

Appendix D – School Turnaround AmeriCorps

A. Program Description

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 below. 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.

The Department of Education’s SIG program provides grants to state educational agencies (SEAs) that make competitive subgrants to local educational agencies (LEAs) that demonstrate the greatest need for the funds and the strongest commitment to use the funds to provide adequate resources in order to raise substantially the achievement of students in the state’s lowest-performing schools. School Turnaround AmeriCorps grantees, in coordination with local school and LEAs turnaround efforts under SIG and ESEA flexibility, will support schools and communities in improving student performance. The initiative reflects CNCS’ commitment to increasing opportunities for children in disadvantaged communities through high-quality education.

B. Special Requirements - In order to receive priority consideration, applications must demonstrate alignment with the requirements below. Approved School Turnaround AmeriCorps grantees must comply with these requirements.

1. All School Turnaround AmeriCorps projects funded under this *RFP* are expected to improve student academic performance, academic engagement, attendance outcomes, or some combination thereof, in eligible schools.
2. School Turnaround AmeriCorps programs must align programming with comprehensive school turnaround plans by engaging members in one or more of the following six strategies, which are based on research on turning around the lowest-performing schools^[3] :
 - a. Providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.
 - b. Establishing a school culture and environment that improve school safety, attendance, and discipline and address other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students’ social, emotional, and health needs.
 - c. Accelerating students’ acquisition of reading and mathematics knowledge and skills;
 - d. Increasing graduation rates through strategies such as early warning systems, credit-recovery programs, and re-engagement strategies.
 - e. Increasing college enrollment rates through college preparation counseling assistance to include completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and college applications, and educating students and their families on financial literacy for college; or
 - f. Supporting school implementation of increased learning time.¹

^[3] For a summary of research supporting the interventions implemented under SIG and ESEA flexibility, please visit <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/college-career-ready.pdf>.

¹ *Increased learning time* means using a longer school day, week, or year schedule to significantly increase the total number of school hours to include additional time for (a) instruction in core academic subjects including English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography; (b) instruction in other subjects and enrichment activities that contribute to a well-rounded education, including, for example, physical education, service learning, and experiential and work-based learning opportunities that are provided by partnering, as appropriate, with other organizations; and (c) teachers to collaborate, plan, and engage in professional development within and across grades and subjects. (75 FR 66363, 66367)

3. School Turnaround AmeriCorps programs must place 100% of members at eligible schools. Eligible schools are Tier I and Tier II schools that are using SIG funds to implement one of the four SIG models² at the time of the applicant's application submission; and/or priority schools or focus schools that are implementing interventions aligned with the ESEA flexibility turnaround principles or SIG models³ during the in 2015-2016 school year. A list of schools is required as part of the School Turnaround AmeriCorps application (see Additional Documents section, below). Approved School Turnaround AmeriCorps grantees may not add new schools without pre-approval.
4. Letters of commitment from school leaders and LEAs are required as part of School Turnaround AmeriCorps application (see Additional Documents section, below).
5. To maximize the impact of the public investment in national service and school improvement, School Turnaround AmeriCorps programs must work directly with school leaders to identify needs, develop interventions that are aligned with LEA and school turnaround efforts, and use student-level data to measure progress and inform continuous improvement efforts. School Turnaround AmeriCorps awardees will be required to develop and update yearly written partnership agreements among an eligible school or schools, LEA, and community-based partners working together to implement the program. These agreements must be submitted to CNCS before the start of the 2016-2017 school year and before members begin service (see Written Partnership Agreement section, below).
6. School Turnaround AmeriCorps programs must select from the following Performance Measures in Education: ED2, ED4A, ED5, ED27A, ED27B, ED30. 100% of the MSYs must be in those performance measures. Programs may also select ED1, ED3A, ED7, ED9, and/or ED10.
7. School Turnaround AmeriCorps programs may not include activities that address non-School Turnaround AmeriCorps priorities, include non-School Turnaround AmeriCorps interventions, or place members at any locations other than eligible schools. If an applicant wishes to provide programming that is broader than School Turnaround AmeriCorps, then the applicant should submit a second application that proposes a non-School Turnaround AmeriCorps project.
8. The project period of School Turnaround AmeriCorps programs must start by the beginning of the academic school year. Programs may select and train members before the school year begins by requesting an earlier start date.
9. School Turnaround AmeriCorps programs must engage members in interventions that are backed by evidence and are likely to lead to the proposed outcomes.
10. School Turnaround AmeriCorps grantees must report the following data:
 - a. List of schools that were served, including their NCES identification numbers and the number of members placed at each school.
 - b. Number of schools served, including:
 - i. # of SIG schools
 - ii. # of priority schools
 - iii. # of urban schools
 - iv. # of rural schools
 - v. # of elementary schools, middle schools, and/or high schools
 - c. Number of students served, including:

² For a listing of many SIG schools, please visit <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/awardedchs.xls>. Lists of priority schools and other SIG eligible schools are posted on the website of each state educational agency. CNCS strongly encourages applicants to consult with SEAs in their states to determine eligibility of the schools they seek to serve to ensure the application is not disqualified for failing to propose to serve eligible schools.

