serveM**o**ntana
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

AmeriCorps State FormulaFFY2018
Notice **of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

This *Notice* announces a funding opportunity and outlines the process to apply for an AmeriCorps grant, funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), administered by the Montana Governor's Office of Community Service (OCS aka ServeMontana). The level and timing of grant funding is subject to the availability of annual appropriations. OCS reserves the right to modify any component of this RFP, at any time.

This *Notice* of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
This *Notice* is the first in a multistep process that an applicant must complete to apply for and receive AmeriCorps State Formula funding. ServeMontana's role is to solicit, screen and rank applications. All applications cleared through screening will be ranked and submitted to CNCS for funding determination. A description of the process used by CNCS is contained in this *Notice*. This *Notice* should be read together with AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 C.F.R.2520–2550, Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, Application Instructions, and Performance Measure Instructions which are incorporated by reference. It is recommended that applicants review federal regulations at www.ecfr.gov and grant management materials on CNCS's website.

Who Should Apply To This *Notice* Of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)?
Organizations that are continuing a formula funded program or who propose an AmeriCorps State program that operates only in Montana must apply to this Notice. The Governor's Office of Community Service will engage a Grant Review Work Group to review and score grants through a selection process, described in this RFP, and select applicants for recommended funding. Funding recommendations are presented to the full Montana Commission of Community Service for approval. Applicants that receive funding for AmeriCorps programs through this *Notice* are overseen by ServeMontana in all areas of grant management.

This step is only required for AmeriCorps programs that propose to serve solely in the state of Montana. Tribes and Tribal organizations may apply through this *Notice* or may choose to apply directly to CNCS. Only submit materials to this solicitation if the program will serve primarily in Montana. CNCS may award a Cost Reimbursement or an Education Award Program grant or a Planning Grant to any successful applicant. Fixed Amount grants are not available under this Notice.

Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding
AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in service through an approved National Service position. Members may receive a living allowance and

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other benefits while serving, but are not employees. Upon successful completion of service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust. Commonly referred to as the 'Ed Award', members receive a voucher that can be used to pay higher education expenses or for qualified student loans, for up to seven years. Members age 55+ may be able to transfer their Education Award to a family member.

ServeMontana
Montana's Commission on Community Service was established in 1993 to administer grants under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. Under the Montana Commission on Community Service, ServeMontana administers funds to Montana AmeriCorps State programs, encourages citizens of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to engage in service, involves youth in the life and work of communities, and strengthens volunteerism for all Montanans.

Expectations ServeMontana expects all respondents to display the following features,

- ✓ Inclusive in design and delivery, making the program accessible to individuals with disabilities
- ✓ Address rural, underserved or areas of poverty not currently served by AmeriCorps programs
- ✓ Clearly connect proposed activities to the needs and priorities in the Montana State Service Plan
- ✓ Collaborative approach to planning, design, and the delivery of the program

Montana AmeriCorps State Process
To be eligible for consideration, an applicant must meet the intent of all the requirements listed in the *Notice*. ServeMontana will determine whether the applicant's submitted materials comply with the requirements. Applicants will be reviewed to ensure they meet the standards of responsibility in accordance with ARM 2.5.407. Such a determination may be made at any time during the process if information surfaces that would result in the determination of non-responsibility. Applicant responses that do not meet the full intent of all requirements listed in this RFP may be deemed unresponsive and will not be considered.

- Montana Commission on Community Service and the Governor's OCS Appeals Process: http://serve.mt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Appeals-Process-Updated-10.18.10.pdf

Dual Points of Contact
From the date this Request for Proposal (RFP) is issued until an applicant(s) is selected and announced by OCS**, *applicants shall only communicate with designated state staff listed below, regarding this Notice.* Any unauthorized contact may disqualify the application from further consideration.

Sarah Sadowski, OCS Grants Manager
ph: 406.444.5547
ssadowski@mt.gov

Sheree Isola, OCS Financial Manager
ph: 406.444.1809
ShIsola@mt.gov

Costs/Ownership of Materials
The applicant is solely responsible for all costs it incurs prior to contract execution. The State shall own all materials submitted in response to this RFP.

Montana State Service Plan
The 2016-2018 Montana State Service Plan outlines the community needs, goals and objectives of the Governor's Office on Community Service. To read the plan visit http://serve.mt.gov/mtstate-service-plan/.

Governor's Initiatives Applicants are encouraged to engage in the Montana Governor's initiatives.

- American Indian Affairs- The Governor's initiative aims to engage Tribal members into service with Montana's AmeriCorps programs and to foster programs that make real impacts in addressing the diverse needs facing Montana's Tribal Nations, with cultural competency.
- Childhood Hunger - The Governor and First Lady's initiative to fight childhood hunger in Montana through innovative, evidence based strategies in schools and communities not currently served by AmeriCorps.
- Early Childhood Education - Governor Bullock's initiative to ensure every Montana child arrives at kindergarten ready to learn. Children who receive quality early learning are more likely to read at grade level, graduate from high school, and earn more money as adults.
- Forests in Focus – The Governor's initiative seeks to engage coalitions of stakeholders to create the brightest possible future for our forests; promote stewardship of lands to meet a variety of objectives; and focuses on land management activities that restore forests and watersheds, drought resiliency, wildfire risk reduction, and improve habitat and water quality.
- SMART Schools – "SMART" refers to a school's ability to "**S**ave **M**oney **A**nd **R**esources **T**oday" by implementing behavioral and operational changes to promote energy efficiency and health. The initiative encourages schools to become more energy efficient, reduce waste, promote health, and to implement sustainable practices.
- Suicide Prevention – The suicide prevention initiative aims to increase awareness and access peer mentoring, mental health services, youth engagement, help schools develop protocols, train teachers and community members, and other innovative evidence based strategies.

