific, relevant data to document the need, such as inadequacy of pro bono or low cost legal services -- as well as additional support services for Unaccompanied children - available in the area.*

Consider: As the Reviewer reads this section of the application, look for the applicant to describe the community needs the AmeriCorps members will be addressing. The applicant should provide information about the extent/severity of the need in the community(ies) where the proposed AmeriCorps members will serve and cite specific relevant data such as unemployment rate as well as the poverty rate. Look for

the applicant to provide the estimated docket<sup>1</sup> size of unaccompanied children of in their proposed program location(s).

## **2b. AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to solve community problems, Evidence and Measurable Community Impact**

### **THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL**

All Reviewers should assess the following standards and select ratings from the rubric scale options in the IRF. Please refer to the assessment criteria training for guidance on how to assess these standards.

*2.b.i Standard: The intervention is an effective way to address the problem/need identified by the applicant.*

**Consider:** The applicant must describe how the intervention is designed to address the problem described in the previous section, including how legal services will be provided to the projected population of Unaccompanied Children in the immigration court locations they propose to serve. While the variety or available intervention is limited for this program, please assess all proposed member activities to ensure that they are an effective way to address the identified problem/intervention.

*2.b.ii Standard: The theory of change is described consistently in the logic model and application narrative.*

**Consider:** The logic model and narrative together depict the program's theory of change. In order to be considered "consistent," not all information from the applicant's theory of change must be in both the narrative and logic model as long as the two are aligned. Also, applicants are not required to measure all outcomes in their theory of change, as some outcomes may be beyond what would be attributable to the program. When looking at alignment, consider whether if/then logic is present from one element of the logic model to the next.

*2.b.iii Standard: The inputs, activities and outcomes are logically aligned (identifying the specific number of lawyers and paralegals the applicant proposes to enroll).*

**Consider:** Inputs should include the number of volunteer interpreters, pro bono lawyers and support services to be recruited from the community; legal clinics or law schools to be recruited to help support lawyers in immigration cases; immigration law training materials and resources).

*2.b.iv Standard: The outcomes identified in the logic model are logically aligned with the problem/need and intervention.*

*2.b.v Standard: The theory of change and logic model cover comprehensively the applicant's entire program (i.e. no significant aspects of the program design are left out.)*

**Consider:** Core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will be implementing or delivering, include representation in Immigration Proceedings; screening for abuse, trafficking, and trauma; and referral to appropriate authorities and/or support services to address such cases.

*2.b.vi Standard: The performance measures are aligned with the theory of change/logic model.*

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<sup>1</sup> Docket - the official schedule of proceedings in lawsuits pending in a court of law.

Consider: The applicant was given the following output to use in their Performance Measures on p. 38 of the *NOTICE: Number of Unaccompanied Children receiving legal services in Immigration Proceedings*. They were responsible for identifying an appropriate outcome to align with the output above. Look for the information on the applicant's proposed Performance Measures in the last pages of the application form. The applicant may have selected other performance measures available for CNCS applicants. Please review all proposed measures to ensure that the output(s) and outcome(s) are aligned with the applicant's theory of change. \*\*\**Please note that these are different from the Performance Indicated listed in Appendix C of the NOTICE (pp. 34-37) which the applicant will need to collect the information and report on, but which are not considered Performance Measures for the purpose of criteria 2.b.vi and 2.b.vii.*

*2.b.vii Standard: The performance measures represent significant program activities. (If not, do not review the performance measure; instruct the applicant to delete it during clarification.)*

Consider: As is stated above, the applicant was instructed to select a specific Performance Measure on p. 38 of the *NOTICE*. However, an applicant may have proposed other aligned Performance Measures in their application. Please assess them for quality and instruct to remove it they do not represent significant program activities.

## **EVIDENCE BASE**

Note: The IRF Excel form contains **five worksheet tabs**. For these criteria, All Reviewers will need to use the worksheet titled "Evidence" and follow the below instructions. You can refer to pp. 19-20 of the *Notice* for specific instructions provided for applicants for providing information related to Evidence Base.

