

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Federal Agency Name: Corporation for National and Community Service
Funding Opportunity Title: 2015 RSVP Competition
Announcement Type: Initial Notice of Funding Opportunity
CFDA Number: 94.002

NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY DEADLINE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to send a Notice of Intent to Apply by Friday, August 8, 2014.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Applications are due Tuesday, September 9, 2014 by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Successful applicants will be notified in February 2015.

OVERVIEW

The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. Through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and other programs and activities, CNCS has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

RSVP is one of the largest volunteer networks in the nation for people 55 and over. Established in 1971, RSVP engages Americans age 55 and older in volunteer opportunities across the country and allows citizens to find solutions to community challenges. RSVP volunteers help seniors to live independently in their homes, mentor at-risk youth, and provide critical support to communities recovering from disasters. While serving, RSVP volunteers also improve their own lives, by staying active and civically engaged.

In 2009, Congress passed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009 (SAA), the most sweeping expansion of national service in a generation. This landmark law not only expands service opportunities, it focuses national service on key outcomes; builds the capacity of individuals, non-profits, and communities to succeed; and encourages innovative approaches to solving problems.

This RSVP Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity (*Notice*), in alignment with the SAA and the CNCS Strategic Plan, will target grant-making in six Focus Areas identified by the SAA:

- Disaster Services
- Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Futures
- Veterans and Military Families

CNCS will carry out the intent of Congress and maximize the impact of the investment by

funding programs that can demonstrate community impact and solve community problems through National Performance Measures in the previously listed Focus Areas.

CNCS is committed to transparency in grant-making. This *Notice* includes a description of the application review and selection process in section D. *Application and Submission Information*. In addition, the following information for new and re-competing applications will be published on the CNCS website at (<http://nationalservice.gov/about/open-government-initiative/transparency/results-grants-competition>) within 90 business days after all grants are awarded:

- A blank template of the external review form
- A list of all compliant applications submitted
- Executive Summaries of all compliant applications as submitted by the applicant
- Data extracted from the Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet and the submitted Program Narratives for successful applications
- A list of all external reviewers that completed the review assignment

This *Notice* should be read together with the RSVP regulations [45 CFR Part 2553], the Senior Corps RSVP Grant Application Instructions, and the National Performance Measures Instructions. The National Performance Measures Instructions can be found online at <http://nationalservice.gov/rsvpcompetition>.

Publication of this *Notice* does not obligate CNCS to award any specific number of grants or to obligate the entire amount of funding available. This *Notice* is being issued prior to Congressional action on the President's FY 2015 Proposed Budget in order to provide applicants ample time to submit strong applications. This *Notice* is in alignment with both the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (DVSA) as currently amended by the SAA, and the President's FY 2015 Proposed Budget. If the President's FY 2015 Proposed Budget is enacted, the results of the 2015 RSVP Competition (as well as the 2013 and 2014 RSVP Competitions) will be used to identify the most competitive RSVP applicants.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Purpose of RSVP Competition Funding

Established in 1971 and now one of the largest senior volunteer programs in the nation, RSVP offers a diverse range of volunteer activities that serve communities to create measurable impact, benefit volunteers through the service experience, and create community capacity. RSVP volunteers serve with commitments ranging from a few hours to 40 hours per week.

Through this competition CNCS seeks to identify the most competitive applicants and increase the impact of national service in 341 specific communities across the country. CNCS intends to fund RSVP grants that support volunteers 55 years and older serving in a diverse range of activities that meet specific community needs and that respond to National Performance Measures.

RSVP grant applications must:

- Serve the entire geographic service area associated with the funding opportunities listed in Appendix A
- Support the minimum number of volunteers listed in Appendix A
- Meet the National Performance Measure requirements and other criteria established in this *Notice*
- Minimize, to the extent possible, disruptions to the current volunteers associated with any incumbent project. Please see Appendix C for more information on how new and incumbent applicants must describe how they plan to minimize the disruption of volunteers if they propose graduating volunteer stations that are included in an incumbent project

Available funding opportunities are listed in Appendix A. Detailed summaries of the 341 available funding opportunities are available on the Senior Corps website at: <http://nationalservice.gov/rsvpcompetition>

2. Funding Priorities

This 2015 RSVP Competition *Notice* prioritizes grant-making in the following six Focus Areas identified by SAA and in alignment with the CNCS Strategic Plan:

- Disaster Services
- Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Futures
- Veterans and Military Families

CNCS will also focus investment in programs that:

- Pursue a balanced rural and non-rural portfolio
- Ensure that the portfolio of grants funded by this competitive process have a program distribution similar to that of the previous RSVP grant cycle

CNCS will pursue a balanced portfolio across Focus Areas and other considerations outlined in section *E., Application Review Information*. Please note that priority consideration does not guarantee funding.

A brief description of the six CNCS Focus Areas and the key goal of capacity building relevant to this competition follows:

Disaster Services

Grants will help individuals and communities prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate disasters and increase community resiliency.

