ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Commission Name:	OneStar National Service Commission, OneStar Foundation
Federal Agency:	Corporation for National and Community Service
Funding Opportunity Types:	2017 AmeriCorps State Grants
Announcement Type:	Initial Announcement
CFDA Number:	94.006

This *Notice* is for AmeriCorps Texas **(**AmeriCorps State) grants. These grants are awarded to organizations that propose to place AmeriCorps members in service solely within Texas. Selected organizations will receive grants to support AmeriCorps member positions that engage members in service to meet critical needs in Texas.

Disclosure: Publication of this Announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity (*Notice*) does not obligate the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) or OneStar Foundation (OneStar) to award any specific number of grants or to obligate any particular amount of funding.

IMPORTANT DATES

Eligible applicants have the option of submitting in the fall of 2016 for Competitive funding consideration or submitting in the spring of 2017 for Formula funding consideration (see *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance* for definitions).

Competitive Funding Consideration

To be considered for Competitive funding, a Legal Applicant Organization must have successfully administered[1] an AmeriCorps State grant through OneStar Foundation for at least one three-year project period. Additionally, the Legal Applicant Organization must meet all eligibility criteria as outlined in the *Eligibility Information* section of this *Notice*. An applicant that is being considered for Competitive funding will also be considered for Formula funding.

- **September 15, 2016 – Notice of Intent to Apply Deadline:** All interested applicants are required to submit the Notice of Intent to Apply form online using this link: https://www.tfaforms.com/436458 by 10:59:59 PM Central on Thursday, September 15, 2016.

- **November 7, 2016 – Application Deadline:** A first draft of the application will be due in eGrants by 10:59:59 PM Central on **Monday, November 7, 2016**. Final applications are due in eGrants and additionally required documents are due via email to grants@onestarfoundation.org by 10:59:59 PM Central on Thursday, December 1, 2016.

- **May 15, 2017 – Application Notification:** Successful applicants will be notified no later than Monday, May 15, 2017.

- **August 1, 2017 – AmeriCorps Program Budget Period Start:** Successful Competitive applicants may not propose a budget period start date earlier than **August 1, 2017**.

- **August 14, 2017 – AmeriCorps Member Term of Service Start Date:** AmeriCorps programs may not propose an AmeriCorps Member term of service start date earlier than **August 14, 2017** without special written approval from OneStar.

Formula Funding Consideration

To be considered for Formula funding, a Legal Applicant Organization must meet all eligibility criteria as outlined in the Eligibility Information section of this *Notice*.

- **March 9, 2017 – Notice of Intent to Apply Deadline:** All interested applicants are required to submit the Notice of Intent to Apply form online using this link: https://www.tfaforms.com/436458 by 10:59:59 PM Central on Thursday, March 9, 2017.

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[1] "Successfully administered" is defined as having a high level of past performance as evaluated by the OneStar Foundation Commission Board in relation to OneStar's Grantee Expectations Policy. The policy is available on the OneStar Foundation website here: http://onestarfoundation.org/americorpstexas/grantee-resources/.

- **March 30, 2017 – Application Deadline:** Applications are due in eGrants and additionally required documents are due via email to grants@onestarfoundation.org by 10:59:59 PM Central on Thursday, March 30, 2017.

- **June 21, 2017 – Application Notification:** Successful applicants will be notified no later than June 21, 2017.

- **August 1 or September 1, 2017 – AmeriCorps Program Budget Period Start:** Successful applicants may not propose a budget period start date earlier than August 1, 2017. Programs that do not have prior history administering an AmeriCorps State program through OneStar may not propose a budget period start date prior to September 1, 2017.

- **August 14, 2017 – AmeriCorps Member Term of Service Start Date:** AmeriCorps programs may not propose an AmeriCorps Member term of service start date earlier than August 14, 2017 without special written approval from OneStar.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding

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

AmeriCorps Grants are awarded to eligible organizations (see *Eligible Applicants* section) 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 Focus Areas

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue 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 (see *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*) 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 behavior 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.

B. **Funding Priorities** (See *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance* for further information about some of the 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 by engaging opportunity youth, either as the population served and/or as AmeriCorps members
- Education – improving student academic performance in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Mathematics (STEM)
- Environment – 21st Century Service Corps
- Healthy Futures – Reducing and/or Preventing Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse
- Veterans and Military Families – Positively impacting the quality of life of veterans and improving military family strength
- Governor and Mayor Initiative
- Programming that supports My Brother's Keeper
- Multi-focus intermediaries that demonstrate measureable impact and primarily serve communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure. i.e. rural and other underserved communities
- Safer communities
- Evidence Based Intervention Planning Grants
- Encore Programs

OneStar Foundation, in alignment with Texas' 2016-2018 State Service Plan seeks to prioritize the investment of national service resources in:

- **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.

- **Disaster Services** – Grant activities will provide support to increase the preparedness of individuals for disasters, improve individuals' readiness to respond, 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.

- **55+ Corps Programs** – In alignment with OneStar's Supplemental State Service Plan for Texans age 55 and older as well as Congress's intention that AmeriCorps funding should also support service programs that engage a significant number of participants age 55 or older, OneStar seeks to identify and encourage such programs to operate in Texas and expand their 55+ volunteer programs through AmeriCorps funding.

- **Intermediary Programs** – OneStar recognizes that rural and/or otherwise under-resourced communities may have limited capacity to successfully apply for and implement an AmeriCorps grant, due to the high level of organizational capacity required 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 (an intermediary) to develop an application and oversee the implementation of an AmeriCorps program that engages multiple non-profits/eligible applicants (a 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 and thus the nonprofit/eligible applicant intermediary may be multi-focused. Applications seeking consideration under this priority must demonstrate that they will be serving at least one or more under-resourced community; that their application represents a consortium model; 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.

