2014 RSVP Competition
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - Updated July 12, 2013

This document supplements the 2014 RSVP Competition Senior Corps Notice of Funding Opportunity and Application Instructions. These FAQs will be updated periodically. New or updated questions will be clearly indicated within each section.

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1. AWARD INFORMATION

1.1. What period of time will grant funds be available to be spent?

Grants will be made for a three-year project period, with funding provided one year at a time, contingent on satisfactory performance and demonstrated capacity to manage the grant. Before the end of the first and second budget years, recipients will receive guidance on submitting a continuation application for the subsequent years of funding.

1.2. Is a separate application needed for each service area listed in Appendix A?

Yes.

1.3. Can I apply for a 1-year project?

No. All grants are for 3 years.

1.4. My organization is the current sponsor for an RSVP grant. If I apply for and win the award for a new RSVP grant, can I combine the newly awarded RSVP grant with my current RSVP grant so there is only one RSVP grant operated by my sponsor?

Yes, but only if your current RSVP grant has already been awarded through competition. If the intent of your new RSVP application is to combine a newly awarded RSVP grant with your existing RSVP grant, your application and budget should reflect this. Initially the newest grant will be awarded a three year project period. When the older grant is due for continuation, it will be closed and the newer grant will be augmented by the $ amount and unduplicated volunteers of the older grant. Combining the grants would be addressed with your state office during the first year of project operations.

Added June 21, 2013

1.5. Can an organization that wins this competition sub contract to another organization to run RSVP?

No.

2. ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS

2.1. We previously relinquished an RSVP grant. May we apply for a new grant in this competition?

Yes.

2.2. Can two organizations jointly apply for one grant?

No. One organization must be identified as the sponsor organization. The second organization could become a volunteer station, but would not be considered the grantee.

2.3. We are a new non-profit and do not yet have an EIN, IRS non-profit status document, or a 990. Can we still apply?

No. All required financial documents must be received by the grant application deadline. If an EIN, IRS non-profit status document, or 990 are not complete and submitted by the grant application deadline, you are not submitting a complete application.

Updated June 14, 2013

2.4. If the geographic area I wish to serve is not listed in Appendix A, are we eligible to apply?

No. However, the geographic service areas will vary during each year of this competition. Please check back next year to see if the geographic service area you would like to serve is up for competition.

3. SELECTION CRITERIA AND REVIEW

3.1. How should applicants address the selection criteria described in the Notice for cost effectiveness/budget adequacy?

Selection criteria Q21, Q22, and Q23 should be addressed through the limited text that can be entered in the eGrants budget section and should align with the other narrative responses.

3.2. For a proposal from a current Senior Corps grantee, should we assume the reviewers will not see our current grant application already entered into eGrants?

Yes.

3.3. How do I answer Q7 in the Notice about receiving credit for unduplicated volunteers above the minimum 10%?

Q7 is part of the selection criteria that reviewers will use when assessing applications. It is not a question that requires a narrative response. Reviewers will assess Q7 based on the work plans.

3.4 How is the DUNS number used during the review?

The DUNS number is one of the items considered during the financial review. A DUNS number establishes an organization's credit score and so should be established as soon as possible prior to submitting an application.

Added July 12, 2013

3.5 Selection Criteria Q18 asks about staff positions. Is a full time RSVP Director required for this competition or can there be a part time RSVP Director?

According to RSVP Federal Regulation 45 CFR Part 2553.23 (c): A sponsor may negotiate the employment of a part-time project director with the Corporation when it can be demonstrated that such an arrangement will not adversely affect the size, scope and quality of project operations.

4. EGRANTS

4.1. When starting my application in eGrants, do I select 'new' or 'renewal'?

ALL APPLICANTS should select 'new.' This includes incumbent RSVPs.

If you selected 'new' the application type on the left side of the screen will say 'new.' You r application will not include any information from previous grant applications.

If you selected 'renewal' the application type on the left side of the screen will say 'new grant/previous grantee.' Information from previously awarded grants will already be populated in the application.

If you selected 'renewal,' please delete the application and begin again with a 'new' application.

4.2. How do I enter my authorized representative name in my application?

The authorized representative for your organization must login to eGrants with their own user account, click on the assurances and conditions, and submit the grant application. This will allow their name to show up as the authorized representative for the grant application.