- i. # of English Learners
- ii. # of students with disabilities

Although not requirements, CNCS encourages the following additional program design features for School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants:

1. Leveraging community, LEA, and school-level support systems can be an important component in comprehensive turnaround efforts. As such, CNCS encourages applicants to partner with multiple eligible schools within an LEA and coordinate turnaround efforts among multiple school sites. Doing so will enable applicants to take advantage of economies of scale, and aid in changing community, LEA, and school cultures.
 2. CNCS seeks to prioritize the investment of national service resources in rural schools. Schools must meet the rural school definition (see *RFP Glossary, Section 8.0*). Furthermore, programs must demonstrate significant program focus, design, and outcomes in rural schools to receive priority consideration as a rural program.
- C. Special Selection Criteria - CNCS seeks to prioritize the investment of national service resources in School Turnaround AmeriCorps programs that provide high-quality responses to the selection criteria. Applicants must respond to both the selection criteria in the *RFP* and the selection criteria in this appendix, unless indicated below. School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants have an expanded page limit to allow space for the additional responses.

Program Design (50 percent)

There are no differences between the *RFP* criteria and the special School Turnaround AmeriCorps criteria for the following: Evidence Base, Member Experience, and Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification.

a. *Problem/Need (9 points)*

Instead of responding to the selection criteria in the *RFP*, School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants should respond to the criteria here:

- How were eligible school(s) and LEA leadership involved in identifying the need?
- How were the need(s) that the AmeriCorps members will be addressing identified by eligible partner school(s) and LEA leadership?
- How extensive and severe are the needs in the school(s) where the proposed AmeriCorps members will serve? Cite specific relevant data.

b. *Theory of Change and Logic Model (15 points)*

In addition to responding to the selection criteria in the *RFP*, School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants should also respond to the criteria here:

- Explain how the potential contribution of AmeriCorps members addresses the needs identified by eligible school and LEA leadership.
- For applicants that propose to serve multiple school sites, explain how you will coordinate your turnaround efforts among those sites and take advantage of the scale of the project (e.g., through economies of scale).
- Explain the extent to which the project addresses multiple student needs and is aligned with comprehensive school turnaround plans, including the extent to which the proposed project incorporates at least one, or preferably more than one, of the following:
 - Providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.
 - Establishing a school culture and environment that improves school safety, attendance, and discipline and addresses other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, and health needs.
 - Accelerating students' acquisition of reading and mathematics knowledge and skills.

- Increasing graduation rates through strategies such as early warning systems, credit-recovery programs and re-engagement strategies.
- Increasing college enrollment rates through college preparation counseling assistance to include completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and college applications, and educating students and their families on financial literacy for college.
- Supporting school implementation of increased learning time.
- Explain how AmeriCorps members are particularly well-suited to deliver effective turnaround interventions and achieve the desired student outcomes in these schools.

c. *Notice Priority (3 points)*

School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants should clearly indicate in the application narrative that the proposed application is for a School Turnaround AmeriCorps program design.

d. *Member Training (4 points)*

In addition to responding to the selection criteria in the *RFP*, School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants should also respond to the criteria here:

- Explain how members will be sufficiently trained to serve high-needs students in high-needs schools, including topics such as behavior management, conflict resolution, etc.
- How will you coordinate the training of AmeriCorps members with school leadership and staff?
- Explain your plans for providing members with opportunities to share best practices and lessons learned to promote effectiveness of interventions and encourage AmeriCorps members' sustained participation in the ongoing efforts to turn around the nation's lowest-performing schools.

e. *Member Supervision (3 points)*

In addition to responding to the selection criteria in the *RFP*, School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants should also respond to the criteria here:

- How will you coordinate the supervision of AmeriCorps members with school leadership and staff?

Organizational Capability (25 percent)

There are no differences between the *RFP* criteria and the special School Turnaround AmeriCorps criteria for Compliance and Accountability.

f. *Organizational Background and Staffing (10 points)*

Instead of responding to the selection criteria in the *RFP*, School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants should respond to the criteria here:

- The organization has the staffing and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program.
- The organization has adequate experience administering AmeriCorps grants or other federal grants effectively.
- Describe the involvement of eligible school and LEA leadership in designing and implementing the program.

School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants must submit Letter(s) of Commitment from all eligible partner schools and their corresponding LEAs, including evidence of the applicants' consultation with school and LEA leadership. See section D.2 of this Appendix for information about what the letters of commitment should include.

