



2021-2022 PENNSYLVANIA AMERICORPS STATE GRANTS

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

COMPETITIVE APPLICANTS:

INTENT TO APPLY DUE OCTOBER 13, 2020; APPLICATIONS DUE NOVEMBER 2, 2020

FORMULA APPLICANTS:

INTENT TO APPLY DUE FEBRUARY 2, 2021; APPLICATIONS DUE MARCH 2, 2021

**The Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

**W. Gerard Oleksiak
Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry**

**PennSERVE
651 Boas Street, Room 1306
Harrisburg, PA 17121**

<http://www.dli.pa.gov/pennserve>

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Disclosure: Publication of this Request for Applications does not obligate PennSERVE or the Corporation for National and Community Service to award any specific number of grants or to obligate any particular amount of funding. The actual level and timing of grant funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. Summary

PennSERVE announces the opportunity to apply for grant funding for the operation of AmeriCorps national service programs by community and faith-based organizations, government agencies, and educational institutions. AmeriCorps state grants support the efforts of organizations to recruit and deploy AmeriCorps members and the volunteers with whom they serve to address unmet needs.

AmeriCorps state grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to eligible organizations proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities. Applicants for AmeriCorps funding must address one or a combination of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) Focus Areas, as identified in this request for applications (RFA).

An AmeriCorps member is an individual who is enrolled in an approved national service position and engages in community service. AmeriCorps members will be recruited, trained, supervised, and managed by the funded organization, and may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of service, AmeriCorps members are eligible to receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

B. Project Sponsors and Program Authority

AmeriCorps is a program funded by the U.S. Congress under the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number 94.006. The national organization supporting AmeriCorps is the CNCS. CNCS's legal authority to award these grants is found in the National and Community Service Act (NCSA) of 1990, *as amended*, 42 U.S.C. § 12501 *et seq.* CNCS receives AmeriCorps program funding from Congress and awards funding to state commissions, including PennSERVE, to grant and oversee AmeriCorps programs in each state.

The mission of PennSERVE is to encourage, develop, and facilitate volunteerism and community service, which builds upon the talents, strengths, opportunities, and challenges of people and communities in ways which enhance the quality of life for all residents of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Commonwealth).

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

C. AmeriCorps Focus Areas

The federal funding for AmeriCorps is provided to states via the CNCS. The NCSA of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act, Pub.L. 111-13, Apr. 21, 2009, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. In order to carry

out Congress' intent and 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.

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 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 support responsible stewardship of the environment, while preparing communities for challenging circumstances and helping Americans respond to and recover from disruptive life events: programs that conserve natural habitats, protect clean air and water, maintain public lands, support wildland fire mitigation, cultivate individual and community self-sufficiency, and provide reforestation services after floods or fires.

Healthy Futures

Grants will provide support for activities that will address the opioid crisis; 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 with the purpose of reducing 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, wounded warriors, 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.

D. CNCS Funding Priorities

In order to receive priority consideration for submitting an application within a CNCS funding 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. Responses that propose programs for the purpose of receiving priority consideration are not guaranteed funding. CNCS seeks to prioritize the investment of national service resources in the following areas:

- Efforts to help local communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants may propose programming in any CNCS focus area to aid communities as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Programs that actively engage in removing structural racial inequities, advancing racial equality, and increasing opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities.
- Economic Opportunity - a program model that increases economic opportunities for communities by preparing people for the workforce.
- Education - evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange. In order to qualify for this priority, the applicant must be assessed as having moderate or strong evidence by the reviewers.
(https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/CNCS_Education_Evidence_Brief_112318_508.pdf)
- Healthy Futures - a program model that reduces and/or prevents prescription drug and opioid abuse.
- Evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange (<https://www.nationalservice.gov/impact-our-nation/evidence-exchange>) that are assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence.
- Veterans and Military Families – a program model that positively impacts the quality of life of veterans and improves military family strength.
- Rural Intermediaries - organizations that demonstrate measurable impact and primarily serve rural communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure. *See Appendix G for more information on applying as a rural intermediary.*
- Faith-based organizations.
- Programs that reduce child poverty.
- Environmental stewardship.
- Economic Mobility Corps – a joint initiative with the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund to place national service members at Certified Community Development Financial Institutions to enhance their capacity to provide financial literacy, financial planning, budgeting, saving, and other financial counseling activities in distressed and underserved areas. *See Appendix H for more information on applying as an Economic Mobility Corps program.*

E. PennSERVE Priorities

In addition to the CNCS focus areas, PennSERVE may also give special consideration in the review process to applicants that:

- embed principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the program design. To meet this priority, the applicant must explain how the program is specifically designed to engage and support a diverse corps of AmeriCorps members, implement equitable practices, and nurture an inclusive service environment;
- include the AmeriCorps Focus Area of Economic Opportunity;
- include the AmeriCorps Focus Area of Healthy Futures;

- engage adults 55 and older as AmeriCorps members;
- support and include individuals with disabilities; and/or
- provide services to underrepresented Pennsylvania counties.

F. Prohibited Activities

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

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

Per CNCS guidance, the following activities are also prohibited:

- **Census Activities:** AmeriCorps members and volunteers associated with AmeriCorps grants may not engage in census activities during service hours. Being a census taker during service hours is categorically prohibited. Census-related activities (e.g., promotion of the census, education about the importance of the census) do not align with AmeriCorps State and National objectives. What members and volunteers do on their own time is up to them, consistent with program policies about outside employment and activities.
- **Election and Polling Activities:** AmeriCorps member may not provide services for election or polling locations or in support of such activities.

AmeriCorps members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the

activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-CNCS funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing any of the above activities on their personal time.

G. Agency Contact

Inquiries about this funding opportunity should be directed to PennSERVE at pennserve@pa.gov. The subject of the email should be "2021 AmeriCorps Application Question <Applicant Name>."

H. Reallocation of Funding

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

I. Application Resources

All applicants are urged to review the AmeriCorps Regulations (http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/45CFR_chapterXXV.pdf) and the AmeriCorps State and National Grants FY 2021 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and Supporting Materials (<https://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities/2021/ameri-corps-state-and-national-grants-fy-2021>).

Table 1: Requirements in the AmeriCorps Regulations

Topics	Citation in the AmeriCorps Regulations
Member Service Activities	§2520.20 - §2520.55
Prohibited Activities	§2520.65
Tutoring Programs	§2522.900-2522.950
Matching Funds	§2521.35-2521.90
Member Benefits	§2522.240-2522.250
Calculating Cost Per Member Service Year (MSY)	§2522.485
Performance Measures	§2522.500-2522.650
Evaluation	§2522.500-2522.540 and §2522.700-2522.740
Selection Criteria and Selection Process	§2522.400-2522.475

II. AWARD INFORMATION

CNCS and PennSERVE will not provide more than one grant for the same project in one fiscal year. Two projects will be considered the same if they: address the same issue areas, address the same priorities, address the same objectives, serve the same target communities and population, utilize the same sites, or use the same program staff and members.

A. Estimated Available Funds

PennSERVE expects a highly competitive AmeriCorps grant competition. The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations. In the 2020 grant year, PennSERVE's AmeriCorps Competitive portfolio included \$4,996,932 in federal funds, or 48 percent of the total program costs. \$5,349,560 of matching funds will be raised by programs to support 52 percent of program expenses. PennSERVE's AmeriCorps Formula portfolio included \$5,380,304 in federal funds, or 38 percent of the total program costs.

\$8,954,907 of matching funds will be raised by programs to support 62 percent of program expenses.

Awards will be for funds and/or AmeriCorps member slots. Award amounts will vary. The general practice is to award no more than 50 member positions (slots) to organizations receiving an AmeriCorps grant for the first time. Please note that PennSERVE will not fund any program applying for less than 10 full-time equivalent members (10 MSY).

B. Estimated Award Amount

Program operating 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. In 2019, award amounts for operating programs ranged from \$80,000 to \$3,210,380. Requests for planning grants may not exceed \$50,000.

C. Project and Award Period

With the exception of planning grants which will be for a one-year period only, AmeriCorps grants generally cover a three-year project period. In approving a multi-year project period, PennSERVE and CNCS make an initial award for the first year of operation. The application is submitted with a one-year budget. Continuation funding is not guaranteed and shall be dependent on availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance. Factors considered in awarding continuation grants include satisfactory performance, demonstrated capacity to manage the grant, compliance with grant requirements, agency priorities, and the availability of appropriated funds. PennSERVE and CNCS reserve the right to adjust the amount of a grant or elect not to continue funding for subsequent years.

Applicants who are funded may expect grant awards in summer 2021. Most project periods will be from Aug. 20, 2021 – Aug. 19, 2022. The project start date may not occur prior to the date PennSERVE 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. Types of Award

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

Education Award Program (EAP): Programs apply for a small amount per MSY, can enroll less than full-time members, and use their own resources to cover all other costs. **EAP applicants must apply for Formula Cost Reimbursement Grants.**

Fixed Amount Grants: PennSERVE will not award any fixed amount grants in 2021-2022.

No-Cost Slots: These grants may be education award only, or all funds may be provided by the grantee. **No-Cost Slot applicants must apply for Formula Cost Reimbursement Grants.**

Planning Grants: AmeriCorps Planning grants allow organizations to develop plans to implement an AmeriCorps program. Planning grant activities involve work to establish a new program in Pennsylvania or to replicate a successful existing program in unserved or underserved areas of the state. **Planning grant applications must apply for Formula Cost Reimbursement Grants.**

Organizations use planning grants to become better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps Program grant in the following grant cycle, but a planning grant award does not guarantee the applicant will be awarded a program operating grant in future cycles. Planning grants may not be used to support AmeriCorps members. Planning grant awards may not exceed \$50,000 and are for one year only.

Planning grantees will be required to attend in-person and virtual training sessions. Grantees are required to create and provide specific deliverables to PennSERVE throughout the grant period, including policies and procedures, AmeriCorps member position descriptions, member recruitment plans, training agendas, and more.

Professional Corps: A professional corps is a program model composed of AmeriCorps members serving as professionals; i.e. teachers, health care providers, police officers, engineers, attorneys, or other professionals. The programs recruit and place qualified members in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Professional corps members' salaries/compensation, including childcare, are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve, and are not included in the budget request to CNCS. Professional corps may only have full-time members. In order to be considered for funding, applicants must demonstrate that there are an inadequate number of professionals in the community(ies) where the program seeks to place members. **Professional Corps applicants must apply for Formula Cost Reimbursement Grants.**

Table 2: Types of Grants: General Summary

<u>Grant Types</u>	<u>Traditional</u>	<u>Education Award Program (EAP)</u>	<u>No-Cost Slots</u>	<u>Planning Grant</u>	<u>Professional Corps</u>
<u>Maximum Cost per MSY</u>	<u>\$16,300</u>	<u>\$800/\$1,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>\$1,000</u>
<u>Special Requirements</u>		\$800 per MSY or \$1,000 per MSY if at least 50 percent of the persons enrolled in the program are disadvantaged youth.			Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in budget.

<u>Financial Reporting Requirements</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes, for Grantee Share	Yes	Yes; Living allowance or salary paid to members may not be counted toward the match requirements
<u>Type of Slots in the National Service Trust</u>	Full-time, three quarter-time, half-time, reduced half-time, quarter-time, minimum time, abbreviated-time	Full-time, three quarter-time, half-time, reduced half-time, quarter-time, minimum time, abbreviated-time	Full-time, three quarter-time, half-time, reduced half-time, quarter-time, minimum time, abbreviated time	No slots awarded	Full-time only

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

The following non-federal entities (as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.69) who have DUNS numbers and are registered in system for award management (SAM) are eligible to apply:

- Indian tribes (2 C.F.R. § 200.54);
- institutions of higher education (2 C.F.R. § 200.55);
- local governments (2 C.F.R. § 200.64);
- nonprofit organizations (2 C.F.R. § 200.70); and
- states (2 C.F.R. § 200.90).

Programs applying to PennSERVE must operate their program only within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Any programs serving more than one state must apply directly to CNCS (see www.nationalservice.gov).

In addition, under Section 132A(b) of the NCSA, organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this RFA.

Note that 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—

- has been assessed,
- for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and
- 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 RFA. (However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has made a determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the federal government.) A similar restriction may be enacted with the appropriation which will fund awards under this RFA.

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(4), that engages in

lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for CNCS funding.

These application/agreement instructions are to be used by all (new, recompetes, and continuation) applicants interested in applying for Pennsylvania AmeriCorps State grants.

B. Threshold Issues

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

- All program grant applicants should request at least 10 member slots equaling 10 member service years (MSY). New and recompetes applicants with less than 10 MSY will be deemed noncompliant and will not be reviewed.
- Professional corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a professional corps by CNCS must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.
- If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: 45 C.F.R. § 2522.910-.940), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.

C. Special Requirements for AmeriCorps Programs in Pennsylvania

- Funded programs must be sufficiently staffed to manage the size and scope of the AmeriCorps program. While staffing varies per program, all programs funded by PennSERVE must include at least one full-time equivalent dedicated to AmeriCorps program management.
- Funded programs are required to include the word “AmeriCorps” in their program name. This should be reflected in the application narrative and in field 11.a of the SF424, “Descriptive Title of Applicant’s Project.”
- AmeriCorps programs may be required to participate in local disaster preparedness planning efforts, including but not limited to emergency management training and management of volunteers. AmeriCorps members may be asked, or offered the opportunity, to participate in disaster services as needed.
- Every AmeriCorps member is required to wear gear that displays the AmeriCorps logo at all times while engaging in service activities as an AmeriCorps member.
- Programs must include funding in the submitted budget to attend PennSERVE required trainings and for members to attend yearly AmeriCorps Week activities.
- Programs are required to use a specific online program management system, and to include funding in the submitted budget to cover system costs.

IV. APPLICATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION

This RFA should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 C.F.R. §§ 2520–2550, and the CNCS’s NOFO, mandatory supplemental information, application instructions, and the national performance measure instructions which are incorporated by reference.

These documents can be found at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities/2021/ameri-corps-state-and-national-grants-fy-2021>.

The full regulations are available online at www.ecfr.gov.

A. Two Opportunities to Apply

For the 2021-2022 AmeriCorps Grant Competition, organizations have two opportunities to apply for funding. Organizations may apply to be considered for competitive funding or may apply to be considered for formula funding. **This request for applications includes both competitive and formula funding; the criteria for each opportunity is different.**

Competitive funding – Program Operating Grants Only: If selected by PennSERVE, applications are submitted to CNCS to compete with other single state and multi-state applicants.

Formula Funding – Program Operating Grants and Planning Grants: Applicants compete with other applicants at the state level. An agency that submits a competitive application may also submit a formula application. However, in the event an applicant is selected for both formula and competitive funding, the applicant is ineligible for funding under both; in most cases, PennSERVE will require the applicant to forfeit any rights to formula funds.

B. Deadlines and Funding Timeline

See Tables 3 and 4 for the application and funding timelines. See Table 5: Required Application Documents for a complete list of required documents and delivery instructions. Late submissions will not be accepted. **Applicants must meet all deadlines in this RFA to be considered for funding.**

1. Competitive Funding

Tuesday, October 13, 2020, 5 p.m.

Intent to apply due to PennSERVE no later than 5 p.m. See page 16 for more information on the intent to apply.

Monday, November 2, 2020, 5 p.m.

- Complete application in eGrants web-based grant management system; and
- Documents via email to pennserve@pa.gov as listed in Table 5.

Table 3: Competitive Application/Funding Timeline

Notice of Intent to Apply deadline	Oct. 13, 2020, 5 p.m.
Technical assistance webinar	Oct. 16, 2020, 2 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Applications due in eGrants AND emailed documents due	Nov. 2, 2020, 5 p.m.
PennSERVE Feedback and Clarification Period; revisions may be required	Dec. 2020
PennSERVE’s Submission of Competitive Applications to CNCS	Jan. 6, 2021
Clarification Period with CNCS; revisions may be required	March/April
New Program / New Staff Training (required for new staff/new programs), Harrisburg, PA	Jun. 23, 2021 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Starting Strong Training (required for all funded programs), Harrisburg, PA	Aug. 4 – 5, 2021; tentative pre-conference on Aug. 3
Funding Awarded	Summer 2021

2. Formula Funding

Tuesday, February 2, 2021, 5 p.m.

Intent to apply due to PennSERVE no later than 5 p.m. See Page 16 for more information on the intent to apply.

Tuesday, March 2, 2021, 5 p.m.

- Complete application in eGrants web-based grant management system; and
- Documents via email to pennserve@pa.gov as listed in Table 5.

Table 4: Formula Application/Funding Timeline

Notice of Intent to Apply deadline	Feb. 2, 2021, 5 p.m.
Technical assistance webinar	Feb. 9, 2021, 2 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Applications due in eGrants AND emailed documents due	Mar. 2, 2021, 5 p.m.
PennSERVE Feedback and Clarification Period; revisions may be required	Apr. 2021
PennSERVE's Submission of Formula Applications to CNCS	May 2021
New Program / New Staff Training (required for new staff/new programs), Harrisburg, PA	Jun. 23, 2021 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Starting Strong Training (required for all funded programs), Harrisburg, PA	Aug. 4 – 5, 2021; tentative pre-conference on Aug. 3
Funding Awarded	Summer 2021

C. Required Documents

In addition to the application narratives, logic model, performance measures, and budget, several additional documents are required. Please see the complete list of required documents in Table 5.

1. Labor and Union Concurrence

If a program applicant:

1. proposes to serve as the placement site for AmeriCorps members; and
2. has employees engaged in the same or substantially similar work as that proposed to be carried out by AmeriCorps members; and
3. those employees are represented by a local labor organization,

then the application must include the written concurrence of the local labor organization representing those employees. Written concurrence can be in the form of a letter or e-mail from the local union leadership.

If a program applicant proposes to place AmeriCorps members at sites where they will be engaged in the same or substantially similar work as employees represented by a local labor organization, then the applicant must submit a written description of how it will ensure that:

1. AmeriCorps members will not be placed in positions that were recently occupied by paid staff; and
2. no AmeriCorps member will be placed into a position for which a recently resigned or discharged employee has recall rights as a result of a collective bargaining agreement, from which a recently resigned or discharged employee was removed as a result of a reduction in force, or from which a recently resigned/discharged employee is on leave or strike.

For the purposes of this section, "program applicant" includes any applicant to CNCS or a state commission, as well as any entity applying for assistance or approved national service positions through a CNCS grantee or subgrantee.

