

# serve montana

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE



Thank you for your interest in an AmeriCorps Grant! This packet outlines the process for applying for AmeriCorps grants funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) that are overseen by the Montana Governor's Office of Community Service (ServeMontana).

## **Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding**

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved National Service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving 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 for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans, for up to 7 years. Members age 55+ may be able to transfer their Education Award to a family member.

CNCS may award a Cost Reimbursement or an Education Award Program grant to any successful applicant, but the availability of a Fixed Amount grant is limited to certain applicants.

This *Notice* should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520–2550, the Glossary, Application Instructions, and the Performance Measure Instructions which are incorporated by reference. The documents can be found at <http://www.serve.mt.gov/funding>. The full regulations are available online at [www.ecfr.gov](http://www.ecfr.gov). The TTY number is 800.833.3722. For a printed copy of related material, call 406.444.5547.

## **ServeMontana**

The Montana 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; promotes volunteerism in emergency management and preparedness; and helps to strengthen and expand volunteer opportunities for all Montanans.

**Expectations** ServeMontana expects that all respondents display the following characteristics:

- ✓ Inclusive in the design and delivery making the program accessible to individuals with disabilities
- ✓ Collaborative approach to planning, design, and the delivery of the program
- ✓ Address rural, underserved or areas of poverty not currently served by AmeriCorps programs

### **Montana AmeriCorps State Process**

To be eligible for consideration, an applicant must meet the intent of all the requirements listed in this packet. 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 not considered in funding decisions.

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>

For more information about starting up an AmeriCorps State program or National AmeriCorps programs, please visit [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov), and [http://s3.amazonaws.com/resource\\_center\\_video/taag/program-start-up/index.html](http://s3.amazonaws.com/resource_center_video/taag/program-start-up/index.html).

### **Who Should Apply To This Process?**

Organizations that are proposing an AmeriCorps project that operates only in Montana must apply to this competition through the Governor's OCS. The Governor's OCS will engage a Grant Review Work Group to review grants put applicants through a selection process, described in this RFP, and select applicants for recommended funding. Funding recommendations are subject to Commission of Community Service approval.

### **Applicants That May Apply Directly to CNCS**

Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one state or territory apply directly to CNCS. Tribal organizations may apply directly to CNCS or through the state commission.

### **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 grant application.* Any unauthorized contact may disqualify the application from further consideration.

Sarah Sadowski, OCS Grants Manager  
Telephone: 406.444.5547  
Fax: 406.444.4418  
[ssadowski@mt.gov](mailto:ssadowski@mt.gov)

Betsy Miller, OCS Grants Coordinator  
Telephone: 406.444.1718  
Fax: 406.444.4418  
[bemiller@mt.gov](mailto:bemiller@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. Please visit <http://serve.mt.gov/mtstate-service-plan/> to read the plan. ServeMontana strongly encourages in new programs that meet the needs identified in that Plan.

## Governor's Initiatives

AmeriCorps Programs that receive funding through this notice will be overseen by ServeMontana in the management of their grant. Because ServeMontana is part of the Governor's office, applicants are encouraged to engage in the initiatives set by the Governor. These initiatives are:

- Childhood Hunger - The Governor and First Lady's initiative to fight childhood hunger in Montana and to increase participation in existing—and initiate the start-up of—breakfast after the bell programs in Montana's schools.
- Early Childhood Education - This is Governor Bullock's Initiative to ensure every Montana child arrives at kindergarten ready to learn. Children who receive high-quality early learning are more likely to read at grade level, graduate from high school, and earn more money as adults.
- SMART Schools – “SMART” Schools refers to a schools' ability to “Save Money and Resources Today” by implementing simple behavioral and operational changes to promote energy efficiency and health. The SMART Schools initiative is meant to encourage schools to become more energy efficient, reduce waste, promote health, and implement sustainable practices.
- Forests in Focus – The Governor's Forests in Focus 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 focus on land management activities that restore forests and watersheds, drought resiliency, wildfire risk reduction, improve habitat and water quality.
- American Indian Affairs- The Governor's American Indian Affairs initiative aims to increase relationships, 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.

## Screening

To be eligible for consideration under this notice, an applicant must meet the intent of all the requirements listed in this packet. Serve Montana 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 removed from the review process.

**Appeals** The appeals process for ServeMontana is located:

<http://serve.mt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Appeals-Process-Updated-10.18.10.pdf>

## Timeline

**April 15** Official posting of the Notice

**April 29** All applicants:

- Letter of Intent due to [serve@mt.gov](mailto:serve@mt.gov) by 5pm
- Documentation of Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate, *if applicable*.

New applicants

- Current A133 or other audit (*if applicable to organization*)
- [Readiness Self-Assessment](#) is also available online at <http://serve.mt.gov/funding/>.
  - The Readiness Assessment and audit should be submitted electronically to [serve@mt.gov](mailto:serve@mt.gov). If you do not receive an email confirming receipt within 24 hours please call 406.444.5547.

**May 2-16** Technical assistance period\* Submit questions via email to [serve@mt.gov](mailto:serve@mt.gov).

**May 16** Technical Assistance period closes at noon

**May 16** Last day to submit an Alternative Match Request

**May 27** All applicants: Application Due Date 5pm Mountain Time

- Complete Application, submitted in eGrants
- Letters of Support, submitted via email to [serve@mt.gov](mailto:serve@mt.gov)

Applications must be submitted in **eGrants**, the online system used by the Corporation for National and Community Service <http://www.nationalservice.gov/egrants/>.