These are the steps for assessing level of evidence. Skip any steps that do not apply:

### **Step 1: Make an initial assessment of the level of evidence using the levels described in the *NOTICE*:**

**Pre-Preliminary Evidence** means the applicant presents a description of the evidence from the extant<sup>2</sup> literature or quantitative or qualitative data from their own program implementation experience regarding the use of culturally competent and trauma-informed interventions with children and youth. An example could be gathering feedback from program participants or beneficiaries following their experience of such interventions.

**Preliminary evidence** means the applicant presents a description of the evidence from the extant literature or quantitative or qualitative data from their own program implementation experience that can support conclusions about the impact of culturally competent and trauma-informed care on a program's observed outcomes. This evidence consists of at least 1 non-experimental study conducted on the culturally competent and trauma-informed care. A study that demonstrates improvement in program participants over time on one or more intended outcomes or an implementation (process evaluation) study used to learn and improve program operations would constitute preliminary evidence. Examples of research that meet the standards include: 1) outcome studies that track program participants through a service pipeline and measure participants' responses at the end of the program; and 2) pre- and post-test research that determines whether participants have improved on an intended outcome.

**Moderate evidence** means the applicant presents a description of the evidence from the extant literature or quantitative or qualitative data from their own program implementation experience that can support causal conclusions that culturally competent and trauma-informed care improved participant outcomes

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<sup>2</sup> \*Definition of extant - in existence; still existing; not destroyed or lost.  
Example: There are only three extant copies of the document.

with moderate confidence. The evidence base consists of 1 or more quasi-experimental studies of interventions using culturally competent and trauma-informed care with positive findings on one or more intended outcome OR 2 or more non-experimental studies conducted on interventions using culturally competent and trauma-informed care with positive findings on one or more intended outcome OR 1 or more experimental studies of another relevant program using culturally competent and trauma-informed care. Examples of research that meet the standards include: well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies that compare outcomes between the group receiving the intervention featuring culturally competent and trauma-informed care and a matched comparison group (i.e. a similar population that does not receive the intervention).

**Strong evidence** means the applicant presents a description of the evidence from the extant literature or quantitative or qualitative data from their own program implementation experience that can support causal conclusions that culturally competent and trauma-informed care improved participant outcomes with the highest level of confidence. This consists of 1 or more well-designed and well-implemented experimental studies conducted on an intervention using culturally competent and trauma-informed care with positive findings on one or more intended outcome.

**Step 2: If initial assessment is preliminary level or higher, assess quality indicators found on the SRW as 2b.viii – 2b.xi. The four quality indicators on the IRW are as follows:**

*2b.viii Standard: Alignment of Models Studied and Implemented: The program model(s) studied is the same or nearly the same as the model the applicant will implement, in a similar context with similar target beneficiaries or entities.*

*2b.ix Standard: Methodological Quality: The study or studies used rigorous and appropriate research methodologies given the design (i.e. non-experimental, quasi-experimental, experimental), using high quality data, sufficient sample size/statistical power, and a representative sample to identify effects. The study or studies exhibited internal validity, i.e. any effects identified can be reasonably attributed to the program model given the methodological limitations.*

*2b.x: Study Recency: Studies conducted within the past six years are considered satisfactory. For studies older than six years, a “satisfactory” rating may be given if there is reasonable confidence that the relative conditions in which the program operated when studied are the same or similar as the conditions in which the applicant’s program will be operating. For example, for an educational program relevant conditions could include community demographics and educational standards. For an economic opportunity program, relevant condition could be economic climate.*

*2b.xi: Finding Strength: The findings from the study or studies indicate with confidence that the program model under study had at least one positive and significant effect on target beneficiaries or entities. “Significant” means the results were statistically significant, for example at the 95 percent confidence level.*

**Step 3: Re-assess the level of evidence based on quality indicators. If any quality indicator was rated unsatisfactory, you must drop your initial assessment down one level. Make your final assessment in the IRF-2b.xii.**

*2b.xii: Final Assessment of Evidence Level.*

You can refer again to pp. 19-20 of the *Notice* for specific instructions provided for applicants for providing information related to Evidence Base.