Screening

To be eligible for consideration under this *Notice*, an applicant must meet the intent of all the requirements listed in this packet. ServeMontana staff will determine whether the applicant's proposal complies with the requirements. If responses do not meet the full intent of all requirements listed in this *Notice*, the application may be deemed unresponsive and/or incomplete and will be removed from the review process.

Timeline 2018

April 6   Official posting of the *Notice*

April 27   All applicants: Letter of Intent due to serve@mt.gov by 5pm
- Documentation of Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate, *if applicable.*

New applicants must also submit the following to serve@mt.gov
- Current A133 or other audit (*if applicable*)
- Readiness Self-Assessment, also online http://serve.mt.gov/funding/.

May 1-9   Technical assistance period* Submit questions via email to serve@mt.gov.

May 9 Last day to submit an Alternative Match Request
- Technical Assistance period closes at noon

May 24   All applicants: Application Due Date 5pm Mountain Time
- Complete Application, submitted in eGrants http://www.nationalservice.gov/egrants/
- Additional Documents, submitted via email to serve@mt.gov

June 7   Grant Review Work Group Meeting, in Helena, MT
     A representative of the Applicant *must* be present for the day.
     Reasonable accommodations available.

June 14   Commission on Community Service Meeting in Helena, MT
- vote on the Work Group funding recommendation

June 15-22   Applicant clarification period – All recommended applicants

June 22   Clarified applications must be resubmitted in eGrants *no later* than 5pm

July/Aug   Applicants notified of funding determination

*Technical Assistance
Applicants are encouraged to use the technical assistance period to ask clarifying questions, to obtain a better understanding of the RFP process, the project, and to notify the State of any ambiguities, inconsistencies, or errors discovered upon examination of this RFP. All questions and written responses will be posted publically on the ServeMontana website at http://serve.mt.gov/funding/. Participation in the technical assistance period is optional, however, it is advisable that all interested parties participate.

CNCS Focus Areas

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, amended by the 2009 Serve America Act, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focuses on a core set of issue areas. To carry out Congress' intent and to maximize the impact of investment in National Service, CNCS maintains six primary Focus Areas:

Disaster Services Grants provide support to increase the personal preparedness of individuals for disasters; improve individuals' readiness to respond to disasters; help individuals recover from disasters; and/or help communities mitigate disasters. Grantees may have the ability to respond to national disasters under cooperative agreements and FEMA mission assignments.

Economic Opportunity Grants provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people; help those people have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy; transition into or remain in safe, affordable housing; and/or have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed.

Education Grants provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved education outcomes for economically disadvantaged students; improved school readiness for economically disadvantaged 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 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; provide reforestation services after floods or fires; and more. AmeriCorps programs support activities, such as conservation and fire corps, which may help veterans and others learn new job skills through conservation service.

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

Veterans and Military Families Grants positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength with National Service, and increase the number of veterans, service members, and their families benefiting from service with AmeriCorps.

Capacity Building Grants provide support for capacity building activities provided by AmeriCorps members. As a general rule, capacity building activities are *indirect services* that enable organizations to provide more, better, and sustained *direct services* in the above six focus areas. Capacity building *cannot* be solely intended to support the administration/operations of the organization. Examples include recruiting and/or managing community volunteers, implementing effective volunteer management practices, conducting community assessments that identify goals and recommendations, developing new systems and processes (technology, performance management, training, etc.), or enhancing existing systems and business processes.

AmeriCorps Funding Priorities, (See Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) CNCS seeks to prioritize the investment of National Service resources in:

- Disaster Services - improving community resiliency through preparation, response, recovery & mitigation
- Economic Opportunity - increasing economic opportunities for communities by engaging opportunity youth, either as the population served and/or as AmeriCorps members, to prepare them for the workforce.
- Education - improving student academic performance in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Mathematics (STEM)
- Healthy Futures – Reducing and/or Preventing Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse
- Veterans and Military Families -- positively impacting the quality of life of veterans and improving military family strength
- Governor and Mayor Initiatives: An application for the Governor and Mayor Initiative must clearly reflect that the application is from one Governor, one or more Mayors, and a minimum of two nonprofits.
- Rural intermediaries that demonstrate measureable impact and primarily serve communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure.
- Safer communities
- Encore Programs

To receive priority consideration and points for applying within a *Notice* priority (ies), applicants must demonstrate that the priority area is a primary intervention of the program and it's intended outcomes and, must include a quality program design. Responses that propose programs for priority consideration are not guaranteed funding.

National Performance Measures
CNCS expects applicants to use National Performance Measures as part of their comprehensive performance measurement strategy that relies on both performance and evaluation data to learn from and to make strategic adjustments to achieve agency goals. CNCS does not expect applicants to select performance measures to correspond to each potential member activity or community impact.

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. In the application narrative, applicants should discuss the rationale for setting output and outcome targets for their performance measures. Recompeting applicants proposing to significantly increase or decrease output or outcome targets from their previous grant should provide a justification for this change.

CNCS values the quality of performance measures over the quantity of performance measures. As described in the Application Instructions, applicants must include all the information about the proposed performances measure in the Performance Measure section of the application in eGrants (*CNCS's web-based grants management system*). 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 Instructions are met. Providing performance measures information elsewhere in the narrative cannot be in lieu of providing full information in the Performance Measures section of the application in eGrants.

For more information, refer to the National Performance Measure Instructions on the ServeMontana Website.