**June 9** Grant Review Workgroup Meeting, in Helena, MT

**A representative of the Applicant *must* be present. Reasonable accommodations available.**

**June 13 – June 17** Applicant clarification period – All recommended applicants

**June 15** Commission Meeting, vote on the Work Group funding recommendation

**June 17** Clarified applications must be resubmitted in eGrants *no later* than 5pm

**July 2016** Successful applicants will be notified

**\*Technical Assistance** Applicants are encouraged to use this opportunity to ask clarifying questions, 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.

**Focus Areas** To carry out Congress' intent to maximize the impact of National Service, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has set the following Focus Areas for AmeriCorps:

### **Disaster Services**

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

### **Economic Opportunity**

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people; help economically disadvantaged people, including youth identified in My Brother's Keeper, to have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy; transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing; and/or have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed.

### **Education**

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

### **Healthy Futures**

Grants will 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 will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength; increase the number of veterans, military service members, and their families benefiting from AmeriCorps service; and/or increase the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through AmeriCorps.

### **Capacity Building**

Grants may 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 activities cannot be solely intended to support the administration or operations of the organization. Examples include recruiting and/or managing community volunteers, implementing effective volunteer management practices, completing community assessments that

identify goals and recommendations, developing new systems and business processes (technology, performance management, training, etc.), or enhancing existing systems and business processes.

#### **2016 AmeriCorps Funding Priorities, listed alphabetically.**

- Disaster Services - improving community resiliency through disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation
- Economic Opportunity - increasing economic opportunities for communities, specifically opportunity youth (see Glossary), both as the population served and as AmeriCorps members.
- Education - improving student academic performance including STEM
- Environment - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Service Corps (see Glossary)
- Veterans and Military Families - positively impacting the quality of life of veterans and improving military family strength
- Montana Governor's priorities: American Indians, Childhood Hunger, Drought Resiliency, Suicide Prevention, Safe & Affordable Housing, and Workforce Development
- Governor and Mayor Initiatives (see Glossary)
- Programing that supports My Brother's Keeper (see Glossary)
- Multi-focus intermediaries that demonstrate measureable impact and primarily serve communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure. i.e. rural and other underserved communities. (see Glossary)

#### **Next Gen AmeriCorps**

Depending on overall funding available, CNCS is inviting applicants to propose the Next Generation AmeriCorps or Next Gen AmeriCorps. The importance of service remains even within tight fiscal constraints we face as a nation. The goal of Next Gen AmeriCorps is to use innovative strategies to offer the same service opportunities but at a more efficient cost to the government. To participate, applicants must have a cost per member that is lower than \$10,000 per year per full time member using CNCS funding. CNCS is looking for innovative approaches and models to implement, for example: locating operations in Promise Zones, areas that meet Promise Zone criteria, or that demonstrate other indicators of severe need.

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

In order to receive priority consideration, applicants must demonstrate that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes and must include a high quality program design. Responses that propose programs for the purpose of receiving priority consideration are not guaranteed funding.

#### **National Performance Measures**

The Serve America Act (SAA) emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. CNCS expects organizations to use National Performance Measures as part of their comprehensive performance measurement strategy that relies on both performance and evaluation data to learn from their work as well as make tactical and strategic adjustments to achieve their goals.

All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output and outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary service activity. 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. As described in the Application Instructions,

applicants must include all their information about their proposed performances measure in the Performance Measure section of the applications 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 National Performance Measures Instructions and NOFO FAQs 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, please refer to the National Performance Measure Instructions on the [ServeMontana Website](#).

**Federal Award Information** Funding levels are subject to annual appropriations.

<b>Grant Types</b>	<b>Cost Reimbursement</b>	<b>Fixed Amount</b>
<b>Available subtypes maximum</b>	Traditional	Full-time/less than full-time service in a full-time capacity
<b>Maximum cost per MSY</b>	\$13,730	\$13,730
<b>Type of slots in the national service trust</b>	All	Full-time/less than full-time service in a full-time capacity
<b>Budget submission required</b>	Yes	No
<b>Availability of funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSY</b>	No	Yes
<b>Available subtypes</b>	Traditional	Full-time/less than full-time serving in a full-time capacity.
<b>Match requirements</b>	Yes	No, but organizations must raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.
<b>Financial tracking requirements</b>	Yes	No
<b>Available to new applicants</b>	Yes	No
<b>Match requirement level</b>	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.	There is no specific match requirement for fixed amount grants, but the Governor’s OCS does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program. Organizations must raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.

## **Award Period**

Unless otherwise specified, an awarded grant typically covers a three-year project period, subject to annual continuation. In approving a multi-year project period, generally an initial award is made for the first year of operation. Continuation funding is not guaranteed. Factors considered in awarding continuation grants include satisfactory performance, demonstrated capacity to manage the grant, compliance with grant requirements, agency priorities, and the availability of appropriated funds.

## **Project/Award Period**

The project start date is proposed by the applicant and is generally one year. The suggested start date is September 1, 2017. Project start date may not occur prior to the date of the grant award. 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.

## **Eligibility Information**

### **1. Eligible Applicants**

The following entities are eligible: public and private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations; institutions of higher education; government entities within states or territories (e.g., cities, counties); labor organizations; partnerships and consortia; and Indian Tribes. Receiving federal funding previously is not a prerequisite to applying under this *Notice*.