## 2c. Member Training

All Reviewers should assess the following two standards and select ratings from the five-rating rubric scale options in the IRF.

*2c.i Standard: Members will be adequately trained to provide legal services focused on immigration law. The applicant describes any additional, supplemental training that will facilitate the successful delivery of legal services to Unaccompanied Children, both before and after the national training.*

Consider: What are the anticipated topics and timeline for member training? The applicant could describe their plan for orienting members to AmeriCorps, the community they are serving, their placement site, and the service they will perform. The applicant may describe what skills the members will acquire during their term of service, describes how they will ensure that training provided to members will prepare members to perform all the activities they will engage in during their term of service. The applicant describes, as necessary, the ongoing training provided to members throughout their terms. What are the anticipated topics and timeline for member training? How will the applicant ensure that members are prepared to provide legal services focused on immigration law?

*2c.ii Standard: Members and volunteers will be aware of, and will adhere to, the rules regarding prohibited activities.*

Consider: How and when will the applicant ensure that members and volunteers are aware of and adhering to the rules regarding prohibited activities? Please refer to the list of Prohibited Activities available on the Reviewer Resource Page for reference.

## 2d. Member Supervision

*2d.i Standard: Members will receive adequate guidance and support from their supervisor/s.*

Consider: The applicant describes their plan for supervising members, and how the plan ensures that members will receive adequate support and guidance throughout their terms. The applicant may describe who will supervise the AmeriCorps members and how supervisors are selected and trained. The applicant may describe how their program provides training, oversight, and support to supervisors.

*2d.ii. Standard: Supervision structure will ensure that members are not engaged in prohibited activities.*

Consider: How and when will the applicant ensure that supervisors are aware of the rules regarding prohibited activities and ensure that members are not engaged in such activities? Please refer to the list of Prohibited Activities available on the Reviewer Resource Page for reference.

*2d.iii. Standard: Supervisors will be trained and prepared to adequately manage the program, provide guidance and supervision to AmeriCorps members, and oversee the work of AmeriCorps members as they appear in Immigration Proceedings.*

Consider: How will supervisors will trained and prepared to adequately manage the program, provide guidance and supervision to AmeriCorps members, and oversee the work of AmeriCorps members as they appear in Immigration Proceedings?

## 2e. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification [CNCS Staff Reviewer Only]

Reviewers should assess the following four standards and select ‘Satisfactory’ or ‘Unsatisfactory’ for each field in the IRF.

*2e.i: Program participants will know they are AmeriCorps members.*

*2e.ii: Communities will know that members are serving in AmeriCorps.*

*2e.iii: Members will wear the AmeriCorps logo daily.*

*2e.iv: Members will be adequately prepared to speak about their experiences to members of the community.*

**Consider:** When assessing the Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification standards, reviewers should seek presence/responsiveness to the above items and not quality. If the applicant is responsive to the standard(s), select Satisfactory. If the applicant is not responsive to the standard(s), select Unsatisfactory.

**\*\*NOTE: Standards 2e.i-2e.iv are important to CNCS. Therefore, if an applicant is not responsive to one or more of these standards and/or if there is a long time grantee who writes well but we know, in practice, does not brand well, reviewers should note this as a PO Follow-Up item in the Post-Award Follow-Up field of the IRF (located in the Clarification section of the IRF).**

**\*\*All Reviewers will enter significant strengths and weaknesses at the end of the **Rationale and Approach/ Program Design** section and will note any items of concern for the Clarification Process. See the **Clarification section for guidance related to the Clarification Process.****

### **3. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY**

#### **3a. Organizational Background and Staffing**

Reviewers should assess the following four standards and select ratings from the rubric scale options in the IRF.

*3a.i Standard: The organization has the experience, staffing and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program. The organization has adequate experience to implement a program providing legal support with Immigration Proceedings to Unaccompanied Children and demonstrates ability to launch and scale new initiatives.*

**Consider:** The applicant may provide the organization’s mission and a brief history and describes how the organization has the experience, staffing and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program. The applicant describes the organization's prior experience practicing in Immigration Proceedings generally and on behalf of Unaccompanied Children specifically (and/or its plans to acquire necessary experience and expertise in these areas of law, such as by partnering with organizations that have extensive experience and expertise in these areas) and launching and or/scaling new initiatives. Clarification may be needed.