- **Youth[2] Educational Attainment** – Programs which focus on Youth Educational Attainment will have a primary goal of one or more of the following:
  - o Increase school-readiness rates among children **– with a focus on Early Childhood Education**
  - o Improve literacy rates among youth **– with a focus on Reading Excellence**
  - o Improve attendance rates
  - o Improve student achievement and educational outcomes
  - o Improve math performance and ensure students are performing at grade-level
  - o Decrease in students that are required to repeat a grade (grade retention)
  - o Increase enrollment in postsecondary education
  - o Improve attainment of postsecondary degree
  - o Increase rate in attainment of high school diploma and/or high school equivalency
  - o Provide students with new opportunities through collaborative partnerships with education and businesses to help ensure post-secondary success
  - o Other goals than listed above that measure increased educational attainment

  Additional priority will be placed on Youth Educational Attainment programs addressing two key **Governor Emergency Priorities: Early Childhood Education** and **Reading Excellence**. Learn more about Governor Abbott's Emergency Items, adopted in March 2015, outlined here.

In order to receive priority consideration and three points for submitting an application within a *Notice* priority(ies), 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. Applications proposing a program design that meets a priority area are not guaranteed funding.

C. **National Performance Measures.**

OneStar requires all applicants to use National Performance Measures as part of their comprehensive performance measure 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 [http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities].

All applicants must include at least one aligned performance measure (output and outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. OneStar and CNCS do not expect applicants to select performance measures to correspond to each and every potential member activity or community impact. OneStar and CNCS value the quality of performance measures over the quantity of performance measures. As described in the Application Instructions, applicants must include all their information about their proposed performance measures in the Performance Measure section of the application in eGrants (CNCS's web-based grants management system). All information requested in the National Performance Measures Instructions must be included in the text of the performance measures themselves, and it must be evident in the performance measure text that all definitions and requirements outlined in the National Performance Measure Instructions were met. Providing performance measure information elsewhere in the narrative cannot be in lieu of providing full information in the Performance Measure section of the application in eGrants.

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[2] For these purposes, "youth" is defined as: 1) An infant or toddler age birth to 4; 2) a person enrolled in an educational institution from pre-kindergarten to undergraduate; or 3) a person under the age of 21 who has dropped-out of high school and is seeking to enroll in an educational program to obtain high school equivalency.

D. Program Authority.

CNCS's legal authority to award these grants is found in the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, (NCSA)(42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.).

FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

A. Estimated Available Funds

OneStar and CNCS expect a highly competitive AmeriCorps grant competition. CNCS reserves the right to prioritize providing funding to existing awards over making new awards. The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

B. Estimated Award Amount

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 – as determined by the scope of the projects.

C. Project and Award Period

The project period is generally one year with a start date proposed by the applicant. The grant award covers a three-year project period unless otherwise specified. The application is submitted with a one-year budget. Continuation funding for subsequent years is not guaranteed and shall be dependent upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance.

The project start date may not occur prior to the date OneStar 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.

D. Type of Award

AmeriCorps Operating Grants: CNCS may award a Cost Reimbursement or a Fixed Amount grant to any successful applicant, but the availability of a Full Time Fixed Amount grant is limited to certain applicants. See the *Eligible Applicants* section and the *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance* for more information. CNCS will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year.

Evidence Based Intervention Planning Grants. CNCS is seeking applications for planning grants what will be used to develop new national service models that seek to integrate members in innovative ways into evidence-based interventions. For example, in the Economic Opportunity focus area, applicants could explore how to adapt social enterprise, workforce partnership, supportive housing, or financial literacy program models that have demonstrated effectiveness through the Social Innovation Fund. Similarly, in the Healthy Futures focus area, applicants might explore how to integrate AmeriCorps members into effective program models designed to improve health outcomes such as increased access to, or utilization of, health care. Alternatively, applicants could propose taking an evidence-based practice such as motivational interviewing and training AmeriCorps members to apply these skills in ways that could improve individual economic or health outcomes.

Table 1: General Summary

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement			Fixed Amount		
Available Subtypes	Traditional	Professional Corps*	Evidence Based Planning Grant	Full-time/Less than FT serving in a full-time capacity	EAP	Professional Corps[3]
Maximum Cost per MSY	$13,830	Up to $1,000*	N/A	$13,430	$800	Up to $1,000*
Type of Member Positions in the National Service Trust	All	All	N/A	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 MSYs	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 the organization where members serve and not included in the budget	See *Notice*	N/A		Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries must be paid entirely by the organization where members serve and not included in the budget
Financial Reporting Requirements	Yes	Yes; living allowance or salary paid to members may not be counted toward the match requirement.	Yes	No		
Available to New Applicants	Yes			No		Yes

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[3] CNCS assumes that Professional Corps will cover 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 Professional Corps programs' 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 legal applicant financial need and substantial challenges to raising non-CNCS resources. CNCS will determine whether a Professional Corps legal applicant has sufficiently demonstrated that they cannot effectively operate an AmeriCorps program without receiving CNCS operating funds on a case-by-case basis, examining all of the circumstances surrounding the application. There are a wide variety of circumstances under which a Professional Corps legal applicant will be able to demonstrate a compelling need for operating funds. However, given the high demand for AmeriCorps funding, there are also specific circumstances where CNCS believes that a Professional Corps legal applicant will be highly unlikely to demonstrate a need for operational funds. For example, where CNCS's due diligence review of a Professional Corps applicant shows that the applicant has a historically high level of support from non-CNCS resources, and as a result has levels of unrestricted net assets that are well in excess of the requested level of CNCS funding, it is difficult to see how the Professional Corps would be able to demonstrate that they should receive operational funding (which would inherently reduce the funding available to other high-quality applicants).

