

2016 AmeriCorps REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS



Applications due July 14, 2015

Notice of Intent to Apply due June 19, 2015



CaliforniaVolunteers
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IMPORTANT NOTICE TO APPLICANTS: The following six documents are necessary to complete a 2016-17 application for AmeriCorps funding. All can be found on the CaliforniaVolunteers website, www.californiavolunteers.org/index.php/Grants/ameriCorps/.

- (1) 2016 AmeriCorps Request for Applications (RFA),
- (2) 2016 AmeriCorps Application Instructions,
- (3) 2016 AmeriCorps Application Forms
- (4) Budget Form and Budget Narrative,
- (5) AmeriCorps Program Title Page and Partnership Forms
- (6) National Performance Measures Instructions

Note: If you are currently funded by CaliforniaVolunteers (CV) and need to apply for year two or three of continuation funding, this RFA does **not** apply to you. Instructions will be e-mailed directly to you by CV at a later time.

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CONTACT INFORMATION

This Request for Applications (RFA) is available on the CaliforniaVolunteers (CV) AmeriCorps funding webpage at www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org/index.php/Grants/ameriCorps/.

CaliforniaVolunteers is committed to providing the most current information available to all applicants. We will rely primarily upon our website to keep applicants abreast of changes. Please check our website frequently for updates and information on technical assistance opportunities.

Please submit questions about this funding opportunity to Funding@CaliforniaVolunteers.ca.gov. Responses will be included in a list of **Frequently Asked Questions** (FAQs) that we will update periodically on the CV AmeriCorps funding webpage. Applicants are encouraged to submit their questions well in advance of the application deadline as CV is not obligated to respond to questions that are received 48 hours prior to the application due date.

For questions regarding multi-state or Indian Tribes applications submitted directly to Corporation for National and Community Service, please contact:

Corporation for National and Community Service
Phone: (202) 606-7508
TTY: (202) 606-3472
Email: americorpsnational@cns.gov

MESSAGE FROM CALIFORNIA'S CHIEF SERVICE OFFICER

April 16, 2015

Dear AmeriCorps Grant Applicants,

CaliforniaVolunteers (CV) is pleased to announce the availability of grant funding to support partnerships that will engage individuals as AmeriCorps members to address pressing state and local community challenges through service and volunteer action.

CaliforniaVolunteers is committed to supporting partnerships that effectively engage AmeriCorps members to address community problems. *The 2016 AmeriCorps Request for Applications (RFA)* reflects our Commission's priorities to support service activities that support drought relief efforts, address critical challenges in California's most high-need communities, provide critical support to veterans (including wounded warriors and military families), and create economic opportunities for disadvantaged individuals. While applications addressing these priorities will receive additional points in the review process, please note that CV will also accept applications addressing other locally identified community needs.

We know that building a strong California AmeriCorps portfolio begins with selecting strong service models that will have the greatest impact in addressing critical challenges facing California. Thanks to the invaluable feedback we've received from existing grantees and new applicants, we're piloting a two-phase application process through the 2016 RFA. Unlike previous years, this RFA is being released nearly six months in advance of the Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity (NOFO) from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the federal agency that administers the AmeriCorps and other national service programs. The extended timeline gives applicants more time to prepare a well-thought out and complete application, as well as give CV extra time to work with applicants to strengthen their proposals, if funded, for implementation and to be more competitive in securing federal grants.

The application process will occur in two phases. In Phase 1, applicants will submit a Notice of Intent to Apply by June 19, 2015, and a full application by July 14, 2015. Phase 1 concludes when applications have been reviewed and CV selects applicants to move forward. Applicants invited to Phase 2 will receive feedback and guidance to submit a final revised application for consideration that meets additional federal requirements published in the CNCS NOFO.