*3a.ii: The organization has adequate experience administering AmeriCorps grants or other federal funds.*

**Consider:** Applicants do not have to have both AmeriCorps grants and other federal funds: it is OK to have one or the other. If the applicant is a commission subapplicant, it is OK to consider input the commission has provided in assessing this section.

*3a.iii Standard: The organization has the capacity to address a 20% fluctuation in the number of Unaccompanied Children in the immigration court locations in which the Grantee proposes to operate during the first year of the Program.*

**Consider:** As the number of cases in the docket may fluctuate during the first year of the program, please assess the organization’s capacity to address such fluctuation.

*3a.iv Standard: The organization has the capacity to scale up its operations in the second and third years if needed.*

Consider: Does the organization have the capacity to scale up their operations in the second and third years of the program if needed.

*3a.v Standard: The organizational chart is consistent with the narrative.*

Consider: Please review the organizational chart (submitted as part of supplemental materials) and ensure that the staffing structure corresponds with that described in the Organizational Capability section of the application narrative.

### **3b. Compliance and Accountability [CNCS Staff Reviewer Only]**

CNCS Staff Reviewers should assess the following three standards and select ratings from the rubric scale options in the IRF.

*3b.i: The organization will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited activities at the grantee, subgrantee and service site locations (if applicable.)*

*3b.ii: The applicant's organization will prevent and detect compliance issues.*

*3b.iii: The applicant's organization will hold itself, subgrantees and service site locations (if applicable) accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified.*

### **3c. Past Performance [CNCS Staff Reviewer Only]**

*\*\*Note: Past performance for enrollment and retention (for the last full year of program operation) is available to use as a cross-check to the application narrative. The performance and compliance past performance will need to be analyzed using the application narrative only. \*\**

This section applies only to recompetitve applications and will be greyed out in the IRF in most cases if this is a new applicant.

*3c.i: The applicant has met performance measurement targets during the last three years of program operation.*

Consider: Reviewers will need to assess the application narrative only for rating this standard. Reviewers will not access data via past GPR reports as the data is not consistently available for all “Previous” applicants.

*3c.ii: The applicant achieved satisfactory enrollment.*

Consider: Per the *NOTICE* we expect 100% enrollment for the applicant’s last full year of program operation. If the applicant has not enrolled 100%, we would expect to see an explanation and would consider that in our assessment of this standard (panels should use professional judgment in this case to determine if the less than 100% enrollment + narrative explanation would equal a Satisfactory rating). Use the application narrative to assess this standard. In addition, consult the N/R Reference Chart for the respective applicant’s enrollment rate for the last full year of program operation. Use the reference chart

data to cross-check the applicant's explanation in the narrative. The *NOTICE* states that if the applicant has not achieved full enrollment to provide an explanation, thus if the applicant has a 100% or more enrollment they might or might include this information in the application narrative. In all cases, if the enrollment information is not included please rely on the information in the N/R reference chart to complete your assessment.

*3c.iii: The applicant achieved satisfactory retention.*

Consider: Per the *NOTICE* we expect the highest retention rate possible for the applicant's last full year of program operation. If the applicant has not retained 100%, we would expect to see an explanation and would consider that in our assessment of this standard (panels should use professional judgment in this case to determine if the less than 100% retention + narrative explanation would equal a Satisfactory rating). Use the application narrative to assess this standard. In addition, consult the N/R Reference Chart for the respective applicant's retention rate for the last full year of program operation. Use the reference chart data to cross-check the applicant's explanation in the narrative. Although the *NOTICE* states that if the applicant should provide us information regarding member retention if they have not it would be permissible for the reviewer to rely on the information in the N/R reference chart to complete their assessment.

