

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

For 2016-2017 AmeriCorps*State Funds



RFP #1617WNCSB-AC

**Issued by:
STATE OF WISCONSIN
WISCONSIN NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE BOARD**

**Submitting a Notification of Intent to Apply is
MANDATORY for all applicants.**

**All Notifications of Intent to Apply must be submitted no later than
4:30 PM Central Time on September 30, 2015.**

**All Proposals and Additional Documents must be submitted no later
than 4:30 PM Central Time on November 4, 2015.**

**For further information regarding this RFP contact Jessica Kessler at
jessica.kessler@wisconsin.gov.**

Questions on this RFP will be accepted until Midnight, October 29, 2015.

LATE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

TO: Jessica Kessler, WNCBSB

FAX: (608) 266-9313

E-MAIL: jessica.kessler@wisconsin.gov

NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR 2016-2017 AMERICORPS FUNDS

This form is due in the WNCBSB office by 4:30 PM Central Time on Wednesday, September 30, 2015.
ALL applicants must submit this form to have their application considered for funding.

An electronic version of this form can be found on the Serve Wisconsin website under “Funding” – “Application Materials”.

Contact Person(s): _____

Organization Applying: _____

Address, City, State, ZIP: _____

Phone Number for Contact(s): _____

E-mail(s) for Contact(s): _____

What type of funds are you going to request? (Please check only one; see RFP for more information)

- New or Recompete AmeriCorps Competitive Program
- New or Recompete Professional Corps Program
- Continuation Competitive AmeriCorps Program
(Please see Section 3.2 of this RFP for list of organizations eligible to apply for Continuation Competitive Funding.)
- AmeriCorps Partnership Challenge
- New or Recompete Education Awards Program (EAP)

Which CNCS Focus Area does your program *primarily* address? (See RFP and Glossary for more info.)

- Disaster Services
- Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Futures
- Veterans and Military Families
- Other/Non-CNCS Focus Area (please describe) _____

Additionally, select any Special Initiatives that apply (See RFP and Glossary for more information)

- 21st Century Service Corps
- Governor and Mayor Initiatives
- Multi-focus Intermediaries
- My Brother’s Keeper
- Next Gen AmeriCorps
- School Turnaround AmeriCorps

How many AmeriCorps members does your program plan to engage? (see Section 2.3.2) _____

WNCBSB uses information submitted on this form to plan technical assistance for organizations that are committed to submitting an application. Separate technical assistance sessions are being planned for New, Recompete, and Continuation applicants. Tentative dates are listed in Section 2.9 of this RFP. Details will be sent to the contact person(s) who respond to this Notification and posted on the Serve Wisconsin website at www.servewisconsin.wi.gov. Links to other resources and tutorials are available on the Serve Wisconsin Website under “Funding”.

If you would like to hand deliver this form on or before the deadline, the address is:

Wisconsin National and Community Service Board
ATTN: RFP Manager
1 W. Wilson Street, Room B274
Madison, WI 53703

Please review the RFP, Application Instructions, and cited Code of Federal Regulations entries that outline the requirements for AmeriCorps applications before submitting this Notification of Intent to Apply form.

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Key Dates

Submission of a Notification of Intent to Apply is required to be eligible for this competition and is due **Wednesday, September 30, 2015 at 4:30 p.m. Central Time**. See page 2 of this *Request for Proposals (RFP)* for this form.

Applications and required additional documents are due **Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at 4:30 p.m. Central Time**. **Late proposals will not be accepted.**

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

This *Request for Proposals (RFP)* should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations 45 CFR Sections 2520 – 2550, which can be found at http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/45CFR_chapterXXV.pdf, the *RFP* Glossary (Section 8.0), Application Instructions and Attachments, and Performance Measures Instructions which are incorporated by reference. These documents can be found at <http://www.servewisconsin.wi.gov>, under *Funding*. The full regulations are available online at www.ecfr.gov. TTY number is 800-833-3722.

Applicants should also have familiarity with the 2013-2015 Wisconsin State Service Plan, which can be found at <http://servewisconsin.wi.gov/documents/StateServicePlan.pdf>.

Publication of this *Request for Proposals (RFP)* does not obligate Serve Wisconsin or CNCS to award any specific number of grants or to obligate the entire amount of funding available.

1.1 Program Description

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

Through all its programs, CNCS seeks to expand economic opportunity – helping Americans acquire the skills, education, and training they need for productive employment. By helping Americans graduate, pursue higher education, and find work, national service can provide immediate and long-term benefits by expanding individual opportunity, building family stability, and creating more sustainable, resilient communities.

1.1.1 Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations (see Section 1.3) proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that members can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

CNCS may award a Cost Reimbursement, a Fixed Amount grant, or an AmeriCorps Partnership Challenge grant to any successful applicant, but the availability of a Full Time Fixed Amount grant is limited to certain applicants. See Section 2.4.1 and the *RFP* Glossary (Section 8.0) for more information. In addition to the funding allocated for competitive distribution under this *RFP*, CNCS provides funding based on population directly to Governor-appointed State Service Commissions (i.e., Serve Wisconsin) which they, in turn, award through a process they administer according to state priorities (i.e., Formula Funding Process – Appendix B).

1.1.2 CNCS Focus Areas

In order to carry out Congress' intent and to maximize the impact of investment in national service, CNCS has the following focus areas:

Disaster Services

Grant activities will provide support to increase the preparedness of individuals for disasters, improve individuals' readiness to respond to disasters, help individuals recover from disasters, and/or help individuals mitigate disasters. Grantees also have the ability to respond to national disasters under CNCS cooperative agreements and FEMA mission assignments.

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 people; help economically disadvantaged people, including youth identified in My Brother's Keeper, to have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy; transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing; and/or have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed.

Education

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children; improved school readiness for economically disadvantaged young children; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or support economically disadvantaged students prepare for success in post-secondary educational institutions.

Environmental Stewardship

Grants will provide support for increased individual behavioral change leading to increased energy efficiency, renewable energy use, and ecosystem improvements particularly for economically disadvantaged households and communities. Grant activities will decrease energy and water consumption; improve at-risk ecosystems; increase behavioral changes that lead directly to decreased energy and water consumption or improved at-risk ecosystems; and/or increase green training opportunities that may lead to decreased energy and water consumption or improved at-risk ecosystems.

Healthy Futures

Grants will provide support for activities that will improve access to primary and preventive health care for communities served by CNCS-supported programs; increase seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible; and/or increase physical activity and improve nutrition in youth with the purpose of reducing childhood obesity.

Veterans and Military Families

Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength; increase the number of veterans, military service members, and their families served by CNCS-supported programs; and/or increase the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through CNCS-supported programs.

1.1.3 2016 AmeriCorps Funding Priorities

CNCS seeks to prioritize the investment of national service resources in:

- Disaster Services – improving community resiliency through disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation
- Economic Opportunity – increasing economic opportunities for communities, specifically opportunity youth (see Glossary, Section 8.0), both as the population served and as AmeriCorps members
- Education – improving student academic performance in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Mathematics (STEM) or addressing student and school needs through School Turnaround AmeriCorps programming (See Glossary, Section 8.0, and Appendix D - School Turnaround AmeriCorps)
- Environment – 21st Century Service Corps (see Glossary, Section 8.0)
- Veterans and Military Families – positively impacting the quality of life of veterans and improving military family strength
- Governor and Mayor Initiatives (see Glossary, Section 8.0)
- Programming that supports My Brother's Keeper (see Glossary, Section 8.0)
- Multi-focused intermediaries that demonstrate measurable impact and primarily serve communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure—i.e., rural and other underserved communities. (see Glossary, Section 8.0)
- Safer Communities – activities that focus on public safety and preventing and mitigating civil unrest e.g., summer programming or engaging communities that are part of The National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention (see Glossary, Section 8.0)

In order to receive priority consideration, applicants must demonstrate that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes and must include a high quality program design.

Responses that propose programs for the purpose of receiving priority consideration are not guaranteed funding.

Next Gen AmeriCorps

Depending on overall funding available, CNCS is inviting applicants to propose the Next Generation AmeriCorps, or Next Gen AmeriCorps. The importance of service remains even within the tight fiscal constraints we face as a nation. The goal of Next Gen AmeriCorps is to use innovative strategies to offer the same service opportunities but at a more efficient cost to the government. To participate, applicants must

have a cost per member that is lower than \$10,000 per year per full-time member using CNCS funding. CNCS is looking for innovative approaches and models to implement, for example: locating operations in Promise Zones, areas that meet Promise Zone criteria, or that demonstrate other indicators of severe need.

Encore Service

Congress set a goal that 10 percent of AmeriCorps funding should support encore service programs that engage a significant number of participants age 55 or older. CNCS seeks to meet this target in this competition and encourages encore programs to apply. Encore will provide an opportunity for current evidence-based Senior Corps Foster Grandparents Program and Senior Companion Program grantees to expand their programs through AmeriCorps funding.

1.1.4 National Performance Measures

The Serve America Act (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 guided the development of 16 agency-wide Priority Performance Measures. CNCS expects organizations to use National Performance Measures as part of their comprehensive performance measurement strategy that relies on both performance and evaluation data to learn from their work as well as make tactical and strategic adjustments to achieve their goals. For more information, please refer to the National Performance Measure Instructions here:

http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Performance_Measure_Instructions_2016.pdf

1.1.5 Program Authority

The National and Community Service Act of 1990 (NCSA), as amended. 42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq. The full text of the NCSA is available online at <http://uscode.house.gov>. The full regulations are available online at <http://www.ecfr.gov>.

CNCS's Fiscal Year 2016 Congressional Budget Request includes a request for additional statutory authority to operate summer-based programs for disadvantaged Opportunity Youth who are 14 years or older at the time they begin their national service.

1.2 Award Information

CNCS expects a highly competitive AmeriCorps FY 2016 grant competition. The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations, which have not yet been made. Grant awards have two components: operating funds and AmeriCorps member positions. Grant award amounts vary – both in the level of operating funds and in the type and amount of AmeriCorps member positions.

1.2.1 Award Period

Unless otherwise specified, the grant generally covers a three-year project period. In approving a multi-year project period, CNCS generally makes an initial award for the first year of operation. In most cases, the application is submitted with a one-year budget. Continuation funding is not guaranteed. Factors considered in awarding continuation grants include satisfactory performance, demonstrated capacity to manage the grant, compliance with grant requirements, agency priorities, and the availability of appropriated funds. CNCS reserves the right to adjust the amount of a grant or elect not to continue funding for subsequent years.

1.2.2 Project/Award Period

The project period is generally one year with a start date of August 15 or September 1, 2016, and end date of August 14 or August 31, 2017, respectively. The project start date may not occur prior to the date CNCS awards the grant. AmeriCorps members may not enroll prior to the start date of the award. AmeriCorps members may not begin service prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period as designated in the grant award. A program may not certify any hours a member performs prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period.

1.3 Eligibility Information

1.3.1 Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply: public or private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations; institutions of higher education; government entities within states or territories (e.g., cities, counties); labor organizations; partnerships and consortia; and federally recognized

Indian Tribes. Receiving funding previously from CNCS or another Federal agency is not a prerequisite to apply under this *RFP*.

In addition to being eligible to apply under this *RFP*, federally recognized Indian Tribes will also be eligible to apply under a separate Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity for Indian Tribes for operating or planning grants released by CNCS later in the fall with an application deadline of spring 2016.

Organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime are disqualified from receiving the assistance described in this *RFP*. 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.

New Applicants

CNCS encourages organizations that have never received funding from CNCS to apply. The general practice is to award no more than 50 member positions (slots) and at least 20 member positions (slots) to organizations receiving an AmeriCorps grant for the first time.

New applicants are eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement and Education Award Program (EAP) grants but are not eligible to apply for Full Time Fixed Amount grants. Existing subgrantees/operating sites of Fixed Amount and Cost Reimbursement grantees that can demonstrate a track record and capacity to manage a Fixed Amount grant are considered to have AmeriCorps experience and therefore can apply for Fixed Amount grants. School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants may not apply for Full Time Fixed Amount grants.

Continuation applicants

Organizations that have current AmeriCorps awards that do not end in FY16 must submit an application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. Please see the Application Instructions. Requests by existing continuation applicants for increases in the level of funding or number of positions will be assessed using the criteria under this *RFP*.

1.3.2 Type of Applicants

Single-State Applicants

Organizations that propose to operate in only one state must apply through the Governor-appointed State or Territory Commissions (i.e., Wisconsin National and Community Service Board). Each state and territory commission administers its own selection process and submits to CNCS the applicants it selects to compete for funding. Single-state applicants must contact their State Commissions to learn about their state or territory processes and deadlines which may be significantly earlier than the CNCS deadlines and may have additional requirements. The list of State and Territory Commissions can be found here: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions> A single-state application submitted directly to CNCS by the applicant rather than the State Commission will be considered noncompliant and will not be reviewed.