CV is committed to providing the most current information available to all applicants. We will rely primarily on our website, <http://californiavolunteers.org/index.php/Grants/ameriCorps/>, to keep applicants abreast of changes. Please check our website frequently. Additionally, our website will also provide information on technical assistance opportunities, including information sessions and technical assistance webinars to be held in the month of May.

We look forward to learning about your partnerships' proposed community solutions to tackle challenges facing California. If you have questions, please contact us via email at funding@CaliforniaVolunteers.ca.gov.

With warm regards,

Karen Baker
Chief Service Officer

OVERVIEW

State Entity Name:	CaliforniaVolunteers
Funding Opportunity Title:	2016 AmeriCorps Request for Applications
Announcement Type:	Initial Announcement
CFDA Number:	94.006

Key Dates: There are two steps that must be followed to apply for an AmeriCorps grant:

1. The submission of a **Notice of Intent to Apply**, due to CaliforniaVolunteers (CV) by **5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on Friday, June 19, 2015**; and
2. The **Completed Application**, due to CV by **5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on Tuesday, July 14, 2015**.

There will be no exceptions for late submissions.

Our Purpose: CaliforniaVolunteers is excited to issue the *2016 AmeriCorps Request for Applications (RFA)* in support of community partnerships that will engage individuals as AmeriCorps members to meet state and local challenges through service and volunteer action. CV is seeking to fund programs that can address community problems and demonstrate impact through an evidence-informed or evidence-based approach (e.g. based on proposed program's performance and evaluation data or research demonstrating the effectiveness of a similar intervention).

CaliforniaVolunteers' mission is to increase the number and impact of Californians engaged in service and volunteering. Each year CV invests over \$20 million in grant funds to support community partnerships in engaging thousands of AmeriCorps members in intense impact-oriented service. These members dedicate millions of hours of service in communities across the state, including:

- Educating vulnerable populations in disaster preparedness
- Rebuilding trails, and combating invasive species
- Connecting distressed parents and homeless individuals to critical resources
- Teaching financial and employment skills to disconnected youth, refugees, homeless, and unemployed individuals
- Tutoring children who are struggling to succeed academically
- Mentoring children and youth not engaged in school
- Helping returning veterans and their families reintegrate into civilian life

CaliforniaVolunteers is committed to providing the most current information available to all applicants. We will rely primarily upon our website, <http://www.californiavolunteers.org/index.php/Grants/americorps/>, to keep applicants abreast of changes. Please check our website frequently. Additionally, our website will also provide information on available technical assistance opportunities. If you have questions, please contact us via email at funding@CaliforniaVolunteers.ca.gov.

This *2016 AmeriCorps Request for Applications* should be read together with the AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR Sections 2520-2550. The following documents are necessary to complete the 2016-17 application for AmeriCorps Funding:

- (1) 2016 AmeriCorps Request for Applications (RFA),
- (2) 2016 AmeriCorps Application Instructions,
- (3) 2016 AmeriCorps Application Forms
- (4) Budget Form and Budget Narrative,
- (5) AmeriCorps Program Title Page and Partnership Forms
- (6) National Performance Measures Instructions

Note for Continuation Programs: If you are currently funded by CV and need to apply for year two or three continuation funding, this RFA does not apply. Instructions will be e-mailed directly to you by CV for both competitive and formula continuation programs at a later time.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

This timeline is subject to change due to CNCS announcements and other events.

Phase 1

April-May, 2015	Training & Technical Assistance Webinars
June 19, 2015	Step 1: Notice of Intent to Apply due by 5:00 p.m. PDT
July 14, 2015	Step 2: Applications due to CV by 5:00 p.m. PDT
July-September, 2015	CV conducts application review

Phase 2

October 9, 2015	*CV notifies applicants about Phase 1 results and provides feedback & federal guidance to applicants invited to participate in Phase 2
October 12, 2015	*Federal Guidance/Welcome to Phase 2 Webinar
November 6, 2015	*Revised Applications Due
December 2, 2015	*Applications Selected for Competitive Submission, Final Feedback Issued
January 8, 2016	Competitive Applications due in eGrants
January 11-15, 2016	Competitive eGrants Application Review/Final Edits**
June 2016	Funding results announced; submit Formula Applications in eGrants*
July-October 2016	Contracting process and program launch

* Applicants and their partnership representatives must be available during this timeframe to respond to CVs' clarification requests.