*3c.iv: The applicant demonstrates success in solving the identified problem.*

Consider:

- This is where we look at the significance of the impact that the applicant has achieved in the past.
- It is not just about whether or not the applicant met its performance measures.
- If the applicant did not meet its PM targets, but did partially meet the measures, this could demonstrate success in solving the problem.
- If the applicant met its performance measures, but those measures were not related to the identified problem, this would not demonstrate success in solving the identified problem.
- A satisfactory corrective action plan demonstrates future plans, not past success.
- You can consider other relevant qualitative and/or narrative information in the application here
- If the applicant did not meet its PM targets, but did partially meet the measures, this could demonstrate success in solving the problem.
- If the applicant met its performance measures, but those measures were not related to the identified problem, this would not demonstrate success in solving the identified problem.
- A satisfactory corrective action plan demonstrates future plans, not past success.
- You can consider other relevant qualitative and/or narrative information in the application here.

*3c.v: Corrective action plan for performance measurement will result in performance measure targets being met.*

Consider: Reviewers should select 'Not Applicable' if the program met all of its measures.

*3c.vi: Corrective action plans have resolved compliance issues or will resolve them.*

Consider: The applicant should describe any compliance issues and areas of weakness/risk identified during the last full year, and provide an explanation of corrective actions taken and plan for improvement.

Reviewers should select 'Not Applicable' if the program did not have any compliance issues to resolve.

*3c.vii: Corrective action plan for enrollment will improve enrollment rates.*

*Consider:* Reviewers should select 'Not Applicable' if the program had satisfactory enrollment and was not required to submit a corrective action plan.

*3c.viii: Corrective action plan for retention will improve retention rates.*

*Consider:* Reviewers should select 'Not Applicable' if the program had satisfactory retention and was not required to submit a corrective action plan.

### **3d. Continuous Improvement [CNCS Staff Reviewer Only]**

CNCS Staff Reviewers should assess the following two standards and select Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory for each field in the IRF.

*3d.i: Feedback from internal and external stakeholders informs continuous improvement efforts.*

*3d.ii: Data is used to inform continuous improvement.*

\*\*\*All Reviewers will enter comments (Significant strengths and Significant weaknesses) at the end of the **Organizational Capability** section and will note any items of concern to be raised in the Clarification Process. **See the Clarification section for guidance related to the Clarification Process.**

## **4. COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY [CNCS Reviewer Only]**

### **4a. Cost Effectiveness [CNCS Reviewer Only]**

*4a.i: The cost per MSY is reasonable given the program design.*

Consider: Consider the cost/MSY and the program design as described in the narrative when assessing this standard. Consider what the cost/MSY maximum is for the type of application (EAP, Professional Corps, cost-reimbursement).

*4a.ii: The cost per MSY is less than the previous award or there is a compelling reason for requesting an increased cost per MSY.*

Consider: If cost per MSY is less than previous award, assess as satisfactory. If cost per MSY is the same as previous award, assess as satisfactory. If cost per MSY is greater than previous award AND there is a compelling reason, assess as satisfactory. Enter N/A if this is a new applicant.

*4a.iii: There is a compelling reason for cost per MSY above the maximum.*

Consider: Select N/A if the applicant is at or below the maximum cost/MSY.

*4a.iv: The program is a cost effective approach for addressing the problem/need.*

**Consider:** Reviewers should consider the cost effectiveness of the program in terms of the total cost of the program. The applicant needs to explain why it is cost effective.

*4a.v: The benefits of the program justify the costs.*

**Consider:** Consider both the budget and the program narrative: does the budget contain a lot of unnecessary costs, or is it fairly lean? What type of information does the narrative contain that justify the costs of the program? This could include descriptions of the different types of benefits the program could bring. Do not bring in external information that you may know or believe about the costs of other models.