2. Delinquent on Federal Debt

Any applicant that is delinquent on any federal debt must disclose this information at the time of application by submitting a complete explanation to pennserve@pa.gov at the same time they submit their application.

3. Emailed Documents

Documents required to be emailed, as listed in Table 5, should be attached to an email and sent to pennserve@pa.gov with the subject line "(Your Organization's Name) – Additional Grant Documents." In the body of the email, please list each document that you have attached. Please note: PennSERVE cannot accept emails with attachments over 5MB.

Table 5: Required Application Documents

Documents Required for All Applicants (New, Recompete, and Continuation)			Further Instructions
Complete application in eGrants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narratives Logic Model Performance Measures Budget 			n/a
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania AmeriCorps State Program Sub-grantee Application/Agreement (complete and signed): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application/Agreement Coversheet Certifications and Assurances SF-424B Audit Clause and Additional Conditions FFATA 			Download from https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/pennserve/grants/Pages/default.aspx . Email to pennserve@pa.gov .
Most recent A-133/Single Audit or Form 990			Email to pennserve@pa.gov .
Labor concurrence (if applicable as required under 45 C.F.R. §2522.100 (c))			Page 14; email to pennserve@pa.gov .
Federally-approved Indirect Cost Agreement (if applicable)			Appendix E; submit through eGrants
Delinquent on federal debt explanation (if applicable)			Page 15; email to pennserve@pa.gov .
Alternative Match Request (if applicable)			Appendix F; email to pennserve@pa.gov .
Documents Required for Specific Applicants	New	Recomp	Further Instructions
Evaluation briefs, reports, studies	X	X	Competitive: Evidence Base, page 24-27 Formula: Evidence Base, page 34-38 Email to pennserve@pa.gov .
Program evaluation report		X	Competitive: Evaluation Plan, page 30 Formula: Evaluation Plan, page 39 Email to pennserve@pa.gov .
Operational and Financial Management Survey and supporting documents	X	X	Download from https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management/financial-and-grants-management - select Applicant Operational and Financial Management Survey under the Pre-Award/Application Certification Forms Section. Submit as a Word document. Email to pennserve@pa.gov .
Rural Intermediaries only: Letters of support from the consortium members	X	X	Appendix G Email to pennserve@pa.gov .

D. Late Applications

Late submissions will not be accepted.

In the case of unresolved technical issues, PennSERVE will consider late submission requests that include documentation of technical difficulties and reserves the right to accept such applications on a case by case basis. Additional deadlines will be required throughout the application process, including deadlines for required revisions and responses to clarification questions from PennSERVE and/or CNCS.

E. Intent to Apply

All organizations planning to apply for AmeriCorps State Funding must notify PennSERVE of their intent to apply. The deadlines for Competitive funding are included in Table 3; deadlines for Formula funding are in Table 4. **This includes new, recompeting, and continuation applicants.**

To file your Intent to Apply, please send an email with the subject line "<Your Organization Name> – Intent to Apply for Funding" to pennserve@pa.gov. Include the following information in the body of the email:

- organization name and address;
- contact person;
- contact person e-mail and phone number;
- the type of grant for which the organization intends to apply (traditional cost reimbursement, education award program, no-cost slots, planning grant, professional corps);
- the proposed program's AmeriCorps Focus Area (see Page 5); and
- the counties you are proposing to serve if awarded an AmeriCorps grant.

F. Content and Form of Application Submission

1. Application Content

In eGrants, CNCS's web-based management system, 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 system;
- Narratives:
 - Executive summary;
 - Program design;
 - Organizational capability;
 - Cost effectiveness and budget adequacy;
 - Evaluation plan (if applicable);
- Logic model;
- Standard Form 424 Budget;
- Performance measures; and
- Authorization, assurances, and certification.

2. Page Limits

There are two page limits that must be adhered to: narrative and logic model. **Please note the length of a document in word processing software may be different than what will print out in eGrants.** Reviewers will not consider any submitted material that exceeds the page limits in the printed report. Also, note that eGrants will not prevent an applicant from entering text that will exceed page limitations. This applies to both the application page limit and the logic model page limit.

(1) Narrative

New and recompeting applications may not exceed 10 pages for the narratives or 12 pages for rural intermediaries with five or more operating sites, as defined in Appendix G.

In determining whether an applicant complies with page limits, PennSERVE will count the following for the narrative:

- the applicant's executive summary, SF 424 Facesheet; and
- the narrative portions contained in the program design, organizational capability, and cost effectiveness and budget adequacy sections of the application.

PennSERVE 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. PennSERVE will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods in determining whether an application complies with the applicable page limits. PennSERVE 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. The application page limit does not include the budget, narrative portion of the evaluation plan, the logic model, performance measures, or any required additional documents, if applicable.

(2) Evaluation Summary or Plan

This section of the narrative does not count toward the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit of 20,000 characters.

(3) Logic Model

The logic model may not exceed three pages, as printed from eGrants.

(4) Additional Documents

See Section IV.C and Table 5 for information on additional documents.

Do not submit other items not requested in this RFA. Neither PennSERVE nor CNCS will review or return them.

G. System Requirements

1. DUNS

Applications must include a DUNS number and an employer identification number. The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number. DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. PennSERVE recommends registering at least 30 days before the application due date.

2. SAM.gov

After obtaining a DUNS number, all applicants must register with the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](https://www.sam.gov/) at <https://www.sam.gov/> and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete and, if a grant is awarded, throughout the life of the award. SAM registration must be renewed annually. **Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and address on all grant applications to PennSERVE and CNCS.** Applicants that do not comply with these requirements may become ineligible to receive an award.

It is recommended that applicants **finalize a new SAM registration or renew an existing one at least two weeks before the application deadline.** This should allow

you time to resolve any issues that may arise. It typically takes seven to ten days to finalize SAM.gov registration. To complete the registration process, you will need to submit detailed information on your organization in various categories relevant to federal procurement and financial transactions:

- General information, such as organization name, EIN, DUNS, location, income, and number of employees;
- Corporate information, such as organization type (e.g., state government, nonprofit);
- Financial information, such as financial institution, bank account numbers, and credit card information; and
- Point of contact information, such as primary and alternate points of contact.

Specific requirements and detailed instructions on how to register are available in the SAM user's guide (www.sam.gov/sam/SAM_Guide/SAM_User_Guide.htm). You should review the guide before you begin the registration process.

3. PA Vendor ID

Pennsylvania requires that all grant applications/agreements and contracts include a Pennsylvania Vendor Number. All applicants must be registered as vendors to submit an application, to be awarded funds, or to be paid. Vendor numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the Vendor Data Management Unit at 717-346-2676 or 1-877-435-7363, or online at www.vendorregistration.state.pa.us (click on "Non-Procurement Vendor Site"). It may take up to two weeks to receive a vendor number. If you are unable to obtain a Pennsylvania vendor number in a timely fashion, you may submit the application prior to receiving your vendor number; however, **no grant will be awarded without a Pennsylvania vendor number.**

4. eGrants

Applicants will be required to apply through eGrants, the CNCS web-based grants management system. If you do not currently have an eGrants account, please access the following link: <https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp> and select "Create an account." It is strongly recommended that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the eGrants application creation process at least three weeks before the application due date.

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 to sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Contact the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask_eg if a problem arises when creating an account or preparing or submitting the application. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the notice to which the organization is applying. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit their application via eGrants. When contacting the National Service Hotline, obtain a ticket number every time.

H. Funding Restrictions

1. Member Living Allowance

The proposed budget must include a living allowance for full-time members between \$15,100 (minimum) and \$30,200 (maximum) per member except as noted below. A living allowance is not considered a salary or a 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. PennSERVE encourages programs to provide a living allowance for all members, regardless of service term. The living allowance amount must be included in the proposed budget as either CNCS or grantee share. (See exceptions below.)

Table 6: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1,700	\$15,100	\$30,200
Three-quarter-time	1,200	n/a	\$21,318
One-year half-time	900	n/a	\$15,988
Reduced half-time	675	n/a	\$11,991
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$7,994
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$5,329
Abbreviated-time	100	n/a	\$1,776

Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements

Programs existing prior to Sept. 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.

Education Award Program 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, and may exceed the maximum living allowance set in the Living Allowance Table above. Professional corps member salaries and benefits, including child care, are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve, and are not included in the budget request to CNCS (federal or matching share).

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. One MSY is equivalent to 1,700 service hours, or a full-time AmeriCorps position.

Table 7: 2021-2022 Maximum Cost Per MSY

Grant Program	Maximum
Cost Reimbursement Grant	\$16,300*
Professional Corps	\$1,000**
Education Award Program	\$800/\$1,000***

*Cost reimbursement programs operating in rural communities (as discussed in Appendix G) and cost reimbursement programs that recruit opportunity youth as AmeriCorps members may request up to \$16,800 cost per MSY for the AmeriCorps members that will be serving in rural areas or who are opportunity youth.

**CNCS and PennSERVE require professional corps programs to cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non CNCS funds.

*** Operational support for Education Award Programs may be provided up to \$800 per MSY, or not more than \$1,000 per MSY if at least 50 percent of the AmeriCorps members are disadvantaged youth.

3. Segal AmeriCorps Education Award

AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service will be eligible for an education award from the National Service Trust. The amount of the education award is linked to the value of the Pell Grant, as included in the annual federal budget. A member has up to seven years after their term of service to use the education award. CNCS will provide the updated education award amounts at the time of the grant award.

As the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award is paid from the National Service Trust, it should not be included in the program budget.

4. Cost Sharing or Matching

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 C.F.R. § 2521.60 and below.

Table 8: Grantee Match Requirements Based on Year of Funding

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

Section 121(e)(5) of the NCSA of 1990, *as amended*, 42 U.S.C. § 12571(e)(5), requires programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant to report the amount and source of these funds. Grantees must track and report on that match to PennSERVE quarterly.

The living allowance or salary provided to AmeriCorps members in professional corps programs does not count toward the matching requirement.

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 C.F.R. § 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 to pennserve@pa.gov at the time the application is submitted.

5. Indirect Costs

Application budgets may include indirect costs. Based on qualifying factors, applicants may either use a federally approved indirect cost rate, a 5/10 percent fixed option, a 10 percent de minimis rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly as outlined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.413. States and local governments may use approved indirect cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across federal awards.

Applicants that have a federal negotiated indirect cost rate or that will be using the 10 percent de minimis rate must enter that information in the Organization section in the CNCS's web-based management system. See Appendix E. However, under Section 121(d) of the NCSA and CNCS's regulations at 45 C.F.R. §§ 2521.95 and 2540.110, no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps grants.

6. PennSERVE Required and Recommended Costs

Grant applicants are required to include the following in their budgets, with some exception for planning grants:

- costs for at least one staff person to attend two required trainings during the 2021-2022 program year: one two-day training and one single-day training. Assume trainings will be held in Harrisburg, PA. Include costs for travel, meals, and lodging;
- costs for at least one staff member to attend the National Service Regional Training Conference. Assume the conference will be held out of state. Include costs for applicable travel, meals, lodging, and registration;
- costs for members and staff to attend a statewide AmeriCorps Week event. Assume the event will be in Harrisburg, PA;
- costs to cover the per member cost of the OnCorps program management system;
- costs of AmeriCorps service gear. Members must display the AmeriCorps logo at all times while in service and members should be dressed uniformly during large service projects (wearing AmeriCorps tees, AmeriCorps hooded sweatshirts, etc.); and
- costs for required National Service Criminal History Checks for AmeriCorps members and covered staff.

Grant applicants are encouraged to include the following in their budgets:

- costs to support high-quality member training;
- costs to support staff professional development; and
- costs to support membership in the member assistance program through America's Service Commissions.

Additional information on PennSERVE Required Costs is in Section E., page 45. Refer to Appendix B for budget instructions.

I. Recommendations

The narrative sections of the application are your opportunity to convince reviewers that your project meets the selection criteria as outlined in the RFA. Below are some general recommendations to help you present your project in a way the reviewers will find compelling and persuasive.

- **Lead from your program strengths and be explicit.** Do not make the mistake of trying to stretch your proposed program description to fit each funding priority and special consideration articulated in the regulations or the RFA.
- **Be clear and succinct.** Reviewers are not interested in jargon, boilerplate, rhetoric, or exaggeration. They are interested in learning precisely what you intend to do, and how your project responds to the selection criteria presented below.

- **Avoid circular reasoning.** The problem you describe should not be defined as the lack of the solution you are proposing.
- **Explain how.** Avoid simply stating that the criteria will be met. Explicitly describe how the proposed project will meet the criteria.
- **Don't make assumptions.** Even if you have received funding from CNCS in the past, do not assume your reviewers know anything about you, your proposed program, your partners, or your beneficiaries. Avoid overuse of acronyms.
- **Use an impartial proofreader.** Before you submit your application, let someone who is unfamiliar with your project read and critique the project narrative.
- **Follow the instructions and discuss each criterion in the order they are presented.** Use headings to differentiate narrative sections by criterion.

Reviewers will assess your application against the selection criteria. To best respond to the criteria listed in the RFA, we suggest that you include a brief discussion of each bullet if it pertains to your application.

J. Technical Assistance

PennSERVE will offer technical assistance webinars for potential applicants, as noted in the funding timelines in Tables 3 and 4.

CNCS will host technical assistance calls to answer questions about the funding opportunity and eGrants. CNCS strongly encourages all applicants to participate in these sessions. The schedule and call-in information for the technical assistance calls is on CNCS's website: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities>.

If you cannot find the information you are looking for in the CNCS resources or this Request for Applications, questions may be submitted to PennSERVE at pennserve@pa.gov. The subject of the email should be "2021 AmeriCorps Application Question <Applicant Name>." Questions will be answered as they are received.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Criteria – New and Re-competing Competitive Program Operating Grant Applicants

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

Table 9: Basic Selection Criteria (New and Re-competing Competitive Program Operating Grant Applicants)

Category	Percentage	Sub-Category	Points
Executive Summary	0%	n/a	0
Program Design	50%	Theory of Change and Logic Model	24
		Evidence Tier	12
		Evidence Quality	8
		CNCS Priorities	0
		Member Experience	6

Organizational Capability	25%	Organizational Background and Staffing	9
		Compliance and Accountability	8
		Culture that Values Learning	4
		Member Supervision	4
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	25%	n/a	25

1. Executive Summary (Required – 0 percent)

Please fill in the brackets 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 first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing.]

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

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

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.

a) Theory of Change and Logic Model (24 points)

The theory of change shall address:

- the proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community problem;
- the applicant's proposed intervention is clearly articulated including the design, dosage, 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 expected outcomes articulated in the application narrative and logic model represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem identified by the applicant;
- the rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention(s) is reasonable; and
- the service role of AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.

The logic model shall depict:

- a summary of the community problem;
- the inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:

- locations or sites in which members will provide services; and
- 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); and
 - the target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level);
- the measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served, type and number of activities conducted). If applicable, identify which national performance measures will be used as output indicators; and
- outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

Note: The logic model is a visual representation of the applicant’s theory of change. Programs should include short, medium or long-term outcomes in the logic model. Applicants are not required to measure all components of their theory of change. The applicant’s performance measures should be consistent with the program’s theory of change and should represent significant program activities.

In the application narrative, applicants should discuss their rationale for setting output and outcome targets for their performance measures.

Rationales and justifications should be informed by the organization’s performance data (e.g., program data observed over time suggests targets are reasonable), relevant research (e.g. targets documents by organizations running similar programs with similar populations), or prior program evaluation findings.

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.

b) Evidence Base (20 points)

The assessment of an applicant’s evidence base has two parts. First, the applicant will be assigned to an evidence tier. Second, the quality of the applicant’s evidence and the degree to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored. Please note the following definitions:

Evidence-based program: Evidence-based programs that have been rigorously evaluated and have demonstrated positive results for at least one key desired outcome. Rigorous evaluation means conducting at least one randomized controlled trial (RCT) or quasi-experimental design (QED) evaluation of the same intervention described in the application.

Evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange: interventions supported by positive results from rigorous evaluations that are documented at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/impact-our-nation/evidence-exchange>. There include but are not limited to the following:

- Economic Opportunity:
https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/CNCS_Economic_Opportunity_Evidence_Brief_2019_508.pdf
- Education:
https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/CNCS_Education_Evidence_Brief_112318_508.pdf
- Healthy Futures:
https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/HF_Evidence_Brief_FINAL_v2_508.pdf

Evidence-informed program: Programs in this category use the best available knowledge, research, and evaluation to guide program design and implementation, but do not have scientific research or rigorous evaluation of the intervention described in the application. Applicants may be evidence-informed if they have incorporated research from other evidence-based programs into their program designs and/or have collected performance measurement data on the intervention described in the application.

Impact evaluation: An evaluation that provides statistical evidence of how well a program achieves its desired outcomes and what effect it has on service recipients and/or service participants compared to what would have happened in the absence of the program. Impact evaluations must be designed to provide evidence of a causal relationship between program activities and outcomes (45 C.F.R. § 2522.700). Grantees must use an experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation design (i.e., the evaluation must include a control group or a statistically matched comparison group).

Same intervention described in the application: The intervention evaluated in submitted evaluation reports must match the intervention proposed in the application in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the program design and logic model sections of the application:

- characteristics of the beneficiary population;
- characteristics of the population delivering the intervention;
- dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities;
- the setting in which the intervention is delivered; and
- outcomes of the intervention.

Submitted reports that do not sufficiently match the intervention proposed by the applicant in all of these areas will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points.

(1) Evidence Tier (12 points)

An evidence tier will be assessed for each applicant for the purpose of understanding the relative strength of each applicant's evidence base and the likelihood that the proposed intervention will lead to outcomes identified in the logic model.

In 2020, the evidence tiers of funded AmeriCorps state and national competitive grantees were as follows: strong 26 percent, moderate 18 percent, preliminary 24 percent, and Pre-preliminary 32 percent. As these figures indicate, CNCS values and funds programs at all points along the evidence continuum and expects programs to progress along the evidence continuum over time. Thus, do not be deterred from applying for funding due to your current evidence level.

Applicants who have outcome or impact evaluation reports of the same intervention described in the application may submit up to two of those reports, plus (if applicable) the evaluation report from their last three-year grant cycle, to qualify for the preliminary, moderate, or strong evidence tier. In order to qualify for consideration, the intervention evaluated in the submitted report(s) must match the intervention proposed by the applicant in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the Program Design and Logic Model sections of the application:

- characteristics of the beneficiary population;
- characteristics of the population delivering the intervention;
- dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities;
- the context in which the intervention is delivered; and
- outcomes of the intervention.