> ***Please refer to the CNCS Performance Measures Instructions document for detailed information regarding the performance measure statements and data collection expectations.***

Federal Award Information
Available Funds
OCS expects a rigorous AmeriCorps grant review and selection process. Funding level is subject to availability of annual appropriations. OCS/CNCS reserve the right to prioritize funding to existing awards over making new awards.

Estimated Award Amount
Grant awards have multiple components: operating funds and AmeriCorps member positions with corresponding Education Award amounts. 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 project.

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

The earliest suggested start date is September 1, 2018, understanding that some applicants may choose to operate on the calendar year. The project start date may not occur prior to the date CNCS awards the grant. AmeriCorps members may not enroll prior to the start date of the award. AmeriCorps members may not begin service prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period as designated in the grant award. A program may not certify any hours a member performs prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period.

Type of Award
CNCS/OCS may award a Cost Reimbursement line item operating grant to any successful applicant for Traditional AmeriCorps program, or a Professional Corps. CNCS will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year. See the *Eligible Applicants* section and the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for more information.

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement	
Available Subtypes	Traditional	Professional Corps
Maximum Cost per MSY	$14,725	Up to $1,000*
Type of Slots in the National Service Trust	All	All
Financial Reporting Requirements	Yes	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.
Available to new Applicants	Yes	Yes; Living allowance or salary paid to members may not be counted toward the match requirements
Budget Submission Required	Yes	

Availability of Funds linked to enrollment & retention of awarded MSYs	No
Special Requirements	N/A
Match requirement	First-time applicant required to match at 24% each year for the first three-year funding period; subsequent match requirements determined according to 45 CFR 2521.60; NCSA 121(e)(5) (42 USC) requires that other federal funds used to match a grant awarded under this *Notice* must report the amount and source of these funds.

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

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

Eligibility Information

1. 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)
  - In addition to being eligible to apply under this *Notice*, federally recognized Indian Tribes are also eligible to apply under a separate *Notice* of Federal Funding Opportunity for Indian Tribes for operating or planning grants.
- Institutions of higher education (2 C. F.R. §200.54)
- Local governments (2 C.F.R. §200.64)
- Nonprofit organizations (2 C.F.R. §200.70)
- States (2 C.F.R. §200.90)

Previously receiving funds from CNCS or another federal agency is not a prerequisite to apply to this *Notice*.

<u>State and Territory Service Commissions (for Single-State Applicants)</u>
Organizations that propose to operate in only one state must apply through the Governor-appointed State Service Commission. Each state and territory commission administers its own selection process and submits the applications it selects to compete for funding directly to CNCS. A Single-State application from a State or Territory with a Commission that is submitted by the applicant directly to CNCS rather than the Commission will be considered noncompliant and will not be reviewed.

<u>National Direct Applicants</u>
Multi-State: Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one State or Territory apply directly to CNCS. While National Direct applicants do not apply to State Service Commissions, there are clear requirements to coordinate with the Commissions for states in which National Service programs will operate. ServeMontana expects National Direct applicants to comply with CNCS's consultation requirements.

New & Recompete Applicants
Applicants to this *Notice* must request at least 15 member positions (slots), with a minimum of 20 strongly encouraged. Organizations applying for the first time are not typically awarded more than 50 member positions (slots)*.* Formula applicants are eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement and Education Award Program (EAP) grants.

Continuation applicants
Organizations that have current AmeriCorps awards that do not end in FY18 must submit an application to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. See the Application Instructions. Requests by existing continuation applicants for increases in the level of funding or number of positions will be assessed using the criteria under this *Notice*.

Continuation Expansion: Requests for continuation expansions will be assessed using the same criteria as the new and re-compete applications and whether the applicant has increased, maintained or lowered the cost per MSY.

Threshold Issues Applications should meet the following threshold requirements.
- All applicants must request a minimum of 15 member slots, 20 strongly encouraged. New and recompete applicants with less than 15 members will be deemed noncompliant and will not be reviewed.
- All applicants must consider the number of members and staff that will attend the 2019 ServeMontana Symposium (tentative March 6-8, 2019 in Helena, MT) and budget for cost of attendance for *at least* one-third of the total attendees on the CNCS share of the budget, in staff and member training, as appropriate. Calculate at $200.00 for registration per attendee that will require lodging and $65.00 for Helena based members. Include travel with mileage rates in staff and member travel, as appropriate.
- If an applicant is applying for a Professional Corps grant, its application must demonstrate that the community where 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 (ex. tutoring programs 45 CFR 2522.910-.940), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.

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

Under section 745 of Title VII, Division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, if CNCS is aware that any corporation has any unpaid Federal tax liability,
- which 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 *Notice*. (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 *Notice*.

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

2. Funding Restrictions

A. Types of Grants
AmeriCorps grants awarded under this Notice will be awarded on a line item cost reimbursement only.

B. Member Living Allowance
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. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either CNCS or grantee share. Exceptions noted below.

Table: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1700	$13,732	$27,464
Half-time	900	n/a	$14,539
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	$10,905
Quarter-time	450	n/a	$7,270
Minimum-time	300	n/a	$4,847

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

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

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

C. Maximum Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)

The maximum cost per MSY is determined on an annual basis by 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.

Table: Maximum Cost per MSY

Grant Program	Maximum
Individual State/Territory Program (Cost Reimbursement)	$14,725*
Professional Corps Grant (Cost Reimbursement)	$1,000*

*Programs operating in rural communities (as defined in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) and cost reimbursement programs that recruit opportunity youth as AmeriCorps members may request up to $15,100 cost per MSY for the AmeriCorps members that will be serving in rural areas or who are opportunity youth.