Activities may include:

- Assisting in disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and/or mitigation

Economic Opportunity

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged individuals.

Activities may include:

- Providing housing-related assistance for economically disadvantaged people, including homeless individuals

Education

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged people, especially children, and for children with special and/or exceptional needs.

Activities may include:

- Providing support and/or facilitating access to services and resources that contribute to school readiness
- Providing support that improves academic performance
- Providing support that improves academic engagement

Environmental Stewardship

Grants will provide services that contribute to increased energy and water efficiency, renewable energy use, or improved at-risk ecosystems. Grant activities will support increased citizen behavioral change leading to increased efficiency, renewable energy use, and ecosystem improvements particularly for economically disadvantaged households and communities.

Activities may include:

- Improving at-risk acres (land and/or water) in national, state, city or county parks, or other public or tribal lands

Healthy Futures

Grants will assist with meeting health needs within communities including access to care, aging in place, and childhood obesity.

Activities may include:

- Supporting the ability of homebound, older adults and individuals with disabilities to live independently
- Assisting individuals with access to food resources

Veterans and Military Families

Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength.

Activities may include:

- Supporting veterans, veterans' family members, military service members, and military service members' families

Capacity Building

In addition to the Focus Areas described above, grants also will provide support for capacity building activities provided by national service participants. Capacity building activities are indirect services that enable CNCS-supported organizations to provide more, better and sustained direct services. Capacity building activities cannot be solely intended to support the administration or operations of the organization.

Activities may include:

- Recruitment or management of community volunteers

3. National Performance Measures

The SAA emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. CNCS's five-year Strategic Plan establishes an ambitious set of objectives that support the mission and goals of the SAA. These strategic goals guided the development of agency-wide National Performance Measures, which align with the Focus Areas of the CNCS Strategic Plan and allow CNCS to demonstrate the aggregated impact of all its programs, including RSVP. See Appendix B for RSVP National Performance Measure Instructions.

Applications must include work plans as described in Part III: Performance Measures and Work Plans of the Grant Application that meet the following minimum guidelines:

One Primary Focus Area: At least 25% of unduplicated RSVP volunteers* must be placed in work plans that use performance measures in one of the following six Focus Areas: Education, Healthy Futures, Economic Opportunity, Veterans and Military Families, Environmental Stewardship, and Disaster Services.

Other Community Need Priorities: No more than 30% of unduplicated RSVP volunteers* may be placed in assignments that address community priorities not covered by the National Performance Measures. Those volunteers must be represented in a single work plan.

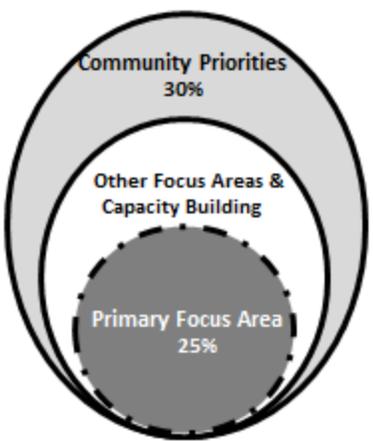
Other Focus Areas and Capacity Building: All other remaining unduplicated RSVP volunteers* must be placed in work plans that use National Performance Measures in a combination of any of the Other Focus Areas (other than the Primary Focus Area) and/or Capacity Building Measures.

Output/Outcome pairs: At least 10% of the total number of unduplicated RSVP volunteers* must be placed in work plans with Output/Outcome pairs. These Output/Outcome pairs may be in a combination of work plans in the Primary Focus area, Other Focus Areas and Capacity Building.

**Unduplicated RSVP Volunteers:* Each volunteer can only be counted once when assigned to a service activity. The volunteer should be counted in the area where he/she will make the most impact – in terms of the focus area (such as primary focus area vs community priority), in terms of the type of service, or in terms of the scope of service, (such as the most number of hours served).

RSVP Performance Measure Requirements

Measured in Unduplicated RSVP Volunteers

Performance Measure Category	Percent of Volunteers	
Primary Focus Area: National Performance Measures outputs in <u>one</u> of the six Focus Areas	At least 25%	 <p>Additional Requirement: 10% of Total Unduplicated Volunteers must be in workplans that result in outcomes.</p>
Community Priorities: Will report on success vs. failure to achieve self-determined targets	No more than 30%	
Other Focus Areas & Capacity Building: 1. National Performance Measures outputs in any of the six Focus Areas; and/or 2. Capacity Building outputs	Remainder of activity	

4. Program Regulations

The RSVP regulations may be found at [45 CFR Part 2553](#). See section F., *Federal Award Administration Information*, for specifics on the full range of administrative and national policy requirements.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimated Available Funds

Awards will be made subject to the availability of Congressional appropriations for 2015 funds. Publication of this *Notice* does not obligate CNCS to award any specific number of grants or to obligate the entire amount of funding available. This *Notice* is in alignment with the DVSA as currently amended by the SAA and the President’s FY 2015 Proposed Budget. If Congress continues funding for RSVP under the current SAA structure at FY 2014 funding levels, CNCS anticipates awarding approximately \$18 million in grants under the 2015 RSVP Competition.