Submitted reports that do not sufficiently match the intervention proposed by the applicant in all of these areas will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points. 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 this RFA will not be reviewed.

In the Evidence Tier section of the application narrative, applicants must (1) summarize the study design and key findings of any outcome or impact evaluation report(s) submitted and (2) describe any other evidence that supports their program, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies that inform their program design. Applicants who submit evaluation reports for consideration must also describe in the Evidence Base section of the application narrative how the intervention described in the submitted reports is the same as the intervention described in the application.

Applicants should provide citations for the studies they describe, if applicable; however, reviewers will not review any documents external to the application other than evaluation report(s) submitted in accordance with the RFA instructions.

Applicants must meet all requirements of an evidence tier to be considered for that tier.

If the evaluation reports submitted by the applicant do not meet the definitions in this RFA, the applicant may be considered for a lower evidence tier.

Requirements associated with the four evidence tiers are described next.

Pre-preliminary evidence means the applicant has not submitted an outcome or impact evaluation of the same intervention described in the application, although the applicant may have collected some performance data on the intervention (e.g., data on intervention outputs and/or outcomes). Applicants in this tier must describe in the Evidence Base section of the application how their program design is evidence-informed (see definition on page 25). Applicants may also cite prior performance measure data if applicable.

Preliminary evidence means the applicant has submitted up to two outcome evaluation reports (non-experimental) that evaluated the same intervention described in the application and yielded positive results on one or more key desired outcomes of interest as depicted in the applicant's logic model. The outcome evaluations may either have been conducted internally by the applicant organization or by an entity external to the applicant. The study design must include pre- and post-assessments without a statistically matched

comparison group or a post-assessment comparison between intervention and comparison groups. In some cases, a retrospective pre-post assessment may be considered, but its use must be justified in the text of the evaluation report.

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 reports allowed for the preliminary evidence tier or may be submitted in addition to this. In the latter case, all three evaluation reports 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 reports will not be considered.

Moderate evidence means the applicant has submitted up to two well-designed and well-implemented evaluation reports 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., RCT) or QED evaluations 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.

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 reports allowed 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 means the applicant has submitted up to two evaluation reports demonstrating that the same 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 experimental design (i.e., QED or RCT) with statistically matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups. Alternatively, the proposed intervention's evidence may be based on multiple (up to two) well-designed and well-implemented QEDs or RCTs of the same intervention described in the application in different locations or with different populations within a local geographic area. The overall pattern of evaluation findings must be consistently positive on one or more 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.

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 toward one of the two reports allowed 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.

(2) Evidence Quality (8 points)

After the applicant's evidence tier has been assessed, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the extent to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored.

For applicants who are assessed as being in the preliminary, moderate, or strong evidence tiers, reviewers will score the submitted evaluation reports using the following standards:

- the submitted reports are of satisfactory methodological quality and rigor for the type of evaluation conducted (e.g., adequate sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, appropriate use of control or comparison groups, etc.);
- the submitted reports describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years; and
- the submitted reports show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.

For applicants who are assessed as being in the pre-preliminary evidence tier, reviewers will score the narrative provided in the Evidence Base section of the application using the following standards:

- the applicant uses relevant evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies, to inform their proposed program design;
- the described evidence is relatively recent, preferably from the last six years; and
- the evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.

Applicants assessed in the pre-preliminary evidence tier who do not provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality standards will not meet the threshold requirements for this RFA and will not be considered for funding.

All applicants, including new grantees, are required to provide additional information in the evaluation summary or plan field of the application (See page 30, Evaluation Plan); however, information provided in the evaluation summary or plan field will not be scored. This information will be reviewed by PennSERVE upon submission but will not be reviewed by CNCS until after funding decisions have been made.

c) CNCS Priority (0 points)

- The applicant's proposed program fits within one or more of the 2021 CNCS funding priorities and meets all of the priority requirements.

d) Member Experience (6 points)

- AmeriCorps members will gain skills 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.
- The program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the programs operate.
- The applicant will also foster an inclusive service culture where different backgrounds, talents, and capabilities are welcomed and leveraged for learning and effective service delivery.

3. Organizational Capability (25 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.

a) Organizational Background and Staffing (9 points)

- The organization details the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing the AmeriCorps program as well as providing oversight and monitoring for the program.

b) Compliance and Accountability (8 points)

- The organization has a monitoring and oversight plan to prevent and detect non-compliance and enforce compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities and criminal history checks at the grantee, subgrantee (if applicable), and service site locations.
- If applicable, the CNCS-required evaluation report meets CNCS requirements.
- If applicable, the CNCS-required evaluation report is of satisfactory quality.

c) Culture that Values Learning (4 points)

- The applicant's board, management, and staff collect and use information, including performance data, for learning and decision-making.

d) Member Supervision (4 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.

4. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's budget to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value. **The criteria will be assessed based on the budget submitted. No narrative should be entered in the narrative field except for "See budget."**

- 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, including PennSERVE required costs.
- Match is submitted with adequate information to support the amount written in the budget.
- The budgeted match is equal to or more than the required match for the given program year.
- The cost per MSY is equal to or less than the maximum cost per MSY.

Proposed budgets that contain MSY costs that exceed the maximum cost per MSY and/or less than required match will be considered unresponsive to the application criteria.

Applicants must complete the budget and ensure the following information is in the budget screens in eGrants:

- current indirect cost rate if used to claim indirect/administrative costs;
- identify the non-CNCS funding and resources necessary to support the project; and
- indicate the amount of non-CNCS resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash) and the sources of these commitments, and if the commitments are proposed or secured.

5. Evaluation Plan (Required - 0 percent)

If the applicant is competing for the first time, please provide a data collection plan in the "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field that includes the following:

- A description of the applicant's data collection system and how it is sufficient to collect high quality performance measurement data during the first three years of the grant. If the applicant does not yet have a data collection system, describe the plan and timeline for developing a high-quality system.
- A description of how the applicant will use performance data (including CNCS performance measures and other process and outcome measures if applicable) to improve its program in the first three years of funding.

First-time applicants should be aware that PennSERVE may require submission of data collection instruments if a grant is approved for funding.

For more information on how to develop a high-quality data collection plan, visit the CNCS Knowledge Network. <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/ameri-corps/building-effective-data-collection-plans-presented-october-12-2017>

If the applicant is re-competing 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 CNCS's web-based management system.

If the applicant is re-competing for a subsequent time, the program must submit its evaluation report as an attachment via email to PennSERVE (pennserve@pa.gov) by the application deadline. Please submit the report in Word. **The evaluation report should include a title page with the CNCS grant ID for the project that was evaluated, the name of the project, and the date of completion of the report. If any of this required information is missing, the applicant may not receive credit for meeting their evaluation requirements.** Applicants must also submit an evaluation plan for the next three-year period in the "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field in the system. Evaluation plans submitted outside of the system 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://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/evaluation/cnscs-evaluation-policies>):

- a short description of the theory of change - why the proposed intervention is expected to produce the proposed results;
- outcome(s) of interest-clear and measurable outcomes that are aligned with the theory of change and will be assessed during the evaluation;
- research questions to be addressed by the study - concrete research questions (or hypotheses) that are clearly connected to the outcomes;
- 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;
- description of the data sources, sampling methods, measurement tools, and data collection procedures that will be used in the evaluation;
- an analysis plan that clearly describes the methodology/ies that will be used to analyze the data;
- A timeline for the evaluation that describes how the evaluation will cover at least one year of CNCS-funded activity and will be completed within the three-year timeframe of the grant;
- qualifications needed for the evaluator; and
- the proposed budget.

Information provided in the evaluation summary or plan field will not be scored; and CNCS will not review it until after funding decisions have been made.

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

The evaluation requirements differ depending on the amount of the grant, as described in 45 C.F.R. § 2522.710:

- If the applicant is a state/territory subgrantee and/or national direct grantee and its average annual CNCS program grant is \$500,000 or more, it must arrange for an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in 45 C.F.R. § 2522.730.
- If the applicant is a state/territory subgrantee and/or national direct grantee whose average annual CNCS program grant is less than \$500,000, 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 C.F.R. § 2522.730.

For purposes of compliance with evaluation plan and report requirements, a program will be considered a re-competing application if it satisfies the CNCS definition of "same project" and has been funded competitively for at least three years. Two projects will be considered the same if they: address the same issue areas, address the same priorities, address the same objectives, serve the same target communities and population, or utilize the same sites. If the applicant has received competitive funding for at least three of the last five years, it will be required to submit an evaluation plan. If the project satisfies the definition of same project and the applicant has completed at least six years of competitive funding for the same project, the applicant will be required to submit an evaluation report as well as an evaluation plan for the upcoming three-year grant. If the project does not satisfy the definition of re-competing, it will not be required to submit an evaluation plan or completed evaluation report.

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 that are re-competing for funds may be eligible to apply for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. Grantees requesting approval of an alternative evaluation approach should submit a request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach along with their evaluation plan in the evaluation summary or plan field in the system. The request should clearly explain: (a) the evaluation constraints faced by the program, (b) why the proposed approach is the most rigorous option feasible, and (c) how the proposed alternative approach will help the grantee build their evidence base. Evaluation plans should include, at a minimum, the required elements listed in this notice. The evaluation plan must be consistent with the information submitted in the competitive funding application and in the request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. CNCS guidance on alternative evaluation approaches can be found on the CNCS website.

The "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field of the narrative does not count toward the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit of 20,000 characters. If the request for the alternative evaluation approach plus the evaluation plan itself will exceed

the character limit of the evaluation summary or plan field in the system, the applicant should do the following:

- Enter the evaluation plan in the evaluation summary or plan field in the system.
- 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. Criteria – New and Recompeting Program Operating Grant Formula Applicants

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

Table 10: Basic Selection Criteria (New and Recompeting Program Operating Formula Applicants)

Category	Percentage	Sub-Category	Points
Program Design	50%	Theory of Change and Logic Model	28
		Evidence Base	10
		Pennsylvania Priorities	4
		Member Experience	8
Organizational Capability	25%	Organizational Background and Staffing	9
		Compliance and Accountability	8
		Member Supervision	8
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	25%	n/a	25

1. Executive Summary (Required – 0 percent)

Please fill in the brackets 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 first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing.]

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

CNCS will post all executive summaries of awarded grant applications on 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.

a) *Theory of Change and Logic Model (28 points)*

The theory of change shall address:

- the community need/problem to be addressed, supported by data;
- the community to be served is engaged in the program design and implementation;
- the proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community problem;
- the applicant's proposed intervention is clearly articulated including the design, dosage, 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 expected outcomes articulated in the application narrative and logic model represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem identified by the applicant;
- the rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention(s) is reasonable; and
- the service role of AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.

The logic model shall depict:

- a summary of the community problem;
- the inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:
 - locations or sites in which members will provide services; and
 - 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); and
 - the target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level);

- the measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served, type and number of activities conducted). If applicable, identify which national performance measures will be used as output indicators; and
- outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

Note: The logic model is a visual representation of the applicant's theory of change. Programs may include short, medium or long-term outcomes in the logic model. Applicants are not required to measure all components of their theory of change. The applicant's performance measures should be consistent with the program's theory of change and should represent significant program activities.

In the application narrative, applicants should discuss their rationale for setting output and outcome targets for their performance measures.

Rationales and justifications should be informed by the organization's performance data (e.g., program data observed over time suggests targets are reasonable), relevant research (e.g. targets documents by organizations running similar programs with similar populations), or prior program evaluation findings.

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.

b) Evidence Base (10 points)

The assessment of an applicant's evidence base has two parts. First, the applicant will be assigned to an evidence tier. Second, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the degree to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored. Please note the following definitions:

Evidence-based program: Evidence-based programs that have been rigorously evaluated and have demonstrated positive results for at least one key desired outcome. Rigorous evaluation means conducting at least one randomized controlled trial (RCT) or quasi-experimental design (QED) evaluation of the same intervention described in the application.

Evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange: interventions supported by positive results from rigorous evaluations that are documented at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/impact-our-nation/evidence-exchange>. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Economic Opportunity:
https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/CNCS_Economic_Opportunity_Evidence_Brief_2019_508.pdf
- Education:
https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/CNCS_Education_Evidence_Brief_112318_508.pdf
- Healthy Futures:
https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/HF_Evidence_Brief_FINAL_v2_508.pdf

Evidence-informed program: Programs in this category use the best available knowledge, research, and evaluation to guide program design and implementation, but do not have scientific research or rigorous evaluation of the intervention described in the application. Applicants may be evidence-informed if they have incorporated research from other evidence-based programs into their program designs and/or have collected performance measurement data on the intervention described in the application.

Impact evaluation: An evaluation that provides statistical evidence of how well a program achieves its desired outcomes and what effect it has on service recipients and/or service participants compared to what would have happened in the absence of the program. Impact evaluations must be designed to provide evidence of a causal relationship between program activities and outcomes (45 C.F.R. § 2522.700). Grantees must use an experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation design (i.e., the evaluation must include a control group or a statistically matched comparison group).

Same intervention described in the application: The intervention evaluated in submitted evaluation reports must match the intervention proposed in the application in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the program design and logic model sections of the application:

- characteristics of the beneficiary population;
- characteristics of the population delivering the intervention;
- dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities;
- the setting in which the intervention is delivered; and
- outcomes of the intervention.

Submitted reports that do not sufficiently match the intervention proposed by the applicant in all of these areas will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points.

(1) Evidence Tier

An evidence tier will be assessed for each applicant for the purpose of understanding the relative strength of each applicant's evidence base and the likelihood that the proposed intervention will lead to outcomes identified in the logic model.

In 2020, the evidence tiers of funded AmeriCorps state and national competitive grantees were as follows: Strong 26 percent, moderate 18 percent, preliminary 24 percent, and pre-preliminary 32 percent. As these figures indicate, CNCS values and funds programs at all points along the evidence continuum and expects programs to progress along the evidence continuum over time. Thus, do not be deterred from applying for funding due to your current evidence level.

Applicants who have outcome or impact evaluation reports of the same intervention described in the application may submit up to two of those reports, plus (if applicable) the evaluation report from their last three-year grant cycle, to qualify for the preliminary, moderate, or strong evidence tier. In order to qualify for consideration, the intervention evaluated in the submitted report(s) must match the intervention proposed by the applicant in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the Program Design and Logic Model sections of the application:

- characteristics of the beneficiary population;
- characteristics of the population delivering the intervention;

- dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities;
- the setting in which the intervention is delivered; and
- outcomes of the intervention.

Submitted reports that do not sufficiently match the intervention proposed by the applicant in all of these areas will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points. 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 this RFA will not be reviewed.

In the Evidence Tier section of the application narrative, applicants must (1) summarize the study design and key findings of any evaluation report(s) submitted and (2) describe any other evidence that supports their program, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies that inform their program design. Applicants who submit evaluation reports for consideration must also describe in the Evidence-Base section of the application narrative how the intervention described in the submitted reports is the same as the intervention described in the application.

Applicants should provide citations for the studies they describe, if applicable; however, reviewers will not review any documents external to the application other than evaluation report(s) submitted in accordance with the RFA instructions.

Applicants must meet all requirements of an evidence tier to be considered for that tier.

If the evaluation reports submitted by the applicant do not meet the definitions in this RFA, the applicant may be considered for a lower evidence tier.

Requirements associated with the four evidence tiers are described next.

Pre-preliminary evidence means the applicant has not submitted an outcome or impact evaluation of the same intervention described in the application, although the applicant may have collected some performance data on the intervention (e.g., data on intervention outputs and/or outcomes). Applicants in this tier must describe in the Evidence-Base section of the application how their program design is evidence-informed (see definition on Page 34). Applicants may also cite prior performance measure data if applicable.

Preliminary evidence means the applicant has submitted up to two outcome evaluation reports (non-experimental) that evaluated the same intervention described in the application and yielded positive results on one or more key desired outcomes of interest as depicted in the applicant's logic model. The outcome evaluations may either have been conducted internally by the applicant organization or by an entity external to the applicant. The study design must include pre- and post-assessments without a statistically matched comparison group or a post-assessment comparison between intervention and comparison groups. In some cases, a retrospective pre-post assessment may be considered, but its use must be justified in the text of the evaluation report.

CNCS grantees re-competing 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 reports allowed for the Preliminary evidence tier or may be submitted in addition to this. In the latter case, all three evaluation reports 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 reports will not be considered.

Moderate evidence means the applicant has submitted up to two well-designed and well-implemented evaluation reports 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., RCT) or QED evaluations 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.

CNCS grantees re-competing 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 reports allowed 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 means the applicant has submitted up to two evaluation reports demonstrating that the same 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 experimental design (i.e., QED or RCT) with statistically matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups. Alternatively, the proposed intervention's evidence may be based on multiple (up to two) well-designed and well-implemented QEDs or RCTs of the same intervention described in the application in different locations or with different populations within a local geographic area. The overall pattern of evaluation findings must be consistently positive on one or more 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.

CNCS grantees re-competing 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 toward one of the two reports allowed 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.

(2) Evidence Quality

After the applicant's evidence tier has been assessed, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the extent to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored.

For applicants who are assessed as being in the preliminary, moderate, or strong evidence tiers, reviewers will score the submitted evaluation reports using the following standards:

- the submitted reports are of satisfactory methodological quality and rigor for the type of evaluation conducted (e.g., adequate sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, appropriate use of control or comparison groups, etc.);
- the submitted reports describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years; and
- the submitted reports show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.

For applicants who are assessed as being in the pre-preliminary evidence tier, reviewers will score the narrative provided in the Evidence-Base section of the application using the following standards:

- the applicant uses relevant evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies, to inform their proposed program design;
- the described evidence is relatively recent, preferably from the last six years; and
- the evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.

All applicants, including new grantees, are required to provide additional information in the evaluation summary or plan field of the application (See Page 39, Evaluation Plan); however, information provided in the evaluation summary or plan field will not be scored.

c) Pennsylvania Priority (4 points)

The applicant proposed program meets one or more of the PennSERVE priorities as outlined on Page 6. The applicant must state the priority area(s) and explain how the program is specifically designed to meet the priority area(s).

d) Member Experience (8 points)

- AmeriCorps members will gain skills 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.
- The program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the programs operate.
- The applicant will also foster an inclusive service culture where different backgrounds, talents, and capabilities are welcomed and leveraged for learning and effective service delivery.