*4a.vi: Compared to other alternative models and approaches, the program model is the most cost effective way of addressing the problem/need.*

*4a.vii Standard: As only a portion of the costs of running this program are covered by this grant, the organization is adequately budgeting for additional resources that will be necessary to run a successful program. The applicant will raise additional resources to manage and operate an AmeriCorps program beyond the fixed amount and/or beyond the CNCS share and match if more resources are needed.*

**Consider:** The applicant was asked to identify in the budget the additional non-CNCS resources (in-kind and cash) that will be necessary to run a successful program addressing the exigent issue of providing legal services to unaccompanied children. They were also asked to discuss how they will raise the additional resources they will need to manage and operate an AmeriCorps program beyond the fixed amount and/or beyond the CNCS share and match if more resource is needed.

#### **4b. Budget Adequacy [CNCS Reviewer Only]**

**\*\*Note:** Assess fixed amount and cost reimbursement grants on the following three standards. For fixed amount grants, look at the application narrative provided in the application. For cost reimbursement grants, look at the budget narrative.\*\*

*4b.i: The budget is clear.*

**Consider:** Are costs in the budget necessary, reasonable and in alignment with the application narrative? For example, if the narrative indicates that the program will have a staff of five and the budget only has two staff and no explanation is given in the narrative, this budget line item would not be aligned with the narrative and should be clarified.

*4b.ii: The budget is sufficient to carry out the program effectively.*

**Consider:** Are there aspects of the program that are not adequately budgeted for, such as insufficient training or insufficient staff?

*4b.iii: The applicant adequately budgeted for its required share of costs.*

**Consider:** Applicants are not required to put all program costs on the budget. If the applicant is proposing to implement a complex evaluation but reviewers are not sure whether they have budgeted enough for the evaluation, this could go in clarification letter.

**4b.iv: GO assessment of budget adequacy.**

The Grants Officer assessment of the Budget Adequacy - The GO will assess whether the budget is clear and compliant. The GOs will provide a rating of excellent, average, or poor for budget adequacy. The GO will enter their rating for budget adequacy as well as any Clarification Items that the applicant will need to address in the Budget Comments field of eGrants. The CNCS Reviewer will transfer this rating into the IRF for this criterion and will incorporate Clarification Items into the clarification letter.

\*\*CNCS Staff Reviewers will enter significant strengths and weaknesses at the end of this section and will note any clarification items that an applicant must address prior to the award. Please make sure to incorporate the Grants Officer clarification items into the clarification letter as is noted above. See the Clarification section for guidance related to the clarification process.

## **FUNDING PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE MEASURES, AND SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

### **A. Funding Priorities [CNCS Staff Reviewer Only]**

The CNCS Staff Reviewer will select a Priority Tier based on where the applicant proposes to operate, as follows:

#### **Tier 1:**

Atlanta, Baltimore, MD Boston, MA Bloomington, MN Charlotte, NC Denver, CO Philadelphia, PA

#### **Tier 2:**

Arlington, VA; Chicago, IL; Cleveland, OH; Dallas, TX; Detroit, MI; El Paso, TX; Hartford, CT; Kansas City, MO; Las Vegas, NV; Memphis, TN; Miami, FL; New Orleans, LA; New York, NY; Newark, NJ; Omaha, NE; Orlando, FL; Phoenix, AZ; Portland, OR; San Antonio, TX; San Diego, CA; San Francisco, CA; and Seattle, WA.

#### **N/A:**

Organization proposes to operate in cities not listed above.

In the 'Comments on Tier' section, please list all the court location cities where the applicant proposes to operate.

### **B. Performance Measure Assessment [CNCS Staff Reviewer Only; other Reviewers can provide input during discussion, but do not assess]**

Review performance measures proposed and note whether they are satisfactory or require revisions. Please consider the items below and consider consulting with your panel mates during panel discussion to seek input. If any of these issues are present, draft a clarification item:

#### **Required Performance Measure**

- Please ensure that the applicant has at least one performance measure that includes the following output listed on p. 38 of the *NOTICE* and includes and aligned applicant-determined outcome:  
*Number of Unaccompanied Children receiving legal services in Immigration Proceedings*

#### **Activities**

- Focus areas, objectives, and interventions are consistent with the application narrative

### Resource Allocation

- MSY and slot allocation charts are consistent with the application narrative
- MSY allocations for performance measures are reasonable
- MSY allocations for programs with member development or teacher corps measures follow our most recent guidance for assigning MSYs to non-beneficiary PMs