2. Estimated Award Amount

Annual award amounts for the 2015 RSVP grant competition will vary. The maximum award

amount for a specific funding opportunity is fixed by the previous RSVP grant cycle. See Appendix A for a list of available funding opportunities and corresponding maximum annual federal award amounts.

3. Project Period

Under the current RSVP grant structure, the project period is three years. If Congress adopts the 2015 Budget proposal, the project period is one year. The funding available for each opportunity covers the first year of project operations. CNCS makes an initial award for the first year of operations. Grantees are eligible for continuation funding in the 2nd and 3rd years, contingent upon:

- Satisfactory performance that signals the grantee is on track to achieve its proposed performance measures at the end of the grant
- Demonstrated capacity to manage the grant
- Compliance with grant requirements, including terms and conditions, reporting, and securing the required non-federal share
- Availability of Congressional appropriations

The above factors determine whether CNCS may adjust a grant award in subsequent years, or elect not to continue funding.

4. Funding Opportunities and the Associated Geographic Service Areas

Funds are available for funding opportunities designated in Appendix A of this *Notice*. Please see Appendix A for a complete list of the available funding opportunities and their associated geographic areas.

Applicants must describe the geographic service area they propose to serve. Refer to *Grant Application Part I: Facesheet Instructions* for guidance on entering this data in eGrants.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

The legal entities that are eligible for this competition are public agencies (including state and local agencies and other units of government); private nonprofit organizations (including community-based organizations, both faith-based and secular); institutions of higher education; and Indian tribes. Applicants must be one of these legal entities at the time the application is submitted.

An Indian Tribe is defined as a federally recognized Indian Tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Native village, Regional Corporation, or Village Corporation, as defined under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act ([43 U.S.C. §1602](#)), that the United States Government determines is eligible for special programs and services provided under federal law to Indians because of their status as Indians. Indian Tribes also include tribal organizations controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by one of the entities described above.

A nonprofit organization that desires to apply for a grant as a tribal organization on behalf of a federally-recognized tribe, or multiple specific federally-recognized tribes, must submit a sanctioning resolution adopted by the Tribal Council (or comparable tribal governing body) of each tribe. The resolution must identify the nonprofit organization by name as a tribal organization and the resolution must authorize the nonprofit organization to act on behalf of and include the tribe in a CNCS grant application for the purpose of conducting the activities and providing the services described in the application. The non-profit organization may represent one or more federally-recognized tribes in its grant application.

Organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this *Notice*. Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Section 501 (c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501 (c)(4), that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply.

Current RSVP grantees may apply for assistance. However, applicants do not have to be currently receiving, or to have previously received, assistance from CNCS or another federal agency to apply under this *Notice*.

2. Cost-Share or Matching Requirements

All applicants applying to establish an RSVP project for the purpose of this competition are required to fund their projects in part through local, non-federal contributions. The required local contribution in Year 1 of the grant is at least 10 percent of the total project budget. The required portion is at least 20 percent in Year 2, and at least 30 percent in Year 3 and subsequent years, if the grant is renewed beyond three years. The local contribution portion should be reflected in the Budget Section of the application. The non-federal share can be cash or in-kind matching funds.

Incumbent RSVP sponsors that are applying for grant funding in this grant competition are required to budget and raise at least 30 percent of the total project budget only when applying for the funding opportunity where they are the incumbent sponsor. However, if a current RSVP applies for a new service area where they are not the incumbent; there is only a requirement of at least 10% non-federal share.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application Package

Please visit <http://nationalservice.gov/rsvpcompetition> for:

- The RSVP Grant Application Instructions
- A copy of this *Notice*
- Appendix A: The list of the Available Funding opportunities
- Appendix B: Senior Corps: RSVP Performance Measure Instructions and Resources
- Appendix C: Graduating Stations
- Appendix D: Terms and Definitions

- Frequently Asked Questions
- eGrants Visual Instructions
- RSVP Work Plan Worksheets to assist applicants with developing targets for the performance measures
- Technical Assistance Call Dates and Times
- Financial Management Forms: Aggregate Dollar Amount of Funding Form, 1199A & 1199A Instructions, Contact Information with DUNS, FFR User Form and Financial Management Survey
- RSVP Regulations

For further information or for a printed copy of related material, email 2015RSVP@cns.gov. The TTY number is (800) 833-3722.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

a. Notice of Intent to Apply

Although it is not required, CNCS strongly encourages applicants to submit a Notice of Intent to Apply by Friday, August 8, 2014, as noted in section *D.4. Submission Dates and Times*. The Notice of Intent to Apply helps CNCS plan an efficient application review process and to notify applicants directly if application materials are updated. Notice of Intent to Apply should be sent to 2015RSVPIntent@cns.gov and should include:

- The opportunity number
- How the organization heard about the RSVP Competition
- Name of the applicant organization
- Address
- Contact person
- Email address
- Phone number

b. Submission in eGrants

Applicants must submit applications electronically via eGrants, CNCS's web-based application system (<https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp>). CNCS recommends that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word processing document, then copy and paste it into eGrants no more than 10 days before the deadline.