National Direct Applicants

Multi-state: Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one state or territory apply directly to CNCS.

Federally-recognized Indian Tribes: Applicants that are Indian Tribes apply directly to CNCS. 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.

1.3.3 Program Models

In Wisconsin, AmeriCorps programs typically employ one of two program models, as described below:

1. Youth Corps Program Model: Pursuant to Sec. 16.22(1)(dm), Wis. Stats., the term “youth corps program” means a full-time, year-round national service program or a full-time, summer national service program that does all of the following: 1) undertakes meaningful service projects with visible public benefit, including

natural resources, urban renovation and human resource projects; 2) includes as participants persons who have attained the age of 16 but who have not attained the age of 26, including youths who are not enrolled in school and other disadvantaged youths; and 3) provides those participants with crew-based, highly structured and adult-supervised work experience, life skills training, education, career guidance and counseling, employment training and support services and with the opportunity to develop citizenship values and skills through service to their community and country. (Note: The Board cautions programs wishing to enroll 16-year-olds in AmeriCorps. CNCS has determined that 16-year-olds must be out-of-school as determined by State Law, and in Wisconsin there are very few cases where a 16-year-old can be deemed out-of-school.)

2. Multi-site Program Model: A “multi-site program” is an AmeriCorps program that places one or two members at multiple project sponsor sites within a single community, county, region or statewide. Host service sites are schools, nonprofit and public agencies that agree to involve an AmeriCorps member in community service; supervise and evaluate that member; and possibly provide a certain amount of matching funds for the member’s living allowance and operating costs.

The Board prefers to make awards to programs that propose to make a significant impact on a community. As such, **applicants may not apply for fewer than 20 AmeriCorps members (slots).**

CNCS has also refocused many national service efforts to assist with the response to natural disasters. The Board encourages you to include member service activity that would involve members in disaster preparedness or response. This could include member training activities that would involve members in local disaster response or limited deployments to areas in the nation affected by disasters.

The Board supports programs that actively engage qualified people with disabilities as AmeriCorps members and volunteers. The Board's efforts are part of a larger initiative from CNCS, which supports efforts to increase participation in national service by people with disabilities. The Board stands behind the principle that everyone can serve their community and encourages programs to engage people with disabilities in their local service efforts.

1.4 Cost Sharing or Matching

1.4.1 Fixed Amount Grants and Education Award Program Grants

There is no specific match requirement for Full Time Fixed Amount and Education Award Program, and AmeriCorps Partnership Challenge (see Glossary, Section 8.0) grants, but CNCS does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program; therefore, organizations must raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.

1.4.2 Cost Reimbursement Grants

A first-time successful applicant is required to match at 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found below and in 45 CFR §2521.60.

	Years 1-3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Overall Minimum Match Share	24%	26%	30%	34%	38%	42%	46%	50%

How to Calculate Minimum Match Requirement

$$\begin{aligned} & \$ \text{ CNCS (Federal) Request} \div (100\% - \text{minimum match share}\%) = \$ \text{ TOTAL AWARD} \\ & \$ \text{ TOTAL AWARD} - \$ \text{ CNCS Request} = \$ \text{ Grantee Share} \end{aligned}$$

Example: A program in year 7 (minimum match share = 38%) of AmeriCorps operations is requesting \$300,000 from CNCS.

$$\begin{aligned} & \$300,000 \div (100\% - 38\% \text{ (or } 62\%)) = \mathbf{\$483,871} \text{ (minimum total award)} \\ & \$483,871 - \$300,000 = \mathbf{\$183,871} \text{ (minimum grantee share)} \end{aligned}$$

Section 121(e)(5) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12571(e)), requires programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant to report the amount and source of these funds to CNCS on a Federal Financial Report. Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout.

The living allowance or salary provided to AmeriCorps members in Professional Corps programs (see Glossary, Section 8.0) does not count toward the matching requirement.

1.4.3 Alternative Match

Under certain, very exceptional circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in the regulations at 45 CFR §2521.60(b). To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Application Instructions. Applicants that plan to request an alternative match schedule must submit a request directly to jessica.kessler@wisconsin.gov by the application due date of **November 4, 2015 at 4:30 p.m. CT**. Serve Wisconsin must first approve an alternative match schedule before submitting to CNCS on behalf of state applicants.

2.0 PREPARING AND SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL

2.1 Content and Form of Application Submission

What are the steps that organizations need to take to apply?

- Determine whether you are a National Direct applicant that will apply directly to CNCS or a Single-State applicant that will apply through the Wisconsin State Commission (see Section 1.3.2)
- Submit a Notification of Intent to Apply (page 2 of *RFP*) by **September 30, 2015 at 4:30 p.m. CT**
- Obtain a DUNS number at www.dnb.com/get-a-duns-number.html
- Register (or update) your organization with the System for Award Management at www.sam.gov
- Establish an eGrants account (<https://egrants.cns.gov>)
- Write a high quality application that is responsive to this *RFP*
- Provide required additional documents in hard copy by **November 4, 2015 at 4:30 p.m. CT**
- Submit the application via eGrants by the deadline on **November 4, 2015 at 4:30 p.m. CT**

2.1.1 How to Apply

Organizations that propose to operate in a single state should apply directly to the Wisconsin National and Community Service Board (the Board) through this *RFP*. Organizations that propose to operate in more than one state and Tribal organizations apply directly to CNCS. Please visit www.nationalservice.gov for their FY 2016 *Notice of Funding Opportunity*.

Please note that single-state applicants that apply to the Wisconsin National and Community Service Board through this *RFP* have different deadlines, more required additional documents and different instructions than CNCS. **Please ensure that you use this *RFP* to complete your proposal to the Board and not the FY2016 *Notice of Funding Opportunity* from CNCS.**

This *RFP* should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520-2550, the Application Instructions and Attachments, and the Performance Measure Instructions, which are incorporated by reference. Application Instructions and Performance Measure Instructions are available at www.servewisconsin.wi.gov; click on the Funding link. Please review the Application Instructions and Attachments for step-by-step instructions on completing your application in eGrants and the required additional documents to send to the Board.

2.1.2 Notification of Intent to Apply

In order to gauge the number of applications we are likely to receive and to plan more efficiently for technical assistance and application review, all applicants must complete and submit the Notification of Intent to Apply Form located on page 2 of this *RFP* by **4:30 p.m. Central Time, Wednesday, September 30, 2015**. This form may be e-mailed, faxed, or hand delivered to the address listed on the form.

Submitting a Notification of Intent to Apply by the deadline of 4:30 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, September 30, 2015, is mandatory. Applications submitted by applicants who have not submitted a Notification of Intent to Apply by the deadline will not be considered for funding.

2.1.3 Additional Documents

An application is only complete if it includes all required documentation and is received by the application due date. **Incomplete applications will not be considered.** All additional required documents that are not possible to attach in eGrants are due to the Board office in hard copy by the application deadline. These documents are specified in the Application Instructions and Attachments. **Additional documents must be received by the Board at 1 West Wilson Street in Room B274, Madison, WI, by 4:30 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, November 4, 2015. No exceptions will be made.**

Do not submit any other supplementary materials such as videos, brochures, or any other item not requested in the Application Instructions. The Board will not review or return them.

All additional required documents should include the applicant organization name and Application ID number at the top of the page, and must be submitted in a **sealed envelope**. WNCSB staff will date and time stamp required grant application document packets and notify applicants via e-mail upon receipt; the packets will not be opened or reviewed for completeness until after the submission deadline. **Not submitting all of the required grant application documents will result in automatic disqualification of the application.**

Submit all additional documents in person, or via a parcel service in a sealed envelope to:

Wisconsin National & Community Service Board
Additional Documents – AmeriCorps 2016-17
1 West Wilson Street, Room B274
Madison, WI 53703

Please note: applicants have had issues with the U.S. Postal Service delivering packages by the guaranteed delivery date; therefore, we do not recommend applicants rely on this service to submit their additional documents by the deadline.

More information about the required additional documents can be found in the Application Instructions and Attachments.

2.1.4 Submission Dates and Times

The closing date for the receipt of all applications under this *RFP* is **Wednesday, November 4, 2015**. Electronic applications must be submitted in eGrants, and additional documents must be received in the WNCSB office by **4:30 p.m. Central Time** on the due date.

Applications and additional documents submitted by fax or e-mail will not be accepted. Unless requested by the Board, no additional information will be accepted from an applicant after the deadline for submittal of applications.

2.1.5 Late Applications

Submitting an application in eGrants after the deadline and/or not submitting all required grant application documents will result in disqualification of the application.

2.2 How to Submit an Application in eGrants

Applicants must submit their applications electronically via the CNCS web-based system, eGrants (www.egrants.cns.gov). Because it is a unique system, it is recommended that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application creation process at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word processing document and copy and paste the document into the appropriate eGrants fields no later than 10 days before the deadline. Please note the length of a document in word processing software may be different than what will print out in eGrants. The Board and CNCS will consider the number of pages as they print out through eGrants when determining compliance with any page limits in this *RFP*.

Please see the 2016-17 Application Instructions and Attachments document posted on the Board's website at www.servewisconsin.wi.gov under "Funding" for more instructions on how to enter and submit your application in eGrants. CNCS also provides eGrants tutorials at www.nationalservice.gov/resources, keyword: eGrants.

2.2.1 Technical Difficulties

Immediately contact the National Service Hotline at 800-942-2677 or https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask_eg if a problem arises while creating an account or while preparing or submitting an application in eGrants.

National Service Hotline hours are as follows: Monday-Friday, 9 am - 7 pm Eastern (Jan, Aug, Sept); Monday-Thursday, 9 am - 7 pm Eastern (Oct, Nov, Dec). In addition to those hours, the Hotline will also be open October 30-31, November 1, December 4-6 and 11-13, and January 16-18 from 10 am - 7 pm Eastern to assist applicants. If you contact the Hotline, be prepared to provide the application ID, organization name, and the *RFP* to which your organization is applying.

If technical issues prevent an applicant from submitting an application on time, please contact the National Service Hotline prior to the deadline to explain the technical issue and receive a ticket number. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, the applicant must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit via eGrants. You must then submit a brief paragraph including your eGrants ticket number with your explanation of the technical issues that prevented you from submitting in eGrants by the deadline to the Board via e-mail to jessica.kessler@wisconsin.gov before the 4:30 p.m. Central Time deadline.

In the event of prolonged unavailability of the eGrants system on the date of submission, the Board reserves the right to extend the eGrants submission deadline. Any notice of extension of the deadline will be sent to all organizations that submitted a Notification of Intent to Apply and will be posted on the Board's website at www.servewisconsin.wi.gov.

2.3 Application Fields and Page Limits

In eGrants, applicants will enter text in the following fields:

- Executive Summary
- Program Design
- Organizational Capability
- Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
- Evaluation Plan

Applications may not exceed 15 pages for the Narratives (18 pages for Multi-Focus Intermediaries, School Turnaround, and Next Gen AmeriCorps applicants). Application content considered in determining page limit compliance includes the SF 424 Facesheet, the Executive Summary, and the Narrative Sections contained in the Program Design, Organizational Capacity, and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy as the pages print out from eGrants. Please note that the length of a document in word processing software may be different than what will print out in eGrants. WNCSB and CNCS will consider the number of pages as they print out through eGrants when determining compliance for page limits. CNCS strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the "Review and Submit" page prior to submission to check that the application does not exceed the page limit. The application page limit does not include the narrative portion of the Evaluation Plan, the Logic Model, Budget, Performance Measures, or the supplementary materials, if applicable.

The Logic Model may not exceed more than three pages when printed through eGrants.

Reviewers will not consider submitted material that is over the page limits in the printed report, even if eGrants allows an applicant to enter and submit text over the limit. This applies to both the application page limit and the logic model page limit. Do not submit other items not requested in the *RFP* or Application Instructions and Attachments. The Board will not review or return them.

2.3.1 Assessment Criteria

Each applicant must describe a project that will deploy AmeriCorps members effectively to solve a significant community problem. CNCS urges applicants to submit high quality applications that carefully follow the guidance in this *RFP* and in the Application Instructions. The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization will receive funding.

2.3.2 Threshold Issues

Applications should reflect that they meet the threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying. No applicant should submit an application with fewer than 20 member slots. If an applicant is applying for a Professional Corps grant, its application should demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals. If an applicant is applying for a Full Time Fixed Amount grant, the application should reflect that only full-time or less than full-time positions serving in a full-time capacity will be permitted. An application for the Governor and Mayor Initiative should clearly reflect that the application is from one Governor, one Mayor, and a minimum of two nonprofits. If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: 45 CFR §2522.910-.940), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.