### Selection Rules

- National performance measures conform to selection rules, definitions and data collection requirements specified in the PM instructions
- Applicant has at least one aligned performance measure for the primary intervention

### Alignment/Quality

- Applicant-determined outputs and outcomes are aligned correctly
- Outcomes can be measured during the grant period
- Outputs and outcomes clearly identify what is counted
- Each output or outcome counts only one thing
- Outcomes clearly identify changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition
- Outcomes clearly state how much change will occur/the degree of change necessary to be counted
- Data collection methods are appropriate
- Instruments are likely to yield high quality data
- Target values appear reasonable
- Unit of measure must be a number, not a percent

#### **A. Plan to Collect Required Performance Indicators [CNCS Staff Reviewers and DOJ Staff Reviewers Only; the External Reviewers can provide input during discussion, but do not assess]**

Reviewers should look in the application for a plan to collect the required performance indicators listed in Appendices B and C (p. 32-27) of the *NOTICE*. Applicants should describe sources of data to address performance indicators and discuss how they will seek and obtain appropriate access to such data (*i.e.*, having well-defined agreements with data owners). Applicants must also have appropriate mechanisms in place to protect the confidentiality and security of project data; plans for collecting and sharing information (with CNCS facilitation) about promising practices with other grantees; and, in the case of a grantee administering more than one project site, plans for collecting and sharing information among project sites. Grantees will be required to collect and share this information in an electronic format to be determined by DOJ and CNCS and accessible to the Grantees. If applicants did not provide adequate plan to collect such data as is described above, please follow up with a Standard Clarification Item related to Performance Indicators (see the Clarification Guidance).

### **GRANT AND STRATEGIC CHARACTERISTICS [CNCS Staff Reviewer Only]**

#### **A. Grant Characteristics**

Select Yes or No to assess if each characteristic is a significant and intentional aspect of the program design proposed in the narrative. If the PO assessed characteristics do not agree with the applicant selections in the Grant Characteristics section, be sure to summarize the discrepancy in the “Comments on Strategic Characteristics” field. This information will be pulled and compared against the submitted characteristics.

**\*\*NOTE:** Per senior staff decision, clarification will NOT be necessary if reviewers do not concur with the applicant's selected grant characteristic(s).\*\*

## **ADDITIONAL FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS**

### **A. Significant Opportunity and/or Risk**

Select from the four drop-down options based on reviewer assessment of the application.

### **B. Comments on Significant Opportunities and/or Risk**

Significant opportunities or risks should be linked to review criteria, strategic characteristics, balancing characteristics, or other considerations and should represent something other than the presence or absence of those elements. If the opportunity or risk is related to some other factor, please thoroughly describe it in the comments box. Risk should represent the potential for a major mistake either programmatically or in terms of management and financial stewardship, the potential for negative impact, or the likelihood of a poor member experience. Opportunities could represent the potential for high impact, high visibility, a great member experience, the demonstration of the efficiency of a new (innovative) approach, or the description of a strong evidence basis for the intervention. Enter N/A if not applicable.

## **CLARIFICATION**

[This section is more relevant to CNCS Reviewers, but can be used by DOJ and External Reviewers as needed]

Please use this section for any clarification items that are in addition to the ones notes at the end of each review section discussed above.

### **A. Budget Comments:**

- Enter any budget issues that need to be clarified.

### **B. Performance Measure and other General Clarification Points**

- Use this space to enter performance measure clarification items and any other general clarification items that are not captured in previous sections.

### **C. Special Conditions [CNCS Staff Reviewers only]**

- Enter required special conditions – these are items that the grantee needs to address after award, but prior to any members being enrolled. Examples of such items may be providing a member recruitment plan, if the reviewer is concerned about the organization's ability to recruit qualified candidates, or it could be providing program start-up materials for grantees that are new to AmeriCorps State & National funding.

### **D. POST-Award Follow-Up [CNCS Staff Reviewers only]**

- Please enter all programmatic and performance measure clarification items to happen after award.