Contact the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via (https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask_eg) if a problem arises when creating an account or preparing or submitting the application. National Service Hotline hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. EST. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the *Notice* to which the organization is applying.

If technical issues will prevent the applicant from submitting an application on time, please contact the National Service Hotline **before** the deadline to explain the technical issue and to

obtain a ticket number. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit via eGrants.

An RSVP incumbent grantee's intention to continue a current grant shall be demonstrated by the formal submission of a grant application to the current RSVP competition during the competition period.

The person who submits the application must be the applicant's authorized representative. The authorized representative must be using eGrants under their own account in order to submit the application. This is an electronic signature that results from submitting the grant application in the electronic grants management system, eGrants. The person who signs this form must be the applicant's authorized representative. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

c. Application Content

An application is only complete if it includes all required components and it is submitted by the application deadline, as noted in section *D.4. Submission Dates and Times*:

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: This is automatically generated when applicants complete the data elements in the eGrants system. When applicants complete the application in eGrants, many of the fields will automatically be filled with information entered during the registration process.
- Executive Summary: This is a brief description, maximum of one page. The Executive Summaries of all compliant applications are published on the CNCS website following grant awards.
- Narrative
 - Strengthening Communities
 - Recruitment and Development of Volunteers
 - Program Management
 - Organizational Capability
- Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (Budget and Budget Narrative)
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications
- Performance Measures (to be generated by the eGrants work plans performance module)

Please refer to the Application Instructions for a complete list of required documents. RSVP Grant Application Instructions can be found online at <http://nationalservice.gov/rsvpcompetition>, as noted in section *D.1. Address to Request Application Package*.

d. Page Limits

Do not exceed 25 double-spaced pages for Narratives, including the SF-424, Executive Summary, and Program Narrative as the pages print out from eGrants. **The Budget section and Performance Measures are not included in the page limit.**

Reviewers will be instructed to stop reading the Narrative section of the grant application after page 25. Reviewers will not consider material past the maximum page limit, even if eGrants allows its submission. CNCS strongly encourages applicants to print out the application

from the “Review and Submit” page before submitting it, in order to make sure it is within the page limit.

Do not submit supplementary material such as videos, brochures, letters of support, or any items not requested in this *Notice*. CNCS will not review or return them.

3. Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and System for Award Management (SAM)

All applications must include a DUNS number **and** an Employer Identification Number. The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number.

Applicants can obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. Although the website indicates a 48-hour email turnaround time on requests for DUNS numbers, CNCS recommends applicants register at least 30 days before the application due date.

All applicants must be registered with the System for Award Management (SAM, www.sam.gov) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete and, if a grant is awarded, throughout the life of the award. Finalize a new registration or renew an existing one at least two weeks before the application deadline. This should allow applicants time to resolve any issues that may arise.

If applicants do not comply with these requirements, applicants may become ineligible to receive an award. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees at: https://www.sam.gov/sam/transcript/SAM_Quick_Guide_Grants_Registrations-v1.6.pdf.

CNCS requires all entities that intend to apply for federal grant funds, that receive federal grant funds, or that receive subgrants directly from a federal grantee to:

- Be registered in the SAM before they submit an application
- Maintain an active SAM registration with current information while they have an application under consideration by CNCS and for their entire active award period, if any
- Provide an active DUNS number in each application it submits to CNCS

CNCS is prohibited from making an award until an applicant has complied with these requirements. CNCS may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award if the intended recipient has not complied with these requirements at the time an award is ready to be made.

4. Submission Dates and Times

a. Notice of Intent to Apply

Although it is not required, CNCS strongly encourages applicants to submit a **Notice of Intent to Apply** by Friday, August 8, 2014 (see section *D.2. Content and Form of Application Submission* for more information).

b. Application Submission Deadline

The application is due no later than Tuesday, September 9, 2014 by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Applications must arrive at CNCS by the deadline in order to be considered (see section *D.2. Content and Form of Application Submission* for more information). Applications received after the deadline will be determined non-compliant and therefore not eligible for review and consideration. Upon application submission, the status in eGrants will change to “Submitted to CNCS” indicating acknowledgement of receipt. CNCS reserves the right to extend the submission deadline and will post any extended deadline in eGrants.

c. Late Applications

CNCS may consider an application after the deadline, but only if applicants submit an email explaining the extenuating technical circumstances that caused the delay. CNCS will determine the admissibility of late applications on a case-by-case basis. However, please be advised that CNCS will not consider an advance request to submit a late application.