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.

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

### **New Applicants**

Organizations that have never received AmeriCorps funding are encouraged to apply. New applicants are eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement and Education Award Program (EAP) grants but not eligible to apply for Fixed Amount grants. Existing subgrantees/operating sites of Fixed Amount grantees that can demonstrate a track record and capacity to manage a Fixed Amount grant are considered to have AmeriCorps experience and therefore can apply for Fixed Amount grants.

### **Continuation applicants**

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

## **2. Cost Sharing and Matching**

### **Fixed Amount Grants and Education Award Program Grants**

With the understanding that federal funds available through this opportunity are not sufficient to operate the program and that organizations must raise the additional revenue to operate the program, there is no specific match requirement for Fixed Amount and Education Award Program grants.

**Cost Reimbursement Grants**

A first-time successful applicant is required to match at 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in 45 CFR §2521.60 and Pub. L. 113-76, Division H, Title IV, § 402

<https://beta.congress.gov/113/plaws/publ76/PLAW-113publ76.htm>

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

The living allowance or salary provided to AmeriCorps members in Professional Corps programs (see Glossary) 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 CFR §2521.60(b). To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Application Instructions. An alternative match request must be submitted by May 16, 2016.

**3. Funding Restrictions**

**A. Types of Grants** AmeriCorps grants can be awarded on a cost reimbursement or fixed amount basis.

Both types of grants will not be awarded for the same project in one fiscal year. See Glossary.

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement		Fixed Amount		
	Traditional	Professional Corps	Full-Time/Less than FT Serving in a full time capacity	EAP	Professional Corps
Available Subtypes					
Maximum Cost per MSY	\$13,730	Up to \$1,000*	\$13,430	\$800	Up to \$1,000*
Type of Slots in the National Service Trust	All	All	Full-Time or Less than Full-Time Serving in a full time capacity Only	All	Full-Time Only
Budget Submission Required	Yes		No		Yes, if requesting operating funds
Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSY	No		Yes		
Special Requirements	N/A	Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such	School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants are not eligible for Full Time Fixed Amount grants	N/A	Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. No CNCS funds may be used to pay

		professionals. Member salaries must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in the budget.			member living allowance or salary.
<b>Match Requirements</b>	Yes	Yes; Living allowance or salary paid to members may not be counted toward the match requirement.		No, but organizations must raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.	
<b>Financial Reporting Requirements</b>	Yes			No	
<b>Available to New Applicants</b>	Yes			No	Yes

\*The assumption is that Professional Corps will be covering the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non AmeriCorps funds and thus will not be requesting operating funds as part of the application. Operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY will be considered, 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.

**B. Member Living Allowance**

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

Cost reimbursement programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time terms of service. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time member, it must comply with the maximum limits in Table 1 below. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either AmeriCorps or grantee share. (EXCEPTION: as noted in Section B.1. and B.3.)

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

**Table 1: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance**

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

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

If a program existed prior to September 21, 1993, a living allowance is not required. If an applicant chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement of \$12,530, but not the maximum requirement of \$25,060.

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

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

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

Maximum Costs per MSY are set forth in Table 2 below. The cost per MSY is determined by dividing the AmeriCorps 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 AmeriCorps per MSY is determined on an annual basis.

**Table 2: 2016 Maximum Cost per MSY**

Grant Program	Maximum
Individual Competitive State/Territory Program (cost reimbursement)	\$13,730
Professional Corps Grant (Cost Reimbursement)	Up to \$1,000*
Professional Corps Fixed Amount Grant	Up to \$1,000*
Education Award Program Fixed Amount Grant	\$800
Fulltime Fixed Amount Grant	\$13,730

\*The assumption is that Professional Corps will be covering the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non AmeriCorps funds and thus will not be requesting operating funds as part of their applications. 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.

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

**D. Amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award for FY 2016**

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

**Table 3: Term of Service and FY16 Education Award\***

Term of Service	Minimum # of Hours	FY16 Education Award
Full Time	1700	\$5,775.00
One-Year Half Time	900	\$2,887.50
Reduced Half Time	675	\$2,200.00
Quarter Time	450	\$1,527.78
Minimum Time	300	\$1,222.22

\*Note: Education Awards amounts are determined by the grant year that the applicant applied and was awarded. This may be different than the amount advertised on the Corporation for National & Community Service website.

**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 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 general compliance with pertinent state and federal regulations as well as 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 committee responsible for scoring applications and making funding decisions.
- Grant review committee recommendations will be submitted 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 will 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 funded at the expense of a higher scoring one. The distribution of funds will be based on the judgment of the Grant Review Work Group as to how best to carry out the mission of the Governor’s OCS. When making funding recommendations, the Grant Review Work Group will consider the score of the application, the effectiveness of the program in addressing the needs of Montana, the priorities, if any, set by the Governor and/or State Service Plan and the input of commission staff.

**E. Financial and Risk Assessment Evaluation**

OCS 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, and
  - If applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
- Information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as—
  - Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS),
  - Dun and Bradstreet, or
  - “Do Not Pay”
- Reports and findings from single audits performed under OMB Circular A-133 and findings of any other available audits
- IRS Tax Form 990
- An applicant organization's annual report
- Publicly available information including information from an applicant organization's website;
- Any other information listed in CFR § 2522.140; and
- The applicant’s ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

### **Continuation Expansion Requests**

Requests for continuation expansions will be assessed using the same criteria as the new and re-compete applications and whether the applicant has lowered its cost per MSY.