*The assumption is that Professional Corps will cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program with non-AmeriCorps funds and thus will not request operating funds as part of the application. Grants will be considered with operating funds of up to $1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate in its narrative and supporting budget materials significant organizational financial need and substantial challenges to raising non-AmeriCorps resources.

D. 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. A member has up to seven years after the term of service to use the Education Award. CNCS will provide the updated Education Award amounts at the time of grant award.

- Note: Education Awards amounts are determined by the grant year that the applicant was awarded. This may be different than the amount advertised on the CNCS website.

3. Cost Sharing and Matching

Cost Reimbursement Grants

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

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

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 (FFR). Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout. The living allowance provided to AmeriCorps members in Professional Corps programs (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) does not count toward the matching requirement.

Alternative Match
Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase 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. An alternative match request must be submitted to OCS by the date stated in the Timeline, page 4.

Indirect Costs
CNCS allows applicants to include indirect costs in application budgets. Based on qualifying factors, applicants have the option of using a federally approved indirect cost rate, a 10% de minimis rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly as outlined in 2 C.F.R. 200.413 Direct costs. States, local governments and Indian Tribes may use approved cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across federal awards. Applicants who hold a federal negotiated indirect cost rate or will be using the 10% de minimis rate must enter that information in the Organization section in eGrants.
- *However, under section 121(d) of the NCSA and CNCS regulations at 45 C.F.R. 2517.710, no more than 5% of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps grants.*

Review and Selection Process
Applications that are cleared through this process will be sent the Corporation for National and Community Service for final funding determination.

The review process will consist of:
- OCS staff review Letters of Intent; Appendix B, Readiness Self-Assessments (New Applicants); and if applicable, Audit Report. If the applicant is determined to have sufficient capacity to manage federal grants they are eligible to continue the application process.
- Submitted applications are reviewed for compliance with pertinent state and federal regulations, and responsibility to the request for proposal. All compliant and responsive applications will continue through the review process.
- Applications passing staff review will next be reviewed by a Grant Review Work Group responsible for scoring applications and making funding decisions.
- Grant Review Work Group recommendations are presented to the Montana Commission on Community Service for approval. If the proposal of the review committee is rejected by the Montana Commission the review process may be repeated.

Funding priority will be given to continuation applicants. Following continuation applications, funding priority will be given to applications in order of the scores assigned by the Grant Review Work Group. Review scores will not necessarily have a direct bearing on the distribution of funds. However, a lower scoring application will not be recommended for funding at the expense of a higher scoring one. The distribution of funds will be based on the assessment of the Grant Review Work Group as to how best to carry out the mission of OCS. When making funding recommendations, the Grant Review Work Group will consider the score of the application, the effectiveness of the program in addressing Montana's needs, the priorities, if any, set by the Governor and/or State Service Plan, and the input of commission staff.

For all applications:
E. Risk Assessment Evaluation
Commission staff will assess recompeting subgrantees' past performance and submit those assessments to CNCS. This assessment is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding or the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this assessment will inform funding decisions. In evaluating programmatic performance, CNCS will consider the following for applicants that are current grantees:

- Grant progress reports – attainment of Performance Measures
- Enrollment and retention
- Compliance with 30 day enrollment and exit requirements in the AmeriCorps portal
- Site visit or other monitoring findings (if applicable)
- OIG findings (if applicable)
- Significant opportunities and/or risks of the grantee related to National Service
- Commission rank

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

F. Financial and Risk Assessment Evaluation
CNCS staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant, including conducting due diligence to ensure an applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding, the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria, and the assessment of programmatic past performance. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If CNCS determines that an award will be made, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award. In evaluating risks, OCS may consider the following, but not limited to:

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

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Application Submission Information

1. **Application Package**
   Information necessary to apply can be accessed at http://serve.mt.gov/funding/. Applicants may email serve@mt.gov or call 406.444.5547 for printed application materials. TTY number is 800.833.3722.

2. **Content and Form of Application Submission**
   In eGrants, applicants will enter the following components of a complete application:
   - Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: Automatically populates when applicants complete eGrants data field
   - Narratives
     - Executive Summary
     - Program Design
     - Organizational Capability
     - Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
     - Evaluation Plan
   - Logic Model
   - Standard Form 424 Budget
   - Performance Measures
   - Authorization, Assurances, and Certification

3. Dun & Bradstreet University Numbering System (DUNS) Number & System for Award Management
Applications must include a DUNS number and an Employer Identification Number. The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number. DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online: DUNS Request Service. OCS advises registering at least 30 days before the application due date.

After obtaining a DUNS number, all applicants must register with the System for Award Management (SAM) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete and if a grant is awarded, throughout the life of the Award. SAM registration must be renewed annually. OCS suggests finalizing a new registration or renewing an existing one at least two weeks before the application deadline to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise. Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and address on all grant applications. Applicants that do not comply with these requirements may be ineligible to receive an award. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees.

4. Submission Dates and Times
Notification of Intent to Apply. Submission of a Letter Of Intent to apply is strongly encouraged for this competition and is due **April 27, 2018.** Eligibility is not based on submission of Notification of Intent to Apply. Submit the letter of intent by completing the template and emailing it to serve@mt.gov

Applications are due Wednesday, May 24, 2018 by 5:00pm Mountain Standard Time to OCS via eGrants. This deadline applies to new, recompeting, and continuation applicants. ServeMontana reserves the right to add documents to the RFP and to extend the submission deadline. Any *Notice* of such extended deadline will be posted on OCS's website. Late applications may not be reviewed.

Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates
Depending on the availability of funding, CNCS expects that successful State Commissions will be notified no later than the end of **July 2018**, contingent on appropriations. Applicants will be notified by OCS as to funding

decisions. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. A formal *Notice* of Grant Award will be produced and the state contracting process will be initiated.