4.3. I cannot complete the **validate** function for the performance measures. When I go to validate, it says that you have to have a performance measure for all objectives. What am I doing wrong?

It is likely that you have checked an objective on the first Performance Measure screen and have not entered a work plan for that objective. Contact the National Service Hotline if further assistance is needed.

4.4. What should be entered in the "Other" narrative section?

The "Other" narrative section does not apply at this time during the competition. Enter 'N/A.'

5. BUDGET

5.1. There are two sections to enter the Source of Matching Funds, one in Budget Section I and another in Budget Section II. Do I have to complete both?

It depends on which sections have your non-federal funds. If you include non-federal funds (grantee share) in the budget for both Budget Section I and Budget Section II, then you would complete the Source of Matching Funds in both Budget Section I and Budget Section II. If you only have non-federal funds in one of the budget sections, then you would only complete the Source of Matching Funds for the particular section where you budget your grantee share.

5.2. In the indirect cost budget section, if we enter our indirect costs in the grantee share column rather than the CNCS share column, do we still have to submit our indirect cost rate agreement?

Yes. Your indirect cost rate agreement must be submitted regardless of whether the indirect costs are in the CNCS share or the grantee share.

5.3. How do I know what volunteer insurance to include in the budget?

For information about required volunteer insurance and other reimbursable expenses, please review the cost reimbursement section of the Federal Regulations, § 2553.43. A link to the Federal Regulations is found on page X of the *Notice*.

5.4. Is there a formula for determining the non-federal share we should budget?

Yes. The RSVP non-federal share requirement — 10% in Year 1, 20% in Year 2, and 30% in Year 3 and subsequent years — is calculated as a percentage of the total project budget. For example, if your total budget is $100,000, the required non-federal share for Year One would be $10,000 and the federal share would be $90,000. The amount listed in the Grant Opportunity Summaries is the federal share.

5.5. Will cash or in-kind contributions be accepted as part of the required non-federal share?

Yes. The RSVP Program Regulations in 45 CFR 2553.72(2), state that: "a grantee is responsible for identifying non-Corporation funds which may include in-kind contributions."

5.6. Is there a mandatory requirement to reimburse volunteers for transportation and meals or is this at the discretion of each program?

This is at the discretion of each RSVP but the applicant's plan for doing so will be taken into account when rating Q21 according to the selection criteria.

5.7. Should 5% of the RSVP project director's salary and benefits be included in the Excess column of the budget to account for time spent fund raising?

If the RSVP project director engages in fundraising activities, time spent on these activities cannot be paid for through CNCS funds or through non-federal funds that are part of the required non-federal share. If time is spent on fundraising, the Excess column should reflect the amount of time that is spent on fundraising.

5.8. Please clarify how the "Excess Amount" category is to be used in calculating the budget.

The Excess column of the budget can be used to reflect the amount of non-federal cash and in-kind contributions generated by a sponsor in excess of the required percentage. If time is spent on fundraising, the Excess column should reflect the amount of time spent on fundraising.

5.9. We do not yet have an approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement but we hope to have one in the next few months. How should we handle this?

At the time the application is submitted, if an indirect cost rate agreement is not yet approved, the costs would have to be budgeted as direct costs. If the application is awarded and the indirect cost rate agreement is approved, an amendment could be done at a later time to adjust the budget for the new indirect cost rate agreement.

6. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

6.1. Page 1, Question 3 of the Financial Management Survey asks if you have received CNCS funding previously and if so specify grant numbers. We have had CNCS funding for many years. What grant numbers should be listed?

You only need to list your current or most recent CNCS grant numbers.

6.2. We are an incumbent RSVP and plan to graduate volunteer stations and bring on new stations. Should the station roster include all current stations or should it include only those that we plan to have as part of our RSVP after we graduate stations?

The station roster should include only those volunteer stations with which you currently have a Memorandum of Understanding. Later in process, depending on the outcome of the competition, you will be instructed to revise and submit a current roster, reflecting the changes you have made from the old grant to the new grant application.

6.3. The "Attachments" listed at the end of the Financial Management Survey includes: "Schedule of Federal Funds" What is the Schedule of Federal Funds"?

The Aggregate Dollar Amount of Funding Form will be a sufficient document for the Schedule of Federal Funds.