## **Application Submission Information**

### **1. Address to Request Application Package**

Organizations should refer to the ServeMontana website to obtain the necessary information to apply.

### **2. Content and Form of Application Submission**

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

- Determine whether you apply directly to CNCS or through a State Commission
- Submit a request for an alternative match schedule, if applicable
- Get a DUNS number
- Establish an eGrants account
- Write a high quality application responsive to the *Notice*
- New Applicants submit readiness self-assessment, and audit report (*if available*)
- Provide letters of support via email
- Submit the application via eGrants by the deadline

### **How to Submit an Application in eGrants**

Applicants must submit their applications electronically via the eGrants system. Because it is a unique system, it is *strongly recommended* that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application creation process at least two weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a WORD document, then copy and paste the document into the appropriate eGrants fields no later than 7 days prior to the deadline. Please note the length of a document in word processing software may be different than what will print out in eGrants.

If a problem arises while creating an account or while preparing or submitting an application in eGrants: Contact the National Service Hotline at 800.942.2677 or <https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask> National Service Hotline hours are Monday through Thursday 9:00 am to 7:00 pm ET. If you contact the Hotline, be prepared to provide the application ID, organization name, and the *Notice* to which your organization is applying.

If technical issues prevent an applicant from submitting an application on time, please contact the National Service Hotline prior to the deadline to explain the technical issue and receive a ticket number. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, the applicant must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit via eGrants and must communicate with ServeMontana Grants Manager.

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

Additional documents may include (if applicable): letter(s) of support, evaluation reports, letters from the consortium members for Multi-focused intermediaries, and up to two evaluation briefs, reports, and/or peer reviewed articles if the applicant has a moderate or strong evidence base.

### **Application Fields and Page Limits**

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

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

Applications may not exceed the 15 page base limit for the Narratives (18 pages for Multi-Focus Intermediaries), including the Executive Summary and SF 424 Facesheet, as the pages print out from eGrants. Applicants are *strongly encouraged* to print out the application from the “Review and Submit” page prior to submission to check that the application does not exceed the page limit. This limit does not include the narrative portion of the evaluation plan or the logic model, budget, performance measures, or the supplementary materials, if applicable. Reviewers will not consider submitted material that is over the page limit in the printed report, even if eGrants allows an applicant to enter and submit text over the limit. eGrants does not limit sections. Submit only items requested in the *Notice* or Application Instructions.

Logic Models may not exceed three pages in length as printed from eGrants.

## Assessment Criteria

Each applicant must clearly describe a project that will deploy AmeriCorps members effectively to solve a significant, clearly defined community problem. Applicants are urged to carefully follow the guidance in this *Notice* and in the Application Instructions. The quality of an application is an important factor in determining whether an organization will be awarded funding.

## Threshold Issues

Applications should reflect that they meet the threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying. New and re-competing applicants are recommended to submit an application with a minimum of 7-10 AmeriCorps members.

If an applicant is applying for a Professional Corps grant, its application should demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals. If an applicant is applying for a Full Time Fixed Amount grant, the application should reflect that only full-time or less than full-time positions serving in a full-time capacity will be permitted. An application for the Governor and Mayor Initiative should clearly reflect that the application is from one Governor, one Mayor, and a minimum of two nonprofits. If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: 45 CFR §2522.910-.940), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements. School Turnaround AmeriCorps applicants must meet the threshold requirements outlined in the Glossary and Appendix.

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

## Application Fields

### A. Executive Summary (Required - 0 points)

Please fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary.

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

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

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

Fixed Amount grant applicants should list their leveraged resources (see Glossary) because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still must raise significant additional resources to operate the program. Executive Summaries of awarded grant applications will be posted on [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov) in the interest of transparency and Open Government.

## **B. Program Design (50 points)**

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

### **1. Problem/Need (9 points)**

- The applicant clearly describes how the community need/problem is prevalent and severe in communities where members will serve, and the need has been well documented with relevant data.
- The applicant clearly describes how the community problem/need will be addressed by the program.

### **2. Theory Of Change and Logic Model (17 points)**

- The applicant clearly describes the proposed intervention including the roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) the roles of leveraged volunteers.
- The applicant clearly describes how the intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's Theory Of Change.
- The applicant clearly describes how the AmeriCorps members will produce significant and unique contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.
- All elements of the logic model are logically aligned.

The Logic Model shall depict the following and shall not exceed three pages:

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

Programs may include short, medium, or long-term outcomes in the logic model. While performance measure outcomes should be consistent with the program's Theory Of Change, programs are not required to measure all outcomes in the logic model. The Logic Model should identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators. Applicants with multiple interventions should complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each intervention.

### **3. Evidence Base (8 points)**

Applicants will be awarded up to 8 points for providing evidence that their proposed intervention will lead to the outcomes identified in the logic model. Applicants shall provide a description of up to two research studies or evaluations that provide evidence that the proposed intervention is effective for the target population and community problem, and should describe how this evidence places them in the highest evidence tier for which they are eligible. Applicants should pay particular attention to the requirements for each tier of evidence. More points are awarded for higher tiers of evidence.