**During this period, applicants must have appropriate staff available to enter and submit application into eGrants.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Funding Program Description

Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding

AmeriCorps is a national service program that provides opportunities for Americans each year to deliver intensive results-driven service. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who meets the eligibility requirements and engages in community service through an approved national service position. AmeriCorps members are recruited, trained, supervised, and managed by the funded organization, and may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, AmeriCorps members are eligible to receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust. Members must be: U.S. Citizens, U.S. Nationals or Lawful Permanent Residents of the United States, at least 17 years of age – no upper age limit, high school graduates or GED recipients (or working towards this goal), and are subject to criminal history checks. AmeriCorps Programs may add program-specific requirements. For member eligibility requirements, please visit: http://www.americorps.gov/for_individuals/ready/eligibility.asp.

AmeriCorps grants support the efforts of national and community-based nonprofit organizations to recruit, train and deploy AmeriCorps members to tackle state and local community challenges. AmeriCorps grants are awarded on a competitive basis to eligible organizations that engage members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities. AmeriCorps grants include an allotment of AmeriCorps member positions and provide partial funding to support AmeriCorps projects and programs. Grants are solely for program expenses and cannot be used for general organizational operating expenses. AmeriCorps members or grant funds can help meet unmet needs or can expand an organization's ability to better address community needs, but cannot be used to duplicate, displace or supplant resources that already exist in a community.

CaliforniaVolunteers

CaliforniaVolunteers (CV) is the State Service Commission in California. As such, CV is the state entity responsible for increasing the number and impact of Californians engaged in service and volunteering. Karen Baker, State of California Chief Service Officer, leads the organization in consultation with a 25-member Commission appointed by the Governor. The Commission develops and adopts policies that guide the State's AmeriCorps grantmaking process.

As home to the largest and most diverse population in the country, California faces many challenges that need our attention. CaliforniaVolunteers is seeking to invest AmeriCorps resources in programs that are:

Targeted at solving a critical challenge facing California. While there are a large number of issues that are identified as "challenges," CV is most interested in those that have been publicly labeled as concerns for California's long-term quality of life by state government leaders as well as key civic and research institutions. While CV will generally view programs and initiatives addressing statewide challenges as more compelling, CV will also give consideration to those that are designed to tackle problems faced by a particular locality or region of the state. Issues that have been addressed in the past include low academic achievement, unemployment, child welfare, and many others.

Using national service as an appropriate strategy. CaliforniaVolunteers is committed to continuing to demonstrate that service is a powerful strategy to address community challenges. Successful program designs clearly identify those directly impacted by the challenges, identify an intervention proven to address the need, and clearly articulate why the efforts of AmeriCorps members are an appropriate strategy to deliver the intervention. This includes demonstrating that the proposed intervention will lead to the desired outcomes, and providing strong evidence that the proposed intervention is effective for the target population and community challenge identified.

Applying an evidence-based approach. CaliforniaVolunteers expects those seeking an investment from AmeriCorps to demonstrate that the efficacy of their model or intervention is supported by documented and independent research. CV is particularly interested in programs that

directly involve leading experts from the relevant subject area in the design and/or evaluation of the program. CV values programs that can demonstrate the intervention is implemented with fidelity across sites and that apply performance data and evaluation findings to continuously strengthen their model.

Based on a well-aligned logic model and focused on measurable outcomes.