6.4. If our audit is not done for this year, can we submit last year's audit?

Yes. The instructions say to submit your most recent audit. If this year's audit is not finished, then the previous year's audit is the most recent audit.

6.5. When sending the attachments to 2014RSVPAttachments@cns.gov, should I send each one separately or combine all the documents into one document?

When sending the required documents for your application, please ensure that each document is submitted as a separate attachment. If necessary, you can submit more than one email but all required documents for your application should be submitted as separate documents attached to the email. Please do not scan all documents into one PDF and send as one attachment.

7. VOLUNTEERS AND VOLUNTEER STATIONS

7.1. Is the number of volunteers listed in Appendix A the number of volunteers per year or the total over three years?

The number of volunteers in Appendix A is the total minimum number of volunteers that should be reflected in the application narratives, work plans, and budget. You would have three years to recruit this number of volunteers. For example, if Appendix A lists 100 volunteers, it is expected that by the time you report on your project at the end of the third year, there would be at least 100 volunteers currently serving with your RSVP. Your application may propose to have more than 100 volunteers, but could not propose less than 100 volunteers.

7.2. We are applying for an available grant opportunity and proposing a new program with new volunteer stations. Could the volunteers already engaged in the current RSVP program enroll in our new RSVP program or must we recruit volunteers that are new to RSVP?

New grantees should manage the current program distribution attributed to the grant being applied for, in order to minimize disruptions to the current volunteer stations where possible. If you are partnering with new volunteer stations your proposal should consider assessment of current volunteers' alignment with the proposed volunteer stations, and a plan for recruitment of new volunteers as appropriate. Should you propose not to partner with some current volunteer stations associated with the grant opportunity for which you are applying, your proposal should demonstrate a coordinated alignment of existing volunteers with the remaining volunteer stations.

7.3. What types of organizations can be volunteer stations?

A volunteer station can be a public agency, secular or faith-based non-profit organization, or proprietary health care organization that accepts the responsibility for assignment and supervision of RSVP volunteers. Each volunteer station must be licensed or otherwise certified, when required, by the appropriate state or local government. Informal groups do not qualify as volunteer stations.

7.4. My RSVP receives funding from other sources that may not approve of us graduating volunteer stations or changing our activities to fit the new Performance Measures. Can my RSVP continue our current RSVP activities above the allowable 30% maximum for community priorities using support from other funding streams?

No. These activities outside of the Performance Measure requirements could not be considered part of your RSVP.

7.5. What constitutes a volunteer "serving intensively on short term assignments?" For example, are there a minimum number of short term assignments required to justify counting a volunteer experience? Is there a benchmark for the number of hours per day or total assignment hours that is considered reasonable?

There is no minimum number of hours or assignments. This will vary based on each particular volunteer assignment developed by the RSVP.

7.6. Do all applicant organizations have three years to recruit the target number of volunteers proposed in the application and meet the Performance Measure requirements?

Yes.

7.7. Do I have to maintain the same programming and service activities as the current RSVP project?

The application asks applicants to describe their plans and infrastructure to responsibly graduate volunteer stations to meet changing community needs and do so in a way that minimizes disruption to current volunteers where possible. All applications should describe how they plan to minimize the disruption of volunteers if they propose graduating volunteer stations that are included in an incumbent grant. Please see Appendix C of the Notice for additional guidance.

7.8. What if the community needs shift during the three year period and the focus area volunteer numbers become a different percentage?

CNCS is still working on issues pertaining to the implications of failing to meet Performance Measure requirements by the end of the three-year grant period or failing to meet Performance Measures as described in your grant application as it was originally awarded. These decisions are CNCS Agency-wide rather than solely the decision of Senior Corps. These issues will be addressed at a later time.

8. APPENDIX A

8.1. The geographic service areas as described in Appendix A vary. Some include counties, some include cities, and some include both cities and counties. Are we required to have a volunteer station in each city or county listed?

Yes. You should plan to have volunteer stations in the geographic service area as it is listed with the service opportunity, including all cities or counties listed.

8.2 If I apply and am awarded two adjacent opportunities, can they be combined into one grant?

Yes. This could be implemented during the first year of the three-year project period.

8.3 What does the 'X' mean in Appendix A? For example, CA-3X?

Any opportunity with an 'X' is a previously relinquished or closed service area. This means that there is not currently an RSVP operating in that location and there are no current volunteers.