Applicants must send the email to LateApplications@cns.gov within the 24 hours immediately after the deadline. Communication with CNCS staff, including an applicant’s CNCS program officer, is not a substitute for sending a letter to LateApplications@cns.gov. If technical issues have prevented an applicant from submitting an application on time, the applicant should include the eGrants National Service Hotline ticket number in the email. Applicants may obtain a ticket number by calling the National Service Hotline before the deadline and explaining the technical issues that prevented the applicant from submitting the application on time.

If extenuating circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit in eGrants, applicants may send a paper copy of the application to the address in section *G., Agency Contacts*, of this *Notice* via overnight carrier. Please use a non-U.S. Postal Service to avoid security-related delays. **All deadlines and requirements in this *Notice* also apply to paper applications.** Paper applications must include a cover letter detailing the circumstances that make it impossible to submit via eGrants. CNCS does not accept applications submitted via fax or email.

5. Intergovernmental Review

Applicants under this program are subject to *Executive Order 12372: Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs*.

6. Funding Restrictions

Grants under this program are subject to the:

- 2 CFR Chapter I, and Chapter II, Parts 200, 215, 220, 225, and 230 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Administrative Requirements)

For further information on the Uniform Administrative Requirements that apply to the applicant organization please visit <https://federalregister.gov/a/2013-30465>. Awards will also be subject to

the law(s) under which the award is made (e.g., DVSA), as well as specific terms and conditions established for discretionary grants or defined in Provisions or Special Conditions attached to an award. If necessary, applicants will have an opportunity to negotiate conditions before they accept an award.

7. Other Submission Requirements

Please refer to the application instructions for a list of required documents. All required documents should be e-mailed to 2015RSVPAttachments@cns.gov by the application due date. E-mailed attachments must include the application ID and opportunity number in the subject line. Indicate if the applicant is the incumbent organization for the opportunity.

Submission of these forms does not guarantee that an application will be approved for funding.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Selection Criteria

Reviewers will assess the applications against the following Selection Criteria: Program Design, Organization Capacity, and Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy. The weights assigned to each category are detailed in the following chart. Reviewers will assess application narratives, budget, and work plans against these Selection Criteria and weigh them accordingly.

With the exception of Q21-Q30, selection criteria within each application are assessed as Excellent, Good, Fair, and Does Not Meet. To achieve a Good assessment, applicants must address everything requested in the selection criteria. To achieve an Excellent assessment, applicants must go beyond what is requested by the selection criteria. For example, criteria Q3 (see below) asks applicants to demonstrate plans and infrastructure to support data collection and ensure National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs are measured, collected, and managed. To achieve a Good assessment, applicants would need to address both the plan and the infrastructure. To receive an Excellent assessment, an applicant could go beyond what is required by addressing consistency and accuracy in this data collection.

Basic Selection Criteria: Categories and Respective Weights

Category	Percentage	Sub-Category	Percentage
Program Design	50%	Strengthening Communities	35%
		Recruitment and Development	15%
Organizational Capacity	35%	Program Management	15%
		Organizational Capability	20%
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	15%		

a. Program Design (50%):

Strengthening Communities (35%)

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the application:

Q1. Describes the community and demonstrates through both the narrative and work plans that the community need(s) identified in the Primary Focus Area exist in the geographic service area

Q2. Describes in the narrative how the service activities in the Primary Focus Area lead to National Performance Measure outputs or outcomes

Q3. Describes in the narrative a plan and infrastructure to support data collection and ensure National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs are measured, collected, and managed

Q4. Program Design as described in the narrative includes activity in service to veterans and/or military families as part of service in the Primary Focus Area, Other Focus Areas or Capacity Building

Q5. Work plans logically connect four major elements in the Primary Focus Area to each other and are aligned with National Performance Measure instructions:

1. The community need(s) identified
2. The service activities that will be carried out by RSVP volunteers
3. The instrument description and data collection plans
4. Work plans include target numbers that lead to outcomes or outputs, and are appropriate for the total number of volunteers assigned to the work plan

Q6*. Work plans logically connect four major elements in the Other Focus Areas and Capacity Building to each other and are aligned with National Performance Measure instructions:

1. The community need(s) identified
2. The service activities that will be carried out by RSVP volunteers
3. The instrument description and data collection plans
4. Work plans include target numbers that lead to outcomes or outputs, and are appropriate for the total number of volunteers assigned to the work plan

*This selection criteria will only be applicable to applications with service activities in Other Focus Areas and Capacity Building.

Q7. In assessing the work plans, applications will receive credit for percentage of unduplicated * volunteers in National Performance Measure outcome work plans above the minimum 10%

*Unduplicated Volunteers: Each volunteer can only be counted once when assigned to a service activity. The volunteer should be counted in the area where he/she will make the most impact – in terms of the focus area (such as primary focus area vs community priority), in terms of the type of service, or in terms of the scope of service, (such as the most number of hours served).