School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants must meet the threshold requirements outlined in the Glossary (Section 8.0) and Appendix D – School Turnaround AmeriCorps.

New and re-competing applicants must submit an application with a minimum of 20 AmeriCorps members. Applications that have fewer than 20 members will be noncompliant and will not be reviewed.

CNCS will assess an applicant's strategic considerations. Applicants must check the relevant boxes in the Performance Measure tab in eGrants in order to be considered for CNCS' assessment of the strategic considerations. Applicants should only check the boxes if the strategic consideration is an intentional part of their program design and the implementation strategies are described in the application.

2.3.3 Application Fields

A. Executive Summary (Required - 0 percent)

Please fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary. Do not deviate from the template below.

[Name of the organization] proposes to have [Number of] AmeriCorps members who will [what the members will be doing] in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will serve]. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing].

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area(s) of [Focus Area(s)].* The CNCS investment of \$[amount of request] will be matched with \$[amount of projected match]**, \$[amount of local, state, and federal funds] in public funding and \$[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.

**If the program is not operating in a CNCS focus area, omit this sentence.*

** Fixed Amount grant applicants (EAP, Full Time Fixed Amount, and AmeriCorps Partnership Challenge) should list their Other Revenue (see Glossary, Section 8.0) because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still must raise significant additional resources to operate the program. CNCS will post all Executive Summaries of awarded grant applications on www.nationalservice.gov in the interest of transparency and Open Government.

B. Program Design (50 percent)

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value. School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants should respond to the additional criteria in the Glossary and Appendix D. Point values listed relate to CNCS's scoring criteria. For WNCSB's scoring criteria, please see Appendix A – 2016-17 AmeriCorps Peer Reviewer Form.

1. Problem/Need (9 points)

- The community problem/need is clearly defined and aligns with the proposed intervention.
- The community problem/need is prevalent and severe in communities where members will serve and has been well documented with relevant data.

2. Theory of Change and Logic Model (15 points)

- The applicant's proposed intervention is clearly articulated including the design, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) the roles of leveraged volunteers.
- The applicant's intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change. The theory of change should be either evidence-informed or evidence-based, meaning that the proposed intervention is guided by the best available research evidence that supports its effectiveness in the evidence section.
- The proposed outcomes represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem/need identified by the applicant.
- The applicant's AmeriCorps members will produce significant and unique contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem/need.

The logic model shall depict:

- A summary of the community problem/need outlined in the narrative.
- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including:
 - Number of locations or sites in which members will provide services
 - Number of AmeriCorps members that will deliver the intervention
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
 - The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention)
 - The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
 - The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level)
- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (e.g., number of beneficiaries served). Identify which National Performance Measures will be used as output indicators.
- Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention.

Programs may include short, medium, or long-term outcomes in the logic model. While performance measure outcomes should be consistent with the program's theory of change, programs are not required to measure all outcomes that are included in the logic model. The Logic Model should identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

Applicants with multiple interventions should complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each intervention. Logic Model content that exceeds the three pages will not be reviewed.

3. Evidence Base (12 points)

Applicants will be awarded up to 12 points for providing evidence that their proposed intervention will lead to the outcomes identified in the logic model. Applicants shall provide a description of up to two research studies or evaluations that provide evidence that the proposed intervention is effective for the target population and community problem, and should describe how this evidence places them in the highest evidence tier for which they are eligible. Applicants should pay particular attention to the requirements for each tier of evidence. More points are awarded for higher tiers of evidence.

Applicants requesting consideration for the moderate and strong evidence levels should reference the 2016-17 AmeriCorps Application Instructions and Attachments guidance on the submission of evaluation studies.

All applicants must include as much detailed information as possible in the Evidence section of the application. Applicants are advised to focus on presenting high-quality evidence from two of the strongest and most relevant studies. Studies must be evaluations of specific programs or interventions. Research that does not focus on a specific program or intervention, but rather focuses on a broader issue area or population, will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points.

All applicants must include a description of up to two research studies or evaluations in order to earn points, including the following information:

1. The date the research or evaluation was completed, and the time period for which the intervention was examined
2. A description of the target population studied (e.g., the demographics)
3. The methodology used in the study (e.g., outcome study, random assignment, regression discontinuity design, or propensity score matching)
4. A description of the data, data source, and data collection methods
5. The outcomes or impacts examined and the study findings
6. The strength of the findings (e.g., confidence level, statistical power of the study design and statistical significance of the findings)

Reviewers will examine the descriptions (and attached studies if requesting consideration for moderate or strong evidence base) using the following criteria:

- a. How closely the intervention evaluated in the studies matches the one proposed by the applicant;
- b. The methodological quality and rigor of the studies presented (e.g., sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, use of control or equivalent comparison groups, baseline equivalence and study attrition, etc.);
- c. Strength and consistency of the findings, with preference given to findings that show a meaningful and persistent positive effect on participants demonstrated with confidence levels;
- d. The date of the study, with a preference towards studies that have been conducted within the last six years.

If the evidence submitted as part of this application does not describe a well-designed and well-implemented evaluation, the applicant will be considered for a lower tier of evidence and related point values.

Requirements associated with the five evidence tiers are described next.

No evidence (0 points) means that the applicant has not provided evidence that they have systematically collected any qualitative or quantitative data to date.

Pre-preliminary evidence (1-2 points) means the applicant has demonstrated data collection experience testing or tracking at least one aspect of its logic model. For example, the applicant has collected systemic and accurate data on one or more of the following: the community need the proposed intervention will address, the program intervention's activities and services delivered, participation in the intervention by the target population, and/or participant outcomes (for example, performance measurement data or a process evaluation assessing implementation of the intervention). The data collection process and results must be described fully, and the applicant should explain the link between data collection and the relevant component(s) of its logic model. Evidence for the pre-preliminary tier should be described in the Evidence section of the application but does not require submission of supplemental documentation.

Preliminary evidence (3-6 points) means the applicant has described up to two outcome studies about the intervention that yielded promising results for the proposed intervention or a similar intervention that the applicant will replicate with fidelity to the evaluated program model. The ways to demonstrate preliminary level of evidence are as follows:

- The applicant must describe at least one outcome study that was conducted of their own intervention. This must include a detailed description of the outcome study data from pre and post-tests without a comparison group or post-test comparison between intervention and comparison groups. An outcome study includes data beyond that which is collected as part of routine performance measurement. This description should explain whether the outcome study was conducted internally by the applicant organization or by an entity external to the applicant.

OR

- The applicant must describe at least one random control trial study or quasi-experimental evaluation (e.g., propensity score matching) that found positive results for the same intervention that the applicant plans to replicate. The description should include details about how the intervention studied and the applicant's proposed approach are the same and how the applicant will replicate the intervention with fidelity to the program model. The study must have been conducted by an entity external to the organization whose program was studied.

OR

- The applicant may submit evidence from both bullets listed above. In this case, the applicant must provide data from an outcome study of an intervention it has previously implemented (see above) and also proposes to modify their program by replicating another random control trial study or quasi-experimental evaluation. Applicants should describe their previous outcome study and should also describe and submit the study(ies) of the proposed evidence-based intervention.

For the purposes of this *RFP*, "replicate" means that the key elements of the applicant's intervention are implemented as the evidence-based program model describes (e.g., in terms of content or curriculum, delivery process, and target population), and the applicant's adaptations are relatively minor. For example, an applicant implementing an intervention using certified teachers to administer the curriculum would not be considered replicating that program with fidelity if it replaces teachers with AmeriCorps members who are not certified teachers, because the documented success of the intervention relied on the specialization of certified teachers.

Moderate evidence (7-9 points) means the applicant has submitted up to two well-designed and well-implemented studies that evaluated the same intervention described in the application and identified evidence of effectiveness on one or more key desired outcomes of interest as depicted in the applicant's logic model. Evidence of effectiveness (or positive findings) is determined using experimental design evaluations (e.g., Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT)) or quasi-experimental design evaluations (QED) with statistically matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups. The ability to generalize the findings from the RCT or QED beyond the study context may be limited (e.g., single-site). The studies were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.

Applicants classifying their evidence as **Moderate** must submit up to two evaluation reports from external sources or evaluations published in peer-reviewed articles as separate attachments.

Current CNCS grantees are required to submit an evaluation report of their CNCS funded program on a three-year cycle. The CNCS-required evaluation report may count towards one of the two studies required for the Moderate evidence tier or may be submitted in addition to this. In the latter case, all three studies will be considered against the review criteria.

If the applicant is not a current grantee, then more than two studies will not be considered.

Strong evidence (10-12 points) means the applicant has demonstrated that the intervention has been tested nationally, regionally, or at the state-level (e.g., multi-site) using a well-designed and well-implemented Randomized Control Trial (RCT) or quasi-experimental design (QED). Alternatively, the proposed intervention's evidence may be based on multiple (up to two) well-designed and well-implemented QEDs or RCTs in different locations or with different populations within a local geographic area. The overall pattern of study findings is consistently positive. Findings from the RCT or QED studies may be generalized beyond the study context. The studies were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.

Applicants classifying their evidence as **Strong** must submit up to two evaluation reports from external sources or evaluations published in peer-reviewed articles as separate attachments.

Current CNCS grantees are required to submit an evaluation report of their CNCS funded program on a three-year cycle. The CNCS-required evaluation report may count towards one of the two studies required for the Strong evidence tier or may be submitted in addition to this. In the latter case, all three studies will be considered against the review criteria.

If the applicant is not a current grantee, then more than two studies will not be considered.

4. Notice Priority (3 points)

- The applicant's proposed program fits within one or more of the 2016 AmeriCorps funding priorities as outlined on page 6 and more fully described in the *RFP* Glossary (Section 8.0).
- The proposed program meets all of the requirements detailed on page 6 and in the *RFP* Glossary.

5. Member Training (4 points)

- AmeriCorps members will receive high quality training to provide effective service.
- AmeriCorps members **and** volunteers will be aware of, and will adhere to AmeriCorps requirements including the rules regarding prohibited activities (see Glossary, Section 8.0).

6. Member Supervision (2 points)

- AmeriCorps members will receive high quality guidance and support from their supervisor to provide effective service.
- AmeriCorps supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations.

7. Member Experience (3 points)

- AmeriCorps members will gain skills and experience as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed.
- AmeriCorps members will have access to meaningful service experiences, including opportunities for reflection and connection to the broader National Service network.
- The program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the programs operate.

8. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification (2 points)

- Members will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- Staff and community members where the members are serving will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- AmeriCorps members will be provided with and will wear service gear that prominently displays the AmeriCorps logo daily.

C. Organizational Capability (25 percent)

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

1. Organizational Background and Staffing (10 points)

- The organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program.
- The organization has adequate experience administering AmeriCorps grants or other federal grants effectively.
- The organization has sufficiently engaged community members and partner organizations in planning and implementing its intervention.

As documentation of community support and commitment to the program; please submit one or two letter(s) of support from the applicant's most significant community partner(s). The letter(s) should include what the partners see as the benefit to the community provided by the applicant's AmeriCorps members and what activities would not happen without the AmeriCorps members. Letters of support must be sent with required additional documents by the deadline of **November 4, 2015 at 4:30 p.m. Central Time**.

2. Compliance and Accountability (15 points)

- The applicant's organization, in implementation and management of its AmeriCorps program, will prevent and detect compliance issues.
- The applicant will hold itself, subgrantees, and service site locations (if applicable) accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified.
- The organization will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities at the grantee, subgrantee, and service site locations (if applicable).

- The AmeriCorps members' service will not duplicate, displace, or supplant volunteers, staff and/or interns.

D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

1. Cost Effectiveness (18 points)

- The budget is sufficient to carry out the program effectively.*
- The budget aligns with the applicant's narrative.*
- The program design is cost effective and the benefits justify the cost.
- The applicant has raised or describes an adequate plan to raise non-CNCS resources to fully support the program.
- The applicant, if re-competing, has a lower cost per Member Service Year (MSY – see *RFP* Glossary, Section 8.0) than approved in previous grants, or provides a compelling rationale for the same or increased cost including why this increase could not be covered by the grantee share.

* Program costs not included in the formal budget, including for Fixed Price and Partnership Challenge grantees, must be described in this section in sufficient detail to allow reviewers to assess their sufficiency and alignment.

Having a low cost per Member Service Year (MSY) is a competitive advantage. New applicants that submit with a low cost per MSY and re-competing applicants that submit with a lower cost per MSY than previously funded may receive higher priority for funding. Applicants requesting a higher cost per MSY than funded in previous years must justify their requests. If an applicant requests above the maximum cost per MSY (see Section 2.4.3), it must justify its request. Please note that such requests are rarely approved.