This section must include specific citations of studies and/or evaluation and research reports. Applicants classifying their evidence as Moderate or Strong must submit up to two studies, evaluation reports, briefs, or peer-reviewed articles cited in this section as separate attachments. Studies should be sent to [serve@mt.gov](mailto:serve@mt.gov) by the application deadline and include in the subject line the application ID and “evaluation studies.”

For each report cited, include the date of the report, a description that shows its relevancy to the proposed program model, the methodology used in the study, and the strength of the findings (e.g. confidence level.)

For current grantees that are required to submit an evaluation report: The evaluation report will be considered as part of the evidence base of the program. Grantees may opt to include that evaluation report as one of the two studies, or submit two separate studies in addition to the evaluation report. In the latter case, all three studies will be reviewed against this criterion.

***The five tiered evidence levels are:***

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

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

**Preliminary evidence** (3-4 points) means the applicant has described up to two outcome studies about the intervention that yielded promising results for the proposed intervention or a similar intervention that the applicant will replicate with fidelity to the evaluated program model. The ways to demonstrate preliminary level of evidence are as follows:

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

OR

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

OR

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

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

**Moderate evidence** (5-6 points) means the applicant has submitted up to two well-designed and well-implemented studies that evaluated the same intervention described in this application and identified evidence of effectiveness on one or more key desired outcomes of interest as depicted in the applicant’s logic model. Evidence of effectiveness (or positive findings) is determined using experimental design evaluations (i.e., Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT)) or quasi-experimental design evaluations (QED) with statistically matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups. The ability to generalize the findings from the RCT or QED beyond the study context may be limited (e.g., single-site). The studies were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.

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

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

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

**Strong evidence** (7-8 points) means the applicant has demonstrated that the intervention has been tested nationally, regionally, or at the state-level (e.g., multi-site) using a well-designed and well-implemented QED or RCT. Alternatively, the proposed intervention’s evidence may be based on multiple (up to two) well-designed and well-implemented QEDs or RCTs in different locations or with different populations within a local geographic area. The overall pattern of study findings is consistently positive. Findings from the RCT or QED studies may be generalized beyond the study context. The studies were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.

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

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

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

#### **4. Member Training and Experience (8 points)**

- AmeriCorps members will receive high quality training to provide effective service.
- AmeriCorps members and volunteers will be aware of, and will adhere to AmeriCorps requirements including the rules regarding prohibited activities (see Glossary).
- AmeriCorps members will gain skills and experience as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed.
- AmeriCorps members will have access to meaningful service experiences, including opportunities for reflection and connection to the broader National Service network.
- The program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the programs operate.

#### **5. Member Supervision (8 points)**

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

#### **6. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification (2 points)**

- The applicant clearly describes how members will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- The applicant clearly describes how the staff and community members where the members are serving will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will be provided with and will wear service gear that prominently displays the AmeriCorps logo daily.

### **C. Organizational Capability (25 points)**

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

#### **1. Organizational Background and Staffing (7 points/10 points for new applicants)**

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

**As documentation of community support and commitment to the program; please procure three letter(s) from the applicant's most significant community partner(s).** The letter(s) should include what the partner(s) see as the benefit to the community provided by the applicant's AmeriCorps members and what activities would not happen without the AmeriCorps members. Letters should be submitted to [serve@mt.gov](mailto:serve@mt.gov) on or before the application due date.

#### **2. Compliance and Accountability (11 points/15 points for new applicants)**

- The applicant clearly describes how the applicant's organization, in implementation and management of its AmeriCorps program, will prevent and detect compliance issues.
- The applicant clearly describes how the applicant will hold itself, subgrantees, and service site locations (if applicable) accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified.

- The applicant clearly describes how the organization will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities at the grantee, subgrantee, and service site locations (if applicable).

**3. Past Performance for Current Grantees and Former Grantees Only (7 points for recompeting applicants and formula Grantees) Any applicant that has received competitive or formula funding for the same project in any of the past three years must address this criteria.**

- The applicant clearly describes how it has met performance measurement targets during the last three years of program operations, or, if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.
- The applicant clearly describes how it achieved 100% member enrollment, in the most recent full year of program operations, or if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.
- The applicant clearly describes how it achieved 100% member retention, in the most recent full year of program operations, or, if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.
- The applicant clearly describes any compliance issues or areas of weakness/risk identified during the last three years of program operations (if applicable) and describes an effective corrective action plan that was implemented.

**D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)**

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

**1. Cost Effectiveness (13 points)**

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

**Having a low cost per Member Service year (MSY) is a competitive advantage.** New applicants that submit with a low cost per MSY and recompeting applicants that submit with a lower cost per MSY than previously funded may receive higher priority for funding. Applicants requesting a higher cost per MSY than in previous years must justify their request. If an applicant requests above the maximum cost per MSY, it must justify its request. Such requests may or may not be approved.

**2. Budget Adequacy (12 points)**

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

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

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

### **E. Evaluation Plan (Required for recompeting grantees - 0 points)**

If the applicant is competing for the first time, please enter N/A in the Evaluation Plan field since it pertains only to recompeting grantees. 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 Plan field in eGrants. If the applicant is recompeting for a subsequent time, the program must submit its evaluation report via email to [serve@mt.gov](mailto:serve@mt.gov) by the application deadline, as well as an evaluation plan for the next three-year period in the Evaluation Plan field in eGrants.