Recruitment and Development of Volunteers (15%)

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the application demonstrates a plan and infrastructure for effective RSVP volunteer recruitment and management through the presence of the following:

Q8. Demonstrates a plan and infrastructure to create well-developed high quality RSVP volunteer assignments with opportunities to share their experiences, abilities, and skills to improve their communities and themselves through service in their communities.

Q9. Demonstrates a plan and infrastructure to ensure RSVP volunteers receive training needed to be highly effective means to addressing identified community need(s) in both the Primary Focus Area and in Other Focus Areas or Capacity Building.

Q10. Describes the demographics of the community served and plans to recruit a volunteer pool reflective of the community served. This could possibly include:

1. Individuals from diverse races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, or degrees of English language proficiency.
2. Veterans and military family members as RSVP volunteers.
3. RSVP volunteers with disabilities.

Q11. Demonstrates a plan and infrastructure to retain and recognize RSVP volunteers.

b. Organizational Capability (35%):

Program Management (15%)

In assessing Program Management, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has:

Q12. Plans and infrastructure to ensure management of volunteer stations in compliance with RSVP program regulations (such as preventing or identifying prohibited activities)

Q13. Plans and infrastructure to develop and/or oversee volunteer stations to ensure that volunteers are performing their assigned service activities

Q14. Plans and infrastructure to meet changing community needs to include minimizing disruption to current volunteers as applicable and/or graduating* stations as necessary (**Please see Appendix C for more information on graduating volunteer stations.*)

Q15. Demonstrated an organizational track record in managing volunteers in the Primary Focus Area, to include if applicable, measuring performance in the Primary Focus Area

Q16. Demonstrated a plan and infrastructure to ensure the project is in compliance with the RSVP federal regulations to include establishing an RSVP Advisory Council, ensuring RSVP volunteers are placed in stations that have signed the required MOU, and ensuring all volunteers are eligible to serve in RSVP

*Advisory Council: RSVP Regulations (see 45 CFR §2553.24) require grantees to secure community participation in local project operation by establishing an Advisory Council or a similar organizational structure with a membership that includes people who are knowledgeable about human and social needs of the community; competent in the field of community service and volunteerism; capable of helping the sponsor meet its administrative and program responsibilities including fund-raising, publicity and programming for impact; interested in and knowledgeable regarding the capability of older adults; and, of a diverse composition that reflects the demographics of the service area.

Organizational Capability (20%)

In assessing Organizational Capability, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has:

Q17. Plans and infrastructure to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight (both financial and in-kind) and day-to-day operational support to ensure compliance with RSVP program requirements (statutes, regulations, and applicable OMB circulars) and to ensure accountability and efficient and effective use of available resources

Q18. Demonstrated clearly defined paid staff positions, including identification of current staff assigned to the project and how these positions will ensure the accomplishment of program objectives

Q19. Demonstrated organizational capacity to:

1. Develop and implement internal policies and operating procedures to provide governance and manage risk, such as accounting, personnel management, and purchasing
2. Manage capital assets such as facilities, equipment, and supplies

Q20. Demonstrated organizational infrastructure in the areas of robust financial management capacity and systems and past experience managing federal grant funds

c. Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (15%):

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant has demonstrated that:

Q21. Personnel costs budgeted reflect adequate staffing for the project and the percentage of time spent on fundraising is appropriately allocated to the excess budget column

Q22. Fringe benefits provided to staff are applied using the appropriate institutional rate and are charged at the same proportional rate as project staff time

Q23. Staff travel is detailed in the budget narrative to provide adequate justification and is broken out to include details for lodging, food, and transportation

*Q24. Contracting services in the budget cover only goods and services that are provided by outside contractors under an existing contract, described in the budget narrative

*Q25. Indirect Costs are only charged if an established indirect cost rate agreement is in place and has been submitted as part of the grant application

Q26. Supplies included in the budget are itemized, detailed, meet the OMB definition of supplies and are not already included in the overhead costs included in an indirect cost rate agreement

*Q27. Items included in the “other” budget section do not need to be moved to a different budget section and appear necessary to the operations of the project

Q28. Within the limits of the budget, transportation or meals for RSVP volunteers is included and appropriately detailed

Q29. The budget includes required volunteer accident, personal liability, and excess automobile insurance

Q30. Appropriate recognition and, if applicable, recruitment is included in the budget and includes cost per volunteer and cost per event including itemization of functional expenses

Q31. The adequacy and reasonableness of required non-federal funds that are budgeted

*Selection Criteria will only be assessed if the applicable line items are included in the budget.