2. Budget Adequacy (7 points)

- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors and proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award.
- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget is in compliance with the budget instructions.
- Match is submitted with adequate information to support the amount written in the budget.

Applicants must complete the budget and ensure the following information is in the budget narrative (requested information in the budget screens):

- Identify the non-CNCS funding and resources necessary to support the project.
- Indicate the amount of non-CNCS resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash) and the sources of these commitments.

E. Evaluation Plan (Required for re-competing grantees - 0 points)

If the applicant is new or has not completed a three-year funding cycle, please enter N/A in the Evaluation Plan field since it pertains only to re-competing grantees. If the applicant is re-competing for AmeriCorps funds for the first time (see definition of "re-competing" below) the program must submit its evaluation plan in the Evaluation Plan field in eGrants. If the applicant is re-competing for a subsequent time, the program must submit its evaluation report with the required additional documents by the deadline, as well as an evaluation plan for the next three-year period in the Evaluation Plan field in eGrants.

Evaluation plans must include as much information as possible for each of the following (see Frequently Asked Questions: Evaluation, available at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/evaluation/cncs-evaluation-policies>):

- A short description of the theory of change - why the proposed intervention is expected to produce the proposed results;
- Outcome of interest - clear and measurable outcomes that are aligned with the theory of change and will be assessed during the evaluation;
- Research questions to be addressed by the study - concrete research questions (or hypotheses) that are clearly connected to the outcomes;

- Study components – a) a proposed research design for the evaluation including a rationale for the design selected, an assessment of its strengths and limitations, and a description of the main components; b) description of the sampling methods, measurement tools, and data collection procedures; and c) an analysis plan
- Qualifications needed for the evaluator; and
- The estimated budget.

For more information about evaluation plans, visit the CNCS Knowledge Network’s Evaluation Resources: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/evaluation/planning-evaluation>.

The evaluation requirements differ depending on the amount of the grant, as described in 45 CFR §2522.710:

- If the applicant is a State/Territory subgrantee and/or National Direct Grantee (other than an Education Award Program grantee), and its average annual CNCS program grant is \$500,000 or more, it must arrange for an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in §2522.730.
- If the applicant is a State/Territory subgrantee and/or National Direct Grantee whose average annual CNCS program grant is less than \$500,000, or an Education Award Program Grantee, it must conduct an internal or an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in §2522.730.

WNCSB will consider an application to be recompeting for the purposes of the evaluation requirement if it satisfies the CNCS definition of “same project” (see Glossary, Section 8.0) and has been funded for at least one complete three-year cycle. This includes applications that have only been funded with state Formula funds.

If the project satisfies the definition of same project and the applicant has completed one three-year cycle, it will be required to submit an evaluation plan. If the project satisfied the definition of same project and the applicant has completed two or more three-year cycles, the applicant will be required to submit an evaluation report as well as an evaluation plan for the upcoming 3-year grant. If the project does not satisfy the definition of recompeting, it will not be required to submit an evaluation plan or completed evaluation report.

The Evaluation Plan field of eGrants does not count towards the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit. Applicants should print out the plan to ensure the narrative does not exceed the character limits when entered in eGrants.

State/Territory subgrantees and/or National Direct Grantees with an average annual CNCS program grant of \$500,000 or more that are recompeting for funds are eligible to apply for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. Grantees requesting approval of an alternative evaluation approach should submit a request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach along with their evaluation plan in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in eGrants. The request should clearly explain: (a) the evaluation constraints faced by the program, (b) why the proposed approach is the most rigorous option feasible, and (c) how the proposed alternative approach will help the grantee build their evidence base. Evaluation plans should include, at a minimum, the required elements listed in this *RFP*. The evaluation plan must be consistent with the information submitted in the competitive funding application and in the request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. More information on alternative evaluation approaches can be found at: https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/files/guidance_for_grantees_approval_of_alternative_evaluation_approach.pdf.

If the request for the alternative evaluation approach and the evaluation plan itself will exceed the character limit of the evaluation summary or plan field in eGrants, the applicant should do the following:

- Enter the evaluation plan in the evaluation summary or plan field in eGrants.
- Include a note in the evaluation summary or plan field stating that the applicant is requesting an alternative evaluation approach.
- Include the alternative evaluation approach at the END of the application narrative with the heading “REQUEST FOR ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION APPROACH.” This section of the application narrative will not count against the page limit.

F. Amendment Justification (0 percent)

Enter N/A. This field will be used if the applicant is awarded a grant and needs to amend it.

G. Clarification Information (0 percent)

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter information that requires clarification in the post-review period.

H. Continuation Changes (0 percent)

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter changes in the application narratives in continuation requests.

2.3.4 Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM)

Applications must include a DUNS number and an Employer Identification Number. The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number. DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. The website indicates a 48-hour e-mail turnaround time on requests for DUNS numbers; however, CNCS suggests registering at least 30 days in advance of the application due date. After obtaining a DUNS number, all applicants must be registered with the Systems for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>.

SAM collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data in support of Federal agency contracts, grant awards, cooperative agreements, and other forms of federal assistance. All grant recipients are required to maintain a valid SAM registration, **which must be renewed annually**. Applicants that are not already registered with SAM are urged to begin the registration process immediately in order to avoid any delays in submitting applications. Applicants must have a DUNS number in order to register with SAM. To register online go to <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>.

2.4 Funding Restrictions

2.4.1 Types of Grants

The purpose of this document is to provide interested parties with information to enable them to prepare and submit a proposal for AmeriCorps*State funding for the creation, expansion, or enhancement of programs that meet the requirements of the AmeriCorps national service program. The State as represented by the Wisconsin National and Community Service Board (the Board) intends to use the results of this process to award contracts for AmeriCorps*State national service programs beginning in August or September 2016. These programs include AmeriCorps*State Competitive, Professional Corps, Full-Time Fixed-Amount (Non-EAP), Education Award Program (EAP) Fixed-Amount grants, and AmeriCorps*State formula grants.

AmeriCorps*State Competitive Grants: These grants are awarded to fund a portion of program costs and members' living allowance. AmeriCorps*State competitive applications are submitted to the Board through this *RFP* process. Eligible applications are reviewed at the state level and then forwarded to CNCS where they are selected for funding or returned back to the state for further consideration under the formula grant process.

AmeriCorps*State Formula Grants: AmeriCorps*State formula applications are those applications not funded by CNCS in the competitive grant cycle. The State of Wisconsin receives an annual formula allocation of funds, slots, and member service years (MSYs) from CNCS. The Board determines which applications receive formula grants in the state of Wisconsin.

NOTE: In order to be eligible for Formula funding through the Board, an applicant shall be one of the following at the time of application for Formula funds: Wisconsin state or local government entity, or one of the following if its governing body operates within the state of Wisconsin: a federally recognized Indian tribe, a public or private nonprofit organization (organized as a tax-exempt entity under the federal IRS Code, including religious organizations and labor organizations), or an institution of higher education as defined in Wisconsin Statute 118.55(1).

Organizations that would like to propose programs that have members serving in multiple states must apply directly to CNCS as a national direct program. Information on applying as a national direct program can be found at www.nationalservice.gov.

AmeriCorps grants can be awarded on a cost reimbursement or fixed amount basis. CNCS will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year. See Glossary, Section 8.0.

Except for Education Award Programs (EAP) and Professional Corps, fixed amount grants are only available to re-competing programs. Second- and third-year continuation applicants with cost reimbursement grants must submit a new application if they are interested in applying for a fixed-amount grant. **New applicants are not eligible to apply for full-time fixed-amount grants.**

General Summary of Grant Types

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement		Fixed Amount		
	Traditional	Professional Corps	Full-Time/Less than FT serving in a full time capacity	EAP	Professional Corps
Maximum Cost per MSY	\$13,730	Up to \$1,000*	\$13,430	\$800	Up to \$1,000*
Type of Slots in the National Service Trust	All	All	Full-Time or Less than Full-Time serving in a full time capacity only	All	Full-Time Only
Budget Submission Required	Yes		No		Yes, if requesting operating funds
Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSY	No		Yes		
Special Requirements	N/A	Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in the budget.	School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants are not eligible for Full Time Fixed Amount grants	N/A	Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. No CNCS funds may be used to pay member living allowance or salary.
Match Requirements	Yes	Yes; Living allowance or salary paid to members may not be counted toward the match requirement.	No, but organizations must raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.		
Financial Reporting Requirements	Yes		No		
Available to New Applicants	Yes		No	Yes	Yes

*CNCS's assumption is that Professional Corps will be covering the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non-CNCS funds and thus will not be requesting operating funds as part of their applications. CNCS will consider requests for operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate in its narrative and supporting budget materials significant organizational financial need and substantial challenges to raising non-CNCS resources.

2.4.2 Member Living Allowance

The proposed budget must include a living allowance for full-time members that is between \$12,530 (minimum) and \$25,060 (maximum) per member except as noted below. A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage.

Cost reimbursement programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time terms of service. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time

member, it must comply with the maximum limits in Table 1. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either CNCS or grantee share. (EXCEPTION: as noted in section 1 on the next page).

While Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to submit detailed budgets, they are still required to provide a living allowance that complies with the minimum and maximum requirements to members (Exception: as noted in 2 and 3 below). Most Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to indicate that amount in the application and should request those positions as “without living allowance” in the budget.

Table 1: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1700	\$12,530	\$25,060
One-year Half-time	900	n/a	\$13,265
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	\$9,950
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$6,635
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$4,420

1. Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements (for programs existing prior to Sept. 21, 1993)

If a program existed prior to September 21, 1993, a living allowance is not required. If an applicant chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement, but not the maximum requirement.

2. EAP Grantees are not required to provide a living allowance, but if a living allowance is provided, it must comply with the maximum requirements set forth in the Living Allowance Table above.

3. Professional Corps Grantees must provide members a living allowance or salary, which must meet the minimum, but may exceed the maximum living allowance set in the Living Allowance Table. Professional Corps member salaries are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve, and are not included in the budget. School Turnaround AmeriCorps EAPs may exceed the maximum living allowance.

2.4.3 Maximum Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)

Maximum Costs per MSY are set forth in Table 2. The CNCS cost per MSY is determined by dividing the CNCS share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested. It does not include child care or the value of the education award a member may earn. The maximum amount an applicant may request from CNCS per MSY is determined on an annual basis. New and re-competing State Commission sub-grantees/applicants will be held to the maximum cost per MSY for their grant type.

Table 2: 2016 Maximum Cost per MSY

Grant Program	Maximum
Individual Competitive State/Territory Program (cost reimbursement)	\$13,730
Professional Corps Grant (Cost Reimbursement)	Up to \$1,000*
Professional Corps Fixed Amount Grant	Up to \$1,000*
Education Award Program Fixed Amount Grant	\$800
Education Award Program Partnership Challenge Grant **	\$0
Full-time Fixed Amount Grant	\$13,430

*CNCS’s assumption is that Professional Corps will be covering the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non-CNCS funds and thus will not be requesting operating funds as part of their applications. CNCS will consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate in its narrative and supporting budget materials significant organizational financial need and substantial challenges to raising non CNCS resources.

** Partnership Challenge applicants should apply as an EAP program in eGrants but will request \$0 cost per MSY.

Programs operating in rural communities (as defined in the Glossary, Section 8.0) and programs that recruit opportunity youth as AmeriCorps members may request up to \$13,930 cost per MSY for the AmeriCorps members that will be serving in rural areas or who are opportunity youth. School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants serving exclusively in rural schools may request up to \$15,000 cost per MSY. All applicants must include a compelling case as to why the applicant's cost per MSY must be higher.

2.4.4 Amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award for FY 2016

AmeriCorps members serving in programs funded with FY 2016 dollars who successfully complete a term of service will receive an Education Award from the National Service Trust of \$5,775 for a year of full-time service, with correspondingly smaller awards for less than full-time service. The amount of the Education Award is linked to the value of the Pell Grant. A member has up to seven years after his or her term of service to use the Education Award.

Table 3: Term of Service and FY16 Education Award

Term of Service	Minimum # of Hours	Education Award
Full Time	1700	\$5,775.00
Half Time	900	\$2,887.50
Reduced Half Time	675	\$2,199.92
Quarter Time	450	\$1,527.45
Minimum Time	300	\$1,221.96

2.5 Procuring and Contracting Agency

This Request for Proposals (*RFP*) is issued by the Wisconsin National and Community Service Board, which is the sole point of contact for the State of Wisconsin during the selection process. The person responsible for managing the *RFP* process is Jessica Kessler, Program Officer. All contracts resulting from this *RFP* will be administered by the Board.