3. Organizational Capability (25 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.

a) Organizational Background and Staffing (9 points)

The organization details the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing the AmeriCorps program as well as providing oversight and monitoring for the program.

b) Compliance and Accountability (8 points)

- The organization has a monitoring and oversight plan to prevent and detect non-compliance and enforce compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities and criminal history checks at the grantee, subgrantee (if applicable), and service site locations.
- If applicable, the CNCS-required evaluation report meets CNCS requirements.

- If applicable, the CNCS-required evaluation report is of satisfactory quality.
- c) Member Supervision (8 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.

4. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent/25 points)

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application’s budget to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value. **The criteria will be assessed based on the budget submitted. No narrative should be entered in the narrative field except for “See budget.”**

- 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, including PennSERVE required costs.
- Match is submitted with adequate information to support the amount written in the budget.
- The budgeted match is equal to or more than the required match for the given program year.
- The cost per MSY is equal to or less than the maximum cost per MSY.

Proposed budgets that contain MSY costs that exceed the maximum cost per MSY and/or less than required match will be considered unresponsive to the application criteria.

Applicants must complete the budget and ensure the following information is in the budget screens in eGrants:

- current indirect cost rate if used to claim indirect/administrative costs;
- non-CNCS funding and resources necessary to support the project; and
- the amount of non-CNCS resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash) and the sources of these commitments, and if the commitments are proposed or secured.

5. Evaluation Plan (Required - 0 percent)

If the applicant is competing for the first time, please provide a data collection plan in the “Evaluation Summary or Plan” field that includes the following:

- a description of the applicant’s data collection system and how it is sufficient to collect high quality performance measurement data during the first three years of the grant. If the applicant does not yet have a data collection system, describe the plan and timeline for developing a high-quality system.
- a description of how the applicant will use performance data (including CNCS performance measures and other process and outcome measures if applicable) to improve its program in the first three years of funding.

First-time applicants should be aware that PennSERVE may require submission of data collection instruments if a grant is approved for funding.

For more information on how to develop a high-quality data collection plan, visit the CNCS Knowledge Network.

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 for a subsequent time, the program must submit its evaluation report as an attachment via email to PennSERVE (pennserve@pa.gov) by the application deadline, and must also submit an evaluation plan for the next three-year period in the "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field in the system. Evaluation plans submitted outside of the system will not be reviewed.

Evaluation plans must include as much information as possible for each of the following (see Frequently Asked Questions: Evaluation:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/evaluation/cncs-evaluation-policies>):

- a short description of the theory of change - why the proposed intervention is expected to produce the proposed results;
- outcome(s) of interest-clear and measurable outcomes that are aligned with the theory of change and will be assessed during the evaluation;
- research questions to be addressed by the study - concrete research questions (or hypotheses) that are clearly connected to the outcomes;
- 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;
- description of the data sources, sampling methods, measurement tools, and data collection procedures that will be used in the evaluation;
- an analysis plan that clearly describes the methodology(ies) that will be used to analyze the data;
- a timeline for the evaluation that describes how the evaluation will cover at least one year of CNCS-funded activity and will be completed within the three-year timeframe of the grant;
- qualifications needed for the evaluator; and
- the proposed budget.

Information provided in the evaluation summary or plan field will not be scored; and CNCS will not review it until after funding decisions have been made.

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

The evaluation requirements differ depending on the amount of the grant, as described in 45 C.F.R. § 2522.710:

- If the applicant is a state/territory subgrantee and/or national direct grantee and its average annual CNCS program grant is \$500,000 or more, it must arrange for an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in 45 C.F.R. § 2522.730.
- If the applicant is a state/territory subgrantee and/or national direct grantee whose average annual CNCS program grant is less than \$500,000, 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 C.F.R. § 2522.730.

For purposes of compliance with evaluation plan and report requirements, a program will be considered a re-competing application if it satisfies the CNCS definition of “same project” and has been funded competitively for at least three years. Two projects will be considered the same if they: address the same issue areas, address the same priorities, address the same objectives, serve the same target communities and population, or utilize the same sites. If the applicant has received competitive funding for at least three of the last five years, it will be required to submit an evaluation plan. If the project satisfies the definition of same project and the applicant has completed at least six years of competitive funding for the same project, the applicant will be required to submit an evaluation report as well as an evaluation plan for the upcoming three-year grant. If the project does not satisfy the definition of re-competing, it will not be required to submit an evaluation plan, or completed evaluation report.

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 that are re-competing for funds may be eligible to apply for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. Grantees requesting approval of an alternative evaluation approach should submit a request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach along with their evaluation plan in the evaluation summary or plan field in the system. The request should clearly explain: (a) the evaluation constraints faced by the program, (b) why the proposed approach is the most rigorous option feasible, and (c) how the proposed alternative approach will help the grantee build their evidence base. Evaluation plans should include, at a minimum, the required elements listed in this notice. The evaluation plan must be consistent with the information submitted in the competitive funding application and in the request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. CNCS guidance on alternative evaluation approaches can be found on the CNCS website.

The “Evaluation Summary or Plan” field of the narrative does not count toward the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit of 10,000 characters. If the request for the alternative evaluation approach plus the evaluation plan itself will exceed the character limit of the evaluation summary or plan field in the system, the applicant should do the following:

- enter the evaluation plan in the evaluation summary or plan field in the system;
- include a note in the evaluation summary or plan field stating that the applicant is requesting an alternative evaluation approach; and
- 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.

C. Criteria – Planning Grant Formula Applicants

Table 11: Basic Selection Criteria (Formula Planning Grants)

Category	Percentage	Sub-Category	Points
Program Design	50%	Program Concept	20
		Planning Process/Timeline	30
Organizational Capability	25%	Organizational Staffing and Background	10
		Compliance and Accountability	15
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	25%	n/a	25

1. Executive Summary (Required – 0 percent)

Please fill in the brackets of these sentences to complete the executive summary. Do not deviate from the template below.

The [Name of the organization] proposes to develop an AmeriCorps program serving in [the location(s) the AmeriCorps program will serve] that will focus on the CNCS focus area(s) of [Focus Area(s)]. The CNCS investment of \$[amount of request] will be matched with \$[amount of projected match], \$[amount of local, state, tribal, and federal funds] in public funding and \$[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding. No AmeriCorps members will be needed to execute this plan.

The planning grant will be used to [describe the rationale for applying for a planning grant and what you hope to achieve during the one-year period].

2. Program Design (50 percent)

a) Program Concept (20 points)

- The community need is prevalent and severe in communities where the program plans to serve, and the need has been documented with relevant data. Target communities are well-defined.
- The applicant describes how AmeriCorps members could help address the community need.
- If proposing to add an AmeriCorps component to an existing program or initiative, explain how the addition of AmeriCorps will enable to organization to better meet the community need; and clearly describe the difference in scope and/or program design that an AmeriCorps program would provide.

b) Planning Process/Timeline (30 points)

- The applicant describes a clear and logical planning process, including:
 - a detailed description of the planning process and who is leading it;
 - a well-developed timeline for planning activities;
 - inclusion of existing community partnerships, or potential for partnerships to be developed, with well-defined roles for partners; and

- a clear description of how the planning period will be used to develop the necessary components to effectively manage an AmeriCorps program in the future.
- The applicant includes development of the following program elements in the planning process/timeline:
 - theory of change/logic model that describes implementation of the intervention and why the proposed intervention is expected to produce the proposed outcomes;
 - development or selection of performance measures and appropriate data collection instruments;
 - AmeriCorps member recruitment and selection;
 - AmeriCorps member orientation and training plan;
 - AmeriCorps member supervision plan;
 - commitment to AmeriCorps identity;
 - process for selecting service sites (if applicable) that will ensure the most appropriate and capable organizations are selected;
 - orientation and training for operating and service site;
 - compliance and accountability: systems and processes for sound programmatic and fiscal oversight; and
 - securing match support for the program.

3. Organizational Capability (25 percent)

a) Organizational Background and Staffing (10 points)

- The applicant has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan the proposed program. The applicant provides a history of the organization, including the year it was established and any funding history with CNCS or PennSERVE, if applicable.
- The applicant has prior experience and a record of accomplishment in the proposed area of programming.
- The applicant has appropriate management and staffing structures and includes a description of the staff members who will play a role in the planning grant process, including one lead staff member specified for the planning grant process.
- The applicant includes at least .5 FTE toward the planning grant.
- The applicant has a demonstrated ability to manage federal funds.
- Special Circumstances: The organization serves a resource-poor community, such as a rural or remote community, a community with a high poverty rate, or a community with a scarcity of philanthropic and corporate resources.

b) Compliance and Accountability (15 points)

- The organization will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities.
- The applicant's organization will prevent and detect compliance issues.

4. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)

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

- The budget is sufficient to effectively carry out the planning grant.
- The budget aligns with the applicant narrative.
- The applicant has an adequate plan to raise non-CNCS resources to fully support the Planning grant.

- 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, including PennSERVE required costs.
- Match is submitted with adequate information to support the amount written in the budget.

Applicants must complete the budget and ensure the following information is in the budget screens in eGrants.

- Current indirect cost rate if used to claim indirect/administrative costs.
- Identify the non-CNCS funding and resources necessary to support the project.
- Indicate the amount of non-CNCS resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash) and the sources of these commitments, and if the commitments are proposed or secured.

5. Evaluation Plan (0 percent)

Enter N/A. Planning grants are not required to undergo an evaluation.

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 not be used for planning grants.

D. Performance Measures

All applicants must submit performance measures with their application. See Appendix A for instructions for entering performance measures.

All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output and outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. This may be a National Performance Measure or an applicant-determined measure depending on the applicant's theory of change. Additional performance measures, including output-only National Performance Measures, may also be included if desired; however, all performance measures must be consistent with the program's theory of change and represent significant program activities. CNCS does not expect applicants to select performance measures to correspond to each and every potential member activity or community impact. CNCS values the quality of performance measures over the quantity of performance measures.

PennSERVE and CNCS expect applicants to use National Performance Measures as part of their comprehensive performance measurement strategy if the National Performance Measures are part of the applicant's theory of change. Applicants should use 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.

2021 Performance Measure Instructions can be found at [https://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities/2021/ameri-corps-state-and-national-grants-fy-2021#Performance Measure Instructions](https://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities/2021/ameri-corps-state-and-national-grants-fy-2021#Performance%20Measure%20Instructions).

For more information about Performance Measures go to:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement/ameri-corps>

E. Budget

Use the Budget Instructions (Appendix B), Budget Analysis Checklist (Appendix C), and the Budget Worksheet (Appendix D) to prepare your budget.

1. Match Requirements

Program requirements, including requirements on match, are located in the AmeriCorps regulations and summarized below.

- Minimum grantee share is 24 percent of program costs for the first three years. Overall grantee share of total program costs increases gradually beginning in Year 4 to 50 percent by the tenth year of funding and any year thereafter. Match requirements based on year of funding are in Table 8. Cost reimbursement grantees are required to meet an overall matching rate that increases over time. You have the flexibility to meet the overall match requirements in any of the three budget areas, as long as the minimum match of 24 percent for the first three years, and the increasing minimums in years thereafter, are maintained. See 45 C.F.R. §§ 2521.35–2521.95 for the specific regulations.
- If you are applying for the first time, you must match with cash or in-kind contributions at least 24 percent of the project’s total operating costs (Section I) plus member costs (Section II) plus administrative costs (Section III). If you are re-competing, please see 45 C.F.R. § 2521.60 for the match schedule.
- The acceptable sources of matching funds are federal, state, local, and/or private sector funds, in accordance with applicable AmeriCorps requirements.
- In the “Source of Funds” field that appears at the end of Budget Section III, enter a brief description of the match. Identify each match source separately. Identify if the match is secured or proposed. Include dollar amount, the match classification (cash or in-kind), and the source type (private, state/local, or federal) for your entire match. Define all acronyms the first time they are used.
- Section 121(e)(5) of NCSA (42 U.S.C. § 12571(e)) requires programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant to report the amount and source of these funds to CNCS on a Federal Financial Report. Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout.
- The living allowance or salary provided to AmeriCorps members in Professional Corps programs does not count toward the matching requirement.

See information on applying for an alternative match in Appendix F.

2. PennSERVE Required Costs

All Applicants:

- In Section I – Staff travel:
 - Include costs for at least one staff person to attend two required trainings during the 2021-2022 program year: one two-day training and one single-day

- training. Assume trainings will be held in Harrisburg, PA. Include costs for applicable travel, meals, and lodging.
 - Include costs for at least one staff member to attend the National Service Regional Training Conference. Assume the conference will be held out of state. Include costs for applicable travel, meals, and lodging. Include registration in Section I – Staff Training.
- In Section I – Staff Training – Include registration for at least one staff person to attend the National Service Regional Training Conference.
- In Section I – Other support costs, include costs for required National Service Criminal History Checks for AmeriCorps members and covered staff. Include costs for the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW), state check(s) and/or FBI check in the CNCS share of the budget. If funds are not budgeted for all covered individuals, an explanation must be noted in the budget.

Program Operating Grant Applicants Only:

- In Section I – Member travel, including costs for all members and relevant staff to attend a statewide AmeriCorps Week event. Assume the event will be in Harrisburg, PA, and include costs to transport members for one day. Lodging may also be included.
- In Section I – Contractual and Consultant Services, include costs for the OnCorps member management system. Cost is \$16.80 per member slot (not MSY) per year. For instance, a program with 20 half-time member slots and 10 MSY will pay \$336 (20 members x \$16.80 per member). Programs with PennSERVE approval to use a separate timekeeping system (e.g., professional corps programs with approval) must budget \$300 to cover financial and progress reporting for the year.
- In Section I – Supplies, include costs to supply members with adequate AmeriCorps service gear. Members must display the AmeriCorps logo at all times while in service and members should be dressed uniformly during large service projects (wearing AmeriCorps tees, AmeriCorps hooded sweatshirts, etc.)
- In Section I – If opting into the member assistance program (optional), visit <https://www.statecommissions.org/ameri-corps-member-assistance-program> to access pricing.

Note: CNCS legislation permits the use of non-CNCS federal funds as match for the grantee share of the budget. Please discuss your intention of using federal funds to match an AmeriCorps grant with the other agency prior to submitting your application. Section 121(e)(5) of the NCSA, 42 U.S.C. § 12571(e)(5), requires that grantees that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant report the amount and source of these funds to CNCS. If you use other federal funds as match, you must ensure you can meet the requirements and purpose of both grants. PennSERVE grantees that use federal funds as match will be required to obtain and maintain letters from the federal agency(ies) that expressly permit use of funds as match and will be required to report the sources and amounts on quarterly financial reports.

3. Preparing Your Budget

Your proposed budget should be sufficient to allow you to perform the tasks described in your narrative. Reviewers will consider the information you provide in this section in their assessment of the cost-effectiveness and budget adequacy selection criterion.

Please include complete calculations for all line items. Follow the detailed budget instructions in Appendix B to prepare your budget. Prior to submission, be sure to review the Budget Analysis Checklist (Appendix C) to ensure your budget is compliant.

As you prepare your budget:

- all the amounts you request must be defined for a particular purpose. Do not include miscellaneous, contingency, or other undefined budget amounts.
- itemize each cost and present the basis for all calculations in the form of an equation.
- do not include unallowable expenses, e.g., entertainment costs (which include food and beverage costs) unless they are justified as an essential component of an activity.
- do not include fractional amounts (cents).

Programs must comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and the requirements of the uniform guidance. Please refer to the uniform guidance, cost principles, and audit requirements for federal awards ([2 C.F.R. Parts 200](#) and [2205](#)) for allowable, allocable, and reasonable cost information, as well as audit requirements, including the need to provide audits to the clearinghouse if expending over \$750,000 in federal funds as required in the OMB Uniform Guidance.

F. Review and Selection Process

The grant selection process includes the following steps:

1. determining whether a proposal complies with the application requirements, such as deadlines and eligibility requirements;
2. applying the basic selection criteria articulated in the AmeriCorps regulations;
3. determining the strength of the need and evidence base for the program;
4. determining the level of alignment with the criteria detailed throughout this RFA; and
5. ensuring innovation and geographic, demographic, and programmatic diversity across the AmeriCorps portfolio.

PennSERVE and CNCS select applications for funding using a multi-stage process that includes a state and federal staff review and approval by the Pennsylvania Community Service Advisory Board. Formula applicants are also reviewed by community peer reviewers. Applicants should review the CNCS NOFO for the complete CNCS review and selection process.

Do not assume reviewers are familiar with your grant program, even if you are recompeting. Please provide sufficient information in your application to make your program clear to a reviewer.

In evaluating your application for funding, reviewers will assess your program design, organizational capability, the program's cost-effectiveness and budget adequacy, and the program's evaluation plan or evaluation (for recompeting grantees). The weights assigned to each category and sub-category are listed in Table 9 (new and recompeting competitive applicants) and Table 10 (new and recompeting formula applicants). Reviewers will measure your application narrative against these criteria and weigh them accordingly.

PennSERVE may request additional clarification concerning your application or require revisions as needed.

Competitive applicants only: After conducting a staff review, PennSERVE staff will make recommendations to the PennSERVE Advisory Board as to which applications are recommended for submission to CNCS to compete nationally against other programs for funding. Applications not submitted to the competitive process and applications submitted to the competitive process but not funded may be considered for formula funding.

If submitted to CNCS, CNCS may also request additional information and/or require revisions as part of its review and award processes.

VI. eGrants Application Detailed Submission Instructions – New and Recompete

New applicants need to establish an eGrants account by accessing this link: <https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp> and selecting “Don’t have an eGrants account? Create an account.”

In eGrants, before Starting Section I you will need to:

- start a new grant application;
- select a program area (AmeriCorps); and
- select a NOFA (notice of funds available):
 - FY 2021 AmeriCorps State and Territory Commission (new and continuations);
 - Select Pennsylvania as the state to which you are applying; and
 - Select the PennSERVE application ID provided to you by PennSERVE (to be emailed after letters of intent are received).

Your application consists of the following components. Make sure to complete each section.

- A. Applicant info
- B. Application info
- C. Narratives
- D. Logic model
- E. Performance measures
- F. Program information
- G. Documents
- H. Budget
- I. Funding/Demographics
- J. Review
- K. Authorize, and submit

A. Applicant Info

Information entered in the Applicant Info, Application Info, and Budget sections will populate the SF 424 Facesheet.