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

The following Non-Federal Entities (as defined in 2 CFR §200.69) who have DUNS numbers and are registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) are eligible to apply:

- Indian Tribes (2 CFR §200.54)
- Institutions of Higher Education (2 CFR §200.54)
- Local Governments (2 CFR §200.64)
- Nonprofit Organizations (2 CFR §200.70)
- States (2 CFR §200.90)

Previously receiving funds from CNCS is not a prerequisite to apply to this *Notice.*

Competitive or Formula Applicants

To be considered for Competitive funding, an applicant must meet all criteria under *Eligibility Information.* Additionally, only the following types of organizations will be considered for Competitive funding consideration. If they are a Current or Prior Legal Application Organization that has successfully administered an AmeriCorps State grant through OneStar Foundation for at least one three-year project period.

An applicant that is being considered for Competitive funding will also be considered for Formula funding. Any application not meeting the criteria for Competitive funding consideration will be held and considered for Formula funding.

New Applicants

OneStar encourages organizations that have not received prior funding from CNCS to apply, but will not award more than 50 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 successful history and current capacity to manage a Fixed Amount grant are considered to have AmeriCorps experience and therefore can apply for Fixed Amount grants. See *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance* for more information.

Full Time Fixed Amount Applicants

To be considered for a Full Time Fixed Amount program, an applicant must be a current or prior legal applicant organization that has successfully administered[4] an AmeriCorps State grant through OneStar Foundation for at least one three-year project period.

Types of Applicants

- Single-State Applicants
  Organizations that propose to operate only in Texas must apply through the OneStar Foundation. A single-state application that is submitted directly to CNCS by the applicant rather than OneStar Foundation will be considered noncompliant and will not be reviewed.

- National Direct Applicants

  o Multi-State: Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one State or Territory apply directly to CNCS.

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

B. Threshold Issues

Applicants should reflect that they meet the following threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying.

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[4] Successfully Administered is defined as having a high level of past performance as evaluated by the OneStar Foundation Commission Board in relation to OneStar's Grantee Expectations Policy. The policy is available on the OneStar Foundation website here: http://onestarfoundation.org/americorpstexas/grantee-resources/.

- All applicants must request at least 20 Member Service Years (MSYs). New and recompeting applicants with less than 20 MSYs proposed will be deemed noncompliant and will not be reviewed.

- If an applicant is applying for a Professional Corps grant, its application must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members for serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.

- If an applicant is applying for a Full Time Fixed Amount grant, the application must 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 must clearly reflect that the application is from the Governor, one or more Mayors 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.

- The applicant organization will have and submit at the time of application submission, a Single Audit or an Independent Financial Audit from 2015 or 2014.

- The applicant organization must have prior experience administering state and/or federal grant funds. The application organization will submit a list of all state and federal funds that have been administered over the past two years at the time of application submission. The experience of administering state and federal funds must exist with the legal applicant organization, not with an individual person's prior experience.

- All programs are required to submit member activities that align with at least one CNCS National Performance Measure. More than 50 percent of all member activities must align with the National measure, which may be accomplished in one of two ways: 1) 100 percent of members align 51 or more percent of their time to the National Performance Measure; or 2) 51 percent or more of members must spend 100 percent of their time in service towards a National Performance Measure.

C. Other Requirements

Under section 132A(b) of the NCSA, organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this *Notice.*

Under section 745 of Title VII, Division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, if CNCS is aware that any corporation has any unpaid Federal tax liability which 1) has been assessed, 2) for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and 3) that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, that corporation is not eligible for an award under this *Notice.* A similar restriction may be enacted with the appropriation which will fund award under this *Notice.*

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 USC 501(c)(4) that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for CNCS funding.

APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

This *Notice* should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520-2550, the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, Application Instructions, and the Performance Measure Instructions which are incorporated by reference. These documents can be found at: http://onestarfoundation.org/americorpstexas/available-funding/. The full Regulations are available online at www.ecfr.gov.

A. Content and Form of eGrants Application Submission

In eGrants, applicants will enter the following components of a complete application:

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: This is automatically generated when applicants complete the data elements in the eGrants system.

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

- Standard Form 424 Budget
- Performance Measures
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certification

B. Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management

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: DUNS Request Service. CNCS recommends registering at least 30 days before the application due date.

After obtaining a DUNS number, all applicants must register with the System for Award Management (SAM) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete and, if a grant is awarded, throughout the life of the award. SAM registration must be renewed annually. CNCS suggests finalizing a new registration or renewing an existing one at least two weeks before the application deadline to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise. **Applicants must use their SAM-registered name and address on all grant applications to OneStar Foundation**.

Applicants that do not comply with these requirements may become ineligible to receive an award.

C. Submission Dates and Times

1. Notification of Intent to Apply
Submission of the Notice of Intent to Apply form is REQUIRED for this competition and is due by 10:59:59 PM Central on **Thursday, September 15, 2016** for Competitive funding consideration or by 10:59:59 PM Central on **Thursday, March 9, 2017 for** Formula funding consideration**.** The Notice of Intent to Apply form must be completed online using this link: https://www.tfaforms.com/436458. All Notifications of Intent to Apply will receive an email response acknowledging receipt.

Continuation programs that are only submitting a continuation application should not submit a Notification of Intent to Apply form.

2. Application Submission Deadline

Competitive Consideration: For New/Recompete applicants, a first draft of the application will be due by 10:59:59 PM Central on **Monday, November 7, 2016**. Final New/Recompete applications and Competitive Continuation applications are due by 10:59:59 PM Central on **Thursday, December 1, 2016.**

Formula Consideration: New/Recompete and Continuation applications are due by 10:59:59 PM Central on **Thursday, April 27, 2017.**

3. Additional Documents Deadline
All required additional documents are due on the Application Submission deadline (in b. above). See *Submission of Additional Documents* section for other guidance.

4. Late Applications.
Late applications in whole or in part will not be accepted. OneStar will not accept applications submitted via mail, fax or email.

D. Funding Restrictions

1. Member Living Allowance
A living allowance is not considered a salary or wage. 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 the table below. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either CNCS or grantee share. Exceptions are noted below.

While Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to submit detailed budgets, they are still required to provide a living allowance to members that complies with the minimum and maximum requirements. Exceptions noted 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 2: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-Time	1,700	$12,630	$24,930
Half-Time	900	n/a	$13,199
Reduced Half-Time	675	n/a	$9,899
Quarter-Time	450	n/a	$6,599
Minimum-Time	300	n/a	$4,400

Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements

- *Programs existing prior to September 21, 1993* are not required to offer a living allowance. If an applicant chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement, but not the maximum requirement.

- *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.

- *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 above. Professional Corps member salaries are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve, and are not included in the budget.

2. **Maximum Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)**

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.

Table 3: Member Term of Service and MSY Value

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Member Service Year (MSY) Value
Full-Time	1,700	1.0
Half-Time	900	.500
Reduced Half-Time	675	.3809524
Quarter-Time	450	.26455027
Minimum-Time	300	.21164022

Table 4: Maximum Cost Per MSY

Grant Program	Maximum
Cost Reimbursement	$13,830
Full-Time Fixed Amount	$13,430
Education Award Program	$800
Professional Corps (*Cost Reimbursement and Fixed Amount*)	$1,000[5]

Cost reimbursement programs operating in rural communities (as defined in the *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*) and cost reimbursement programs that recruit opportunity youth as AmeriCorps members may request up to $14,000 cost per MSY for the AmeriCorps members that will be serving in rural areas or who are opportunity youth. Applicants requesting the higher cost/MSY must include a compelling case justifying the cost/MSY and explaining why these costs cannot be covered by the grantee share (match).

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[5] CNCS's assumption is that Professional Corps will cover 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.

3. **Amount of the Segal Education Award for FY 2017**

AmeriCorps members serving in programs funded with FY 2017 dollars who successfully complete a term of service will receive an Education Award from the National Service Trust of $5,815 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 5: Term of Service and Education Award

Service Term	Minimum Number of Hours	Maximum Total Education Award
Full-Time	1700	$5,815.00
Half-Time	900	$2,907.50
Reduced Half-Time	675	$2,215.24
Quarter-Time	450	$1,538.36
Minimum-Time	300	$1,230.69

4. **Cost Sharing or Matching**

Fixed Amount Grants. There is no specific match requirement for Fixed Amount grants. CNCS does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program; therefore, organizations must raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.

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 in 45 CFR §2521.60 and below.

Section 121(e)(5) of NCSA (42 USC 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 *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*) does not count toward the matching requirement.

Table 6: Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements

AmeriCorps Funding Year	1, 2, 3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Cost Sharing/Matching Requirements	24%	26%	30%	34%	38%	42%	46%	50%

Alternative Match. Under certain 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 at the time the application is submitted.

5. **Indirect Costs**

CNCS allows applicants to include indirect costs in application budgets. Based on qualifying factors, applicants have the option of using a federally approved indirect cost rate, a 10% de minimis rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly as outlined in 2 CFR §200.413 Direct Costs. States, local governments, and Indian Tribes may use approved cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across federal awards. Applicants who hold a state or federally negotiated indirect cost rate or will be using the 10% de minimis rate must enter that information in the Organization section in eGrants. However, under section 121(d) of the NCSA and CNCS's regulations at 45 CFR 2517.713, no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps grants.

E. Other Submission Requirements

1. **Electronic Application Submission in eGrants**

   Applicants must submit applications electronically via eGrants, CNCS's web-based system. CNCS recommends that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word processing document, then copy and paste the text into the appropriate eGrants field no later than 10 days before the deadline. Please note that the length of a document in word processing software will be different than what will print out in eGrants. For example, one page of text in a word processing software will be longer than one page of text in eGrants. When determining compliance with any page limits in this *Notice*, OneStar will consider the number of pages as they print out per the guidance in the Page Limits section.

   The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must be using eGrants under his or her own account in order to sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representation to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

   Contact the National Service hotline at 800-942-2677 or via eGrants online if a problem arises when creating an account or preparing or submitting the application. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the *Notice* to which the organization is applying. National Service Hotline hours are as follows: Monday – Friday, 9am – 7pm ET (Jan, Aug, Sept); Monday – Thursday 9am – 7pm ET (Oct, Nov, Dec).

2. **Submission of Additional Documents**

   Applicants are required to submit the following additional documents by the application submission deadline. Additional Documents must be emailed to grants@onestarfoundation.org with the following subject line: [Legal Applicant Name]-[Application ID number]. Emails should include the following information:

   - The legal applicant name and its point of contact information
   - The application ID number
   - A list of documents that should be attached to the email
   - Individually saved files that are clearly labeled
   - Files that include the legal applicant name and application ID number in the body of each document.

   All Applicants:

   - Current indirect cost rate agreement, if used to claim indirect/administrative costs.
   - Evaluation briefs, reports, studies. Please refer to the Evidence Base section for detailed instructions by evidence tier.
   - Member Placement Chart
   - Organizational Capacity Survey
     - *If applicable, submit sample in-kind donation forms or documentation your organization uses.*
   - Federal and State Award Schedule (*do not submit if you are submitting a Single Audit*)
   - Organizational Chart.
     - *The Organizational Chart that is submitted must clearly show where the AmeriCorps program would be within the Organization including the name and/or title of the individual(s) responsible for supervising the AmeriCorps members.*
   - Independent Financial Statement Audit from 2014 or 2015 (*submit the most recently completed*)
   - Single Audit from 2014 or 2015 (*submit the most recently completed*) (if applicable)

   Recompeting Applicants:

   - Evaluation report, if required. Please see the *Evidence Base* section for further information.

   Governor/Mayor Initiative Applicant:

   - Letter(s) of support from partnering nonprofits
   - Letter of support cosigned by Governor Abbot and participating Mayor(s)

   Intermediaries:

   - Letters of support from the consortium members

> **Do not submit other items not requested in this *Notice* or Application Instructions. OneStar will not review or return them.**

3. Page Limits

Applications may not exceed 15 pages for the Narratives or 18 pages for Multi-Focus Intermediary applicants with more than five operating site applicants. OneStar will use the number of locations entered by the applicant into the "multi-site operating sites" field in eGrants to determine whether a multi-site application has more than five operating sites. The "multi-site operating sites" field can be found by clicking on the "operating sites" link in eGrants. Multi-site applicants that list five or fewer operating sites cannot exceed 15 pages for the Narrative.