CaliforniaVolunteers values strong program designs built to address community needs by logically connecting all program components and services back to these needs. Programs funded through AmeriCorps are expected to achieve results that can be quantifiably measured and reported on program impacts annually. (See *2016 AmeriCorps Application Forms; California Performance Measurement Worksheets*)

Dedicated to quality. CaliforniaVolunteers seeks to invest in programs that are committed to making a difference and incorporate quality management practices to oversee the program and ensure appropriate investment of public funds. CaliforniaVolunteers values programs that can successfully implement the program design by assuring that the systems and processes necessary for managing and assessing the effectiveness of the program model are in place prior to operation. This includes adequate oversight in the management of each component to assure that the program design and systems are implemented and assessed, the capacity to collect data and report on program effectiveness, and that stakeholder feedback leads to continuous improvement.

Corporation for National and Community Service

CaliforniaVolunteers receives federal funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to invest in AmeriCorps programs. CNCS is the federal agency that oversees AmeriCorps State and National programs, as well as other national service programs including Senior Corps and AmeriCorps VISTA. CNCS's mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. CNCS—through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Social Innovation Fund—has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting local community, state, and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

B. National Service Focus Areas

In accordance with federal guidance, to maximize the impact of the investment in national service, CV is targeting funds to the following focus areas:

1. ***Disaster Services***— Grants will provide support to increase the preparedness of individuals for disasters, improve individuals' readiness to respond to disasters, help individuals recover from disasters, and/or help individuals mitigate disasters. Grantees also have the ability to respond to national disasters under CNCS cooperative agreements and FEMA mission assignments.
2. ***Economic Opportunity***— Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people; help economically disadvantaged people, including youth ages 16-24 who have been disconnected from school or work for at least six months, 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.
3. ***Education***— Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children; improved school readiness for economically disadvantaged young children; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or support economically disadvantaged students prepare for success in post-secondary educational institutions.
4. ***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 green training opportunities that may lead to decreased energy and water consumption or improved at-risk ecosystems.

5. **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.
6. **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; and/or increase the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through AmeriCorps programs.
7. **Capacity Building**
Grants can also provide support for capacity building activities provided by AmeriCorps members. As a rule, CV considers capacity building activities to be *indirect services* that enable CV-supported organizations to provide stronger, expanded, and sustained *direct services* in the six focus areas. Capacity building activities cannot be solely intended to support the administration or operations of the organization. Examples of capacity building activities include:
 - Recruiting and/or managing community volunteers.
 - Implementing effective volunteer management practices.
 - Completing community assessment that identifies goals and recommendations.
 - Developing new systems and business processes (technology, performance management, training, etc.) or enhancing existing systems and business processes.

C. California Volunteers AmeriCorps Funding Priorities

Funding priorities for CV are informed by the interests and priorities of the Governor-appointed Commission. CV is seeking to fund programs that can demonstrate community impact and address community problems through an evidence-based or evidence-informed approach and is particularly interested in reaching high-need communities that are currently not leveraging AmeriCorps resources. In addition, CV is interested in service models that address unmet needs for veterans (including wounded warriors and military families) and promote economic opportunities. In the 2016 AmeriCorps grant competition, CV will give priority consideration to programs that address the following:

- Unmet needs in the disaster services focus area, specifically activities relating to drought relief efforts such as:
 - Services to improve water efficiency
 - Services to mitigate drought-related economic hardships
 - Services to educate Californians on water conservation and the drought
- Unmet needs in the bottom five California neighborhood clusters with the lowest American Human Development Index for California¹:
 - Tulare County: Visalia, Tulare, and Porterville
 - Los Angeles County: Huntington Park, Florence-Graham and Walnut Park
 - Kern County: Bakersfield
 - Los Angeles County: Los Angeles City (Southeast/East Vermont)
 - Los Angeles County: South Central/Watts
- Unmet needs for veterans, including wounded warriors and military families
- Unmet needs in the economic opportunity focus area
- Unmet needs in counties that currently have no AmeriCorps state presence²:
 - Merced, Stanislaus, Lassen, Modoc, Mono, Plumas, San Joaquin, Sutter, and Ventura

¹ The American Human Development Index for California measures three fundamental human development dimensions: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living. The index combines, health, education, and income indicators into a composite measure expressed on a scale of 0 to 10. The identified neighborhood clusters have HDI scores less than 3. Source: [Lewis, K. Burd-Sharps, S. \(2014\). The Measure of America Series: A Portrait of California 2014-2015.](#)

² Counties with no AmeriCorps presence based on partnership information reported by programs funded in 2014-15.