- If you are recompeting (in the final year of a funding cycle and applying for a new grant cycle), select **Continuation/Renewal**.
- If you are not a current grantee, but have received an AmeriCorps grant in the past five years, select **Continuation/Renewal**.
- If you are applying for the first time or are a former grantee whose last AmeriCorps grant was received more than five years ago, select **New**.
- If you are a current planning grantee applying for an implementation grant, select **New**.

Enter or update the requested information in the fields that appear. **The contact person needs to be the person who can answer questions about the application and enter information into eGrants.**

B. Application Info

Information entered in the Applicant Info, Application Info, and Budget sections will populate the SF 424 Facesheet. In the Application Info Section enter:

- areas affected by your proposed program. Please include city or county information, followed by the two-letter capitalized state abbreviation (PA).
- requested project period start and end dates. Please enter Aug. 20, 2021 – Aug. 19, 2022.
- State Application Identifier: Enter N/A.
- the Application is Subject to Review by State Executive Order 12372 Process: This is pre-filled as “No, this is not applicable.”
- Yes or No if you are delinquent on any federal debt. If yes, provide an explanation.
- Request a waiver: use this link to request a waiver to the volunteer generation requirement.

C. Narratives

Complete all narratives as directed in this RFA. In eGrants, you will enter text for:

- Executive summary;
- Rationale and approach (Program design);
- Organizational capability;
- Cost effectiveness and budget adequacy; and
- Evaluation summary or plan.

The narratives section also includes fields for clarification summary, amendment justification, and continuation changes. **Please enter N/A in these fields. They may be used at a later date to enter information for clarification, to request amendments once a grant is awarded, and to enter changes in the narrative in continuation requests.**

D. Logic Model

Complete the logic model using the guidance provided in this RFA.

To begin entering your logic model from your eGrants application page select “Logic Model” in the left side navigation menu.

In the first blank row of the logic model click “edit.” Clicking this link will open a pop-up screen with fields for each column of the logic model. Complete any fields that are applicable; there are no required fields in this screen. When you are finished, click “save and close.”

You may add an unlimited number of rows by clicking “add a new row,” but **you must remain within the three-page limit for the logic model, as it prints from eGrants.**

You may edit or delete an existing row by clicking “edit” or “delete” in the last column of the logic model.

E. Performance Measures

All applicants must submit performance measures with their application. See Appendix A for instructions for entering performance measures and see the National Performance Measure Instructions for details about the member and type of performance measure required.

F. Program Information

Applicants should only check the boxes for those characteristics that represent a significant part of the program.

AmeriCorps Funding Priorities

Check any priority area(s) that apply to the proposed program. Only select priorities that represent a significant part of the program focus, high quality program design, and outcomes.

Grant Characteristics

Check any grant characteristics that are a significant part of the proposed program.

G. Documents

In addition to the application submitted in eGrants, you are required to provide your labor concurrence (if necessary), a federally-approved indirect cost agreement (if applicable), an explanation of federal debt delinquency (if applicable), and other required documents listed in this RFA. After you have submitted the documents to PennSERVE as directed in Table 5, change their status in eGrants from the default "Not Sent" to the applicable status "Sent," "Not Applicable," or "Already on File at CNCS."

H. Budget Instructions

See Appendices C and D for Budget Instructions and a Budget Analysis checklist.

I. Funding/Demographics

In the Funding/Demographics Section enter:

- Other Revenue funds. Enter the amount of funds that your program uses to run the program that are not identified on the application budget as CNCS share or grantee share (match). Note: Programs should not enter the total operating budget for their organization unless the entire operating budget supports the AmeriCorps program. Programs that have additional revenue sources not included in the matching funds section of the budget should provide the amount of this additional revenue that supports the program. This amount should not include the CNCS or grantee share amounts in the budget.
- Number of volunteers generated by AmeriCorps members. Please enter the number of volunteers participating in one-day service projects or ongoing volunteer commitments that the proposed AmeriCorps members will generate.

J. Review, Authorize, and Submit

eGrants requires that you review and verify your entire application before submitting by completing the following sections in eGrants:

- Review;
- Authorize;
- Assurances;
- Certifications;
- Verify; and
- Submit.

Read the Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications carefully (Appendix I). The person who authorizes the application must be the applicant's authorized representative or their designee and must have an active eGrants account to sign these documents electronically. An authorized representative is the person in your organization authorized to accept and

commit funds on behalf of the organization. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Be sure to check your entire application to ensure that there are no errors before submitting it. When you verify the application, eGrants will also generate a list of errors if there are sections that need to be corrected prior to submission. If someone else is acting in the role of the applicant's authorized representative, that person must log into their eGrants account and proceed to authorize and submit. After signing off on the authorization, assurances, and certifications, their name will override any previous signatory that may appear and show on the application as the authorized representative.

Note: Everyone within your organization who will be entering information in the application at any point during application preparation and submission in the eGrants system must have their own eGrants account. Individuals may establish an eGrants account by accessing this link: <https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp> and selecting "Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account."

VII. Continuation Grants: Criteria and eGrants Application Instructions

The following instructions for submitting a continuation request apply only to programs that are currently in their first or second year of operation within a grant cycle. If your program is currently in the final year of its grant cycle, you must apply using the application instructions for new and recompeting programs.

How to Submit Your Continuation Request

- Click Continuation/Renewal on your eGrants home page. You will be shown a list of grants that are eligible to be continued. Select the grant you wish to continue. Make sure you select the correct one. Do not start a new application. The system will copy your most recently awarded application.
- Edit your continuation application as directed in the continuation request instructions below. When you have completed your work, click the SUBMIT button.

Your application consists of the following components. Make sure to complete each section.

- A. Applicant info;
- B. Application info;
- C. Narratives;
- D. Logic model;
- E. Performance measures;
- F. Program information;
- G. Documents;
- H. Budget;
- I. Funding/Demographics;
- J. Review; and
- K. Authorize, and submit.

A. Applicant Info and Application Info

Information entered in the Applicant Info, Application Info, and Budget sections will populate the SF 424 Facesheet. Update the Applicant Info and Application Info sections in eGrants if necessary. Note in the Continuation field that you have updated the Applicant Info or Application Info section(s).

B. Narratives – Competitive Continuation Applicants

Your original application will appear in the Executive Summary and in the narrative sections Rationale and Approach/Program Design, Organizational Capability, Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy, Evaluation Summary or Plan, Amendment Justification, Clarification Information, and Continuation Changes, as appropriate. **Do not modify these original narrative fields.**

CNCS expects that programs will maintain a consistent program design for the duration of the three-year project period; however, CNCS and PennSERVE recognize that, on occasion, some programmatic changes are necessary. As a result, continuation applicants may request the changes listed below during the continuation process.

Information should be provided in the **Continuation Changes** narrative field as relevant.

- Changes in operating sites
- Significant changes in program scope or design
- Changes to performance measures
- Significant Changes to Monitoring Structures or Staffing
- Budget Revisions

The page limit for the Continuation Changes field is six pages, as the pages print out from eGrants.

Any continuation applicant not requesting changes that fit within the above categories should enter “N/A” in Continuation Changes. CNCS expects that most continuation applications will not be requesting changes.

Evaluation plans are approved by CNCS when applicants re-compete for funding. If you wish to make changes to your evaluation plan, do NOT change the text of the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in your application. Instead, send a revised version of the evaluation plan (with the proposed changes in track-changes mode) as an attachment to PennSERVE@pa.gov. PennSERVE will coordinate with CNCS and notify you if the changes are approved.

C. Narratives – Formula Continuation Applicants

Your original application will appear in the Executive Summary and in the narrative sections Rationale and Approach/Program Design, Organizational Capability, Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy, Evaluation Summary or Plan, Amendment Justification, Clarification Information, and Continuation Changes, as appropriate. **Please update the executive summary but do not modify any other original narrative fields.**

PennSERVE and CNCS expect that programs will maintain a consistent program design for the duration of the three-year project period; however, we recognize that, on occasion, some programmatic changes are necessary. Any changes must be requested in the continuation narrative.

Provide the following information in the Continuation Changes narrative field:

1. Identify whether this is a Year Two or Year Three continuation in the heading of this section.
2. Did the program enroll 100 percent of the member positions in the last full year of program operation? If no, provide an explanation and describe the plan for improvement.

3. Did the program retain at least 85 percent of the members in the last full year of program operation? If no, provide an explanation, and describe the plan for improvement. PennSERVE recognizes retention rates may vary among equally effective programs depending on the program model but expects all grantees to pursue the highest retention rate possible.
4. Are you proposing a change in program scope or design? If yes, describe the change and provide a justification.
5. Are you proposing a change in performance measures? If yes, describe the change and edit your performance measures appropriately.
6. Are you requesting an expansion (increase in members, increase in funding, and/or an increase in cost/MSY)? If YES, please answer the following questions.
 - a. What type of expansion is being requested (increase in members, increase in funding, and/or increase in cost per MSY)?
 - b. What is the level of increase being requested? Provide the level of resource the program currently receives, the amount of increase being requested, and a new total request amount. For example: The program currently receives \$100,000, 10 MSY, and 10 slots, for a cost/MSY of \$10,000. We are requesting an additional \$20,000, two MSY, and two slots, for a cost/MSY of \$10,000. Our total request is \$120,000, 12 MSY, and 12 slots, for a cost/MSY of \$10,000.
 - c. Provide a justification for the expansion. The justification should include an explanation of the problem/need that will be met, how or whether member activities will differ from those already included in the approved grant, and a description of the organizational capability to support the expansion, including the organizational staffing and experience to manage the expansion and ensure quality and compliant programming and member experience.
 - d. Provide a detailed description of how the expansion would change the application budget from the previous year and the dollar amount of the total increase. Include any additional staffing that would be added, changes to member training, criminal history checks, etc.
 - e. Provide a detailed description of how the expansion would change the application performance measures from the previous year. Indicate how the expansion will impact program outcomes and make the program more effective.
7. Are you proposing other changes not captured above? If yes, describe these changes and provide a justification for them.

The page limit for the Continuation Changes field is six pages, as the pages print out from eGrants.

D. Logic Model

Continuation applicants do not need to enter content into the Logic Model fields. **Applicants should confirm that the logic model carries over from the previous year's application before submitting.**

E. Performance Measures

Your performance measures are copied from your previous year's application into your continuation request. If you made changes to your program, such as adding or changing grant-funded activities, or requesting additional slots or MSYs, you may need to revise your performance measures. To revise your performance measures, "View/Edit" the performance measures that copy over from your original application or add new performance measures (See Appendix A). Note in the continuation changes field that you have updated your

performance measures. If you are proposing to significantly increase or decrease output or outcome targets for existing performance measures, provide a justification for this change in the continuation narrative.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review their performance measures using the checklist found in Appendix B of the 2021 CNCS Performance Measure Instructions before submitting their final application.

F. Program Information

In the Program Information Section, review and make selections as appropriate. Applicants should only select priorities and characteristics that represent a significant part of the program.

AmeriCorps Funding Priorities

Check any priority area(s) that apply to the proposed program. Only select priorities that represent a significant part of the program focus, high quality program design, and outcomes.

Grant Characteristics

Check any grant characteristics that are a significant part of the proposed program.

G. Documents

In addition to the application submitted in eGrants, you are required to provide your labor concurrence (if necessary), a federally-approved indirect cost agreement (if applicable), an explanation of federal debt delinquency (if applicable), and other required documents listed in this RFA. After you have submitted the documents to PennSERVE as directed in Table 5, change their status in eGrants from the default "Not Sent" to the applicable status "Sent," "Not Applicable," or "Already on File at CNCS."

H. Budget Instructions

Your budget from the previous year's application is copied into your continuation request so you can make the necessary adjustments. Revise your detailed budget for the upcoming year. Incorporate any required CNCS increases, such as an increase to the member living allowance, into your budget. Please ensure you are including all required PennSERVE budget items. **Continuation applicants may apply for expansions – dollars, MSY, and/or members.**

Source of Funds (Match)

In the "Source of Funds" field that appears at the end of Budget Section III, enter a brief description of the match. Identify each match source separately. Identify if the match is secured or proposed. Include dollar amount, the match classification (cash or in-kind), and the source type (private, state/local, or federal) for your **entire match**. (The total amount in the Source of Funds field should match the total amount in the budget narrative exactly.) Define all acronyms the first time they are used.

See Appendices C and D for Budget Instructions and a Budget Analysis checklist.

I. Funding/Demographics

In the Funding/Demographics Section enter:

- Other revenue funds: Enter the amount of funds that your program uses to run the program that are not identified on the application budget as CNCS share or grantee

share (match). Note: Programs should not enter the total operating budget for their organization unless the entire operating budget supports the AmeriCorps program. Programs that have additional revenue sources not included in the matching funds section of the budget should provide the amount of this additional revenue that supports the program. This amount should not include the CNCS or grantee share amounts in the budget.

- Number of volunteers generated by AmeriCorps members: Please enter the number of volunteers participating in one-day service projects or ongoing volunteer commitments that the proposed AmeriCorps members will generate.

J. Review, Authorize, and Submit

eGrants requires that you review and verify your entire application before submitting by completing the following sections in eGrants:

- Review;
- Authorize;
- Assurances;
- Certifications;
- Verify; and
- Submit.

Read the Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications carefully (Appendix I). The person who authorizes the application must be the applicant's authorized representative or their designee and must have an active eGrants account to sign these documents electronically. An authorized representative is the person in your organization authorized to accept and commit funds on behalf of the organization. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Be sure to check your entire application to ensure that there are no errors before submitting it. When you verify the application eGrants will also generate a list of errors if there are sections that need to be corrected prior to submission. If someone else is acting in the role of the applicant's authorized representative, that person must log into their eGrants account and proceed with authorize and submit. After signing off on the Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications, their name will override any previous signatory that may appear and show on the application as the authorized representative.

Note: Everyone within your organization who will be entering information in the application at any point during application preparation and submission in the eGrants system must have their own eGrants account. Individuals may establish an eGrants account by accessing this link: <https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp> and selecting "Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account."

VIII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notice – Competitive Applicants

PennSERVE will inform applicants if their applications are submitted to CNCS to compete nationally no later than January 7, 2021. CNCS anticipates notifying PennSERVE of funding decisions by mid-May, 2021, contingent on timely full year appropriations. PennSERVE will notify applicants at that time. This notification is not authorization to begin grant activities. An awardee may not obligate or expend federal funds until the start of the project period identified on the approved grant application, within PennSERVE's Notice of Grant Award from CNCS.

B. Award Notice – Formula Applicants

PennSERVE will inform applicants if their applications are submitted to CNCS no later than June 1, 2020. CNCS anticipates notifying PennSERVE of grant awards in late Summer 2021, contingent on timely full year appropriations. PennSERVE will notify applicants at that time. This notification is not authorization to begin grant activities. An awardee may not obligate or expend federal funds until the start of the project period identified on approved grant application, within PennSERVE's Notice of Grant Award from CNCS.

C. Documents that Govern the Grant / Administrative and National Policy Requirements

These application and agreement instructions and RFA incorporate the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant, as well as the requirements of applicable sections of the NCSA of 1990 and other applicable statutes. Awards will be subject to the AmeriCorps regulations and grant terms and conditions.

See the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania AmeriCorps State Program Subgrantee Application/Agreement. These documents, along with the completed and submitted grant application and the language in the Request for Applications, will serve as a grantee's contract with the commonwealth.

1. Uniform Guidance

All awards under this notice are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), now consolidated in [2 C.F.R. Parts 200](#) and [2205](#).

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 Payments 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, CNCS may, in appropriate circumstances, consider in its funding decisions any previous failures to make timely responses.

3. CNCS Terms and Conditions

All awards made under this RFA will be subject to the 2021 CNCS General Terms and Conditions, and the 2021 AmeriCorps Program Specific Terms and Conditions for the particular program (when applicable.) These terms and conditions contain detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the CNCS General and Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/terms-and-conditions-cnsc-grants>.

4. 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. This includes staff that receive part of their salary through a subgrant. 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.

Please budget appropriately for full checks on all covered individuals. Grantees should utilize the two vendors CNCS has engaged to conduct the required NSCHCs. Information regarding use of these two vendors can be found at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/2018/nschc-using-fieldprint-and-truescreen-manual>. Failure to conduct an NSCHC may result in significant disallowed costs.

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:

- A nationwide name-based search of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW); and EITHER:
 - A name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the person's state of residence and in the state where the person will serve/work; *or*
 - A fingerprint-based FBI Criminal History Check.

Special Rule for Persons Serving Vulnerable Populations. Award-funded staff, national service participants, and volunteers *with recurring access to vulnerable populations* (i.e., children age 17 or younger, individuals age 60 or older, or individuals with disabilities) must undergo NSCHCs that include:

- A nationwide name-based check of the NSOPW; and BOTH:
 - A name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the person's state of residence and in the state where the person will serve/work; *and*
 - A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check.

See 45 C.F.R. §§ 2540.200–2540.207 and [CNCS Criminal History Check Resources](#) for complete information and FAQs.

All funded programs must complete the NSCHC eCourse provided by CNCS annually; and submit certification of course completion to PennSERVE as part of the grant record.

D. Use of Material

To ensure that materials generated with CNCS funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, CNCS reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so (2 C.F.R. § 200.315 (b)).

E. Reporting Requirements

Grantees are required to provide:

- reporting via the PennSERVE-determined online reporting system, including a mid- and end-of-year report (includes performance measure progress, demographics, and narrative data);
- monthly expense reports and invoices for reimbursement;
- quarterly and year-end financial status reports;
- participation in both desk and on-site monitoring by PennSERVE and/or CNCS; and

- any additional reporting and/or monitoring as required by PennSERVE and/or CNCS.

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 PennSERVE and 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.

PennSERVE will report on all grantee performance to CNCS on a semi-annual basis, or as required by CNCS.

APPENDIX A: EGRANTS PERFORMANCE MEASURE INSTRUCTIONS

All applicants must submit performance measures with their application.

About the Performance Measures Module

In the performance measures module, you will:

- provide information about your program's connection to CNCS focus areas and objectives;
- show MSY and member allocations;
- create at least one aligned performance measure aligned with your primary service activity (primary intervention), plus additional measure(s) if desired; and
- set targets and describe data collection instruments and strategies for your performance measures.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROGRAM GRANT APPLICANTS

Home Page

To start the module, click the "Begin" button on the home page. As you proceed through the module, the home page will summarize your work and provide links to edit the parts of the module you have completed. You may also navigate sections of the module using the tab feature at the top of each page.