2.6 Clarification and/or Revisions to the Specifications and Requirements

Any questions concerning this *RFP* must be submitted **in writing by midnight on October 29, 2015**. Questions will not be accepted via telephone. Please submit all questions to:

U.S. Postal Service or other Carriers:

Jessica Kessler, RFP Manager
 Wisconsin National & Community Service Board
 1 West Wilson Street, Room B274
 Madison, WI 53703

Fax: 608-266-9313

Email: jessica.kessler@wisconsin.gov

Applicants are expected to raise any questions, exceptions, or additions they have concerning the *RFP* document by October 29, 2015. **All questions asked by applicants with corresponding answers will be released periodically at www.servewisconsin.wi.gov in the Funding section. The final posting of Questions and Answers will occur on October 30, 2015.** Please note, after October 29th only specific eGrants technical assistance may be given.

If an applicant discovers any significant ambiguity, error, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other deficiency in this *RFP*, the applicant should immediately notify the RFP Manager of such error and request a modification or clarification of this initial *RFP*.

Each proposal shall stipulate that it is predicated upon the requirements, terms, and conditions of this *RFP* and any supplements or revisions thereof.

Any contact with WNCBSB staff or Board members concerning this RFP is prohibited, except as authorized by the RFP Manager during the period from the date of release of the RFP until the Board approves final grant applications for AmeriCorps funding for the 2016-2017 program year.

2.7 Technical Assistance

The Board intends to provide technical assistance to ensure that strong proposals are developed. The following policies will be followed as a fair process for the provision of technical assistance:

1. Technical Assistance will be equally available to all prospective applicants.
2. Staff will only respond to applicants who have reviewed the available written materials and have a specific question to be answered. Questions may only be submitted in writing (see Section 2.6).
3. Staff will only provide answers to specific questions and make general comments regarding the Regulations and RFP, as opposed to providing specific programmatic suggestions for a particular applicant.
4. Staff will not review proposal drafts.
5. In compliance with federal regulations regarding conflict of interest, WNCBSB Board members will not provide any form of technical assistance to a potential grant applicant. Instead, they will refer applicants to the RFP Manager.
6. The Board will provide applicants with technical assistance on entering and submitting proposals in eGrants and will provide guidance on how to access assistance from the National Service Hotline.

2.8 Reasonable Accommodations

Upon request, reasonable accommodations will be provided by the Board including the provision of information materials in an alternative format for individuals with disabilities. For special needs, contact Jessica Kessler at 608-267-0772 or jessica.kessler@wisconsin.gov.

2.9 Calendar of Events

Listed below are specific and estimated dates and times of actions related to this RFP. The actions with specific dates must be completed as indicated unless otherwise changed by the Board. In the event that the Board finds it necessary to change any of the specific dates and times in the calendar of events listed below, it will do so by issuing a supplement to this RFP. There may or may not be a formal notification issued for changes in estimated dates and times. Meeting dates will be posted on the Board’s Web site at www.servewisconsin.wi.gov, and all meetings are publicized as open meetings.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
August 24, 2015	Date of Issue of RFP
September 22-24 (TBA*)	Technical Assistance Webinar--Continuation Applicants
September 30, 2015 (4:30 p.m. CDT)	Notification of Intent to Apply due to WNCBSB – Submission of a NOI is mandatory for an application to be considered for funding, including continuation applications
October 5-13, 2015 (TBA*)	Technical Assistance Webinars for New Applicants, Recompete Applicants, and other Technical Assistance Topics (TBA)
October 29, 2015	Last day for submitting written inquiries regarding this RFP
October 30, 2015	Final Questions & Answers from applicants available online
November 4, 2015 (4:30 p.m. CDT)	All proposals entered in eGrants and additional documents received by WNCBSB
November 4, 2015 (4:30 p.m. CDT)	Alternative Match Requests Due (if applicable, via e-mail)
December 2015 (TBA)	Program Evaluation & Development Committee meeting, Madison
	All recommended applicants are required to present to committee
December 17, 2015	WNCBSB Board meeting – Madison, WI
January 20, 2016	WNCBSB Applications due to CNCS
May 13, 2016	Date by which CNCS expects to make notification of Competitive awards
TBD	Program Evaluation & Development Committee and WNCBSB Board meetings to determine Formula grants
TBD	Formula applications due to CNCS

* Dates, times, and call-in information for all technical assistance calls and webinars will be sent to all currently-funded applicants and those who submit a Notification of Intent to Apply by the deadline.

2.10 Contract Term and Funding

Unless CNCS delays award notification, funds awarded under this solicitation will be for a period of one year starting between August 15, 2016 and September 1, 2016, and ending between August 14, 2017 and August 31, 2017, respectively.

2.11 Oral Presentations

All applicants that pass the State level peer review and program performance evaluation and are recommended to the Board for funding will be required to provide a short, 5-minute presentation to the Board's Program Evaluation & Development Committee at their December 2015 meeting in Madison, WI. **The presentation should summarize the application.** Board members may also ask applicants questions regarding their application. The date and location of this meeting will be sent to all recommended applicants.

2.12 Incurring Costs

The State of Wisconsin is not liable for any cost incurred by applicants replying to this *RFP*.

2.13 Withdrawal of Proposals

Proposals shall be irrevocable until contract award unless the proposal is withdrawn. Applicants may withdraw a proposal in writing at any time. A written request to withdraw the proposal must be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant organization and submitted to the RFP Manager. If a previously submitted proposal is withdrawn before the proposal due date and time, the applicant may submit another proposal at any time up to the proposal closing date and time.

3.0 PROPOSAL SELECTION AND AWARD PROCESS

The Board selects applications using an extensive, multi-stage review and selection process. This process includes Board, staff, and peer review and evaluation of pre-determined performance indicators. This section describes the application review and selection process.

In accordance with State Statute 16.22(2)(h), the Board must give priority to the greatest extent practicable to persons providing youth corps programs when awarding grants. The Board has enacted the following policy: when considering applications for AmeriCorps grant funding, if two applicants are approximately equal in performance and one of the two programs is a youth corps, then the youth corps program shall be given priority over the other program. Under this policy, two applications shall be considered approximately equal if there is a difference of two percentage points or less between their percentages of points earned. For applications that are approximately equal, their final rank may be affected by other factors including, but not limited to: youth corps priority; compliance issues; program start date; program location; demographic factors; public or private non-profit registered in Wisconsin; State Service Plan; program expansion.

3.1 Preliminary Staff Review – Timely Submission

Board staff will date and time stamp required grant application document packets upon receipt; however, the packets will not be reviewed for completeness until after the submission deadline. Board staff will also print a list of grant applications that were submitted in eGrants by the deadline. Applications submitted by eligible organizations by the deadline and that include all required grant application documents will continue in the selection process. **Submitting an application in eGrants after the deadline and/or not submitting all required grant application documents will result in disqualification of the application.**

3.2 Proposal Review for Continuation Competitive Applications

The following organizations are eligible to apply for Continuation funding: Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee-Kinder Academy, Summer Slide Prevention, Graduation Plus; Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee-SPARK/Environmental Education; Dane County Human Services; Indianhead Community Action Agency; Marshfield Clinic AmeriCorps Afterschool; Milwaukee Christian Center; Renewal Unlimited; United Way of Dane County-Achievement Connections; University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire – ECLIPSE; Wisconsin Association for Homeless and Runaway Services; and Wisconsin Emergency Management.

Since CNCS currently funds these projects, these organizations are only required to submit continuation requests and required additional documents that will be reviewed by Board staff. A recommendation for funding will be made to the Board without peer review; however, Continuation Applicants will be subject to performance score review (see Section 3.3.2).

After the Board approves the continuation applications, the applications will then be sent to CNCS for review. CNCS will make the final determination as to whether an applicant will continue to receive funding or will be declined. If a continuation application is declined at the federal level, the application will be considered for Formula funding under this *RFP*, if eligible.

3.3 **Proposal Review for All Other Applications (not Continuations)**

If your organization is not applying for Continuation Competitive funding, your organization will be submitting a New or Recompete application. After review for timely submission, the next steps are the concurrent state level peer review process and the Board staff technical review process. New and recompetite applications are peer reviewed by outside experts including community service practitioners, educators, administrators, former national service participants, and specialists in the areas of the environment, public safety, education, homeland security, and other human needs to evaluate the quality of the applications. If you are a current AmeriCorps Grantee, do not assume that peer reviewers are familiar with your program.

Board staff complete a technical review of all sections of the application narrative, logic model, performance measures, and budget. Staff will prepare funding recommendations to the Board based on the results of the staff technical review and state level peer review. Following final Board approval of applications, staff may request technical changes to applications.

3.3.1 **State Level Peer Review**

In evaluating your application for funding, peer reviewers will only assess the program design section of the narrative and logic model. Application Peer Review Forms, included in this *RFP* as Appendix A, are used for the state level peer review process. **Note that the peer review format in Appendix A has been revised to reflect changes in CNCS's NOFO and application instructions related to the program design portion of the application narrative.** The point values on the Peer Review Form are (roughly) doubled from the points values listed in this *RFP*. The state peer reviewers do not review the Organizational Capability or Budget Adequacy/Cost Effectiveness sections; therefore, point values are increased in order to reach 100 total possible points.

Proposals will be scheduled for review by at least 3 peer reviewers and the reviewers' scores are then averaged for each application. An applicant must meet an average peer score of 80 or above to be considered by the Board for submission as a New or Recompete Competitive Application. The Board will consider all applications receiving an average score of 80 or above if they also pass the Performance Scoring Evaluation and may recommend any or all for submission as a New or Recompete Competitive Application. **An application that receives an average score of fewer than 80 points will be ineligible for further consideration.** Reaching the 80 point threshold is inclusive of rounding to two places after the decimal point. Governor and Mayor Initiative application(s) are subject to peer review; however, such applications are not subject to the minimum 80 point peer review score criterion.

3.3.2 **Performance Scoring Evaluation**

Performance scoring percentages will be considered for applications requesting funding to continue existing programs including recompetite and continuation applications. Recompetite applications that have a performance scoring percentage less than 80% (inclusive of rounding to two places after the decimal point) will be eliminated from further consideration for Competitive funding.

A program's performance is based on the following criteria: enrollment and retention rates; 30-Day compliance with enrolling and exiting members; meeting performance measures; and timeliness of reporting.

An exception to the 80% minimum shall apply to applicants proposing a new and not previously funded AmeriCorps project, and shall apply for the first three years that the new/not previously funded project is funded. The exception for such new projects shall not preclude use of other criteria to determine appropriateness of funding such new projects.

An exception to the 80% minimum also applies to Continuation Competitive applications (see Section 3.2). As approved by the Board, any Continuation Competitive application that has a performance scoring percentage less than 80% would be allowed to proceed in the Competitive application process if approved by the Board; however, the Board's recommendation to CNCS would be to not fund the Continuation application due to the program's performance scoring percentage. Since CNCS selects Competitive grant

awardees, the recommendation for Continuation applicants would allow CNCS to make the determination on whether or not to continue funding the application.

3.3.3 Post Review Quality Control

After the peer review is complete, Board staff will review the results for fairness and consistency. Some applications may be selected for a Quality Control review. This additional level of review may be used for:

- Applications submitted by high-performing current grantees that receive a low peer review score
- Applications for which there are significant peer reviewer anomalies
- Applications with discrepancies identified during the peer review

Quality Control reviewers may be Board staff not involved in the technical review of the application and/or individuals with qualifications similar to those of peer reviewers. The Quality Control reviewer(s) will provide an assessment of the application's key strengths and weaknesses.

3.3.4 Ranking of Applications for New and Recompete Competitive Consideration

Prior to sending New and Recompete applications to the federal level for competitive review, CNCS requires state commissions to rank proposals. The Board must prioritize the proposals based on their relative quality.

The proposed ranking of New and Recompete applications will be provided to the Board as part of their December 17, 2015 meeting. Average application score and fit in Wisconsin's portfolio criteria for all applicants plus performance scoring for existing programs will be considered for ranking of Competitive applications. Performance scoring percentage and fit in Wisconsin's portfolio criteria will be used to break any tie for the number one ranking position. Fit in Wisconsin's portfolio criteria includes, but is not limited to: program location, program focus, cost efficiency, public or private non-profit registered in Wisconsin, and staff capacity. If eGrants requires ranking of any Governor and Mayor Initiative application, the Board will determine the ranking of such application.

All applications approved by the Board will be sent to CNCS for review by their January 20, 2016 deadline.

3.4 CNCS Application Review Information

3.4.1 Selection Criteria

The assessment of applications involves a wide range of factors and considerations. CNCS will engage external reviewers to provide insight and input with respect to eligible applications. In addition, CNCS staff will apply their experience and expertise in evaluating applications. In the end, the review and selection process will produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and strategic considerations described in this *RFP*.