Evaluation plans must include the following:

- A description of the Theory Of Change, or why the proposed intervention is expected to produce the proposed results;
- Clear and measurable outcomes that are aligned with the Theory Of Change and will be assessed during the evaluation;
- Concrete research questions (or hypotheses) that are clearly connected to the outcomes;
- A proposed research design for the evaluation;
- Qualifications needed for the evaluator; and
- The estimated budget.

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

- If the applicant has an annual AmeriCorps program grant of \$500,000 or more, it must arrange for an external evaluation of the program, and must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application for competitive funds as required in §2522.730 of this subpart.
- If the applicant has annual AmeriCorps 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 must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application for competitive funds as required in §2522.730 of this subpart.

Grantees with an annual AmeriCorps program grant of \$500,000 or more that are recompeting for funds are eligible to apply for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. Grantees requesting approval of an alternative evaluation approach should submit a request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach along with their evaluation plan in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in eGrants. The request should clearly explain: (a) the evaluation constraints faced by the program, (b) why the proposed approach is the most rigorous option feasible, and (c) how the proposed alternative approach will help the grantee build their evidence base.

Evaluation plans should include, at a minimum, the required elements listed in this 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. More information on alternative evaluation approaches can be found at:

[https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/files/guidance\\_for\\_grantees\\_approval\\_of\\_alternative\\_evaluation\\_approach.pdf](https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/files/guidance_for_grantees_approval_of_alternative_evaluation_approach.pdf).

A program will be considered a recompeting application if it satisfies the definition of “same project” (see Glossary) and has been funded competitively for at least one complete three-year cycle. If the project satisfies the definition of same project and the applicant has completed one three-year cycle, it will be required to submit an evaluation plan. If the project satisfied the definition of same project and the applicant has completed two or more three-year cycles, the applicant will be required to submit an evaluation report *and* an evaluation plan. If the project does not satisfy the definition of recompeting, it will not be required to submit an evaluation plan, summary, or completed evaluation.

The Evaluation Plan field of eGrants does not count towards the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit. Applicants should print out the report to ensure the narrative is complete.

**F. Amendment Justification (0 points)**

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

**G. Clarification Information (0 points)**

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

**H. Continuation Changes (0 points)**

Enter N/A. This field will be 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 I) 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 your organization, your 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.

### **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.

## **Dun & Bradstreet University Numbering System (DUNS) Number & System for Award Management (SAM)**

Applications must include a DUNS number and an Employer Identification Number. The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number. DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at 866.705.5711 or by applying online: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. The website indicates a 48-hour e-mail turnaround time on requests for DUNS numbers; however, it is suggested that applicants register at least 30 days in advance.

After obtaining a DUNS number, all applicants must be registered with the Systems for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>. SAM collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data in support of Federal agency contracts, grant awards, cooperative agreements, and other forms of federal assistance. All grant recipients are required to maintain a valid SAM registration, which must be renewed annually. Applicants that are

not already registered with SAM are urged to begin the registration process immediately in order to avoid any delays in submitting applications. Applicants must have a DUNS number in order to register with SAM.

## **Submission Dates and Times**

### **Application Submission Deadline**

Applications are **due Friday May 27, 2016 at 5pm Mountain Standard Time**

Late applications will not be accepted. Serve Montana reserves the right to extend the submission deadline and any notice of such extended deadline will be posted. This deadline applies to new, re-competing, and continuation applicants.

### **Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates**

CNCS will award grants following the grant selection announcement. Depending on the availability of funding, CNCS expects that successful State Commissions will be notified **no later than the end of July 2016**, 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 then be initiated.

### **Federal Award Administration Information**

#### **1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

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

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

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

#### **National Service Criminal History Check Requirements**

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

Unless CNCS has provided a recipient with a written exemption or written approval of an alternative search procedure, recipients must perform the following checks—All award-funded staff, national service participants, and volunteers must undergo NSCHCs that include:

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

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

1. A nationwide name-based check of the [NSOPW](#); *and*
2. *Both*
  - A name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the person’s state of residence and in the state where the person will serve/work; *and*
  - A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check.

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

### **Use of Material**

To ensure that materials generated with CNCS funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, CNCS reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so. 45 CFR §2543.36; 2541.30

### **2. Reporting**

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

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

While applications will not be evaluated on these criteria, grantees will be expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are providing CNCS with high quality 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 outcomes and progress toward the grant approved performance measures, additional data must be reported annually (as applicable).

### **Re-Focusing of 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](mailto:ssadowski@mt.gov)  
General email: [serve@mt.gov](mailto: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.