Once you have started the module, clicking "Continue Working" will return you to the tab you were on when you last closed the module.

To edit the interventions, objectives, MSYs, and member allocations for your application, click the "Edit Objectives/MSYs/Members" button.

After you have created at least one performance measure, the home page will display a chart summarizing your measures. To edit a performance measure, click the "Edit" button. To delete a measure, click "Delete." To create a new performance measure, click the "Add New Performance Measure" button.

Objectives Tab

On the objectives tab, applicants will account for the full range of their program activity. Applicants are not expected to create performance measures for every focus area, objective, or intervention they select on this tab.

An expandable list of CNCS focus areas appears on this tab. When you click on a focus area, a list of objectives from the CNCS strategic plan appears. A list of common interventions appears under each objective. First click on a focus area. Then click on an objective. All national performance measures fall under a strategic plan objective. Only the performance measures that correspond to the strategic plan objectives you select on this tab will be available for selection as you continue through this module. To see which performance measures correspond to which objective, refer to the CNCS Performance Measures Instructions: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities/2021/ameri-corps-state-and-national-grants-fy-2021#Performance-Measure-Instructions>.

Next, select all interventions that are part of your program design. Interventions are the activities that members and volunteers will carry out to address the problem(s) identified in the application. Select "other" if one of your program's interventions does not appear on the list. Repeat these actions for each of your program's focus areas. Select "other" for your

focus area and/or objective if your program activities do not fall within one of the CNCS focus areas or objectives.

Choose your program's primary focus area from the drop-down list. Only the focus areas that correspond to the objectives you selected above appear in the list. Next, select the primary intervention within your primary focus area. You will be required to create an aligned performance measure (output paired with outcome) that contains your primary intervention. Note that your primary intervention, and the performance measure associated with your primary intervention, must be focused on the community impact of the program; applicants may not count AmeriCorps members as beneficiaries under either National Performance Measures or applicant-determined measures. Some member-focused outputs and outcomes may be reported as demographic indicators.

You may select a secondary focus area and a secondary intervention. The primary and secondary focus area may be the same if you have more than one intervention within the focus area.

MSYs/Members Tab

On this tab, you will enter information about the allocation of MSYs and members across the focus areas and objectives you have selected. You must allocate 100 percent of your program's MSYs to focus areas and objectives. When you create your performance measures, you will be asked to allocate MSYs to each performance measure; however, you will not be required to assign 100 percent of your total MSYs to performance measures. Begin by entering the total MSYs for your program. This must match the total MSYs in your budget. Please double-check your budget to make sure that the total MSY values match. Next, enter the number of MSYs your program will allocate to each objective. Only the objectives that were selected on the previous tab appear in the MSY chart. If some of your program's objectives are not represented in the chart, return to the previous tab and select additional objectives. The MSY chart must show how all your program's resources are allocated. If the only activity in another objective that you have selected is focused on AmeriCorps member development, enter 0 MSYs for that objective.

As you enter MSYs into the MSY column of the chart, the corresponding percentage of MSYs will calculate automatically. When you have finished entering your MSYs, the total percentage of MSYs in the chart must be 100 percent. The total number of MSYs in the chart must equal the number of MSYs in your budget.

In the members column, enter the number of members who will be assigned to each objective. Some members may perform services across more than one objective. If this is the case, allocate these members to all applicable objectives. For example, if one member performs service in both school readiness and K-12 success, allocate one member to each of these objectives. It is acceptable for the total number of members in this table to exceed total slots requested in the application due to counting members' service across multiple objectives. If the only activity in another objective that you have selected is focused on AmeriCorps member development, enter 0 members for that objective.

To ensure that information is entered accurately, please refer to additional guidance in Appendix A of the CNCS 2019 National Performance Measure Instructions on calculating and entering MSY and member allocations.

Performance Measures Tab

CNCS does not require national performance measures outputs to be paired only with corresponding national performance measures outcomes. National performance measures outputs may also be paired with applicant-determined outcomes or may not be paired with any outcome. The latter is referred to as an “output-only measure” in these instructions. Refer to selection rules in the National Performance Measures Instructions to ensure that your performance measures meet CNCS requirements.

This tab allows you to create performance measures for all the grant activities you intend to measure.

You must create at least one aligned performance measure (either a national performance measure or an applicant-determined measure) that includes your primary intervention. You may create additional aligned performance measures and/or output-only measures provided that they measure significant program activities. There is no expectation that 100 percent of program activity be allocated to national performance measures or to any performance measures at all.

Begin by creating the aligned performance measure for your primary intervention. After creating your required performance measure, you will be able to create additional performance measures if desired.

To create a performance measure, begin by selecting an objective. The list of objectives includes those you selected on the objectives tab. Note that programs may not create performance measures for the Find Opportunity, Teacher Corps, Green Jobs, or Access & Attract objectives, since these are member-focused objectives. Member-focused outputs and outcomes related to these objectives may be reported as demographic indicators. Provide a short, descriptive title for your performance measure.

Briefly describe the problem your program will address in this performance measure. Select the intervention(s) to be delivered by members and/or member-supported volunteers. The list of interventions includes the ones you selected previously for this objective. Select only the interventions that will lead to the outputs (plus outcomes, if applicable) of the performance measure and that are applicable to all beneficiaries counted under the measure. If you selected “other” as an intervention and wish to include an applicant-determined intervention in your aligned performance measure, click “add user intervention” and enter a one or two-word description of the intervention. (Note: you are not permitted to create a user-defined intervention that duplicates an intervention already available in the system.)

Select output(s) for your performance measure. The output list includes only the National Performance Measure outputs that correspond to the objectives you have selected. If you do not wish to select National Performance Measures, and if the objective you have selected permits applicant-determined outputs, you may create an applicant-determined output by clicking in the checkbox next to the empty output text box and entering the text of your output indicator. You may create additional applicant-determined outputs for the performance measure by clicking “Add User Output.” (Note: you are not permitted to create an applicant-determined output that duplicates a national performance measure output. If you do not see the national performance measure output that you wish to use, check the Selection Rules in the National Performance Measure Instructions to make sure you selected the correct objective associated with that National Performance Measure output.)

Select outcome(s). If you have selected a National Performance Measures output that has corresponding National Performance Measures outcome(s), these outcomes will be available to select. If you do not wish to select a National Performance Measures outcome, you may create an applicant-determined outcome by clicking in the checkbox next to the empty outcome text box and entering the text of your outcome indicator. If you do not wish to select any outcome for your National Performance Measures output, click in the checkbox next to the empty outcome text box and enter "NA" in the outcome indicator text box. (Note: all output-only measures must consist of national performance measures outputs. Applicant-determined outputs must be paired with applicant-determined outcomes.)

You may create additional applicant-determined outcomes for the performance measure by clicking "Add User Outcome."

If you have not selected a National Performance Measures output, or if there is no corresponding National Performance Measures outcome, create an applicant-determined outcome by clicking "Add User Outcome." All applicant-determined outputs must be paired with an applicant-determined outcome.

Enter the number of MSYs and members your program will allocate to achieving the outcomes and/or outputs you have selected in this performance measure. Since programs are not required to measure all grant activities, the number you enter does not have to correspond to the MSY chart you created on the MSY/Members tab; however, the total number of MSYs across all performance measures within a single objective cannot exceed the total number of MSYs previously allocated to that objective. Members may be double-counted across performance measures, but MSYs may not.

Click "next" to proceed to the data collection tab. Later you can return to this tab to create additional performance measures.

Data Collection Tab

On this tab, you will provide additional information about your interventions, instruments, and plan for data collection. The performance measures may be used after grant making separate from the grant narrative. Thus, all information requested in the National Performance Measure 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 Measures Instructions are met. Should an applicant choose to provide duplicate information about performance measures in the narrative, this information will also need to be in the performance measures module.

Describe the design and dosage (frequency, intensity, duration) of the interventions you have selected. Frequency refers to how often an intervention occurs (for example, number of sessions per week); intensity refers to the length of time devoted to the intervention (for example, number of minutes per session); and duration refers to the period of time over which the intervention occurs (for example, how many total weeks of sessions). Expand each output and outcome and enter data collection information.

Select the data collection method you will use to measure the output or outcome. To select more than one method, click the "Add New Method" button. To de-select a method, click the first (blank) line in the method drop-down.

Describe the specific instrument(s) you will use to measure the output or outcome. Include the title of the instrument(s), a brief description of what it measures and how it will be administered, and details about its reliability and validity if applicable. For outcomes, specify how much improvement in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition is required to be counted as having improved and clearly explain how the instrument measures this. Enter the target number for your output or outcome. Targets must be numbers, not percentages.

For applicant-determined outputs and outcomes, enter the unit of measure for your target. The unit of measure should describe the population you intend to count (children, miles, etc.). Do not enter percent or member service hours as units of measure. In most cases, the unit of measure should be the same for the outputs and outcomes in an aligned performance measure.

For output-only performance measures, eGrants will require text in the outcome data collection fields. If you do not wish to have an outcome for your National Performance Measure output, enter the following:

- Method: Select "other"
- Instrument Description: Enter "NA"
- Target: Enter "1"
- Unit of Measure: Enter "NA"

After entering data collection information for all outputs and outcomes, click "Mark Complete." You will return to the Performance Measure tab. If you wish to create another performance measure, repeat the process. If you would like to continue to the next step of the module, click "Next."

Summary Tab

The summary tab shows all the information you have entered in the module.

To print a summary of all performance measures, click "Print PDF for all Performance Measures."

To print one performance measure, expand the measure and click "Print This Measure." Click "Edit Performance Measure" to return to the Performance Measure tab.

Click "Edit Data Collection" to return to the Data Collection tab.

"Click Validate Performance Measures" to validate this module prior to submitting your application. You should also use the Performance Measures Checklist in Appendix B of the CNCS 2021 National Performance Measure Instructions to self-assess your measure(s) prior to submission.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PLANNING GRANT APPLICANTS

Home Page

To start the module, click the "Begin" button on the home page.

As you proceed through the module, the home page will summarize your work and provide links to edit the parts of the module you have completed. You may also navigate sections of the module using the tab feature at the top of each page.

Once you have started the module, clicking "Continue Working" will return you to the tab you were on when you last closed the module.

To edit the interventions, objectives, MSYs, and slot allocations for your application, click the "Edit Objectives/MSYs/Slots" button.

After you have created your performance measure, the home page will display a chart summarizing your measure. To edit a performance measure, click the "Edit" button. To delete a measure, click "Delete." To create a new performance measure, click the "Add New Performance Measure" button.

Objectives Tab

An expandable list of CNCS focus areas appears on this tab. When you click on a focus area, a list of objectives from the CNCS strategic plan appears. A list of common interventions appears under each objective.

First click on the "Other Community Priorities" focus area. Then click on the "Other" objective and select the "Other" intervention.

Choose "Other Community Priorities" as your program's primary focus area in the drop-down list at the bottom of the page. Next, select "other" as your primary intervention.

Click the next button to continue.

MSYs/Slots Tab

On this tab, you must enter a numerical value of "1" in all MSY and slot fields in order to submit your application. Then click the next button to continue.

Performance Measure Tab

To create your performance measure, begin by selecting "other" from the objective drop-down.

Enter the following title: Planning Grant.

Enter NA in the problem statement text box.

Check the box next to the intervention text box. Enter this text in the intervention text field: Plan an AmeriCorps program.

Click the button next to the output text box. Enter this text in the output text field: Work with grantor staff to design and conduct planning process as outlined in the application.

Check the box next to the outcome text box. Enter "NA" in the outcome text field.

Enter a numerical value of "1" in the MSYs and slots fields at the bottom left of the page. Click "next" to proceed to the data collection tab.

Data Collection Tab

On this tab, enter NA in the intervention text box. Then expand each output and outcome. Enter "1" for all numerical values required and enter NA in all text boxes. Select "other" as your data collection method for both the output and the outcome.

After entering data collection information for the output and outcome, click "Mark Complete." You will return to the Performance Measure tab. To continue to the next step of the module, click "Next."

Summary Tab

The summary tab shows all of the information you have entered in the module.

To print a summary of all performance measures, click "Print PDF for all Performance Measures."

To print one performance measure, expand the measure and click "Print This Measure."

Click "Edit Performance Measure" to return to the Performance Measure tab.

Click "Edit Data Collection" to return to the Data Collection tab.

"Click Validate Performance Measures" to validate this module prior to submitting your application.

APPENDIX B: BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS

Please include complete calculations in all line items.

Section I. Program Operating Costs

Complete Section I, Program Operating Costs, of the Budget Worksheet by entering the "Total Amount," "CNCS Share," and "Grantee Share" for Parts A-I, for year one of the grant, as follows:

A. Personnel Expenses

Under "Position/Title Description," list each staff position separately and provide salary and percentage of FTE devoted to this award. Each staff person's role must be described in the application narrative and each person mentioned in the narrative must be listed in the budget as either CNCS or grantee share. Because the purpose of this grant is to enable and stimulate volunteer community service, do not include the value of direct community service performed by volunteers. However, you may include the value of volunteer services contributed to the organization for organizational functions such as accounting, audit work, or training of staff and AmeriCorps members.

B. Personnel Fringe Benefits

Under "Purpose/Description," identify the types of fringe benefits to be covered and the costs of benefit(s) for each staff position. Allowable fringe benefits typically include FICA, workers' compensation, retirement, SUTA, health and life insurance, IRA, and 401K. You may provide a calculation for total benefits as a percentage of the salaries to which they apply or list each benefit as a separate item. If a fringe amount is over 30 percent, please list separately. Holidays, leave, and other similar vacation benefits are not included in the fringe benefit rates but are absorbed into the personnel expenses (salary) budget line item.

C. 1. Staff Travel

Describe the purpose for which program staff will travel. Provide a calculation to include costs for airfare, transportation, lodging, per diem, and other travel-related expenses multiplied by the number of trips/staff. Where applicable, identify the current standard reimbursement rate(s) of the organization for mileage (not to exceed the federal mileage rate), daily per diem, and similar supporting information. Only domestic travel is allowable.

Include costs for at least one staff person to attend two required trainings during the 2021-2022 program year: one two-day training and one single-day training. Assume trainings will be held in Harrisburg, PA. Include costs for applicable travel, meals, and lodging.

Include costs for at least one staff member to attend the National Service Regional Training Conference. Assume the conference will be held out of state. Include costs for applicable travel, meals, and lodging.

Please itemize costs. For example: Two staff will attend the National Conference on Volunteering and Service. 2 staff x \$750 airfare + \$50 ground transportation + (two-day) x \$200 lodging + \$50 per diem = \$2,000.

C. 2. Member Travel (n/a for planning grant applicants)

Describe the purpose for which members will travel. Provide a calculation to include costs for airfare, transportation, lodging, per diem, and other related expenses for members to travel outside their service location or between sites. Costs associated with local travel, such as bus passes to local sites, mileage reimbursement for use of car, etc., should be included in this budget category. Where applicable, identify the current standard reimbursement rate(s) of the organization for mileage, daily per diem, and similar supporting information.

Include costs for all members and relevant staff to attend the yearly AmeriCorps Week. Assume the event will be in Harrisburg, PA, and include costs to transport and provide meals to members for one day. Lodging may be included if necessary.

D. Equipment

Equipment is defined as tangible, non-expendable personal property having a useful life of more than one year AND an acquisition cost of **\$5,000 or more per unit** (including accessories, attachments, and modifications). Any items that do not meet this definition should be entered in E. Supplies below. Purchases of equipment are limited to 10 percent of the total corporation funds requested. If applicable, show the unit cost and number of units you are requesting. Provide a brief justification for the purchase of the equipment under Item/Purpose.

E. Supplies

AmeriCorps members must wear an AmeriCorps logo on a daily basis – preferably clothing with the AmeriCorps logo. The item with the AmeriCorps logo is a required budget expense for program operating grants. Please include the cost of the item with the AmeriCorps logo in your budget or explain how your program will be providing the item to AmeriCorps members without using grant funds. Grantees may add the AmeriCorps logo to their own local program uniform items using federal funds. Please note that your program will be using the AmeriCorps logo in the budget description.

Include the amount of funds to purchase consumable supplies and materials, including member service gear and equipment that does not fit the definition above. You must individually list any single item costing \$1,000 or more. Except for safety equipment, grantees may only charge the cost of member service gear to the federal share if it includes the AmeriCorps logo. All safety gear may be charged to the federal share, regardless of whether it includes the AmeriCorps logo. All other service gear must be purchased with non-CNCS funds.

F. Contractual and Consultant Services

Include costs for consultants related to the project's operations, except evaluation consultants, who will be listed in Section G and H below. There is not a maximum daily rate. Program operating grant applicants must include costs for the OnCorps member management system. Cost is \$16.80 per member slot and is NOT based on MSY. For instance, a program with 10 MSY and 20 member slots will pay \$336 for OnCorps.

Continuation and recompetete programs with PennSERVE approval to use a separate timekeeping system (e.g., Professional Corps programs with approval) should budget \$300 to cover financial and progress reporting for the year.

G. 1. Staff Training

Include registration costs for at least one staff member to attend the National Service Regional Training Conference.

Include the costs associated with training staff on project requirements and training to enhance the skills staff need for effective project implementation, i.e., project or financial management, team building, etc. If using a consultant(s) for training, indicate the estimated daily rate. There is not a maximum daily rate.

G. 2. Member Training (n/a for planning grant applicants)

Include the costs associated with member training to support them in carrying out their service activities. You may also use this section to request funds to support training in Life After AmeriCorps. If using a consultant(s) for training, indicate the estimated daily rate. There is not a maximum daily rate.

H. Evaluation

Include costs for project evaluation activities, including additional staff time or subcontracts, use of evaluation consultants, purchase of instrumentation, and other costs specifically for this activity not budgeted in Personnel Expenses. This cost **does not** include the daily/weekly gathering of data to assess progress toward meeting performance measures, but is a larger assessment of the impact your project is having on the community, as well as an assessment of the overall systems and project design. Indicate daily rates of consultants, where applicable.