Given the capacity required to successfully apply for and implement an AmeriCorps program, CV recognizes that most of the geographic areas listed above are severely under-resourced communities that may have limited application options, either based on the size of the non-profits or the lack of available matching funds. Thus it may be necessary to engage an eligible applicant or intermediary that will develop an application and oversee the implementation of an AmeriCorps program that engages multiple grassroots non-profits/eligible applicants that individually do not have the necessary organizational or fundraising capacity to apply for and run an AmeriCorps program independently. CV strongly encourages current AmeriCorps grantees that are re-competing to consider adding service locations and member placement sites listed in the priority geographic areas above.

Applicants must demonstrate significant program focus, design, and outcomes to receive priority consideration. Applicants that receive priority consideration are not guaranteed funding. Strong program applications will be considered for funding, regardless of focus and/or priority areas.

D. Available Funding

CV receives AmeriCorps grant funding from CNCS through two separate funding streams: **formula** and **competitive** funds. CV subgrants these funds to applicants through its AmeriCorps State grant competition based on a rank-order score received during the grant application review process. Grants are awarded to programs that will operate solely in California. CaliforniaVolunteers expects to award new, re-competing, and continuation AmeriCorps grants for fiscal year 2016. In awarding funds, continuation grants are considered first, followed by new and re-competing grants. AmeriCorps grantmaking is highly competitive.

CaliforniaVolunteers receives formula funds from CNCS through a population-based allocation. Competitive funds are awarded through a national competition administered by CNCS to applicants that have competed successfully at both the state and national levels. CaliforniaVolunteers' review and selection process will be used to determine applications that will be considered for funding. Some finalists will be nominated for the national competition by CV. These applications will be sent to CNCS to be reviewed and scored in the national competition. Applications submitted to the national competition are not guaranteed AmeriCorps funding at any level. CNCS will make final award decisions for competitive funds. Applicants selected for competitive funds are considered grantees of CV. Unsuccessful applicants will return to a rank-order list for consideration of formula funds following competitive funding announcements. CaliforniaVolunteers anticipates announcing final funding decisions for both competitive and formula funding in June 2016.

E. Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards

AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service will receive an Education Award from the National Service Trust. Education awards are granted directly to eligible members by the National Service Trust and are not included in the calculation of an AmeriCorps grant. The amount of the Education Award is based on the Pell Grant award and changes from year to year. A member has up to seven years after the term of service has ended to use the award. The member may use the award to pay for current educational expenses at qualifying institutions of higher education, or to repay qualified student loans. AmeriCorps members who commence service on or after October 1, 2009, who are age 55 or older at the time of commencement, may, upon successful completion of a term of service, transfer the education award to a child, grandchild, or foster child. While members can serve up to 4 years, they may only earn up to two full-time equivalent Education Awards.

The Education Awards for FY 15 are provided in the table below for reference. Please note the Education Award amounts presented are for the 2015-16 program year. The amounts for 2016-17 will be shared once made available by CNCS in late summer to fall.