2. Review and Selection Process

The assessment of applications involves a wide range of considerations. CNCS will engage External and Staff Reviewers with relevant knowledge and expertise in aging issues and volunteering to provide insight and input on the eligible applications. At the conclusion of this process, the review and selection process will produce a balanced set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and selection factors described in this *Notice*. The results of this process will also identify the most competitive RSVP applicants from the 2015 RSVP Competition.

a. Selection Factors

The overall review and selection process is designed to:

Identify eligible applications that satisfy the following considerations:

- Serve the entire geographic service area attributed to the funding opportunity in Appendix A
- Support the minimum number of volunteers listed in Appendix A
- Include a budget that does not exceed the amount listed in Appendix A

Compile a balanced portfolio based on:

- A balance of rural and non-rural communities
- A program distribution that is similar to the previous grant cycle
- Relative risk and opportunity for eligible applications that address the above selection criteria

b. Stages in the Review and Selection Process

Compliance Review (All Grant Applications)

CNCS staff will review all applications to determine compliance with the eligibility requirements identified in section C., *Eligibility Information*, and the deadline and completeness requirements identified in section D., *Application and Submission Information*. The compliance review does not include reading the entire application. Applications that do not meet all compliance criteria will not be considered.

In order to be compliant and advance to the application assessment, an applicant must satisfy all of the following requirements:

- Be an eligible organization
- Submit an application by the submission deadline: September 9, 2014
- Submit an application that is complete, in that it contains all required elements and follows the instructions provided in this Notice (section D.2. *Content and Form of Application Submission*)
- Submit to a valid opportunity number as described in Appendix A

- Have not been denied CNCS Senior Corps funding in the past three years

Blended Review

Panels of External and CNCS Staff Reviewers will assess applications based on the Program Design, Organization Capacity, and Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy Selection Criteria. CNCS will recruit and select reviewers on the basis of demonstrated expertise in Senior Corps programming and/or the Selection Criteria and Focus Areas, and will be screened all reviewers for conflicts of interest.

Post Review Quality Control

After the review process is complete, CNCS staff will review the results for fairness and consistency. At this stage, some applications may be selected for a Post Review Quality Control assessment. This additional level of application review will be done by a review panel of External Reviewers and Staff Reviewers who will assess the applications for which significant panel scoring anomalies were identified.

Risk Assessment Evaluation

CNCS staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant, including conducting due diligence to ensure an applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility and the quality of its application, and results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions.

If CNCS determines that an award will be made, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award.

In evaluating risks, CNCS may consider the following:

- Financial stability
- Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in applicable OMB Guidance
- Applicant's record in managing previous CNCS awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
 - Timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements
 - Conformance to the terms and conditions of previous Federal awards
 - If applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
- Information available through OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as:
 - Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)
 - Duns and Bradstreet
 - "Do Not Pay"
- Reports and findings from single audits performed under Subpart F – Audit Requirements, 2 CFR Part 200 and findings and reports of any other available audits
- IRS Tax Form 990

- Applicant organization’s annual report
- Publicly available information, including information from the applicant organization's website
- Applicant’s ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on award recipients

Clarification Process

Following the review process described above in *Blended Review* and *Risk Assessment Evaluation*, applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information to resolve questions and issues, such as the total number of volunteers at the beginning of the grant period, or to clarify performance measures, including requesting clarification on performance measure targets. Applicants may also receive requests to clarify the budget as part of the clarification process. Clarification information is used by CNCS staff in making final selection recommendations. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to requests for information in a timely fashion will result in the removal of applications from consideration. Be prepared to provide documentation of eligibility criteria and other support documentation described in the narrative and grant application instructions. CNCS staff may engage in a site visit inspection, as appropriate.

The Clarification Process will also confirm that the legal applicant has sufficient local presence to directly manage the proposed RSVP grant. The operation of an RSVP grant cannot be delegated to another organization, even if the other organization is an affiliate of the legal applicant.

Should clarification result in a reduction of the total percentage of volunteers in outcome work plans, the application may be rescored to reflect the updated information and could affect funding decisions.

Program Staff Recommendation

CNCS staff will recommend applications for selection based on the results of the Blended Review, Quality Control, Risk Assessment Evaluation, Clarifications, and the assessment of the proposed portfolio for Appendix A to ensure a similar program distribution to the previous grant cycle. In the event of tie scores, the higher score for the Strengthening Communities selection criteria will be prioritized.

Selection for Funding

The Chief Executive Officer or designee will select the final portfolio and confirm the most competitive applicants based on the results of the review and selection process.

CNCS reserves the right to change the review and selection process depending on the number of applications received, or for extenuating circumstances.

c. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

CNCS anticipates announcing the results of this competition in February 2015 (see section *F.I. Federal Award Notices* for more information).

d. Feedback to Applicants

Following grant awards, compliant applicants will receive summary comments from the Blended Review. This feedback will be based on the review of the original application and will not reflect information that may have been provided during clarification.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

CNCS will make awards following the grant selection announcement. There are two grant start dates associated with this *Notice*: April 1, 2015 and July 1, 2015, contingent on the availability of appropriations.