Specifically, the review and selection process will:

A. Identify eligible applications that satisfy the following considerations:

- High alignment with narrative assessment criteria
- High alignment with priorities outlined in the *RFP*, including priority-specific requirements as detailed in the Glossary (Section 8.0)
- Relative risk and opportunity

B. Consider:

- State/Territory Commission rank and recommendations on state applicants
- State/Territory Commission input on National Direct applications, except federally-recognized Indian Tribes

C. Yield a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:

- Meaningful representation of
 - Geographic diversity
 - Rural communities (see definition in Glossary, Section 8.0)
 - Small and medium programs
 - Single and multi-state programs

- Faith- and community-based organizations
- Focus area representation
- Organizations and/or program models that recruit and engage traditionally underrepresented populations as AmeriCorps members (e.g., people with disabilities, low-income individuals, older Americans, etc.) and expand opportunities to serve as AmeriCorps members
- High ratio of match and/or other revenue to CNCS investment
- Evidence levels
- Promise Zone designees or cities that have had a Strong Cities, Strong Communities community solutions team

3.4.2 Review and Selection Process

A. Compliance and Eligibility Review

CNCS staff will review all applications submitted to CNCS to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completeness requirements. In order to be compliant and advance to Phase One Review, an applicant must satisfy all the following requirements:

- Submit a Notification of Intent to Apply by the deadline.
- Submit an application and all required additional documents by the application submission deadline.
- Submit an application that is complete, in that it contains all required elements and additional documents and follows the instructions provided in this *RFP*.
- Submit an application with a minimum of twenty (20) AmeriCorps members.

B. Phase One Review

There are three components to Phase One: 1) An assessment of the applicant's past performance for the same program model (if applicable), 2) a review of Theory of Change and Logic Model portion of the application narrative, and 3) a review of the Evidence Base portion of the application. Each application will be read by several CNCS staff.

State Commission staff will assess their re-competing subgrantees' past performance and submit those assessments to CNCS. This assessment is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding or the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this assessment will inform funding decisions. In evaluating programmatic performance, CNCS will consider the following for applicants that are current formula and competitive grantees and are submitting applications for the same program model:

- Grant Progress Reports – attainment of Performance Measures
- Enrollment and Retention rates
- Compliance with 30-day enrollment and exit requirements in the AmeriCorps portal
- Site visit or other monitoring findings (if applicable)
- Significant opportunities and/or risks of the grantee related to national service
- Commission Rank

External reviewers will review and assess the evidence base criteria in the *RFP*.

C. Selection of Applicants for Phase Two Review

Applications will advance to Phase Two Review based on the results of the Phase One Review, as well as consideration of the priorities and the strategic considerations outlined in the *RFP*. Those applications that do not advance to Phase Two Review will not be recommended for competitive funding and may be considered for State Formula funding (see Section 3.6).

D. Phase Two Review

Several CNCS staff will assess the remaining portions of the application on the basis of the selection criteria. Some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information and/or make changes to their application including changes to the budget. This information is used by CNCS staff in making final recommendations. Applications may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked clarification questions. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to requests for

additional information in response to clarification questions in a timely fashion will result in the removal of applications from consideration.

E. Financial and 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 for funding or the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria, and the assessment of programmatic past performance. 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, but not limited to:

- Financial stability;
- Quality of financial management systems and ability to meet the administrative standards prescribed in applicable OMB Guidance;
- History of performance as reflected in the applicant's record in managing previous CNCS awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
 - Timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements,
 - If applicable, meeting matching requirements
 - If applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards;
- Information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as—
 - Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS),
 - Dun and Bradstreet, or
 - "Do Not Pay";
- Reports and findings from single audits performed under OMB Circular A-133 and findings of any other available audits;
- IRS Tax Form 990;
- An applicant organization's annual report;
- Publicly available information including information from an applicant organization's website;
- Any other information listed in CFR § 2522.140; and
- The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

F. Selection for Funding

Applicants that do not advance to Phase Two will not be selected for funding, and may be considered for State Formula funding (see Section 3.6). The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of CNCS will select the final portfolio based on staff recommendations on the quality of response (including clarification responses) against the criteria, programmatic and financial risk assessments, external review input, *RFP* priorities and strategic considerations.

G. Feedback to Applicants

Following grant awards, each applicant will receive the summary comments of Phase One and, if applicable, Phase Two Review pertaining to their application. Feedback will be based on the review of the original application and will not reflect any information that may have been provided in response to clarification questions, if any.

CNCS is committed to transparency in grantmaking. The following information pertaining to this competition for new and re-competing applications will be published on the CNCS website (<http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/open-government-initiative/transparency/results-grants-competition>), within 90 business days after all grants are awarded:

- A blank template of the internal review form.
- A blank template of the external review form of the Evidence Base.
- A list of all compliant applications submitted.
- Executive summaries of all compliant applications submitted by the applicants as part of the application.
- Data extracted from the Standard Form 424 Face Sheet (SF424) and Program Narrative submitted by applicants for successful applications.

- Summaries of external reviewers' comments for successful applications.
- A list of external reviewers who completed the review process.

3.4.3 Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

CNCS will award grants following the grant selection announcement. Depending on the availability of funding, CNCS expects that successful State and Territory Commissions and National Directs will be notified **no later than May 13, 2016**, contingent on timely full year appropriations.

3.5 CNCS Award Administration Information

3.5.1 Award Notice

Applicants will be notified via email as to funding decisions. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The Notice of Grant Award signed by the grant officer is the authorizing document for grant activities.

3.5.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Documents that Govern the Grant

The Notice of Grant Award incorporates the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant as well as the AmeriCorps regulations and grant provisions.

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards

Grants under this program are subject to 2 CFR Part 200 and CNCS regulations issued to implement Part 200. Those regulations supersede and streamline requirements from the OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A-110, and A-122 (which have been placed in OMB guidance); Circulars A-89, A-102, and A-133; and the guidance in Circular A-50 on Single Audit Act follow-up.

National Service Criminal History Check Requirements

The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. The law requires recipients to conduct and document NSCHCs on any person (including award-funded staff, national service participants, or volunteers) receiving a salary, living allowance, stipend or education award through a program receiving CNCS funds. An individual is ineligible to serve in a position that receives CNCS funding if the individual is registered, or required to be registered, as a sex offender or has been convicted of murder. The cost of conducting NSCHCs is an allowable expense under the award.

Unless CNCS has provided a recipient with a written exemption or written approval of an alternative search procedure, recipients must perform the following checks –

- All award-funded staff, national service participants and volunteers receiving a salary, living allowance, stipend or education award must undergo NSCHCs that include:
 1. A nationwide name-based search of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) at www.nsopw.gov; and
 2. *Either*
 - A name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the person's state of residence and in the state where the person will serve/work *or*
 - A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check.
- **Special Rule for Persons Serving Vulnerable Populations**
Award-funded staff, national service participants, and volunteers with *recurring access to vulnerable populations* (i.e., children age 17 or younger, individuals age 60 or older, or individuals with disabilities) must undergo NSCHCs that include:
 1. A nationwide name-based search of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) at www.nsopw.gov; and
 2. *Both*
 - A name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the person's state of residence and in the state where the person will serve/work *and*
 - A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check.

Additionally, all national service participants serving in a program funded through the Wisconsin National and Community Service Board must undergo a check of the Wisconsin Circuit Court Access website. This is not required for grant-funded staff.

See 45 CFR § 2540.200 - § 2540.207 and <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/criminal-history-check> for complete information and FAQs. Vendor checks (checks performed by commercial vendors) are often noncompliant with these requirements. Inability of a grantee to demonstrate that they have conducted an NSOPW and other required criminal history checks, as specified in CNCS's regulations, may result in a disallowance of all or part of the costs associated with noncompliance.

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

3.5.3 Reporting

Cost reimbursement grantees are required to provide mid-year and end of year progress reports, semi-annual financial reports, and an internal or external evaluation report as required by the AmeriCorps regulations §§2522.500-2522.540 and §§2522.700-2522.740.

Fixed Amount grantees are required to provide mid-year and end of year progress reports and an internal or external evaluation report.

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 providing CNCS with high quality programmatic and financial data. At a minimum, grantees should have policies and practices which address the following five aspects of data quality:

- The data measures what it intends to measure;
- The grantee collects data in a consistent manner;
- The grantee takes steps to correct data errors;
- The grantee ensures that the data reported is complete; and
- The grantee actively reviews data prior to submission.

Progress Report Data

In addition to semi-annual reporting of progress toward the grant's approved performance measure outputs and outcomes, additional demographic and narrative data must be reported annually (as applicable).

3.5.4 Re-Focusing of Funding

CNCS reserves the right to re-focus funding in the event of disaster or other compelling need for service.

3.6 Ranking of Applications for Formula Consideration

Applications sent to the federal level for competitive review and declined for funding by CNCS will be considered for state Formula funding if they meet the requirements detailed below and in Appendices B and C.

In order to be eligible for Formula funding through the Board, an applicant shall be one of the following at the time of application for Formula funds: Wisconsin state or local government entity or one of the following if its governing body operates within the state of Wisconsin: a federally recognized Indian Tribe, a public or private nonprofit organization (organized as a tax-exempt entity under the federal IRS Code, including religious organizations and labor organizations), or an institution of higher education as defined in Wisconsin Statute 118.55(1).

The amount of funds available for state formula grants in 2016 is not yet determined. In addition to limits in the amount of funds available to the Board, CNCS may place restrictions on the number of MSYs that can be filled through state AmeriCorps awards. In 2015, the Board was allocated \$2.17 million and no limit of MSYs. The Board will release on their Web site the amount of funds and MSYs available for 2016 when CNCS announces allocations.

Please review the criteria in Appendices B and C which include documents that outline how applications will be ranked for Formula consideration. The Board's Program Evaluation & Development Committee and/or staff will prepare a ranking of Formula programs and recommendations for awarding funds, slots, and MSYs. These recommendations are reviewed by the Program Evaluation & Development Committee of the Board and/or forwarded to the full Board for consideration. The Board reserves the right to request that programs modify their applications in order to create a manageable Formula portfolio. This may include setting a maximum number of programs funded and/or a minimum or maximum number of MSYs per program.

For Competitive applications, applicants are encouraged to apply for the maximum amount of funding and MSYs that they require to administer their programs; however, when applications are considered for formula funding, they will initially be considered at a maximum funding level of \$274,600 for cost reimbursement and \$268,600 for fixed amount programs (maximum cost per MSY x 20 MSYs).

3.7 Right to Reject Proposals and Negotiate Contract Terms

The Board reserves the right to reject any or all proposals. The Board may negotiate the award amount, authorized budget items, type and number of AmeriCorps MSYs or slots, and specific programmatic goals with the selected applicants prior to entering into an agreement with an applicant.

3.8 Public Inspection of Proposals

After notification of awards is made by CNCS and/or the Board, and under the supervision of Board staff, copies of proposals will be available for public inspection from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at 1 W. Wilson St., Room B274, Madison, WI. Applicants should schedule reviews with Jessica Kessler at jessica.kessler@wisconsin.gov.

No entire proposal submitted to the state may be marked as confidential, and any materials so marked, by being included in the application, will be considered public information. Evaluation tabulation and scoring by individual peer reviewers will also be open for public inspection, but these scores will not identify individual peer reviewers.

3.9 Appeals Process

The appeals process for the Competitive decisions should be released by CNCS when those funding announcements are made. Applicants wishing to file an appeal should work with the Board to meet the appeal requirements outlined by CNCS.

Applicants can only protest or appeal violation of procedures to the Board that are outlined in this *RFP* or fall within the Formula grant selection process. Ranking and scoring by the Peer Review Committee is not subject to protest or appeal. Notice of intent to protest and any protests must be made in writing. Individuals should make their protests as specific as possible and should fully identify the procedural issue being contested.

Any written notice of intent to protest must be filed the Board and received in no later than five (5) working days after the notices of intent to award are issued. Any written protest must be received within ten (10) working days after the notice of intent to award is issued.

Via U.S. Postal Service or Other Carriers:

The Board Chair
Wisconsin National & Community Service Board
1 W. Wilson Street, Rm. B274
Madison WI 53703-3445

The appeal will be reviewed by the Program Evaluation & Development Committee of the Board and a recommendation will be forwarded to the Board for consideration.

The decision of the Board may be appealed to the Secretary of the Department of Administration within five (5) working days of issuance. A copy of such appeal must also be filed with Board. The appeal must allege a violation of a Wisconsin statute or a section of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.

4.0 GENERAL PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

All proposal requirements are outlined in this *RFP* and the Application Instructions and Attachments.

5.0 TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Technical requirements differ based on the type of application being submitted and are included in the Application Instructions and Attachments. Pay careful attention to the technical requirements for the appropriate application. For your convenience, an additional documents checklist is included in the Application Instructions and Attachments document.