Submission of Additional Documents
Applicants are required to submit the following additional documents by the application submission deadline:
All applicants
- Current indirect rate cost agreement, if used to claim indirect/administrative costs.
- Evaluation briefs, reports, studies. Refer to the *Evidence Base* section for instructions by evidence tier.
- Member Training memo: In no more than one double spaced page, describe how AmeriCorps members will receive high-quality training to provide effective service, and how AmeriCorps members, site supervisors and community volunteers will be informed of, and will adhere to AmeriCorps requirements, including Prohibited Activities.
- AmeriCorps Identification memo: In no more than one double spaced page, describe how participants will know they are AmeriCorps members, how participants will be trained on describing their role and position while in service, and how staff and community members will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- Two letters of support

Recompeting applications
- Evaluation report, if required. Please see the *Evidence Base* section for further information.
- Learning memo, if required. Any applicant required to submit an evaluation report in order to comply with CNCS evaluation requirements must also submit a learning memo that describes how they are using the evaluation to improve and to inform their activities in the next funding cycle. The learning memo must be in a 12-point font and should not exceed three pages of double-spaced text.
  The learning memo should include:
    - A short summary of key learnings from the evaluation
    - An explanation of how the program will incorporate key learnings into its strategy, design or implementation
    - An explanation of how these changes will improve the program
    - A discussion of how learning from the evaluation may inform next steps in the program's long-term research agenda

Governor/Mayor Initiative applicants (New applicants)
- Letter(s) of support from partnering nonprofits
- Letter of support cosigned by Governor/Tribal Chair and participating Mayor(s)

Rural Intermediaries: Letters of support from the consortium members, no more than three.

Entities applying on behalf of a state or Federally Recognized Tribe
- Sanctioning resolution adopted by the Tribal Council of each Indian Tribe. (See the *Eligible Applicants*)

Additional Documents must be emailed to serve@mt.gov with the subject line: [Legal Applicant Name] – [Application ID number]. Emails should include the following information:
- the legal applicant name and its point of contact information
- a list of documents that should be attached to the email
- individually saved files that are clearly labeled
- files that include the legal applicant name and application ID number within the body of each document.

Attachments to emails should include
- Individually saved files
- Each file should also include a header or title within the body of each additional document to include the legal applicant name and application ID number.

Only submit items requested in this *Notice* and Application Instructions. Items not requested that are submitted will not be reviewed or returned.

Late Applications
All applications received after the submission deadline published in this *Notice* are presumed to be non-compliant. In order to overcome this presumption, the applicant must:
Provide a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that caused the delay, including:
- the timing and specific cause(s) of the delay
- the ticket number if a request for assistance was submitted to the National Service Hotline
- any information provided to the applicant by the National Service Hotline
- any other documentation or evidence that supports the justification

OCS must receive the written justification no more than one business day of the submission deadline at serve@mt.gov. Applicants are required to continue working in eGrants, CNCS's web-based system and with the National Service Hotline to submit the application as soon possible. OCS will determine whether or not to accept a late application on a case-by-case basis. Applicants that do not submit a justification or any other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the published timeframe will not be reviewed or selected for award.

Note: OCS/CNCS will not consider an advance request to submit a late application. Applicants are encouraged to continue working on their application until it is submitted. If you are experiencing technical difficulties, please carefully review and follow the guidance listed above, and submit your application as soon as possible.

5. How to Submit an Application in eGrants
Applicants must submit their applications electronically via the CNCS eGrants system. Because it is a unique system, it is *strongly recommended* that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application at least two weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word processing document, then copy and paste the document into the appropriate eGrants fields no later than five days prior to the deadline. The length of a document in word processing software will likely be different than what will print out in eGrants-follow the page limits. The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must be using eGrants under his or her own account in order to sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Contact the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via eGrants Questions 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.

An application is only complete if it includes all required documentation and is received by the due date and time. *Incomplete applications will not be considered*. All additional required documents should include the applicant organization name and eGrants Application ID number at the top of the page and are due by the application deadline at serve@mt.gov.

Page Limits

Applications may not exceed 12 pages for the Narratives or 15 pages for Multi-Focus Intermediaries with more than five operating sites. The number of locations entered by the applicant into the "multi-state operating sites" field in eGrants will be used to determine whether a multi-site application has more than five operating sites. The "multi-site operating sites" field can be found by clicking on the "operating sites" link in eGrants. Multi-state applicants that list five or fewer operating sites cannot exceed 15 pages for the Narrative.

In determining whether an application complies with page limits, CNCS will include:
- The application's Executive Summary, SF 424 Facesheet, and
- The Narrative portions contained in the Program Design, Organizational Capacity, and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy sections of the application.

The application page limit does not include the Budget, narrative portion of the Evaluation Plan, the Logic Model, performance measures, or the supplementary materials, if applicable. However, the Logic Model may not exceed three pages when printed with the application from the "Review" tab in eGrants. Note the length of a document in word processing may be different than the eGrants printout. Reviewers will not consider material that is over the page limits in the printed report. However, eGrants will allow an applicant to enter text that exceeds page limits.

When determining compliance for page limits, OCS/CNCS will only consider the number of pages as printed from the "Review" tab in eGrants (See the "View/Print application"). Therefore, to verify that the application is complaint with the page limits, applicants are encouraged to print the application from the "Review" tab prior to submission. OCS/CNCS will not consider results of any alternative printing methods in determining whether an application complies with page limits. This applies to both the application page limit and the Logic Model page limit. Do not submit other items not requested in this *Notice* or Application Instructions. Submitted items not requested will not be reviewed or returned.