- For grants with an April 1, 2015 start date, CNCS anticipates the awards will be issued by late March 2015
- For grants with a July 1, 2015 start date, CNCS anticipates the awards will be issued by late June 2015

CNCS is not obligated to make any award as a result of this *Notice*. Successful applicants will receive an official notification that their application was selected for an award. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The Notice of Grant Award signed by the grant officer (or equivalent) is the authorizing document for grant activities, and will be sent at a later date. An unsuccessful applicant will receive a notification that its application was not recommended for funding.

An awardee may not expend federal grant funds until the start of the Project Period identified on the Notice of Grant Award.

2. Indirect Cost

CNCS has determined that indirect costs are an allowable budget item in CNCS grants when the costs are included in an approved indirect cost rate approved by the cognizant federal agency. CNCS Policy CFO-15, Indirect Cost Rates for Corporation-funded Grant Awards, prescribes CNCS's policies and procedures for establishing indirect cost rates for Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (DVSA) grants and cooperative agreements and for National Community Service Act of 1990 (NCSA) grants and cooperative agreements when the grantee or sub-grantee is claiming more than the match allowed as a fixed administrative cost allowance under 45 CFR §2540.110.

3. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The Notice of Grant Award will be subject to, and incorporate the provisions of, the DVSA. The NGA will also incorporate, as part of the binding commitments under any award, the approved

application, budget, and a special condition requiring all RSVP grantees to adopt the CNCS National Performance Measures. Awardees will be subject to the following (as applicable):

- [45 CFR Part 2553](#)—RSVP Federal Regulations
- [2 CFR Part 175](#)—Award Term for Trafficking in Persons
- [2 CFR Parts 180](#) and [2200](#)—Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension
- 2 CFR Chapter I, and Chapter II, Parts 200, 215, 220, 225, and 230 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audits Requirements for Federal Awards.
- [45 CFR Part 2545](#)—Government-wide Requirements For Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)
- [45 CFR Part 2555](#)—Nondiscrimination On The Basis Of Sex In Education Programs Or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance
- The Single Audit Act ([31 U.S.C. Chapter 75](#))
- [45 CFR Part 2553](#)—Legal limitations including prohibited activities

4. Use of Material

To ensure that materials generated with CNCS funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, CNCS reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so (45 CFR §§ 2543.36; 2541.30).

5. Reporting

Grantees are required to provide bi-annual progress reports and bi-annual financial and narrative progress reports through eGrants, CNCS’s web-based grants management system. All grantees must provide quarterly expense reports through the Payment Management System (PMS) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In addition, at the end of the grant period, grantees must submit final financial and progress reports that are cumulative over the entire award period and consistent with the close-out requirements of CNCS’s Office of Grants Management. The final reports are due 90 days after the end of the agreement.

While applications will not be evaluated on these criteria, grantees will be expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are giving CNCS high quality performance measure data. At a minimum, grantees should have policies and practices that address the following five aspects of data quality:

- The data measures what it intends to measure
- The data reported is complete
- The grantee collects data in a consistent manner
- The grantee takes steps to correct data errors
- The grantee actively reviews data before it submits it

G. AGENCY CONTACTS

The RSVP Competition *Notice* RSVP Grant Application Instructions can be found online at <http://nationalservice.gov/rsvpcompetition>.

The TTY number is (800) 833-3722.

For more information or a printed copy of related material(s), e-mail 2015RSVP@cns.gov.

For technical questions and problems with the eGrants system, call the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677. National Service Hotline hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Applicants can also use this

link: https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask_for_questions. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the name of the *Notice* to which the organization is applying.

Refer to the application instructions for details about required documents.

All required documents should be e-mailed to 2015RSVPAttachments@cns.gov. The e-mail should include the application ID and opportunity number in the e-mail subject line. Indicate if the organization is the incumbent organization for the opportunity.

For application submission material, when applicable, the mailing address is:

Corporation for National and Community Service
ATTN: Office of Grants Policy and Operations/RSVP Competition Application
1201 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20525

H. OTHER INFORMATION

1. Technical Assistance

CNCS will host technical assistance calls to answer questions about the funding opportunity and about eGrants and strongly encourages all applicants to participate in these sessions. Call-in information for the technical assistance calls can be found on the RSVP Competition website: <http://nationalservice.gov/rsvpcompetition>.

2. Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act

For more information regarding the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, please go to: http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/09_0331_recovery_summary.pdf.

CNCS is not obligated to make any award as a result of this *Notice*.

3. Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request

For more information regarding the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request, please go to:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/budget>

4. Re-Focusing of Funding

CNCS reserves the right to re-focus program dollars in the event of disaster or other compelling needs for service.

5. Public Burden Statement

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 requires CNCS to inform all potential persons who are to respond to this collection of information that such persons are not required to respond unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. [See 5 CFR 1320.5(b)(2)(i)]. This collection is approved under OMB Control #: 3045-0035, Senior Corps: RSVP Grant Application, Expiration Date: 06/30/2016.