**APPENDIX A: Staff Assessment**

**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 ('15)	Request ('16)	Difference
<b>Federal Funds</b>			\$0
<b>Cash Match</b>			\$0
<b>In-Kind Match</b>			\$0
<b>Total Match</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Match %</b>	#DIV/0!	0%	#DIV/0!
<b>Project Cost</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>MSY</b>	-		0.00
<b>Cost per MSY</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

## APPENDIX B: National Performance Measures

### Tier 1: Priority Measures in Disaster Services, Education and Veterans and Military Families and Complementary Program Measures in Economic Opportunity

Economic Opportunity	
O1:	Number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving financial literacy services
O9:	Number of economically disadvantaged individuals with improved financial knowledge
O2:	Number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving job training and other skill development services
O3:	Number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving job placement services
O10:	Number of economically disadvantaged individuals placed in jobs
O12:	Number of economically disadvantaged National Service Participants who are unemployed prior to their term of service*
O15:	Number of economically disadvantaged National Service Participants that secure employment during their term of service or within one year after finishing a CNCS-supported program*
O14:	Number of National Service Participants who have their high school diploma or equivalent but have not completed a college degree prior to their term of service*
O17:	Number of National Service Participants that complete a college course within one year after finishing a CNCS-supported program*
Disaster Services	
D1:	Number of individuals that received CNCS-supported services in disaster preparedness
D2:	Number of individuals that received CNCS-supported services in disaster response
D3:	Number of individuals that received CNCS-supported services in disaster recovery
D4:	Number of individuals that received CNCS-supported services in disaster mitigation
Veterans and Military Families	
V1:	Number of veterans that received CNCS-supported assistance
V8:	Number of veterans' family members that received CNCS-supported assistance
V7:	Number of family members of active duty military service members that received CNCS-supported assistance
V9:	Number of active duty military service members that received CNCS-supported assistance
V2:	Number of veterans engaged in service opportunities as a National Service Participant or volunteer.
V10:	Number of military family members engaged in service opportunities as a National Service Participant or volunteer

\*Programs that select O12, O14, O15, or O17 must also select an additional priority or complementary program measure from Tier 1, 2, or 3 that measures community impact.

### Tier 2: Priority Measures (in Education, Economic Opportunity, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures and Capacity Building)

Education – operating less than 100% in School Improvement Grant(SIG)/DOE Priority Schools and other non SIG/Priority Schools	
ED21:	Number of children that completed participation in CNCS-supported early childhood education programs
ED23:	Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of social and/or emotional
ED24:	Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of literacy skills
ED25:	Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of numeracy (math) skills
ED2:	Number of students that completed participation in CNCS-supported K-12 education programs
ED4A:	Number of disadvantaged youth/mentor matches that were sustained by the CNCS-supported program for at least the required time period
ED5:	Number of students with improved academic performance in literacy and/or math

ED27:	Number of students in grades K-12 that participated in the mentoring or tutoring or other education program, including CNCS-supported service learning, who demonstrated improved academic engagement
ED6:	Number of students that improved their school attendance over the course of the CNCS-supported program's involvement with the student
<b>Economic Opportunity<sup>1</sup></b>	
O5:	Number of economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, receiving housing
O11:	Number of economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing
<b>Environmental Stewardship<sup>2</sup></b>	
EN4:	Number of acres of national parks, state parks, city parks, county parks, or other public and tribal lands that are improved
EN5:	Number of miles of trails or waterways (owned/maintained by national, state, county, city or tribal governments) that are improved and/or created
<b>Healthy Futures<sup>3</sup></b>	
H8:	Number of homebound OR older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving food, transportation, or other services that allow them to live independently
H9:	Number of homebound OR older adults and individuals with disabilities who reported having increased social ties/perceived social support
H10 (formerly O6):	Number of individuals receiving emergency food from food banks, food pantries, or other nonprofit organizations
H11 (formerly O7):	Number of individuals receiving support, services, education and/or referrals to alleviate long-term hunger
H12:	Number of individuals that reported increased food security of themselves and their children (household food security) as a result of CNCS-supported services
<b>Capacity Building</b>	
G3-3.1:	Number of community volunteers recruited by CNCS-supported organizations or National Service
G3-3.2:	Number of community volunteers managed by CNCS-supported organizations or National Service
G3-3.3:	Number of organizations implementing three or more effective volunteer management practices as a result of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or National Service Participants

<sup>1</sup>The following Economic Opportunity measures may also be used to report on your program's performance in providing services in the Disaster Services focus area,

<sup>2</sup> The following Environmental Stewardship measures may also be used to report on your program's performance in providing services in the Disaster Services focus area,

<sup>3</sup> The following Healthy Futures measures may also be used to report on your program's performance in providing services in the Disaster Services focus area

### Tier 3: Complementary Program Measures

<b>Education</b>	
ED1:	Number of students who start in a CNCS-supported education program
ED3A:	Number of disadvantaged youth/mentor matches that are commenced by CNCS-supported programs
ED7:	Number of students with no or decreased disciplinary referrals and suspensions over the course of the CNCS-supported programs' involvement
ED8:	Number of youth with decreased substance abuse, arrest, or gang involvement
ED9:	Number of students graduating from high school on time with a diploma
ED10:	Number of students entering post-secondary institutions

ED11:	Number of students earning a post-secondary degree
ED12:	Number of CNCS-Supported National Service Participants who begin serving as teachers through a Teacher Corps program
ED13:	Number of CNCS-Supported National Service Participants who completed serving as teachers through a Teacher Corps program
ED14:	Number of individuals teaching in high need schools
ED15:	Number of students in CNCS-supported teacher classrooms with improved academic performance
ED17:	Number of teachers remaining in the education field, but not teaching in a school (school support staff, school administration, district administration policy, education nonprofits, etc.) after their term of service
ED18:	Number of teachers who have had a positive impact on student learning as determined by observation-based assessments of teacher performance
ED19:	Number of individuals receiving certification to teach in schools after their term of service
ED20:	Number of children who start in a CNCS-supported early childhood education program
ED22:	Number of children accessing high quality early childhood education programs
ED26:	Number of students acquiring a GED
<b>Economic Opportunity</b>	
O4:	Number of housing units developed, repaired, or otherwise made available for low-income individuals, families or people with disabilities
O13:	Number of economically disadvantaged National Service Participants who have not obtained their high school diploma or equivalent prior to the start of their term of service
O16:	Number of National Service Participants that obtain a GED/diploma while serving in CNCS-supported programs or within one year after finishing serving in CNCS-supported programs
<b>Environmental Stewardship</b>	
EN1:	Number of housing units of low-income households and structures weatherized or retrofitted to significantly improve energy efficiency
EN2:	Number of low-income households home and public building energy audits conducted
EN3:	Number of individuals receiving education or training in energy-efficient and environmentally-conscious practices, including but not limited to sustainable energy and other natural resources, and sustainable agriculture
EN6:	Number of tons of materials collected and recycled