In determining whether an application complies with pages limits, OneStar will include:

- The application's Executive Summary, SF 242 Face Sheet, and
- The Narrative portions contained in the Program Design, Organizational Capacity, and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy sections of the application.

OneStar will consider the number of pages only as they print out from the "Review" tab in eGrants (where you will see the "View/Print your application" heading) when determining compliance for page limits. OneStar will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods in determining whether an application complies with the applicable page limits. <u>OneStar strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the "Review" tab prior to submission to check that the application does not exceed the page limit</u>. The application page limit does not include the budget, narrative portion of the Evaluation Plan, the Logic Model, performance measures, or the supplementary materials, if applicable. However, the Logic Model may not exceed three pages when printed with the application from the "Review" tab in eGrants.

Please note the length of a document in word processing software will be different than what will print out in eGrants. Reviewers will not consider submitted material that is over the page limits in the printed eGrants report. Also note that eGrants will not prevent an applicant from entering text which will exceed page limitations. This applies to both the application page limit and the Logic Model page limit. Do not submit other items not requested in this *Notice* or Application Instructions. OneStar will not review or return them.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Criteria

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

1. 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.

The [Name of the organization] proposes to have [Number of] AmeriCorps members who will [service activities the members will be doing] in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will serve]. At the end of the program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of the 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 match with $[amount of projected match], $[amount of local, state, and federal funds] in public funding and $[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding. [6]

Fixed Amount grant applicants (EAP, Full-time fixed, and Professional Corps Fixed) should list their Other Revenue (see *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*) because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but must still raise significant additional resources to operate the program.

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[6] The dollar amounts listed in the Executive Summary must match exactly with the amounts in the Budget.

OneStar and CNCS will post all Executive Summaries of awarded grant applications on www.onestarfoundation.org and www.nationalservice.gov in the interest of transparency and Open Government.

2. **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. Please respond to each of the following in the order in which the item is presented.

a. **Need (*2 points*)**

- The community[7] need is prevalent and severe in communities where members will serve and has been documented with relevant data.

b. **Intervention (*3 points*)**

- The proposed intervention utilizing AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) leveraged volunteers is clearly described.
- The proposed intervention aligns with the identified community need.

c. **Theory of Change and Logic Model (*19 points*)**

The Theory of Change must address:

- The applicant's proposed intervention is clearly articulated including the design, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) 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, as described in the Evidence Base section below.
- The proposed outcomes articulated in the application narrative and Logic Model represent meaningful progress in addressing the community need identified by the applicant. Applicants should provide rationale for selecting output and outcome targets. Note: recompeting applicants proposing to significantly increase or decrease output and outcome targets from their previous grant must provide a compelling justification for the proposed change(s).
- The applicant's AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.

The Logic Model must depict:

- A summary of the community problem/need outlined in the narrative.
- The inputs or resources necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:
  - 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 measureable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served). If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as output indicators.

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[7] "Community" can be a geographic region, a specific population of people, or a combination of both. The applicant organization must document the need it plans to address with its proposed program, whether it is a defined geographic community or a subset of individuals living in a particular area.

Applicants 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.

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

d. 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 must 1) clearly state the evidence tier in which they think they qualify; 2) clearly indicate and describe the evidence that supports the highest evidence tier for which they are eligible and 3) describe the complete body of evidence that supports their program intervention including evidence from lower tiers. Applicants should pay particular attention to the requirements for each tier of evidence. More points are awarded for higher tiers of evidence.

In 2016 the evidence tiers of funded AmeriCorps State and National competitive grantees were as follows: Strong 17%, Moderate 9%, Preliminary 39%, and Pre-Preliminary 24%. CCNS expects programs it funds to be progressing along the evidence continuum. Thus, do not be deterred from applying for funding due to your current evidence level.

Applicants classifying their evidence as preliminary who propose to replicate an identical or similar evidence-based intervention, as well as applicants classifying their evidence as either moderate or strong evidence should reference the information about the evidence tiers provided below. Submission of additional documents (e.g., advocacy pieces, policy briefs, other narratives not research studies or program evaluations) that are not consistent with the guidance and requirements described in the *Notice* will not be reviewed.

All applicants must include as much detailed information as possible in the Evidence section of the application. Applicants that have collected relevant performance measurement data must describe this data. Applicants that have conducted evaluations of their own program or that are replicating other evidence-based programs must describe these evaluations as outlined in the evidence tier descriptions. Applicants are advised to focus on presenting high-quality evidence from up to two of the strongest and most relevant studies while also summarizing the remaining body of evidence that exists for the program. 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.

When describing research studies or evaluations in the application narrative, applicants must include the following information in order to earn points:

- The date the research or evaluation was completed, and the time period for which the intervention was examined.
- A description that shows the study's relevance to the proposed intervention.
- A description of the target population studied (e.g. the demographics).
- The methodology used in the study (e.g., outcome study, random assignment, regression discontinuity design, propensity score matching, etc.).
- A description of the data, data source, and data collection methods.
- The outcomes or impacts examined and the study findings
- The strength of the findings (e.g., effect size, confidence level, statistical power of the study design and statistical significance of findings).

Applicants must provide this information in the narrative even if they submit the study or evaluation. Applicants must provide citations for the studies they describe, if applicable; however, reviewers will not review any links or cited documents referenced in the application and will not review and additional document that is not a study submitted in accordance with the *Notice* instructions.

Reviewers will examine the descriptions (and attached studies if relevant) using the following criteria:

- How closely the intervention evaluated in the studies matches the one proposed by the applicant;
- 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.);
- 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; and
- 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 an application does not describe a well-designed and well-implemented evaluation, the applicant may be considered for a lower tier of evidence and related point values. Applicants must meet all requirements of the evidence tier in order to be considered for that tier. Applicants that do not meet all requirements will be considered for a lower tier.