6.0 PROGRAM BUDGETS

Program budgets are submitted as part of your eGrants application. Please follow the budget instructions in the Application Instructions. Grants under this program, except for fixed-amount grants, are subject to the applicable Cost Principles under 2 CFR Part 220 (formerly A-21), 2 CFR Part 230 (formerly A-122), or 2 CFR Part 225 (formerly A-87) – available at www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/circulars -- and the Uniform Administrative Requirements for grants under A-102 (45 CFR Part 2541) or A-110 (45 CFR 2543 or 2 CFR Part 215).

7.0 SPECIAL CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

7.1 *Payment Requirements*

An operating grant recipient must submit payment requests on at least a quarterly basis. The method of requesting payments will be further detailed in the contract.

7.2 *Reporting*

The Board will require grantees to submit reporting to facilitate the Board's reporting to CNCS. Grantees are required to provide quarterly performance reports and an internal or external evaluation report as required by the AmeriCorps regulations §§2522.500-2522.540 and §§2522.700-2522.740. In addition, grantees – other than fixed amount grantees – will be required to submit quarterly financial reports and a project close-out report.

7.3 *Prime Contractor and Subcontracts or Placement Sites*

The prime contractor will be responsible for contract performance when subcontractors or placement sites are used. However, when subcontractors or placement sites are used, they must abide by all terms and conditions of the contract.

7.4 *Executed Contract to Constitute Entire Agreement*

In the event of contract award, the contents of this *RFP* (including all attachments), *RFP* addenda and revisions, the proposal of the successful applicant, and additional terms agreed to in writing, by the Board and the grant recipient shall become part of the contract. Failure of the successful applicant to accept these as a contractual agreement may result in a cancellation of award.

The following priority for contract documents will be used if there are conflicts or disputes:

- AmeriCorps Contract between the Board and Grantee
- Code of Federal Regulations
- AmeriCorps Grant Terms and Conditions
- Applicant's Proposal and Any Subsequent Amendments
- State Request for Proposals Dated August 25, 2015

7.5 *Termination of Contract*

The Board may terminate the contract at any time at its sole discretion by delivering 30 days written notice to the grant recipient. Upon termination, the Board's liability will be limited to the pro rata cost of the services performed as of the date of termination plus expenses incurred with the prior written approval of the Board. In the event that the grant recipient terminates the contract, for any reason whatsoever, it will refund to the Board within 10 days of said termination, all payments made hereunder by the Board to the grant recipient for work not completed or not accepted by the Board. Such termination will require written notice to that effect to be delivered by the grant recipient to the Board not less than 90 days prior to said termination.

8.0 GLOSSARY

21st Century Service Corps (21st CSC): The 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) is a bold national effort to put young Americans and veterans to work protecting, restoring, and enhancing America's great outdoors. The 21CSC, built on the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps, will complete high quality, cost effective projects on public and tribal lands and waters across the nation. The **21CSC goals:**

Put Americans to work: The 21CSC will provide service, training, education and employment opportunities for thousands of young Americans and veterans, including low income and disadvantaged youth.

Preserve, protect, and promote America's greatest gifts: The 21CSC will protect, restore and enhance public and tribal lands and waters as well as natural, cultural, and historical resources and treasures. With high-quality, cost-effective project work, the 21CSC will also increase public access and use while spurring economic development and outdoor recreation.

Build America's future: Through service to America, the 21CSC will help develop a generation of skilled workers, educated and active citizens, future leaders, and stewards of natural and cultural resources, communities and the nation.

In order to qualify for this priority area, applicants must demonstrate that they are a 21CSC member organization. Applications for membership are reviewed quarterly. Instructions for applicants are available in the Federal Register Notice, here: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-04-11/pdf/2014-08101.pdf>

AmeriCorps: The national service program funded under 42 U.S.C. §12571-12595 (Division C Programs).

AmeriCorps Partnership Challenge: Partnership Challenge applicants are organizations that request only member positions and \$0 in CNCS funding. These applicants must demonstrate that they have the resources to support an AmeriCorps program and must respond to all other relevant criteria in the RFP.

AmeriCorps Regulations: Refers to the Code of Federal Regulations that includes the federal requirements related to administering an AmeriCorps*State program. You can find the C.F.R. for AmeriCorps programs under Title 45 – Public Welfare, Volume 4, Chapter XXV, parts 2500 – 2599 at www.ecfr.gov.

AmeriCorps*State: The AmeriCorps funds that are allocated to states through a population-based formula or are awarded to states through a national competition.

AmeriCorps National Service Network: Includes AmeriCorps State, AmeriCorps National, AmeriCorps Tribes and Territories, AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), and AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) programs taken together as programs dedicated to national service.

AmeriCorps Member: Any individual who is serving in an approved national service position and is eligible to receive the education award from the National Service Trust. The term "AmeriCorps Member" is synonymous with the term "participant" as used by the CFR and the AmeriCorps Health Care policy.

Applicant: A firm/organization submitting a proposal in response to this RFP.

Board: The Wisconsin National and Community Service Board.

Capacity Building: A set of activities that expand the scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of programs and organizations. These activities achieve lasting positive outcomes for the beneficiary populations served by CNCS-supported organizations (i.e., AmeriCorps programs). As a general rule, CNCS considers capacity building activities to be *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. Capacity building activities must:

1. Be intended to support or enhance the program delivery model;
2. Respond to the program's goal of increasing, expanding, or enhancing services in order to address the most pressing needs identified in the community; and
3. Enable the program to provide a sustained level of more or better direct services after the capacity building services ended.

C.F.R.: Code of Federal Regulations.

Community-based Agency: A private nonprofit organization (including a church or other religious entity) that: (1) is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community; and (2) is engaged in meeting educational, environmental, public safety, homeland security, or other human needs.

Consortia: A group of organizations eligible for Corporation assistance under this application, or a nonprofit organization created or identified by such a group, whose purpose is to facilitate and support the work of member organizations in ways that add material and human resources (e.g., subgrants and technical assistance) beyond those available to each member individually.

Continuation Applicants: Those currently in their first or second year of a competitive funding cycle.

Cost Reimbursement Grants: These grants fund a portion of program operating costs and member living allowances with flexibility to use all of the funds for allowable costs regardless of whether or not the program recruits and retains all AmeriCorps members. Cost reimbursement grants include a formal matching requirement and require the submission of a budget and financial reports.

CNCS or The Corporation: The Corporation for National and Community Service.

DUNS#: The DUNS number is an identifier that helps the federal government improve statistical reports on federal grants and cooperative agreements. **The DUNS number does not replace your Employer Identification Number.** DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. The website indicates a 48-hour e-mail turnaround on requests for DUNS numbers; however, **CNCS suggests registering at least 30 days in advance of the application due date.**

Education Award Program Grants (EAP) fixed amount grant: Programs apply for a small fixed amount per MSY, can enroll less than full-time members, and use their own resources to cover all other costs. Programs can access funds under the grant based on enrolling the full complement of members supported under the grant. As with full-time fixed amount grants, there are no specific match or financial reporting requirements.

eGrants: CNCS's integrated, secure, Web-based system for applications: <https://egrants.cns.gov>

Eligible Member: An individual: (1) who is enrolled in an approved national service position; (2) who is a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States; (3) who is at least 17 years of age at the commencement of service unless the member is out of school and enrolled (a) in a full-time, year-round youth corps Program or full-time summer Program as defined in the Act [42 U.S.C. §12572 (a) (2)], in which case he or she must be between the ages of 16 and 25, inclusive, or (b) in a Program for economically disadvantaged youth as defined in the Act [42 U.S.C. §12572 (a)(9)], in which case he or she must be between the ages of 16 and 24, inclusive; (4) has a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate [or agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent before using an education award] and who has not dropped out of elementary or secondary school in order to enroll as an AmeriCorps member [unless enrolled in an institution of higher education on an ability to benefit basis and is considered eligible for funds under section 484 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. §1091], or who has been determined through an independent assessment conducted by the Program to be incapable of obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent [provided that CNCS has waived the education attainment requirement for the individual]; (5) has passed required criminal history background checks.

Encore Programs: Congress set a goal that 10 percent of AmeriCorps funding should support Encore service programs that engage a significant number of participants age 55 or older. CNCS seeks to meet that 10 percent target in this competition and encourages Encore programs to apply.

Enrollment Rate: Enrollment rate is calculated as slots filled, plus refill slots filled, divided by slots awarded.

Fixed Amount Grants (non EAP): These fixed amount grants are available for programs that enroll full-time members or less than full-time members that are serving in a full time capacity only, including Professional Corps. These grants provide a fixed amount of funding per Member Service Year (MSY) that is substantially lower than the amount required to operate the program. Organizations use their own or other resources to cover the remaining cost. Programs are not required to submit budgets or financial reports, there is no

specific match requirement, and programs are not required to track and maintain documentation of match. Professional Corps programs applying for operational funding through a Fixed Amount Grant must submit a budget in support of their request for operational funds. However, CNCS provides only a portion of the cost of running the program and organizations must still raise the additional resources needed to run the program. Programs can access all of the funds, provided they recruit and retain the members supported under the grant based on the MSY level awarded.

Governor and Mayor Initiative: CNCS will accept one application per state in each year's new and re-compete competition. If a state has a Governor and Mayor Initiative in continuation status, the state commission can submit a new application. However, CNCS is interested in increasing the number of states that have Governor and Mayor's Initiatives as well as funding high quality program designs.

The application must address a pressing challenge the Governor wishes to solve in her or his state. A Governor must apply with one Mayor in his or her state and a minimum of two nonprofits. In conjunction with the Mayor, the Governor will be responsible for identifying and selecting those nonprofits that are best able to achieve a demonstrated positive impact on the problem. The application should include letters of commitment from all relevant parties. If the Governor and Mayor have not yet selected partnering nonprofit entities, they should describe the process that the Governor and Mayor will use to select the nonprofit entities. The application, submitted to the State Commission, will respond to the application criteria and explain how several nonprofits working together, with the Governor's office serving as a convener, will effectively deploy AmeriCorps members for a collective impact. Only the Governor, Mayor, their designated government office (but not the State Commission), or a public university may apply for grants under the Governor and Mayor initiative. Applications from other entities will be deemed non-compliant and will not be considered under this initiative.

For example, a Governor and a Mayor in a state could conclude the most pressing challenge facing the state is its high school graduation rate. The Governor and/or Mayor would submit one application describing:

- How the partnership will be organized and AmeriCorps resources will be allocated between the partnering entities (State, locality, and nonprofit entities).
- The proposed theory of change and program model.
- How they will utilize an identified consortium of nonprofits that are well positioned to achieve outcomes identified in the theory of change.

Applications submitted as part of the Governor and Mayor Initiative must check the "Governor and Mayor Initiative" box in the Performance Measure tab and submit a letter of endorsement cosigned by the Governor and Mayor, as well as signed letters of commitment from partnering nonprofits with the packet of required additional documents by the application due date on **November 4, 2015 at 4:30 p.m. Central Time** in order to be considered for this Initiative.

Grant Recipient: An organization that is awarded AmeriCorps funds for direct benefit of the community.

Host Service Site: An organization, or other entity, that has been selected to provide a service placement for, or host, a member.

Indian Tribes: 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 any tribal organization controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by one of the entities described above.

Member Service Year (MSY): This term refers to the equivalent of one full-time AmeriCorps member (at least 1700 service hours). One full-time slot equals 1.0 MSY. One half-time slot equals 0.500 MSY; one reduced half-time slot equals 0.381 MSY; one quarter-time slot equals 0.2646 MSY; and one minimum-time slot equals 0.2116 MSY.

Multi-focus Intermediaries: CNCS recognizes that severely under-resourced communities may have limited capacity to successfully apply for and implement an AmeriCorps program, due to the size and organizational capacity of eligible applicant/host site organizations or the lack of available matching funds in

these communities. Thus it may be effective for a single eligible applicant (intermediary) to develop an application and oversee the implementation of an AmeriCorps program that engages multiple grassroots nonprofits/eligible applicants (consortium) that, individually, do not have the necessary organizational or fundraising capacity to apply for and run an AmeriCorps program. Given the desire to address community needs holistically, the nonprofits/eligible applicants that make up the consortium may have, but are not required to have, different focus areas (including the non-focus area capacity building) and thus the nonprofit/eligible applicant intermediary will be multi-focused.

Applications seeking consideration under this priority must demonstrate that they will be serving in severely under-resourced communities; that their application represents a consortium and that the activities provided by the consortium collectively address a compelling community need or set of needs; and that they have sufficient financial and management capacity to act as an umbrella organization for the consortia.