Table 1: Member Term of Service and Education Award

Term of Service	MSYs	Minimum # of Hours	Education Award
Full Time	1.00	1,700	\$5,730
Half Time	.500	900	\$2,865
Reduced Half Time	.381	675	\$2,182.78
Quarter Time	.265	450	\$1,515.55
Minimum Time	.212	300	\$1,212.44

F. Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)

Applicants request for the number and types of AmeriCorps member positions that are needed to address the community needed identified. A 1700-hour (full-time) AmeriCorps member position is equivalent to one Member Service Year (MSY). The MSY is similar to a Full Time Equivalent (FTE), measuring positions as a fraction of full-time, so a full-time member is 1 MSY and a half-time member is .5 MSY. An AmeriCorps grant is determined based on the number of MSYs that a grantee will support. The maximum amount an applicant may request CV per MSY is determined on an annual basis. CaliforniaVolunteers' maximum costs per MSY for the 2016-17 program year are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2: CaliforniaVolunteers Cost per Member Service Year Limit

Grant Cycle	Grant Years	Maximum Cost Per MSY
1	1, 2, 3	\$16,000
2	4, 5, 6	\$15,000
3	7, 8, 9	\$14,000
4	10, 11, 12	\$13,000
5	13, 14, 15	\$12,000

NOTE: CNCS requires programs submitted for competitive funds to use a maximum Cost per MSY that is lower than the limit for CaliforniaVolunteers. This amount will be finalized with the release of the CNCS Federal Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) this coming fall. The cost per MSY limit for 2015-16 was \$13,730.

CaliforniaVolunteers considers the cost per MSY a competitive factor in making funding decisions. New applicants that submit a budget with a low cost per MSY and re-competing applicants that submit with a lower cost per MSY than previously funded may receive higher priority for funding.

An applicant's cost per MSY is determined by dividing the total federal share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested. For example, an applicant requesting \$325,000 to support 25 MSYs would have a cost per MSY of \$13,000 ($\$325,000 \div 25$ MSY). The cost per MSY does not include child care or the value of the education award a member may earn, which are covered directly by CNCS outside of the grant award.

CaliforniaVolunteers limits successful new applicants' cost per MSY to \$16,000. Other applicants must follow the guidelines appropriate to the number of previous funding years the proposed program has received AmeriCorps funding as set forth previously in Table 2. CaliforniaVolunteers reserves the right to adjust or waive the cost per MSY schedule to align with changes in requirements or due to extenuating circumstances. CaliforniaVolunteers is responsible to monitor successful applicants' member enrollment and retention to adjust budgets to maintain the awarded cost per member, as needed. The average cost per MSY for CVs' 2014-15 AmeriCorps programs is \$12,902.

Re-competing and previously funded applicants requesting a higher cost per MSY than in the previous year must include a compelling rationale for the increased cost in the Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy section of the Program Narrative. This applies even if the proposed increased cost per MSY is less than the maximum for the program age.

G. Types of Grants

AmeriCorps grants can be awarded on a cost reimbursement or fixed amount basis. CV will not provide both types of grants for the same program in one fiscal year. Applicants will need to select and indicate which type of grant they are applying for in their application. The following types of AmeriCorps grants are offered through this funding opportunity:

COST REIMBURSEMENT

1. Traditional:

In a traditional AmeriCorps operating grant, all program expenses are based on an approved budget as part of the grant award and are reimbursed through the submission of expense reports to CV. Grant funds can only be spent on costs in the approved budget. A cost-reimbursement grant provides funding to pay for program costs such as member support, operational costs, and administrative costs associated with the implementation of an AmeriCorps program. An applicant that applies for a cost-reimbursement grant must provide and include in the budget cash and/or in-kind match to support its overall program costs. The minimum match level required varies for applicants depending on the number of years an applicant has received AmeriCorps funding. (See Table 4 on page 10 for information on match requirements.)

2. Professional Corps:

These grants are awarded to organizations that propose to operate a Professional Corps program that place AmeriCorps members as teachers, health care providers, police officers, engineers, or other professionals in communities where there is a documented shortage of such professionals. Applicants are eligible to apply for funding for a portion of program costs. Professional Corps member salaries must be paid entirely by the organizations where members serve and are not included in the budget. A Professional Corps program may request up to \$1,000 per MSY to implement an AmeriCorps program.