Requirements associated with the five evidence tiers are described below.

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

Applicants in this tier must describe how their program design is evidence-informed. An evidence-informed program uses the best available knowledge, research, and evaluation to guide program design and implementation, but does not have scientific research or rigorous evaluation of the program itself. Applicants may describe up to two research or evaluation studies that inform their program design but may not submit these studies.

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 evaluating assessing implementation of the intervention).

In order to qualify for this tier, the applicant must have collected data about their own program. 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. Applicants should describe evidence for the pre-preliminary tier in the Evidence section of the application but should not submit additional documents unless required to meet CNCS evaluation requirements.

Preliminary Evidence (*3-6 points*) means the applicant has provided data from at least one outcome study of their own intervention that yielded promising results for the proposed intervention or that the applicant proposes to replicate a similar intervention with fidelity to the evaluated program model. The ways to demonstrate a preliminary level of evidence are as follows:

Preliminary with Outcome Study. 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. In some cases a retrospective pre-post test may be considered, but its use must be justified. This description should explain whether the outcome study was conducted internally by the applicant organization or by an entity external to the applicant. Applicants must describe the studies fully but should not submit them unless required to meet CNCS evaluation requirements. Outcome evaluations that are submitted to fulfill the CNCS evaluation requirements will be reviewed only for compliance with evaluation requirements. Outcome evaluations submitted by applicants who were not required to meet CNCS evaluation requirements will not be considered when assessing evidence tier.

An outcome study includes data beyond that which is collected as part of routine performance measurement. In addition to describing up to two outcome studies of their own program or intervention, applicants must describe the performance measurement data they have collected and how the outcome study data goes beyond performance measurement.

<u>Preliminary with Replication.</u> The applicant must describe and submit at least one randomized 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 applicant must describe 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. An applicant may be eligible for more points if they also submit evidence from a process evaluation demonstrating that they have implemented the replication with fidelity. The process evaluation should be described but not submitted.

Applicants who do not submit the required study or who do not describe fully how they are replicating the evidence-based program with fidelity will be considered for a lower tier.

For the purposes of this *Notice*, "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.

Applicants proposing to replicate an evidence-based program with fidelity must describe how their program is the same as, or very similar to, the program they will replicate in the following areas:
- Characteristics of the beneficiary population
- Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention
- Dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention
- Training for the AmeriCorps members and/or other individuals, such as volunteers, delivering the intervention
- The context in which the intervention is delivered
- Outcomes of the intervention

Applicants must also describe how they will assess whether they are implementing the intervention with fidelity to the intervention they are replicating.

In cases where the applicant is part of a multi-site program that has conducted an evaluation that qualifies them for the moderate or strong evidence tier, but the evaluation did not include the applicant's proposed sites, the applicant must describe how they are replicating the evidence-based program with fidelity at all of the sites included in the application. In this case, an application for sites included in the evaluation would receive moderate or strong evidence, and an application for the sites not included in the evaluation would receive preliminary evidence.

Moderate evidence (*7-9 points*) means the applicant has submitted up to two well-designed and well-implemented studies of their own program that evaluated the same intervention described in this 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 (i.e., Randomized Control 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 entities or evaluations published in peer-reviewed articles as separate attachments.

CNCS grantees recompeting for their third competitive grant cycle are required to submit an evaluation report of their CNCS funded program. 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 required to submit an evaluation report of their CNCS funded program, then more than two studies will not be considered.

Strong evidence (*10-12 points*) means the applicant has demonstrated that the intervention described in the application has been tested nationally, regionally, or at the state-level (e.g., multi-site) using a well-designed and well-implemented QED or RCT of their own program. Alternatively, the proposed intervention's evidence may be based on multiple (up to two) well-designed and well-implemented QEDs or RCTs of their own program in different locations or with different populations within a local geographic area. The overall pattern of study findings is consistently positive on the key desired outcomes of interest as depicted in the applicant's logic model. 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 entities or evaluations published in peer-reviewed articles as separate attachments.

Applicants recompeting for their third grant cycle are required to submit an evaluation report of their CNCS funded program. 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 required to submit an evaluation report of their CNCS funded program, then more than two studies will not be considered.

e. Notice Priority (*3 points*)

- The applicant proposed program fits within one or more of the 2017 AmeriCorps funding priorities as outlined in the Funding Priorities section and more fully described in the *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*.
- The proposed program meets all of the requirements detailed in the Funding Priorities section and in the *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*.

f. 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 *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*).

g. Member Supervision (*2 points*)

- AmeriCorps members will receive sufficient 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.

h. 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.
- AmeriCorps members will have access to 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.

i. 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.

- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will be provided with and will wear service gear that prominently displays the AmeriCorps logo daily.

3. **Organizational Capability (*25 percent*)**

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

   a. **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 sufficiently engaged community members and partner organizations in planning and implementing its intervention.
   - As documentation of community support and commitment to the program, please procure, keep on file, but DO NOT SUBMIT, letter(s) from the applicant's most significant community partner(s). The letter(s) should include what the partner(s) see as the benefit to the community provided by the applicant's AmeriCorps members and what activities would not happen without the AmeriCorps members.

   b. **Compliance and Accountability (*15 points*)**

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

4. **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.

   a. **Cost Effectiveness (*18 points*)**

   - The budget is sufficient to carry out the program effectively[8].
   - The budget aligns with the applicant's narrative.
   - The applicant has raised or describes an adequate plan to raise non-CNCS resources to fully support the program.
   - The applicant, if recompeting, has a lower cost per Member Service Year (MSY- see *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*) 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.

   Having a low cost per Member Service Year (MSY) is a competitive advantage. New applicants that submit with a low cost per MSY and recompeting 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 request.

   b. **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.