8.4 My organization is the incumbent for an RSVP opportunity. Can the number of volunteers for the opportunity in Appendix A be updated?

No.

Added June 14, 2013
8.5 How do I know the opportunity number for the geographic service area?

All opportunity numbers are listed in Appendix A, which is found on the Notice website.

Added July 12, 2013
8.6 My service area is not listed in Appendix A. How are service areas for Appendix A selected and can mine be added?

Appendix A is formed based on the previous RSVP grant cycle and any RSVP relinquishments that have not been awarded through competition. Additional service areas cannot be added to Appendix A because the available opportunities for RSVP Competition are defined by the Serve America Act. A list of service areas for the 2015 RSVP Competition can be found at: http://www.nationalservice.gov/site-policy-and-notices/foia-and-privacy-act/electronic-reading-room-and-library

9. PERFORMANCE MEASURE

Please review the RSVP Performance Measure FAQs found on the Knowledge Network: https://www.nationalserviceresources.org/npm/rsvp. The RSVP Performance Measure FAQs include Performance Measure questions answered during the 2013 RSVP Competition.

RSVP Performance Measure FAQs received during the 2014 RSVP Competition will be added below as they are received. Generally, questions that ask for guidance on which Performance Measure to select for a specific activity will not be answered. Please review Appendix B to assist you in determining which Performance Measures to select for a specific service activity.

9.1 PERFORMANCE MEASURE: EDUCATION

Added June 14, 2013

9.1.1 If an RSVP volunteer is serving many children in a classroom, do all of the children have to meet the definition of "Economically Disadvantaged?"

No. According to Appendix B, "Grantees must demonstrate that the children in the program come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and/or have special or exceptional needs, or explain an outreach strategy to increase the proportions of economically disadvantaged children and/or children with special or exceptional needs in the program."

Added June 21, 2013

9.1.2 Could you please provide a brief description of previous/current RSVP education programs?

For information about RSVP and education, please review the education section of Appendix B. Further details, such as sample work plans, will not be shared.

9.2 PERFORMANCE MEASURE: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Added June 28, 2013

9.2.1 I am working on a work plan for tax preparation services for the low income and elderly. For the service activity options, can you please explain the difference between "Income Tax Tutoring" and "Assisting VITA"?

VITA is an official IRS program that uses IRS-certified volunteers to assist in tax preparation for individuals that fall within certain income guidelines. If your tax assistance activities do not fall into an official VITA Program, then the activities most likely should be counted as "Income Tax Tutoring" instead of "Assisting VITA."

9.3 PERFORMANCE MEASURE: HEALTHY FUTURES

Added June 28, 2013

9.3.1 If I am using the Senior Companion survey tool for independent living, can I modify the tool?

For RSVP, the survey tools are sample tools and are not required. If you choose to use the tool, you can modify the tool as needed to fit your project needs.

9.4 PERFORMANCE MEASURE: CAPACITY BUILDING

Added July 12, 2013

9.4.1 Where can I find the pre/post assessment tool referenced on pages 46 and 47 of Appendix B for Capacity Building?

A sample pre/post assessment tool has not been developed for Capacity Building. You may create your own pre/post assessment tool as long as it meets the requirements described in Appendix B.

10. OTHER

Added June 14, 2013

10.1 Are the three webinars entitled "eGrants" the same or do they cover different areas of the process?

They are the same.

10.2 Where can I find a list of grantees from the 2013 RSVP Competition?

http://www.nationalservice.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2013/rsvp-awards-chart-2013

Added June 28, 2013

10.3 Where can I find a list of the current sponsor for an RSVP in my area?

Lists of incumbent sponsors and their service areas for the 2014 and 2015 RSVP Competitions can be found on the CNCS FOIA page: http://www.nationalservice.gov/site-policy-and-notices/foia-and-privacy-act/electronic-reading-room-and-library

Added July 12, 2013

10.4 Where can I find other information about the 2013 RSVP Competition?

You will find the external review form used in the 2013 RSVP Competition at: http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/open-government-initiative/transparency/results-grants-competition In following with the CNCS Grant Competition Posting Policy, all other information will be posted no later than 90 business days after July 1, 2013, which is the date all final awards were made.