FIXED AMOUNT

An AmeriCorps program that receives a fixed-amount grant must adhere to all AmeriCorps Regulations and Provisions including the administrative and programmatic requirements related to the recruitment, placement, training, and management of members as well as the required documentation. The major difference is that, unlike the cost-reimbursement grant, the fixed-amount grant does not require compliance with Office of Management & Budget (OMB) cost principles, Federal Financial Reports (FFR), nor match or documentation of match.

However, applicants requesting for fixed-amount grants are required to submit a detailed budget at the time of application in order to plan for all program costs, including match resources needed to support their proposed program design. If funded, a detailed budget will not be used for contracting due to the minimal financial tracking required.

NOTE: The cost per MSY limits for fixed amount grants are yet to be published by CNCS. Applicants requesting these grants are advised to stay below the maximum cost per MSY established in this RFA. CV will provide an opportunity for applicants to make adjustment to their cost per MSY in Phase 2 of the application process after CNCS publish the FY 16 cost per MSY limits.

1. Full-Time/Less than Full-Time AmeriCorps Members Serving in a Full Time Capacity:

Fixed-amount grants are only available for re-competing or previously funded programs that enroll full-time members or less than full-time members that are serving in a full time capacity (a less than full-time member serving 35-40+ hours per week). While the program is not required to report match, the award per MSY is significantly less than the cost of running an AmeriCorps program and the applicant must use its own or other resources to meet the remaining cost of the program. The final grant amount that a fixed-amount grantee may retain under its award is tied to the number of service hours completed by each member. If a member completes their term of service and has earned their education award, the program is entitled to the full amount approved per MSY. If a member did not complete the term of service the program is entitled to the pro-rated approved amount based on the

percentage of hours served. Programs can access all of the funds, provided they recruit and retain the members supported under the grant based on the MSY level awarded. Applicants requesting these grants are advised to stay below the maximum cost per MSY established for FY 15 (\$13,430).

Recompeting applicants that apply for a *Fixed-amount Full-Time or Less than Full-Time Serving in a Full-Time Capacity Grant* must maintain the cost per MSY appropriate to the level established for its number of funding years and must ensure that the cost per MSY does not exceed the maximum costs per MSY set by CNCS. Successful applicants receiving fixed-amount grants must comply with any additional requirements determined by CV and/or CNCS.

NOTE: New applicants are NOT eligible to apply for Full-Time/Less than Full-Time AmeriCorps Members Serving in a Full-Time Capacity Fixed Amount Grants.

2. Education Award Program (EAP):

EAP programs apply for a small fixed amount up to \$800 per Member Service Year (MSY) and use their own resources to cover all other costs (e.g. majority of member living allowance, staffing, training, etc.). Like cost reimbursement grants, an EAP program receives an award for a specific amount per the number of MSYs enrolled. Because of the minimal financial support, EAP grants are best suited for pre-existing service programs or for organizations with other sources of funding, for whom becoming part of AmeriCorps will add value to their program. There is no match or financial reporting requirement. EAPs may enroll less-than-full-time members in addition to full-time members. New applicants are eligible to apply for EAP grants.

3. Fixed-amount Professional Corps:

These grants are awarded to organizations that propose to operate a Professional Corps program for full-time members only. The Professional Corps program model places AmeriCorps members as teachers, health care providers, police officers, engineers, or other professionals in communities where there is a documented shortage of such professions. Applicants must use their own or other resources to pay the members' living allowance and additional member costs. New applicants are eligible to apply for this grant.

CVs' assumption is that Professional Corps will be covering the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non CNCS funds and thus will not be requesting operating funds as part of their applications. CV will consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate in its narrative and supporting budget materials significant organizational financial need and substantial challenges to raising non CNCS resources.