Learning Memo (if a recompeting applicant) must be in a 12 point font or larger and should not exceed three single sided pages double spaced text.

Assessment Criteria The score sheet will be available online.

Each applicant must describe a project to deploy AmeriCorps members effectively to meet significant community need(s). OCS urges applicants to submit high quality applications that follow the *Notice* and the Application Instructions. Application and budget quality are important factors in determining the funding recommendation.

Application Review Information by Application Fields

A. Executive Summary (Required - 0 percent)

In the interest of transparency and open government, executive summaries of awarded grant applications will be posted on **www.nationalservice.gov** . To complete the Executive Summary, fill in the blanks of the sentences below. Do not deviate from the template.

> The [Name of the organization] proposes to have [# of] AmeriCorps members who will [member service activities] in [locations AmeriCorps members will serve]. At the end of the program year, AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome(s) of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage [number of leveraged community volunteers, if applicable] who engage 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.

In the interest of transparency and open government CNCS will post all Executive Summaries of awarded grant applications on **www.nationalservice.gov**.

B. Program Design (50 percent)

Reviewers consider the quality of the application with the following criteria. Sub-criteria are not of equal value.

1. Need, 4 points

The problem that the program will address is prevalent and severe in communities where members will serve and has been documented with relevant data.

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

2. Theory of Change and Logic Model, 24 points

The Theory of Change shall address:

- The applicant's 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.
- The service role of AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.

The Logic Model shall concisely depict:
- A summary of the community problem outlined in the narrative.
- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:
  - Number of locations or sites in which members will provide services
  - Number of AmeriCorps members that will deliver the intervention
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
  - The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention)
  - The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
  - The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level)
- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served, hours of service delivered, types and number of activities conducted.) If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as output indicators
- Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. 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. Recompeting applicants proposing to significantly increase or decrease output or outcome targets from their previous grant must provide a justification for this change.

Applicants should use National Performance Measures if they are part of the program's theory of change. Applicants are not required to use National Performance Measures and should only use them if they are part of the program's theory of change. 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.

3. Evidence Base, 12 points
The assessment of an applicant's evidence base has two steps. First, the applicant will be assigned to an evidence tier. (See Mandatory Supplemental Guidance.) Second, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the applicant's overall capacity to collect and use data (including performance measurement and evaluation data) will be assessed and scored.

Evidence Tier:
An evidence tier will be assessed for each applicant for the purpose of applying the strategic characteristics (moderate/strong evidence) and 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. Applicants should use the evidence checklist to self-assess their evidence tier before completing the application.

Applicants must 1) state the evidence tier in which they think they qualify; 2) clearly indicate and describe the evidence that supports the highest evidence tier for which they are eligible and 3) describe the complete body of evidence that supports their program intervention including evidence from lower tiers. Applicants should pay particular attention to the requirements for each tier of evidence. All requirements must be met in order for applicants to be assigned to a tier. Applicants who do not fully describe their evidence base may not be assigned to a tier for which the applicant otherwise may have qualified.

In 2017, the evidence tiers of funded AmeriCorps State and National competitive grantees' were as follows: Strong 9%, Moderate 9%, Preliminary 38%, and Pre-Preliminary 27%. 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 classifying their evidence as preliminary who propose to replicate an identical or similar evidence-based intervention, as well as applicants classifying their evidence as either moderate or strong evidence should reference the information about the evidence tiers. Submission of additional documents (e.g. advocacy pieces, policy briefs, other narratives that are not research studies or program evaluations) that are not consistent with the guidance and requirements described in the *Notice* will not be reviewed.

All applicants must include as much detailed information as possible in the Evidence section of the application. All applicants who have collected relevant performance measurement data must describe this data fully as outlined in the requirements for the pre-preliminary evidence tier. Applicants who have conducted evaluations of their own program or that are replicating other evidence-based programs must describe these evaluations in the application narrative as outlined in the evidence tier descriptions. Applicants are advised to focus on presenting high-quality evidence from up to two of the strongest and most relevant studies while also summarizing the remaining body of evidence that exists for the program. Studies must be evaluations of specific programs or interventions. Research that does not focus on a specific program or intervention, but rather focuses on a broader issue area or population, will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points.

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

1) The date the research or evaluation was completed, and the time period for which the intervention was examined
2) A description that shows the study's relevance to the proposed intervention
3) A description of the target population studied (e.g., the demographics)
4) The methodology used in the study (e.g., outcome study, random assignment, regression discontinuity design, propensity score matching, etc.)
5) A description of the data, data source, and data collection methods
6) The outcomes or impacts examined and the study findings

7) The strength of the findings (e.g., effect size, confidence level, statistical power of the study design and statistical significance of findings).

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

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

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

If the evidence submitted as part of an application does not describe a well-designed and well-implemented evaluation, the applicant may be considered for a lower evidence tier. Applicants must meet all requirements of the evidence tier in order to be considered for that tier. Applicants who do not meet all requirements will be considered for a lower tier.

Evidence Quality and Evaluation Capacity
After the applicant's evidence tier has been assessed, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the applicant's overall capacity to collect and use data (including performance measurement and evaluation data) will be assessed and scored. Applicants must address the following standards in the application narrative. The standards are weighted differently for applicants in different evidence tiers to reflect expected variations in program life cycle and evaluation capacity at each stage of the evidence continuum.