I. Other Program Operating Costs

Allowable costs in this budget category should include when applicable:

- Criminal history background checks for all members and for all employees or other individuals who receive a salary, education award, living allowance, or stipend or similar payment from the grant (federal or non-federal share). Please budget for criminal history checks for all covered positions. If funds are not budgeted for all covered positions, an explanation must be noted in the budget.
- Office space rental for projects operating without an approved indirect cost rate agreement that covers office space. If space is budgeted and it is shared with other projects or activities, the costs must be equitably pro-rated and allocated between the activities or projects.
- Utilities, telephone, internet and similar expenses that are specifically used for AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps project staff, and are not part of the organizations indirect cost/admin cost allocation pool. If such expenses are budgeted and shared with other projects or activities, the costs must be equitably pro-rated and allocated between the activities or projects.
- Recognition costs for members. List each item and provide a justification in the budget narrative. Gifts and/or food in an entertainment/event setting are not allowable costs.

Section II. Member Costs (n/a for planning grant applicants)

Member costs are identified as "Living Allowance" and "Member Support Costs." Your required match can be federal, state, local, or private sector funds.

A. Living Allowance

The narrative should clearly identify the number of members you are supporting by category (i.e., full-time, three-quarter time, half-time, reduced-half-time, quarter-time, minimum-time, 1st and 2nd years of two-year half-time) and the amount of

living allowance they will receive, allocating appropriate portions between the corporation's share (CNCS Share) and grantee share (match).

In eGrants, enter the total number of members you are requesting in each category. Enter the amount of the living allowance for each type of member. Enter the number of members for which you are not requesting funds for a living allowance, but for whom you are requesting education awards.

Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1,700	\$15,100	\$30,200
Three-Quarter-time	1,200	n/a	\$21,318
One-year half-time	900	n/a	\$15,988
Reduced half-time	675	n/a	\$11,991
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$7,994
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$5,329
Abbreviated-time	100	n/a	\$1,776

B. Member Support Costs (n/a for planning grant applicants)

Consistent with the laws of the state where your members serve, you must provide members with the benefits described below.

- **FICA for Members.** Unless exempted by the IRS with accompanying documentation (note in the narrative and provide documentation with application), all projects must pay FICA for any member receiving a living allowance, even when CNCS does not supply the living allowance. In the first column next to FICA, indicate the number of members who will receive FICA. Calculate the FICA at 7.65 percent of the total amount of the living allowance.
- **Workers' Compensation.** Some states, including Pennsylvania, require workers' compensation for AmeriCorps members. Successful applicants are required to pay workers' compensation.
- **Health Care.** You must offer, or make available, health care benefits to full-time members in accordance with AmeriCorps requirements. Except as stated below, you may not pay for health care benefits to less-than-full-time members with CNCS funds. You may choose to provide health care benefits to less-than-full-time members from other sources (i.e., non-federal) but the cost cannot be included in the budget. Less-than-full-time members who are serving in a full-time capacity for a sustained period of time (such as a full-time summer project) are eligible for health care benefits. In your budget narrative, indicate the number of members who will receive health care benefits. CNCS will not pay for dependent coverage. If health care is not budgeted for all full-time members, please confirm all full-time members will have access to coverage.

- **Unemployment Insurance and Other Member Support Costs.** Include any other required member support costs here. Pennsylvania **does not** allow unemployment coverage for their AmeriCorps members.

Section III. Administrative/Indirect Costs

Definitions

Administrative costs are general or centralized expenses of the overall administration of an organization that receives CNCS funds and do not include particular project costs. These costs may include administrative staff positions. For organizations that have an established indirect cost rate for federal awards, administrative costs mean those costs that are included in the organization's indirect cost rate agreement. Such costs are generally identified with the organization's overall operation and are further described in Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance.

Options for Calculating Administrative/Indirect Costs (choose either A, B OR C)

Applicants choose one of three methods to calculate allowable administrative costs – a CNCS-fixed percentage rate method or a federally approved indirect cost rate method or a de minimis method. Regardless of the option chosen, the CNCS share of administrative costs is limited to 5% of the total CNCS funds **actually expended** under this grant. Do not create additional lines in this category.

A. CNCS-Fixed Percentage Method

Five/Ten Percent Fixed Administrative Costs Option

The CNCS-fixed percentage rate method allows you to charge administrative costs up to a cap without a federally approved indirect cost rate and without documentation supporting the allocation. If you choose the CNCS-fixed percentage rate method (Section IIIA in eGrants), you may charge, for administrative costs, a fixed 5 percent of the total of the CNCS funds expended. In order to charge this fixed 5 percent, the grantee match for administrative costs may not exceed 10 percent of all direct cost expenditures.

1. To determine the maximum CNCS share for Section III: Multiply the sum of the CNCS funding shares of Sections I and II by 0.0526. This is the maximum amount you can request as corporation share. The factor 0.0526 is used to calculate the 5 percent maximum amount of federal funds that may be budgeted for administrative (indirect) costs, rather than 0.0500, as a way to mathematically compensate for determining Section III costs when the total budget (Sections I + II + III) is not yet established. Enter this amount as the CNCS share for Section III A.
2. To determine the grantee share for Section III: Multiply the total (both CNCS and grantee share) of Sections I and II by 10 percent (0.10) and enter this amount as the grantee share for Section III A.
3. Enter the sum of the CNCS and grantee shares under Total Amount.

Please include your full calculation in the budget, using this template: [CNCS Section I (\$000,000) + II (\$000,000) = \$000,000] x .0526 = \$000,000. Grantee: [Section I (\$000,000) + II (\$000,000) = \$000,000] x .10 = \$000,000.

If you are not claiming the maximum allowable amount, include the statement "Amount claimed less than max allowed."

PennSERVE is not electing to retain a share of the federal funds available to programs for administrative costs in 2021 – 2022. PennSERVE reserves the right to elect to retain a share of the 5 percent of federal funds available to programs for administrative costs, up to 2 percent in future funding years.

B. Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate

If you have a federally approved indirect cost rate, this method must be used and the rate will constitute documentation of your administrative costs, not to exceed the 5 percent maximum federal share payable by CNCS. Specify the cost type for which your organization has current documentation on file, i.e., provisional, predetermined, fixed, or final indirect cost rate. Supply your approved IDC rate (percentage) and the base upon which this rate is calculated (direct salaries, salaries and fringe benefits, etc.). CNCS does not restrict the overall indirect cost rate claimed. It is at your discretion whether or not to claim your entire IDC rate to calculate administrative costs. If you choose to claim a lower rate, please include this rate in the Rate Claimed field.

1. Determine the base amount of direct costs to which you will apply the IDC rate, including both the CNCS and grantee shares, as prescribed by your established rate agreement (i.e., based on salaries and benefits, total direct costs, or other). Then multiply the appropriate direct costs by the rate being claimed. This will determine the total amount of indirect costs allowable under the grant.
2. To determine the CNCS share: Multiply the sum of the CNCS funding share in Sections I and II by 0.0526. This is the maximum amount you can claim as the CNCS share of indirect costs.
3. To determine the grantee share: Subtract the amount calculated in Step 2 (the CNCS administrative share) from the amount calculated in step 1 (the Indirect Cost total). This is the amount the applicant can claim as grantee share for administrative costs.

Please include your full calculation in the budget, using this template: [CNCS Section I (\$000,000) + II (\$000,000) = \$000,000] x .0526 = \$000,000. Grantee: [Base Amount (\$000,000) - <\$CNCS Share>] = \$000,000.

If you are not claiming the maximum allowable amount, include the statement "Amount claimed less than max allowed."

C. De Minimis Rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs

Organizations who have **never**, at any point in time, held a federally negotiated indirect cost rate (except for those non-Federal entities described in Appendix VII to Part 200-States and Local government and Indian tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, paragraph (d)(1)(B)) and who receive less than \$35 million in direct federal funding, may indefinitely use a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC). Additional information regarding what is included in MTDC and use of this option can be found at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.414(f) and 200.68. If this option is elected, it must be used consistently across all federal awards.

Source of Match

In the "Source of Funds" field that appears at the end of Budget Section III, enter a brief description of the match. Identify each match source separately. Identify if the match is secured or proposed. Include dollar amount, the match classification (cash or in-kind), and the source type (private, state/local, or federal) for your **entire match**. Define all acronyms

the first time they are used. The total amount of Source of Match should equal the Grantee Share amount.

Please complete the Source of Match Section following this example:

Section	Match Description	Amount	Type	Source
Source of Funds	Do Good Foundation – secured	350,000	Cash	Private
	School District – secured	12,000	In-Kind	State/Local
	Kids R Great Foundation - proposed	175,250	Cash	Private
Total Source of Funds		537,250		

Note: the value of the Segal Education Awards that members earn for their service is not identified in the budget. Also, the childcare reimbursements provided to eligible full-time members is not included in the budget.

Increasing Grantee Overall Share of Total Budgeted Costs -- Grantees are required to meet an overall matching rate that increases over time. You have the flexibility to meet the overall match requirements in any of the three budget areas, as long as the minimum match of 24 percent for the first three years, and the increasing minimum in years thereafter, are maintained.

APPENDIX C: BUDGET ANALYSIS CHECKLIST

Below is a checklist to help you make certain that you submit an accurate budget narrative that meets AmeriCorps requirements.

In Compliance?	Section I. Program Operating Costs
Yes ___ No ___	Costs charged under the personnel line item directly relate to the operation of the AmeriCorps project? Examples include costs for staff that recruit, train, place, or supervise members as well as manage the project.
Yes ___ No ___	Staff indirectly involved in the management or operation of the applicant organization is funded through the administrative cost section (Section III.) of the budget? Examples of administrative costs include central management and support functions.
Yes ___ No ___	Staff fundraising expenses are not charged to the grant? You may not charge AmeriCorps staff members' time and related expenses for fundraising to the federal or grantee share of the grant. Expenses incurred to raise funds must be paid out of the funds raised. Development officers and fundraising staff are not allowable expenses.
Yes ___ No ___	All positions in the budget are fully described in the narrative?
Yes ___ No ___	The types of fringe benefits to be covered and the costs of benefit(s) for each staff position are described? Allowable fringe benefits typically include FICA, workers' compensation, retirement, SUTA, health and life insurance, IRA, and 401K. You may provide a calculation for total benefits as a percentage of the salaries to which they apply or list each benefit as a separate item. If the fringe amount is over 30 percent, please list separately.
Yes ___ No ___	Holidays, leave, and other similar vacation benefits are not included in the fringe benefit rates but are absorbed into the personnel expenses (salary) budget line item?
Yes ___ No ___	The purpose for all staff and member travel is clearly identified?
Yes ___ No ___	You have budgeted funds for staff travel to PennSERVE sponsored meetings?
Yes ___ No ___	You have budgeted funds for member travel to the yearly AmeriCorps Week?
Yes ___ No ___	You have budgeted funds to the National Service Regional Conference?
Yes ___ No ___	Funds to pay relocation expenses of AmeriCorps members are not in the federal share of the budget?
Yes ___ No ___	Funds for the purchase of equipment (does not include general use office equipment) are limited to 10 percent of the total grant amount?
Yes ___ No ___	All single equipment items over \$5,000 per unit are specifically listed?
Yes ___ No ___	Justification/explanation of equipment items is included in the budget narrative?
Yes ___ No ___	All single supply items over \$1,000 per unit are specifically listed and explained in the budget narrative?
Yes ___ No ___	Cost of items with the AmeriCorps logo that will be worn daily is included for all AmeriCorps members? Or if not, there is an explanation of how the program will be providing the AmeriCorps logo item to AmeriCorps members using funds other than CNCS grant funds.
Yes ___ No ___	You only charged to the federal share of the budget member service gear, with the exception of safety equipment, that includes the AmeriCorps logo?

In Compliance?	Section I. Program Operating Costs
Yes ___ No ___	Is the daily rate noted in all sections of the budget narrative where consultants are proposed?
Yes ___ No ___	You have budgeted \$16.80 per member slot for use of the OnCorps member management system? Or, if the program has PennSERVE approval to use a separate timekeeping system, \$300 is budgeted to cover financial and progress reporting for the year.
Yes ___ No ___	Does the budget reflect adequate budgeted costs for project evaluation?
Yes ___ No ___	Have you budgeted for the cost of the NSOPW, FBI, and state check in the CNCS share for criminal history checks of each member and grant-funded staff that are in covered positions per 45 CFR 2522.205? If not, have you provided an explanation?
Yes ___ No ___	Are all items in the budget narrative itemized and the purpose of the funds justified?

In Compliance?	Section II. Member Costs
Yes ___ No ___	Are the living allowance amounts correct? Full-time AmeriCorps members must receive at least the minimum living allowance as indicated in the chart in the budget instructions. Note: Programs in existence prior to Sept. 21, 1993 may offer a lower living allowance than the minimum. If such a program chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement, but not from the maximum requirement.
Yes ___ No ___	Living allowances are not paid on an hourly basis? They may be calculated using service hours and program length to derive a weekly or biweekly distribution amount. Divide the distribution in equal increments that are not based on the specified number of hours served.
Yes ___ No ___	Is FICA calculated correctly? You must pay FICA for any member receiving a living allowance. Unless exempted by the IRS, calculate FICA at 7.65 percent of the total amount of the living allowance.
Yes ___ No ___	Is the workers' compensation calculation correct? Pennsylvania requires workers' compensation for AmeriCorps members.
Yes ___ No ___	Health care is provided for full-time AmeriCorps members only (unless part-time serving for a sustained full-time period of time such as summer service)? If your project chooses to provide health care to other part-time members, you may not use federal funds to help pay for any portion of the cost. Projects must provide health care coverage to all full-time members who do not have adequate health care coverage at the time of enrollment or who lose coverage due to participation in the project. In addition, projects must provide coverage if a full-time member loses coverage during the term of service through no deliberate act of their own.
Yes ___ No ___	Unemployment insurance is not budgeted?

In Compliance?	Section III. Administrative/Indirect Costs
Yes ___ No ___ N/A ___	Applicant has chosen Option A – Applicant does not have a federally approved indirect cost rate and has chosen to use the CNCS - fixed percentage method and the maximum federal share of administrative costs does not exceed 5

	percent of the total federal funds budgeted? To determine the federal administrative share, multiply all other budgeted federal funds by .0526.
Yes ___ No ___ N/A ___	Applicant has chosen Option A – Corporation fixed percentage method and the maximum grantee share is at 10 percent or less of total budgeted funds?
Yes ___ No ___ N/A ___	Applicant has chosen Option B – Applicant has a federally approved indirect cost rate method and documentation has been submitted to PennSERVE?
Yes ___ No ___ N/A ___	Applicant has chosen Option B – federally approved indirect cost rate method and the maximum grantee share does not exceed the federally approved indirect cost rate, less the 5 percent CNCS share?
Yes ___ No ___ N/A ___	Applicant has chosen Option B – federally approved indirect cost rate method and the type of rate, the IDC rate percentage, the rate claimed and the base to which the rate is applied has been specified?
Yes ___ No ___ N/A ___	Applicant has chosen Option C – Applicant has never had a federally approved indirect cost rate and a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs has been budgeted?

In Compliance?	Match
Yes ___ No ___	Is the overall match being met at the required level, based on the year of funding?
Yes ___ No ___	For all matching funds, proposed vs secured, the source(s) [private, state, local, and/or federal], the type of contribution (cash or in-kind), and the amount of match, are clearly identified in the narrative and in the Source of Funds field in eGrants?
Yes ___ No ___	The amount of match is for the entire amount in the budget narrative. (The total amount of match equals the amount in the budget?)

Please note that the Commonwealth requires all AmeriCorps programs to meet its budgeted match (rather than the minimum required match).

APPENDIX D: EGRANTS BUDGET WORKSHEET

Section I. Program Operating Costs

A. Personnel Expenses

Position/Title/Description	Qty	Annual Salary	% Time	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Totals						

B. Personnel Fringe Benefits

Purpose/Description	Calculation	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Totals				

C.1. Staff Travel

Purpose	Calculation	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Totals				

C. 2. Member Travel

Purpose	Calculation	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Totals				

D. Equipment

Item/Purpose/Justification	Qty	Unit Cost	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Totals					

E. Supplies

Purpose	Calculation	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Totals				

F. Contractual and Consultant Services

Purpose	Calculation	Daily Rate	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Totals					

G.1. Staff Training

Purpose	Calculation	Daily Rate	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Totals					

G.2. Member Training

Purpose	Calculation	Daily Rate	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Totals					

H. Evaluation

Purpose	Calculation	Daily Rate	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Totals					

I. Other Program Operating Costs

Purpose	Calculation	Daily Rate	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Totals					

Subtotal Section I:	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share

Section II. Member Costs

A. Living Allowance

Item	# Mbrs	Allowance Rate	# w/o Allowance	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Full-time (1700 hrs)						
Three quarter-time (1200 hrs)						
Half-time (900 hrs)						
Reduced Half-time (675 hrs)						
Quarter-time (450 hrs)						
Minimum-time (300 hrs)						
Abbreviated-time (100 hours)						
Totals						

B. Member Support Costs

Purpose	Calculation	Daily Rate	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Totals					

Subtotal Section II:	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Subtotal Sections I + II:			

Section III. Administrative/Indirect Costs

A. Corporation-fixed Percentage Rate

Purpose	Calculation	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Totals				

B. Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate Or De Minimis Rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs

Cost Type	Cost Basis	Calculation	Rate	Rate Claimed	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share

Total Sections I + II + III:	Total Amount	CNCS Share	Grantee Share

Source of Funds

Match Description (Note whether Secured or Proposed)	Amount	Match Classification (Cash or In Kind)	Match Source (Federal, State/Local, Private)

APPENDIX E: eGRANTS INDIRECT COST RATE USER INSTRUCTIONS

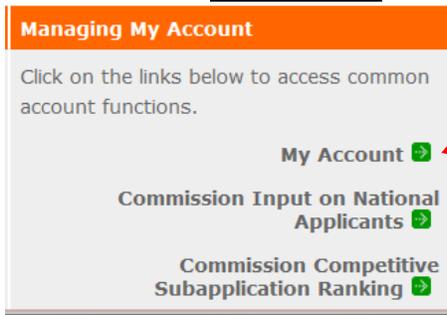
eGrants Indirect Cost Rate (IDCR) User Instructions

A new feature has been introduced to eGrants which allows users to input Indirect Cost Rate information into their eGrants account. Grantees who will be claiming indirect costs on CNCS awards are required to enter the following indirect cost rates in eGrants: federally negotiated rates, state negotiated rates, and the use of *de minimis* rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC). Recipients of AmeriCorps State and National awards may only charge 5 percent of their negotiated rate to the federal share of the award, with the remaining balance being charged to match (See [45 C.F.R. §§ 2521.95](#) and [2540.110](#)).

Once a rate is entered and saved in eGrants, it cannot be edited. If users inadvertently enter incorrect information, a new entry must be submitted with the correct information.