Continuous Improvement (0 points)

- Describe the plans for soliciting timely and regular feedback from stakeholders, including school and LEA staff, students, and families, to inform continuous improvement efforts.
- Describe the plans for using data on student academic performance, academic engagement, and/or behavioral outcomes to inform continuous improvement.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)

In addition to responding to the selection criteria in the *RFP*, School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants should also respond to the criteria here:

g. Use of Funds (0 points)

- Provide a description of how the resources requested will supplement, and not supplant, SIG funding or other existing school funding streams.

D. Additional Documents

In addition to submitting the additional documents outlined in the *RFP*, such as the logic model, applicants must submit a list of partner schools and letter(s) of commitment as part of the required additional document packet by the deadline of **November 4, 2015 at 4:30 PM Central**.

1. List of Partner Schools - Applicants must provide a list including the name and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) identification number of each eligible partner school with which the applicant will be working. Please specify whether the school is an elementary, middle, or high school. Also indicate if the school meets the rural school definition (see *RFP Glossary, Section 8.0*).

School Name	NCES ID	School Type	Indicate if SIG or Priority or both	Indicate if Rural School
ABC School	XXXXXXXXXXXX	Elementary		Rural
123 School	XXXXXXXXXXXX	Middle		N/A

2. Letter(s) of Commitment - Applicants must submit Letter(s) of Commitment from each eligible partner schools and their corresponding LEAs, including evidence of the applicants' consultation with school and LEA leadership, as part of the required additional document packet by the deadline of **November 4, 2015 at 4:30 PM**. School leadership must include the school leader responsible for leading the turnaround effort. LEA leadership may include either the superintendent or an official at the LEA responsible for SIG or priority school implementation. Letters must be signed by school and LEA leadership. The letter of commitment must also include the name and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) identification number of each eligible partner school with which the applicant will be working.

Each letter of commitment must affirm the following:

1. The applicant's program design plan is submitted in consultation with the LEA and each eligible partner school(s).
2. The applicant's program design aligns with each eligible partner school(s)' and LEA's turnaround plan.
3. Commitment to develop after the grant selection announcement a written partnership agreement between the applicant and the school(s) and LEA that addresses the alignment between the applicant's program design and each school(s)' and LEA's turnaround plan, as well as the parties' plan for ongoing collaboration throughout the grant period, as detailed in section E, below. An applicant working with multiple schools in one LEA may develop a single partnership agreement for that LEA that contains all of the elements set forth in section E, below for each school partner within that LEA.

The partnership agreement does not need to be completed at the time of the application submission but it must be submitted to CNCS by the start of the 2016-17 school year. The partnership agreement should be updated throughout the three-year project period as necessary to reflect changes.

4. The letters should include a commitment from partner schools and the LEA to share student and school outcomes data with the applicant as needed. If applicable, the letter should explain why data sharing with the legal applicant is not possible at this time and what steps will be taken to overcome the barriers within the project period.
5. The letter should affirm that school leaders and LEAs understand that members may not be engaged in activities that duplicate or displace school staff. Roles including substitute teaching, exam proctoring, excessive data entry, etc. are unallowable for AmeriCorps members when they duplicate or displace school staff duties.
6. The letters should include what the partners see as the benefit provided by the applicant's AmeriCorps members and what activities would not happen without the AmeriCorps members.

E. Written Partnership Agreements

School Turnaround AmeriCorps awardees are required to develop and update written partnership agreements among an eligible school or schools, LEA, and community-based partners working together to implement the program. These agreements will articulate the alignment between the School Turnaround AmeriCorps program design and school and LEA turnaround plans, as well as the parties' plan for ongoing collaboration throughout the grant period. These agreements must be submitted to CNCS before the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year and before AmeriCorps members start service.

The partnership agreements must be consistent with the awarded application plans, and articulate how the key entities responsible for program implementation will work together along the following elements of high-quality partnerships between eligible schools, LEAs, and community-based organizations:

- *Managing collaboratively.* Jointly establishing program direction and priorities, planning, budgeting, training and aligning program staff, communicating across the partnership, and continuously improving program services.
- *Sharing data and evaluation.* Sharing information, data (including student-level data), performance measures, and evaluation strategies that guide project management, resource allocation, and service delivery while maintaining data privacy requirements.
- *Sharing resources.* Jointly using resources such as staff, funding, administrative systems, school facilities, curricula, and instructional materials.
- *Clarifying and communicating roles and responsibilities.* Clearly articulating roles and responsibilities for each partner organization to help optimize program services and limited resources.

In addition, partnership agreements must also address the following strategies, when applicable:

- *Aligning in-school and out-of-school.* Coordinating to ensure that out-of-school academic and enrichment efforts complement in-school instruction and programming.
- *Coordinating on safety, health, and student supports.* Coordinating to promote school and community safety, reinforce health and wellness programming, and provide necessary student supports.
- *Cooperating on family engagement.* Coordinating interactions with families to strengthen positive family engagement that reinforces learning in multiple settings.
- *Coordinating among CBOs.* Coordinating and establishing agreements between multiple community-based organizations (CBOs) when working with the same schools and students.