Evidence Quality and Evaluation Capacity Standards	No Evidence & Pre-Preliminary Points	Preliminary Points	Moderate & Strong Points
The applicant's evidence is of satisfactory quality. Applicants with no evidence describe an evidence-informed theory of change.	2	2	2
The applicant's data collection systems are sufficient to yield high quality process and outcome data.	5	4	1
The applicant demonstrates adequate capacity to use process and outcome data including performance measurement (and evaluation data if applicable) to inform continuous learning and program improvement.	5	5	5
The applicant's long-term research agenda is aligned to the organization's learning needs and position on the evidence continuum (evidence tier).	0	1	4

Evidence quality and evaluation capacity standards must be addressed in the application narrative. All applicants, including new grantees, are required to provide additional information in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field of the application, See Section E. Evaluation Plan.

4. Notice Priority, 3 points

- The applicant proposed program fits within one or more of the 2018 AmeriCorps funding priorities as outlined in the *Funding Priorities* section and more fully described in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance.
- The proposed program meets all of the requirements detailed in the *Funding Priorities* section and in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance.

5. Member Experience, 7 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.
    - AmeriCorps members will have access to meaningful service experiences that includes education about the community problem/need and the community in which they will serve.
    - AmeriCorps members will have access to opportunities for reflection that involves the intentional processing of members' experience and the incorporation of lessons learned
- 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.

C. Organizational Capability (25 percent)

Reviewers consider the quality of the application with the following criteria. Sub-criteria are not of equal value.

1. Organizational Background and Staffing (7 points)

- The organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program.

2. Compliance and Accountability (8 points)

- The organization will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities at the grantee, subgrantee (if applicable), and service site locations.
- The applicant will hold subgrantees (if applicable) and service site locations accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified.
- If applicable, the CNCS-required evaluation report meets CNCS requirements.
- If applicable, the CNCS-required evaluation report is of satisfactory quality.

3. Culture that Values Learning (8 points)

- The applicant's board, management, and staff collects and uses information for learning and decision making.
- The applicant's management and staff produces frequent reports on how well the organization is implementing its programs and strategies.

4. Member Supervision (2 points)

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

D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)

Reviewers consider the quality of the application with the following criteria. Sub-criteria are not of equal value.

This criteria will be assessed based on the budget submitted. No narrative should be entered in the narrative box except for "See budget**"**

1. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 points)
- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors and proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award.
- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget is in compliance with the budget instructions.
- Match is submitted with adequate information to support the amount written in the budget.
- 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:
- Current indirect rate cost if used to claim indirect/administrative costs.
- Identify the non-CNCS funding and resources necessary to support the project, including for Fixed Amount applicants.
- Indicate the amount of non-CNCS resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash), the sources of these commitments, and if the commitments are proposed or secured.

E. Evaluation Plan (Required for recompeting grantees - 0 percent)

If the applicant is competing for the first time, 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 CNCS may require submission of data collection instruments if a grant is approved for funding.

If the applicant is recompeting for AmeriCorps funds for the first time (see definition of "recompeting" below) 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 and a learning memo as attachments (see the *Submission of Additional Documents* section for more information), and must also submit an evaluation plan for the next three-year period in the "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field in the system. Evaluations 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/cncs-evaluation-policies):

- A short description of the theory of change - why the proposed intervention is expected to produce the proposed results
- Outcome of interest - clear and measurable outcomes that are aligned with the theory of change and will be assessed during the evaluation
- Research questions to be addressed by the study - concrete research questions (or hypotheses) that are clearly connected to the outcomes
- Study components – a) a proposed research design for the evaluation including a rationale for the design selected, an assessment of its strengths and limitations, and a description of the main components; b) description of the sampling methods, measurement tools, and data collection procedures, and c) an analysis plan
- Qualifications needed for the evaluator
- The proposed budget

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

Frequently Asked Questions: http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/evaluation/cncs-evaluation-policies

The evaluation requirements differ depending on the amount of the grant, as described in 45 CFR §2522.710:
- If the applicant is a State/Territory subgrantee and/or National Direct Grantee (other than an Education Award Program grantee), and its average annual CNCS program grant is $500,000 or more, it must arrange for an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in 45 CFR §2522.730.
- If the applicant is a State/Territory subgrantee and/or National Direct Grantee whose average annual CNCS program grant is less than $500,000, or an Education Award Program Grantee, it must conduct an internal or an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in 45 CFR §2522.730.

For purposes of compliance with evaluation plan and report requirements, a program is considered a recompeting application if it satisfies the CNCS definition of "same project" (*see* Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) and has been funded competitively for at least three of the last five years. If the project satisfies the definition of same project and 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 satisfied the definition of same project and the applicant has completed two or more competitively funded three-year cycles, including at least four years of competitive funding in the last five years, the applicant will be required to submit an evaluation report as well as an evaluation plan for the upcoming 3 year grant. If the project does not satisfy the definition of recompeting, it will not be required to submit an evaluation plan or completed evaluation report.

The "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field of the Narrative does not count toward the page limit of the application; however, it has 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 CNCS's web-based management system.

State/Territory subgrantees and/or National Direct Grantees recompeting for funds may be eligible to apply for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. Grantees requesting 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 at: https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/files/guidance_for_grantees_approval_of_alternative_evaluation_approach.pdf

If a request for the alternative evaluation approach and 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.

F. Amendment Justification (0 percent)

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

G. Clarification Information (0 percent)

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

H. Continuation Changes (0 percent)

Enter N/A if renew applicant. This field is used to enter changes in the application narratives in continuation requests.

Assessment of Continuation Applications

For each continuation application, ServeMontana staff will complete an assessment document (Appendix A) that will provide reviewers with critical information about the current performance of the grantee. Reviewers will provide each continuation applicant with feedback on the narrative and budget, but will only score the application based on the information provided in the staff assessment document. The following are the scoring areas included on the staff assessment document:

1. **Budget, Match, and Cost Per MSY, 10 Points**
   Staff will provide reviewers with information pertaining to the program's performance in relation to their budget. This information will include spending as compared to their budget, ability to meet budgeted match and the programs cost per MSY as compared to previous operating periods.