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[8] Program costs not included in the formal budget, including for Fixed-amount applicants, must be described in this section in sufficient detail to allow reviewers to assess their sufficiency and alignment. Failure to provide adequate information in this section will result in a lower score.

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, including for Fixed-amount applicants.
- Indicate the amount of non-CNCS resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash) and the sources of these commitments.

5. **Evaluation Plan (*required for recompeting grantees – 0 percent*)**

If the applicant is competing for the first time, please enter N/A in the "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field since it pertains only to recompeting grantees. If the applicant is recompeting for AmeriCorps funds for the first time the program must submit its evaluation plan in the "Evaluation Summary or Plan" section of the Narratives field in eGrants. If the applicant is recompeting[9] for a subsequent time, the program must submit its evaluation report (see the *Submission of Additional Documents* section for more information), as well as an evaluation plan for the next three-year period in the "Evaluation Plan" field in eGrants. Evaluation plans submitted outside of eGrants will not be reviewed.

Evaluation plans must include as much information as possible for each of the following (see *Frequently Asked Questions: Evaluation*, available at http://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 measureable 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
- 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.

- If the applicant's 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 funds as required in 45 CFR §2522.730.
- If the applicant's average annual CNCS program grant is less than $500,000, 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 45 CFR §2522.730.

The "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field of the Narrative does not count towards the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit of 10,000 characters. Applicants should print out the plan to ensure the narrative does not exceed the character limits when entered in eGrants.

Applicants 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. Applicants 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

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[9] A program will be considered a recompeting application if it satisfies the CNCS definition of "same project" (see *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*) and has been funded competitively for at least one complete three-year cycle. 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 satisfies 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.

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 with applicant build their evidence base. Evaluation plans should include, at a minimum, the required elements listed in this *Notice*. The evaluation plan must be consistent with the information submitted in the 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.org/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 application 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.

6. **Amendment Justification (*0 percent*)**
Enter N/A. This field will be used if the applicant is awarded a grant and needs to amend it.

7. **Clarification Information (*0 percent*)**
Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter information that requires clarification in the post-review period.

8. **Continuation Changes (*0 percent*)**
Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter changes in the application narratives in continuation requests.

B. **Review and Selection Process**

1. **Compliance and Eligibility Review**
OneStar staff will review all applications submitted to determine compliance with eligibility, the submission deadline, and completeness. Applications determined to be non-compliant will not be considered for funding. An applicant is compliant if the applicant:

- Is an eligible organization
- Submits a Notice of Intent to Apply Form by the submission deadline
- Submits an application by the submission deadline
- Submits an application that is complete, in that it contains all required elements and follows the instructions provided in this *Notice*
- Submits an application with a minimum of twenty (20) AmeriCorps Member Service Years (MSYs)
- Submits an application with a Cost per MSY that does not exceed the maximum for the application type as outlined in this *Notice* in Table 3: Maximum Cost Per MSY

OneStar will screen applications in accordance with the requirements in this *Notice* to determine if the applicant has met all eligibility and submission requirements. Applicants determined to be ineligible will not receive an award.

2. **Review**
Each application will be assessed by several OneStar Foundation reviewers. External (community) reviewers will review and assess all eligible Formula application using the application review criteria and will consider the comprehensiveness and feasibility of the application. Formula applications that receive a score of 70 percent or more will be passed along for an Internal (staff) review. Internal reviewers will evaluate Formula applications that pass a minimum score threshold and all Competitive applications using the application review criteria, and will consider the comprehensiveness and feasibility of the application as well as the priorities and strategic considerations detailed in the Notice. All reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest and relevant experience.

3. **Post Review Quality Control**
   <u>Competitive Applications only</u>: After the reviewers complete their assessment, CNCS staff will review the results for fairness and consistency. Some applications may be selected for a Quality Control assessment. This additional level of review may be used to assess applications ranked first by OneStar that received low scores and applications for which there are significant panel anomalies.

4. **Risk Assessment Evaluation**
   OneStar Staff, OneStar's National Service Commission Board, and CNCS staff (if applicable) will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant, including conducting due diligence to ensure an applicant's ability manage federal funds and the applicant's past performance (if applicable). This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding and the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If OneStar or CNCS determine 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, OneStar and 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, including:
     o Timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements,
     o If applicable, meeting match requirements, and
     o 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 qualifications or financial integrity information, such as –
     o Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information Systems (FAPIIS)
     o Dun and Bradstreet
     o "Do Not Pay"
   - Reports and findings from Single Audits performed 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 45 CFR §2522.140
   - The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements
   - Past Performance. OneStar will assess recompeting and previous subgrantees' past performance and, for Competitive applicants, will 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, OneStar and CNCS will consider the following for applicants:
     o Meeting Performance Measures
     o Enrollment and Retention rates
     o Compliance with 30 day enrollment and exit requirements in the AmeriCorps portal
     o Site visits or other monitoring findings (if applicable)
     o Significant opportunities and/or risks of the grantee related to national service

   Additionally, OneStar and CNCS may use the results of the review of the risk assessment evaluation in determining which applications to fund. If OneStar or CNCS conclude that the reasons for applicants having poor risk assessment evaluations is not likely to be mitigated, those applications may not be selected for funding.

5. **Clarification Process**

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 OneStar and/or 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 may result in the removal of applications from consideration.

6. **Selection for Funding**

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

Specifically, the review and selection process will:

a. Identify how well eligible applications are aligned with application review criteria and/or represent relative risk and/or opportunity.

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

- Meaningful representation of:
  o Geographic diversity
  o Rural communities (see definition in *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*)
  o Small, medium and large programs
  o Single and multi-site programs
  o Faith-based organizations
- OneStar and/or CNCS Priorities representation
- 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
- Low Cost per MSY
- Moderate and Strong evidence levels
- Promise Zone designees

In selecting applicants to receive awards under this *Notice*, the OneStar Foundation Commission Board and/or the CNCS Chief Executive Officer will endeavor to include a diverse portfolio of applications based on staff evaluations, recommendations, priorities and strategic considerations.