The nonprofit/eligible applicant intermediary should submit one application which describes:

- How the partnership will be organized and AmeriCorps resources will be allocated between the partnering entities (intermediary and consortia members).
- The proposed theory(ies) of change and program model(s).
- How they will utilize an identified consortium of nonprofits/eligible applicants that are well positioned to achieve outcomes identified in the theory of change.

Applicants must send memoranda of understanding or signed letters of commitment from all members of the consortia with the packet of required additional documents via mail by the application due date (**November 4, 2015 at 4:30 pm Central**) in order to be considered for this Initiative.

Multi-Site Program: An AmeriCorps program that places one or more members at multiple host service sites within a single community, county, or statewide.

My Brother's Keeper: President Obama launched the My Brother's Keeper initiative to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and to ensure that all young people can reach their full potential.

Through this initiative, the Administration is joining with cities and towns, businesses, and foundations that are taking important steps to connect young people to mentoring, support networks, and the skills they need to find a good job or go to college and work their way into the middle class.

My Brother's Keeper is focused on five milestones:

1. Getting a Healthy Start and Entering School Ready to Learn: All children should have a healthy start and enter school ready – cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally.
2. Reading at Grade Level by Third Grade: All children should be reading at grade level by age 8 – the age at which reading to learn becomes essential.
3. Graduating from High School Ready for College and Career: Every American child should have the option to attend postsecondary education and receive the education and training needed for quality jobs of today and tomorrow.
4. Successfully Entering the Workforce: All those who want jobs should be able to find work that allows them to support themselves and their families.
5. Keeping Kids on Track and Giving Them Second Chances: All children should be safe from violent crime; and individuals who are confined should receive the education, training and treatment they need for a second chance.

In order to qualify for this priority area, applicants must demonstrate that their program addresses one or more of the five milestones.

National Direct Applicants:

1. Multi-state: Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one state or territory apply directly to CNCS.
2. Federally-recognized Indian Tribes: Applicants that are Indian Tribes apply directly to CNCS. 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.

3. Territories without Commissions: Applicants in American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands apply directly to CNCS because these Territories have not established a State Commission.

National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention: A network of communities and federal agencies that work together, share information and build local capacity to prevent and reduce youth violence. Established at the direction of President Obama in 2010, the Forum brings together people from diverse professions and perspectives to learn from each other about the crisis of youth and gang violence in the U.S and to build comprehensive solutions on the local and national levels. Participating Federal agencies include the Departments of Justice, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, and the Office on National Drug Control Policy. The communities participating in the Forum include Boston, Camden, Chicago, Detroit, Memphis, Minneapolis, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Salinas, San Jose, Long Beach, Cleveland, Louisville, Seattle, and Baltimore. See more at: <http://youth.gov/youth-topics/preventing-youth-violence>. Each of these cities is charged with making a comprehensive plan and driving against that plan to reduce youth violence.

New Applicant: Those who have never had AmeriCorps State and/or National funding before. Current and former formula Grantees are not new.

NOFO or Notice: Notice of Funding Opportunity

Opportunity Youth: Opportunity youth are economically disadvantaged individuals ages 16-24 who are disconnected from school or work for at least six months prior to service. CNCS defines "economically disadvantaged" consistent with the definition used in the member development performance measures, "Receiving or meet the income eligibility requirements to receive: TANF, Food Stamps (SNAP), Medicaid, SCHIP, Section 8 housing assistance." CNCS defines "disconnected from school or work" as unemployed, underemployed, and not in school for at least six months prior to their term of national service. A member who was not economically disadvantaged prior to becoming an AmeriCorps member but became economically disadvantaged because the living allowance was low enough to make them eligible for SNAP, etc., cannot be counted as economically disadvantaged. In order to apply under this priority the applicant must demonstrate the programmatic elements they will implement in order to recruit and support Opportunity youth as members and a substantial portion of their requested MSYs must fall into this category.

Other Revenue: Funds necessary to operate the AmeriCorps program that are not CNCS funds or grantee share (match) identified in the budget. Programs should not enter the total operating budget for their organization unless the entire operating budget supports the AmeriCorps program. Programs that have additional revenue sources not included in the matching funds section of the budget should provide the amount of this additional revenue that supports the program. This amount should not include the CNCS or grantee share amounts in the budget. Fixed amount grantees should enter all non-CNCS funds that support the program in this field. All fixed grants will have other revenue.

Partnership: A joint arrangement among a group of organizations eligible for Corporation assistance under this application, or a nonprofit organization created or identified by such a group, whose purpose is to carry out common objectives that are specific and well-defined, and in which the responsibilities of each partner are clearly defined and mutually understood.

Performance Measure: Performance measures are measurable indicators of a program's performance as it relates to member service activities. Performance measurement is the process of regularly measuring the services provided by your program and the effect your program has in communities or in the lives of members or community beneficiaries. The main purpose of performance measurement is to strengthen your AmeriCorps program and foster continuous improvement and to identify best practices and models that merit replication. Performance measurement will also help identify programmatic weaknesses that need attention. Review the Performance Measures Instructions for this RFP here: http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Performance_Measure_Instructions_2016.pdf

Professional Corps: Professional Corps programs recruit and place qualified members in positions as teachers, health care providers, police officers, engineers, or other professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. CNCS's assumption is that Professional Corps will be covering the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non-CNCS funds and thus will not be requesting operating funds as part of their applications. CNCS will consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate in its narrative and supporting budget materials significant organizational financial need and challenges to raising non-CNCS resources. Professional Corps members' salaries are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve, and are not included in the budget. In order to be considered for funding, applicants must demonstrate that there are an inadequate number of professionals in the community(ies) where the corps seeks to place members. These grants can either be fixed amount or cost reimbursement grants.

Program: A national service program, described in the Act (42 U.S.C. §12572(a)), carried out by the Grantee through funds awarded by CNCS, and carried out in accordance with federal requirements.

Program Sponsor: An entity responsible for recruiting, selecting, and training members, providing them benefits and support services, engaging them in regular group activities, and placing them in projects. The program sponsor is in most cases the fiscal agent.

Prohibited Activities: While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or CNCS, staff and members may not engage in the following activities (see 45 CFR § 2520.65):

1. Attempting to influence legislation;
2. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
3. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
4. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
5. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
6. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
7. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
8. Providing a direct benefit to—
 - a. A business organized for profit;
 - b. A labor union;
 - c. A partisan political organization;
 - d. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
 - e. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph C. 7. above, unless CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
9. Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
10. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
11. Such other activities as CNCS may prohibit.

AmeriCorps members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-CNCS funds.

Project: An activity, or a set of activities carried out by a program that results in a specific, identifiable community service or improvement that: (1) otherwise would not have been made with existing funds; and (2) does not duplicate the routine services or functions of the organization to which members are assigned.

Project Sponsor: The same as a host service site or an organization or other entity that has been selected to provide a placement for a member.

Promise Zones: Promise Zones are high poverty communities where the federal government partners with local leaders to increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, leverage private investment, reduce violent crime, enhance public health and address other priorities identified by the community. Through the Promise Zone designation, these communities will work directly with federal, state and local agencies to give local leaders proven tools to improve the quality of life in some of the country's most vulnerable areas. The current promise zones are: Los Angeles, CA; Sacramento, CA; Hartford, CT; Indianapolis, IN; Southeastern KY; Minneapolis, MN; St. Louis/St. Louis County, MO; Camden, NJ; Choctaw National of Oklahoma, Philadelphia, PA; Barnwell, SC; Low Country of South Carolina; Pine Ridge Indian Reservation of the Oglala Sioux Tribe; SD; Porcupine, SD; San Antonio, TX.

Proposal: A response to this RFP.

Recompete Applicants: Those that have received AmeriCorps State and/or National funding before and are in Year 3 of their grant cycle and are applying for continued funding for the program for a new cycle.

Retention Rate: Retention rate is calculated as the number of members exited with an education award (full or partial award) divided by the number of members enrolled.

RFP: Request for Proposals.

Rural: CNCS uses rural-urban commuting area (RUCA) codes to classify program addresses as either rural or urban for analytic purposes. RUCA codes classify U.S. census tracts using measures of population density, urbanization, and daily commuting. Census tracts with an urban cluster population less than 50,000 are considered rural (RUCA codes 4 – 10). Applicants are encouraged to designate themselves as serving rural communities if some or all service locations are in rural areas as defined by RUCA codes or if the program can provide other compelling evidence that the program is rural in the narrative portion of the application. This self-designation will be considered in grant-making decisions. For more information about RUCA codes, please visit the USDA website found here: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-commuting-area-codes.aspx>. The assessment of rural for School Turnaround AmeriCorps uses the definition for a rural school, below.

A Rural School is a school that is assigned a locale code of 41 (located in a census-defined rural territory less than 5 miles from an urban cluster), a locale code of 42 (located in a census-defined rural territory more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urban cluster), or a locale code of 43 (located in a census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urban cluster) by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Note: To identify the locale code of any school, access the NCES public school database here: <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/>.

The Office of Grants Management uses Beale Codes when assessing alternative match requirements as the statute (45 CFR § 2521.60(c)) requires it.

SAM (System for Award Management): SAM is combining federal procurement system and catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into one new system. SAM collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data in support of Federal agency contracts, grant awards, cooperative agreements, and other forms of federal assistance. All grant recipients are required to maintain valid registration, which must be renewed annually. Applicants not already registered with SAM are urged to begin the registration process immediately in order to avoid any delays in submitting applications. Applicants must have a DUNS number in order to register with SAM. To register online go to www.sam.gov.

Same Project: Two projects will be considered the same if they: address the same issue areas, address the same priorities, address the same objectives, serve the same target communities and population, and utilize the same sites. Programs need to get approval from the Board and CNCS to be considered a new project.

School Turnaround AmeriCorps: School Turnaround AmeriCorps is an initiative to place AmeriCorps members in schools implementing turnaround models under the Department of Education's School Improvement Grants (SIG) program or turnaround principles under Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility to improve student academic performance, academic engagement, attendance outcomes, or some combination thereof, in eligible schools. School Turnaround AmeriCorps grantees must meet special program design requirements that are described in Appendix D. Applicants for a School Turnaround AmeriCorps program must provide high quality responses to special selection criteria, submit additional documents and demonstrate that they meet the special program design requirements. See Appendix D for details.

Service-learning: A method under which students or members learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that: (1) is conducted in and meets the needs of a community and is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program, and with the community; (2) is member/student-planned and member/student-run; (3) is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students or the educational components of the community service program in which the members are enrolled; and (4) includes structured time for the students and members to reflect on the service experience.

Serve Wisconsin: The marketing name for the Wisconsin National and Community Service Board.

Single-State Applicants: Organizations that propose to operate in only one state must apply through the Governor-appointed State or Territory Commissions (Wisconsin National and Community Service Board). Each state and territory commission administers its own selection process and submits to CNCS the applicants it selects to compete for funding. Single-State applicants must contact their State Commissions to learn about their state or territory processes and deadlines which may be significantly earlier than the CNCS deadlines and may have additional requirements. The list of State and Territory Commissions can be found here: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions>. A single state application submitted directly to CNCS by the applicant rather than the State Commission will be considered noncompliant and will not be reviewed.

Slot: One position in a national service program. Slots can be full-time (1700 hours), half-time (900 hours), reduced half-time (675 hours), quarter-time (450 hours), and minimum time (300 hours).

State: The State of Wisconsin.

State Commission: A State Commission on National and Community Service established by a state pursuant to the Act (42 U.S.C. §12638), including an authorized alternative administrative entity to administer the state's national service plan and national service programs and to perform such other duties prescribed by law. Wisconsin's State Commission is the Wisconsin National and Community Service Board.

Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) Initiative: This initiative, first announced in July 2011, seeks to strengthen neighborhoods, towns, cities, and regions around the country by enhancing the capacity of local governments to develop and execute their economic vision and strategies, providing necessary technical assistance and access to federal agency expertise, and creating new public and private sector partnerships. The cities participating are Greensboro, NC; Hartford, Connecticut; and Las Vegas, Nevada

WNCSB: Wisconsin National and Community Service Board, a 21-member citizen body appointed by the Governor and staffed by five state employees.

Youth Corps Program: Pursuant to Sec. 16.22(1)(dm), Wis. Stats., the term "youth corps program" means a full-time, year-round national service program or a full-time, summer national service program that does all of the following: (1) undertakes meaningful service projects with visible public benefit, including natural resources, urban renovation and human resource projects; (2) Includes as participants persons who have attained the age of 16 but who have not attained the age of 26, including youths who are not enrolled in school and other disadvantaged youths; and (3) Provides those participants with crew-based, highly structured and adult-supervised work experience, life skills training, education, career guidance and counseling, employment training and support services and with the opportunity to develop citizenship values and skills through service to their community and country.