2. **Compliance Findings, 10 Points**
   Staff will describe any compliance issues and areas of weakness/risk identified during the last full year of program operation at the organization, the subgrantees (if applicable), and service site locations (if applicable). If the applicant, its subgrantees, and/or service site locations had compliance or areas of weakness/risk identified, provide an explanation and describe the corrective action taken and the plan for improvement. This will include compliance with 30 day rule for member enrollments and exits.

3. Member Enrollment, 10 Points

If the program enrolled less than 100% of the slots received during its last full year of program operation, the program should provide an explanation and describe the plan for improvement in the continuation narrative. Enrollment rate is calculated as slots filled, plus refill slots filled, divided by slots awarded.

4. Member Retention, 10 Points

If the applicant was not able to retain all of its members during the last full year of program operation, the applicant should provide an explanation and describe the plan for improvement in the continuation narrative. While retention rates may vary among effective programs depending on the program model, the expectation is that Grantees to pursue the highest retention rate possible. Retention rate is calculated as the number of members exited with award (full or partial award) divided by the number of members enrolled.

5. Performance Measure Progress Versus Stated Goals (10 Points)

Staff will describe the applicant's performance against performance measure targets during its last year of program operations. How successful has the applicant been in solving the identified problem? If the applicant did not meet performance targets, provide an explanation and describe the plan for improvement.

Consideration of Integrity and Performance System Information

Prior to making any award that exceeds $150,000, CNCS is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM and FAPIIS (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). Additionally CNCS may expand upon these requirements and use its discretion to review and consider information about any applicant receiving an award, including those under $150,000.

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

CNCS will consider any comments by any applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing its review of risk posed by the applicant under the Risk Assessment Evaluation section of this *Notice.*

Clarification Process

As a result of the review, applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information and/or make changes to their application including changes to the budget. This information is used by OCS and CNCS staff in making final recommendations. Applications may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked clarification questions. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to requests for additional information in response to clarification questions in a timely fashion may result in the removal of applications from consideration.

Federal Award Administration Information
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 CFR Parts 200 and 2205.

Requests for Improper Payment Information
CNCS will, from time to time, request documentation from recipients 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.

CNCS Terms and Conditions
All awards made under this *Notice* will be subject to the 2018 CNCS General Terms and Conditions, and the 2018 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-cncs-grants.

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

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

All award-funded staff, national service participants, and volunteers must undergo NSCHC that include:
1. A nationwide name-based search of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW)
2. Either
   a. A name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the person's state of residence and in the state where the person will serve/work; *or*
   b. A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check.

Special Rule for Persons Serving Vulnerable Populations. Award-funded staff, National Service participants, and volunteers *with recurring access to vulnerable populations* (i.e., children age 17 or younger, individuals age 60 or older, or individuals with disabilities) must undergo NSCHC that include:
1. A nationwide name-based check of the NSOPW and;
2. Both
   a. A name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the person's state of residence and in the state where the person will serve/work; *and*
   b. A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check.
See 45 C.F.R.2540.200–2540.207 and CNCS Criminal History Check Resources for more information and FAQs.

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

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

While applications will not be evaluated on these criteria, grantees are expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are providing CNCS with high quality performance measure data. At a minimum, grantees should have policies and practices which address the following five aspects of data quality:
- The data measures what it intends to measure;
- The grantee collects data in a consistent manner;
- The grantee takes steps to correct data errors;
- The grantee ensures that the data reported is complete; and
- The grantee actively reviews data prior to submission.

Progress Report Data
In addition to semi-annual reporting of progress toward the grant's approved performance measure outputs and outcomes, additional demographic and narrative data must be reported annually (as applicable), including the number of applicants for AmeriCorps positions and the number of volunteers recruited and/or supported by AmeriCorps members (both episodic and ongoing volunteers.) Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the recipient's ability to secure future OCS and CNCS funding.
- For further guidance and training resources see – Resources: Data Collection and Instruments.

Re-Focusing Funding
CNCS and OCS reserve the right to re-focus funding in the event of disaster or other compelling need for service.

Agency Contact
Montana Governor's Office of Community Service
Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
Grants Manager: 406.444.5547 ssadowski@mt.gov
General email: serve@mt.gov

Other Information In addition to consulting the Application Instructions, Supplementary Materials, and AmeriCorps regulations applicants are encouraged also to consult the ServeMontana website for materials that may be updated during the RFP period.

ServeMontana, the Governor's Office of Community Service
Staff Assessment of Continuation Applications

AmeriCorps State Grant Applications
Staff will complete the following assessment for all previously funded applicants.

1) Applicant:
2) Federal Request:
3) Total Match:
4) Match %:

	Current Grant ('17)	Request ('18)	Difference
Federal Funds			$0
Cash Match			$0
In-Kind Match			$0
Total Match	$0	$0	$0
Match %	#DIV/0!	0%	#DIV/0!
Project Cost	$0	$0	$0
MSY	-		0.00
Cost per MSY	$0	$0	$0

5) Areas of Assessment
   i. Budget, match, and cost per MSY (10 Points)
   ii. Compliance findings
   iii. Member enrollment rate and 30 compliance
   iv. Member retention and 30 day compliance
   v. Performance measure performance versus goals

Performance Measure statements	2016-17 Grant Year		
	Target	Actual	Status

End of AmeriCorps State FORMULA Grant Request for Proposal (RFP)