OneStar and CNCS reserve the right to adjust or make changes to the review process, in the event that unforeseen challenges or exigent circumstances make it impossible, impractical, or inefficient to execute the review process as planned. Any such adjustments or changes will not affect the selection criteria that will be used to assess applications submitted to OneStar in response to this *Notice*.

C. **Consideration of Integrity and Performance System Information**

Prior to making any award under this *Notice* that exceeds $150,000, CNCS is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS, see 41 USC 2313).

Any applicant, at its option may review information in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.

CNCS will consider any comments by any applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgement about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of

performance under Federal awards when completing its review of risk posed by the applicant under the Risk Assessment Evaluation section of this *Notice.*

D. Feedback to Applicants

Following grant awards, each applicant will receive summary comments 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. All complaint applications will receive feedback from the external and staff review of the application, as applicable.

E. Transparency in Grant-making

CNCS is committed to transparency in grant-making. The following information for new and re-competing competitive applications will be published on CNCS Results of Grant Competitions within 90 business days after all grants are awarded.

- A list of all compliant applications submitted

- Executive Summaries of all compliant applications submitted by the applicants

- Data extracted from the SF-424 Face Sheet and the submitted program narratives for successful applications

- A blank template of the external review worksheet

- A list of all external reviewers that completed the review process

- A summary of external reviewer comments for successful applications.

FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Federal Award Notices

CNCS anticipates announcing the results of the Competitive competition by notifying OneStar Foundation no later than May 15, 2017, contingent on timely full year appropriations. OneStar anticipates announcing the results of the Formula competition by notifying applicants no later than June 21, 2017. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions via email. Notification will be sent to the individual listed in the eGrants Application Face Sheet as the person with whom communication regarding this application may be shared. If the applicant is a current OneStar grantee, notification will be sent to the following people listed in the Authorized Representative Form: Legal Authorized Signatory, Primary Program Contact, Primary Fiscal Contact, and Pre-Award or Grant Manager Contact. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) is the authorizing document for beginning grant activities. Unsuccessful applicants will also receive notification that their application was not approved for funding.

An awardee may not expend federal funds until the start of the Budget Period identified on the Notice of Grant Award. OneStar will make an award for one year of operation.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Uniform Guidance

The Notice of Grant Award incorporates the approved application as part of the binding commitments under the grant award, as well as the requirements of applicable sections of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 and other applicable statutes. Awards will also be subject to the specific terms and conditions established for AmeriCorps grants and/or defined in the Terms and Conditions or Special Conditions attached to the award.

2. Requests for Improper Payment Information

CNCS may, from time to time, request documentation from recipients in order to monitor the award or to comply with other legal requirements, such as the Improper Payment Information Act of 2002, as amended. Failure to make timely responses to these requests may result in award funds being placed on temporary manual hold, reimbursement only, or other remedies as appropriate. In addition, OneStar and CNCS may, in appropriate circumstances, consider in its funding decisions any previous failures to make timely responses.

3. CNCS Terms and Conditions

Grants under this program are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), consolidated in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 2205.

C. 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 participant, or volunteer) 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 such 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 must undergo NSCHCs that include:

1. A nationwide name-based search of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW); and

2. Either

    a. 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*

    b. 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 check of the NSOPW; and
2. Both
    a. 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*
    b. A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check.

See 45 CFR §2540.200-§2540.207 and CNCS Criminal History Check Resources for complete information and FAQs.

D. Use of Materials

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 (2 CFR §200.315(b)).

E. Reporting

Recipients are required to submit a variety of reports which are due at specific times during the life cycle of an award. All reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time.

Recipients 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 45 CFR §§2522.500-2522.540 and §§2522.700-2522.740.

Once the grant is awarded, recipients 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),

including the number of applicants for AmeriCorps positions and the number of volunteers recruited and/or supported by AmeriCorps members (both episodic and ongoing volunteers).

Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the recipient's ability to secure future CNCS funding.

F. Continuation Funding Information and Requirements
Organizations that have current AmeriCorps awards that do not have a Project Period end date in 2017 must submit an application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. Please see the *Continuation Application Instructions* (provided to eligible organizations directly by OneStar via email). Requests by existing applicants for increases in the level of funding or number of AmeriCorps member positions will be assessed using the criteria under this *Notice*.

OTHER INFORMATION

A. Technical Assistance
In addition to consulting the Application Instructions, Supplementary Materials, and AmeriCorps regulations as directed in this *Notice*, applicants are encouraged also to consult the OneStar Foundation website for a schedule of technical assistance webinar calls, and Frequently Asked Questions that will be updated during the competition period and posted publicly online at: http://onestarfoundation.org/americorpstexas/available-funding/.

B. Re-Focus of Funding
OneStar and CNCS reserve the right to re-focus funding in the event of a disaster or other compelling need for service.

CONTACT INFORMATION

All communication relating to this *Notice* must be directed to the contact person named below.

For questions regarding an AmeriCorps Texas application, contact:

Elisa Gleeson
Senior Grants Management Specialist
Email: elisa@onestarfoundation.org
Phone: (512) 287-2029
Availability: 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM Central, Monday to Friday

Emily Steinberg
Director, National Service Programs
Email: emily@onestarfoundation.org
Availability: Phone consultations available by appointment only. Email Emily to schedule.

Communication related to this application shall be directed to the contacts named above. All emails and phone calls will be returned within a reasonable amount of time. Applicants are encouraged to submit their questions well in advance of the deadline as OneStar is not obligated to respond to questions that are received 48 hours prior to the due date.

Questions regarding multi-state or Indian Tribe applications must be submitted directly to CNCS:

Corporation for National and Community Service
Attn: Office of Grants Policy and Operations/ASN Application
250 E St. SW
Washington, DC 20525
Phone: (202) 606-7508
TTY: (202) 606-3472
Email: americorpsgrants@cns.gov