Entry for the IDCR screen can be accessed using the following steps:

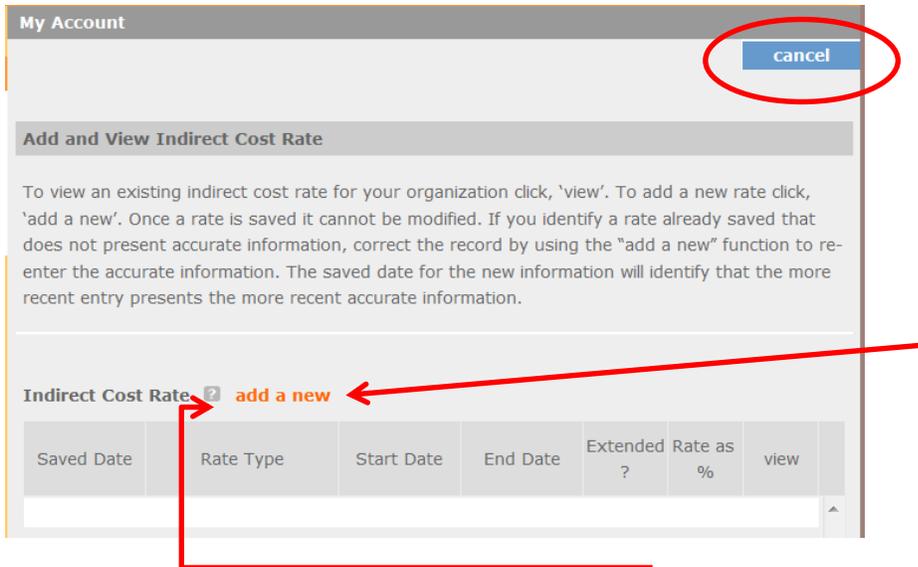
- 1) From the **eGrants Home** screen, in the lower panel under **Managing My Account**, click on **My Account**



- 2) From the **My Account** screen, under **Edit My Organization Info**, click on **Add and View Indirect Cost Rate**



- 3) From the **Add and View Indirect Cost Rate** screen, select **add a new** to add a rate or **cancel** to back out of the screen.



Field by field instructions can be found by clicking the “?” located next to Indirect Cost Rate or Indirect Cost Rate Record.

If **add a new** is selected, the screen below will pop up.

- 4) **Do you have an Indirect Cost Rate to record?** Respond Yes or No. If **NO** is selected, users cannot go any further and nothing will be recorded. If **Yes** is selected, users can continue.

If your organization will be claiming a current, approved indirect cost rate on any CNCS award, it must be reported on this page. The rate information you record will be used in all award negotiation and reviews until it is superseded by a new approved rate, or expires. Applicants will have the opportunity to identify, in application submissions, if they elect to use a lesser percentage of an approved rate.

- 5) **Rate Type:** If your rate type is not one of the following options, contact your grants officer for guidance:
- **Federally Negotiated** – select if your rate has been negotiated by your cognizant federal agency. Cognizance is determined by the agency which provides the highest amount of direct federal funding;
 - **State Negotiated** – select if your rate has been negotiated by a state agency or other pass through entity; or
 - **10 Percent of MTDC** – select if your organization qualifies for and elects to use the 10% *de minimus* rate of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC). Organizations qualify for this rate if they have NEVER had a federally negotiated rate. State entities must also not receive more than \$35 million in direct federal funding.

Rates must be used consistently across ALL federal awards.

- 6) **Issuing Agency.** Respond by selecting the federal agency that approved your rate, or if the federal agency who issued your rate is not listed, select **Other**, or if your rate is issued by a state agency select **Other**. Identify federal agencies using the drop-down list. If your rate is approved by a federal agency other than the ones listed, notify your grants officer. Other federal agencies may be added as needed.

- 7) **Acceptance Date.** Enter a valid date. The acceptance date is usually identified where the rate was signed by the issuing state or federal agency.

- 8) **Rate Status.** Select one of the following options: **Final, Provisional, Predetermined, Fixed, Other, or Other – 10 percent**. Rates issued by federal agencies will almost always be final or provisional. However, if your organization has formally notified a federal or state agency of your eligibility and intent to use the 10-percent of MTDC rate, select **Other – 10 percent**. If your organization has a **predetermined** or **fixed rate**, select those options accordingly. If a state rate indicates a term that is not listed here select **Other** and notify your grants officer. Additional rate status options may be added as needed.

- 9) **Effective From.** Enter a valid date. The effective from date is found on your indirect cost rate document. If using the 10-percent of MTDC rate, enter today's date or the date your organization formally started charging costs under the 10-percent of MTDC rate.

- 10) **Effective To.** Enter a valid date.

The effective to date is found on your indirect cost rate document. If your organization has received approval to extend your rate, enter the end date of the extension.

11) **No Expiration.** Check or leave unchecked.

If your rate does not have an expiration date, as is the case with the use of the 10 percent of MTDC rate, check this box, otherwise, leave unchecked.

12) **Extended?** Respond Yes or No.

If the rate "effective to" date has been extended with approval of the federal cognizant agency under authority of the 2014 Omni Circular, respond **Yes**. If it is not an extended rate effective to date, respond **No**.

13) **Rate Base.** Enter up to 500 characters including spaces.

Enter the text as found on your indirect cost rate approval document. For rates issued by state agencies, enter either the rate base used to determine the indirect cost pool as stated on your indirect cost rate approval document or "State Rate N/A." If you need more than 500 characters, indicate "Summary" and record the most important content.

14) **Treatment of Fringe Benefits.** Enter up to 500 characters including spaces.

Enter the text as found on your indirect cost rate approval document. For rates issued by state agencies, enter either the how fringe benefits were treated in determining the indirect cost rate as stated on your indirect cost rate approval document or "State Rate N/A." If you need more than 500 characters, indicate "Summary" and record the most important content.

15) **Treatment of Paid Absences.** Enter up to 500 characters including spaces.

Enter the text as found on your indirect cost rate approval document. For rates issued by state agencies, enter either how paid absences were treated in determining the indirect cost rate as stated on your indirect cost rate approval document or "State Rate N/A." If you need more than 500 characters, indicate "Summary" and record the most important content.

16) When you have completed all of the above entries, click the **"save & close"** button at the bottom of the page.



- If you would like to cancel your entry, click the **"cancel"** button and the entry will be cancelled. All entry information will be lost and no entry will be shown.
- **Once a rate is saved it cannot be modified.**
- If users inadvertently enter incorrect information, a new entry must be submitted with the correct information.

17) **Order of Rates** - Once an entry is saved, users will be able to see the rates they have entered. Rates will display in the order of entry. Entry of rates will provide users and CNCS with a historical record which can be used to clarify indirect cost rate inquiries for monitoring, consistent record maintenance, and audits.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your assigned grants officer.

APPENDIX F: ALTERNATIVE MATCH INSTRUCTIONS

Grantees are required to meet an overall matching rate that increases over time. You have the flexibility to meet the overall match requirements in any of the three budget areas, as long as the minimum match of 24 percent for the first three years, and the increasing minimums in years thereafter, are maintained. See 45 C.F.R. §§ 2521.35–2521.90 for the specific regulations.

Special Circumstances for an Alternative Match Schedule: 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 C.F.R. § 2521.60(b). To qualify, you must demonstrate that your program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined below.

- A. Rural County:** In determining whether a program is rural, CNCS will consider the most recent Beale code rating published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the county in which the program is located. Any program located in a county with a Beale code of 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 or 9 is eligible to apply for the alternative match requirement. See Appendix G for the Table of Beale codes.
- B. Severely Economically Distressed County:** In determining whether a program is located in a severely economically distressed county, CNCS will consider the following list of county-level characteristics. See Appendix G for a list of website addresses where this publicly available information can be found.
 1. The county-level per capita income is less than or equal to 75 percent of the national average for all counties using the most recent census data or Bureau of Economic Analysis data;
 2. The county-level poverty rate is equal to or greater than 125 percent of the national average for all counties using the most recent census data; and
 3. The county-level unemployment is above the national average for all counties for the previous 12 months using the most recently available Bureau of Labor Statistics data.
 4. The areas served by the program lack basic infrastructure such as water or electricity.
- C. Program Location:** Except when approved otherwise, CNCS will determine the location of your program based on the legal applicant's address. If you believe that the legal applicant's address is not the appropriate way to consider the location of your program, you must provide relevant facts about your program location in your request. CNCS will, in its sole discretion, determine whether some other address is more appropriate for determining a program's location.

If your program is located in one of these areas, see the instructions below for applying for this alternative match schedule. **You must submit your alternative match schedule request to PennSERVE at the time of application.**

If approved for the alternative schedules, programs will base their budget in the upcoming application on the approved alternative match. The alternative match requirement will be in effect for whatever portion of the three-year project period remains or if applying as a new grantee, for the upcoming three-year grant cycle.

- D.** Instructions for the Alternative Match Schedule: Programs must send their request to PennSERVE for review. PennSERVE will then forward the request to CNCS for consideration. Upon PennSERVE approval, CNCS will review your request, notify PennSERVE if you qualify for the alternative schedule, and provide instructions for entering your budget into eGrants under the Alternative Match Schedule. To submit a request for an alternative match, submit an email to PennSERVE at the time of the application as follows:

E-mail subject line: AmeriCorps Alternative Match Request

Send your request in memo format. You must respond to each item below. Please include both the item and your response in your request.

1. Basis of Request
 - a. Identify the basis for your request as either a rural county or a severely economically distressed community as described above.
 - b. Describe where your program operates and include the address of the legal applicant.
2. Rural Counties
 - a. Describe the economic conditions.
 - b. Confirm that your county has a Beale code of 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9.
3. Economically Distressed Counties:
 - a. Provide your county per-capita income, poverty, and unemployment levels.
 - b. Demonstrate that your county per-capita income, poverty, and unemployment levels are above or below the national averages. Identify the data source(s) used to make your determination.
 - c. Provide any other statistics you deem relevant to demonstrate your county is economically distressed.
4. Program Location: If you believe the location of your program should not be based on the address of the legal applicant, describe your justification for requesting an alternative location(s).
5. Other: Provide any other justification and information for your request that is not presented in the responses to the above.

APPENDIX G: RURAL PROGRAMS, RURAL INTERMEDIARIES, BEALE CODES, AND COUNTY-LEVEL ECONOMIC DATA

RUCA codes classify U.S. census tracts using measures of population density, urbanization, and daily commuting. Census tracts with an urban cluster population less than 50,000 are considered rural (RUCA codes four – 10). For more information about RUCA codes, please visit the USDA website found here: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-commuting-area-codes.aspx>

Rural intermediaries primarily serve communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure. PennSERVE and CNCS recognize that severely under-resourced communities may have limited capacity to successfully apply for and implement an AmeriCorps program due to the size and organizational capacity of eligible applicant/host site organizations or the lack of available matching funds in these communities. Thus, it may be effective for a single eligible applicant (intermediary) to develop an application and oversee the implementation of an AmeriCorps program that engages multiple grassroots nonprofits that individually do not have the necessary organizational or fundraising capacity to apply for and run an AmeriCorps program independently. Given the desire to address community needs holistically, the nonprofits that make up the consortium may have different focus areas and thus the nonprofit intermediary will be multi-focused.

Applications seeking consideration as a Rural Intermediary must demonstrate that they will be serving in rural severely under-resourced communities, that their application represents a consortium, 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 consortium. Applicants seeking consideration under this priority area may submit a narrative that does not exceed 12 pages in eGrants.

The eligible applicant (intermediary) should submit one application which describes:

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

Applicants must email memoranda of understanding or signed letters of commitment from all members of the consortium to pennserve@pa.gov by the application due date in order to be considered for this priority area.

Beale codes are published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and are used to classify counties as being more urban or more rural. Counties are designated on a scale from one to nine according to the following descriptions:

	Metropolitan Type	Description
1	Metropolitan	Counties in metro areas of 1 million population or more
2	Metropolitan	Counties in metro areas of 250,000 to 1 million
3	Metropolitan	Counties in metro areas of fewer than 250,000
4	Non-metro	Urban population of 20,000 or more, adjacent to a metropolitan area
5	Non-metro	Urban population of 20,000 or more, not adjacent to a metropolitan area
6	Non-metro	Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, adjacent to a metropolitan area
7	Non-metro	Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, not adjacent to a metropolitan area
8	Non-metro	Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, adjacent to a metropolitan area
9	Non-metro	Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, not adjacent to a metropolitan area

The CNCS Office of Grants Management uses Beale Codes when assessing alternative match requirements. Any program located in a county with a Beale code of 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 is eligible to apply for the alternative match.

Data Sources

WEBSITE ADDRESS	EXPLANATION
http://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/	PA Work Stats: Labor statistics in Pennsylvania, including rates by county
http://www.rural.pallegislature.us/	The Center for Rural Pennsylvania: Demographics, publications, and data about Pennsylvania’s rural communities and residents
http://www.bea.gov/regional/	Bureau of Economic Analysis’ Regional Economic Information System (REIS): Provides data on per capita income by county for all states except Puerto Rico.
https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe.html	Census Bureau’s Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates: Provides data on poverty and population estimates by county for all states except Puerto Rico.
https://data.census.gov	Explore Census Data: Provides data from several censuses and surveys, including estimates on poverty, per capita income and unemployment by counties, states, and metro areas including Puerto Rico.
https://www.bls.gov/lau/	Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Local Area Unemployment Statistics: Provides data on annual and monthly employment and unemployment by counties for all states including Puerto Rico.
https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-continuum-codes	US Department of Agriculture’s Rural-Urban Continuum Codes: Provides urban and rural codes for all counties in US.

APPENDIX H: ECONOMIC MOBILITY CORPS

Economic Mobility Corps applicants must apply for Competitive Cost Reimbursement Grants.

About the CDFI Fund and CDFIs

The mission of the U.S. Treasury Department's Community Development Financial Institution Fund (CDFI Fund) is to expand economic opportunity for underserved people and communities by supporting the growth and capacity of a national network of community development lenders, investors, and financial service providers known as Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs).

CDFIs are community-based financial institutions that have a common goal of filling financing gaps in underserved, low-income areas. As community-based institutions, they possess a keen sensitivity to needs of local residents and businesses, and their creation reflects a bottom-up, rather than a top-down, approach to community investment and revitalization.

Currently, there are more than 1,100 CDFIs that are certified by the CDFI Fund serving urban and rural communities throughout the United States. CDFIs are found in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico. They bridge diverse public and private sector interests to serve people and places that traditional financial institutions usually do not. CDFIs provide:

- loans for businesses and projects that otherwise would not receive for financing;
- safe, affordable banking services that otherwise would not be available in the community;
- loan rates and terms that are more flexible than those offered by traditional lenders; and
- development services—such as business planning, credit counseling, and homebuyer education—to help their borrowers use credit effectively and build financial strength.

As a result, CDFIs support the creation of small businesses and local jobs, and the development of affordable housing, community facilities, and schools—all in places where economic opportunity is needed most.

About the Economic Mobility Corps

A joint initiative of the CDFI Fund and CNCS, the Economic Mobility Corps (EMC) places full-time AmeriCorps members at Certified CDFIs to enhance their capacity to provide financial literacy, financial planning, budgeting, saving, and other financial counseling activities in distressed and underserved areas. Economic Mobility Corps members will be placed in Certified CDFIs and will receive training on the principles of financial counseling and financial literacy. A Certified CDFI is an entity that the CDFI Fund has officially notified that it meets all CDFI certification requirements. Only Certified CDFI's are eligible to receive EMC members.

This initiative will fund up to 61 full-time members a year for two years.

Who is Eligible for Award

Organizations that meet the AmeriCorps State and National eligibility criteria.

Additionally, applicants that are Certified CDFIs and organizations with CDFI Fund awards:

- Will be considered ineligible for award if the applicant has a previously executed award agreement(s), as of the date of the Application, (i) the CDFI Fund has made a determination that such entity is noncompliant or found in default with a previously executed agreement, and (ii) the CDFI Fund has provided written notification that such entity is ineligible to apply for or receive any future CDFI Fund awards or allocations. Such entities will be ineligible to submit an application for such time period as specified by the CDFI Fund in writing. Applicants that have pending noncompliance issues of any of its previously executed award agreement(s), are eligible to receive an award if the CDFI Fund has not yet made a final compliance determination.
- Will be considered ineligible for award if the applicant has defaulted on a loan from the CDFI Fund within five years of the application deadline.

Preference will be given to applicants that intend to enroll veterans as AmeriCorps members and/or serve rural areas.

AmeriCorps Member Position Description

Economic Mobility Corps members will strengthen the capacity of Certified CDFIs to provide financial literacy, financial counseling, and financial planning services offered by the Certified CDFIs, to distressed and underserved individuals. Duties include:

- conducting community outreach and recruitment of new clients to the Certified CDFI's counseling and planning services and programs;
- assisting or conducting one-on-one or group orientation sessions for new program clients to explain the Certified CDFI's services, as well as the responsibilities of the client;
- providing financial planning workshops and individual financial counseling to meet the needs of Certified CDFI clients, including conducting group education meetings, and delivering workshops, webinars and meetings;
- assisting in the development and execution of marketing strategies to promote program client participation in Certified CDFI-sponsored financial counseling and education programs;
- providing program clients with information on the different financial products and services (e.g., loan products, checking/savings accounts, etc.) offered by the Certified CDFI;
- conducting scheduled follow-ups with program clients to ask how they are doing, find out if they need additional help, and to help them stay engaged to achieve their plans by established deadlines;
- performing administrative duties that support the Certified CDFI's activities, including but not limited to, coordinating client meetings, preparing presentations, conducting research, reviewing training and outreach materials, reviewing applications for programs and services, and developing material that supports the Certified CDFI's financial counseling and outreach activity; and
- reporting to the Certified CDFI on a regular basis on activities undertaken by the service member.

Desired Skills

Economic Mobility Corps members should possess:

- a desire and ability to work with a diverse group of people, particularly those living in low-income and economically distressed neighborhoods;
- willingness to learn and serve others;
- ability to successfully work independently and in a team environment;
- strong organizational, writing, and oral communication skills, and possess high attention to detail;
- familiarity with community development, financial services, banking and lending terminology, including an understanding of financial planning basics, credit and credit scoring;
- have an interest in finance and/or financial education;
- computer skills, including high degree of familiarity with Microsoft Excel, or other spreadsheet software; and
- Bachelor's degree preferred, with coursework in finance, accounting, business, or community development.