### Healthy Futures

H1:	Number of individuals who are uninsured, economically disadvantaged, medically underserved, or living in rural areas utilizing preventive and primary health care services and programs
H2:	Number of clients to whom information on health insurance, health care access and health benefits programs is delivered
H3:	Number of clients enrolled in health insurance, health services, and health benefits programs
H4:	Number of clients participating in health education programs
H5:	Number of children and youth engaged in in-school or afterschool physical education activities with the purpose of reducing childhood obesity
H6:	Number of children and youth receiving nutrition education with the purpose of reducing childhood obesity
H7:	Number of clients receiving language translation services at clinics and in emergency rooms

### Veterans and Military Families

V3:	Number of veterans assisted in pursuing educational opportunities
V4:	Number of veterans assisted in receiving professional certification, licensure, or credentials
V6:	Number of housing units developed, repaired, or otherwise made available for veterans

**Capacity Building**

G3-3.4	Number of organizations that received capacity building services from CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants
G3-3.5:	Number of staff and community volunteers that received training (of one or more types) as a result of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants
G3-3.6:	Number of organizations that completed a community assessment identifying goals and recommendations with the assistance of CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants
G3-3.7:	Hours of service contributed by community volunteers who were recruited by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants
G3-3.8:	Hours of service contributed by community volunteers who were managed by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants
G3-3.9:	Number of organizations reporting that capacity building activities provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants have helped to make the organization more efficient
G3-3.10:	Number of organizations reporting that capacity building activities provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants have helped to make the organization more effective
G3-3.11:	Number of new systems and business processes (technology, performance management, training, etc.) or enhancements to existing systems and business processes put in place as a result of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants
G3-3.12:	Number of organizations that monitored their progress towards the goals identified in their community assessment with the assistance of CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants
G3-3.13:	Number of additional activities completed and/or program outputs produced by the program as a result of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants in a) Disaster Services, b) Economic Opportunity, c) Education, d) Environmental Stewardship, e) Healthy Futures and/or f) Veterans and Military Families

**Capacity Building, cont.**

G3-3.14:	Number of organizations that have experienced an increase in requests for their programs and services as a result of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants.
G3-3.15:	Number of additional types of services offered by organizations as a result of capacity building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants in a) Disaster Services, b) Economic Opportunity, c) Education, d) Environmental Stewardship, e) Healthy Futures and/or f) Veterans and Military Families
G3-3.16:	Dollar value of cash resources leveraged by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants
G3-3.17:	Dollar value of in-kind resources leveraged by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants
G3-3.18:	Number of new beneficiaries that received services as a result of capacity building efforts in: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, and/or Veterans and Military Families
G3-3.19:	Number of new beneficiaries from one or more targeted or underserved populations (counts by target population, e.g., racial or ethnic group) that received services as a result of capacity building efforts in: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, and/or Veterans and Military Families

## APPENDIX C: Definitions

**Cost reimbursement 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.

### **Full-time fixed amount/less than full-time serving in a full time capacity grants (Non-EAP)**

These fixed amount grants are available for programs that enroll full-time members or less than full-time members that are serving in a full time capacity only, including Professional Corps. These grants provide a fixed amount of funding per member service year (MSY) that is substantially lower than the amount required to operate the program. Organizations use their own or other resources to cover the remaining cost. Programs are not required to submit budgets or financial reports, there is no specific match requirement, and programs are not required to track and maintain documentation of match. However, CNCS provides only a portion of the cost of running the program and organizations must still raise the additional resources needed to run the program. Programs can access all of the funds, provided they recruit and retain the members supported under the grant based on the MSY level awarded.

**Fixed amount grants** are only available to re-competing programs. Second and third-year continuation applicants with cost reimbursement grants must submit a new application if they are interested in applying for a fixed amount grant. New applicants are NOT eligible to apply for fixed amount grants.

Full-time fixed amount applicants in the Education Focus Area are required to select either a Priority Education Measure or Complementary Program Measure. Applicants proposing non-Education programs may select from Tiers 1-5.

### **Education award fixed amount grants (EAP)**

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

Fixed amount grants are only available to re-competing programs. Second and third-year continuation applicants with cost reimbursement grants must submit a new application if they are interested in applying for a fixed amount grant. New applicants are NOT eligible to apply for these grants.

One **MSY** is equivalent to a full-time AmeriCorps position (at least 1,700 service hours.)

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

For additional definitions, please refer to the Notice Glossary.

**\*End of 2016 AmeriCorps State Grant Formula Request for Proposal (RFP)\***