H. Cost Sharing or Match Requirements

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

Table 3: Match Requirements in the AmeriCorps Regulations

Grant Type	Match Requirement
Cost-Reimbursement Grants	Minimum grantee share is 24% of program costs for the first three years. Overall grantee share of total program costs increases gradually beginning in Year 4 to 50% by the tenth year of funding and every year thereafter.
Fixed-Amount Full-Time/ Less than Full-Time Serving in a Full-Time Capacity Grants	There are no specific match requirements for fixed-amount grants. Grantees pay all program costs over the cost per MSY awarded.
Fixed-Amount EAP Grants	There are no specific match requirements for fixed-amount grants. Grantees pay all program costs over \$800 per MSY awarded.
Fixed-Amount Professional Corps Grants	There are no specific match requirements for fixed-amount grants. Grantees pay all program costs over the cost per MSY awarded.

Cost Reimbursement Grants (Traditional and Professional Corps Non Fixed-Amount)

A first-time successful applicant is required to provide a single overall match of 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with the second three-year cycle, match gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in 45 CFR § 2521.60 summarized in Table 4:

Table 4: Single Match Requirements for Cost Reimbursement Grants

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

The legal applicant is the entity responsible for meeting matching funds requirements. The legal applicant may request that partnering organizations provide a share of the match necessary to meet matching funds requirements. Programs may provide their share of operating costs and overall match through cash or in-kind resources, and may use non-CNCS federal funds if specifically allowed by the other federal agency. Matching funds must be verifiable, not be included as match for other federal programs, be necessary and reasonable for the purpose of the proposed program, and be allowable under OMB cost principles. Successful applicants must demonstrate matching funds are secured before CV can issue the grant award.

Successful applicants are awarded a grant dollar amount to support an overall operating budget, which includes the match needed to run the program and achieve the outcomes. As such, grantees must meet their *contracted* match and show a corresponding increase in match for increases to the awarded operating budget. Grantees must receive prior approval from CV to use program savings to support new costs/increases to the awarded operating budget. Failure to secure matching funds identified in the budget may result in adverse audit findings in addition to negatively affecting future grant applications to CV.

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

The living allowance or salary provided to Cost-Reimbursement Professional Corps AmeriCorps members does not count toward the matching requirement for a cost reimbursement Professional Corps grant.

Fixed-Amount Grants (EAP, Full-time & Less than Full-time serving in a Full time capacity Fixed-Amount, Professional Corps Fixed-Amount)

There is no match requirement for fixed-amount grants. However, the fixed-amount grant does not cover all costs. Fixed-amount grantees provide the additional resources needed to operate the program, but are not required to track or report on them.

Alternative Match

Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35% instead of 50% as specified in the regulations at §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 accompanying document, *2016 AmeriCorps Application Instructions*. Applicants that plan to request an alternative match schedule must include the *Request for Alternative Match Form* as part of the application.

I. Authority

These funds will be available under authority of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.§12571-12595) reauthorized by the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009.

II. GRANT PARAMETERS

A. Award Amount

Successful applicants will receive grant funds and an allotment of AmeriCorps member slots. CV will review applications and determine the final award amount. Award amounts vary.

B. Project/Award Period

Grants awarded through this selection process will support programming beginning in late summer of 2016. Successful applicants must start member service activities no later than mid-October 2016 and allow up to 12 months for members to complete a term of service. Any exception to this start date deadline must be requested in contracting and receive approval from CV. Additionally, the project start date may not occur prior to a program's AmeriCorps contract execution date with CV, which means AmeriCorps members may not begin service prior to the program entering into a fully executed contract with CV. A program may not certify any hours a member performs prior to the contract execution date.

Applications for 2016 must include proposed activities and a detailed proposed budget for the first year of operation. CaliforniaVolunteers expects that programmatic activities for the second and third years of operation will build upon, and be similar in scope to those of the first year. Unless otherwise specified, CV follows CNCS's practice of awarding up to three-year grants, which are evaluated annually for continued funding. Continuation funding is not guaranteed. Factors considered in awarding continuation grants include satisfactory performance, demonstrated capacity to manage a grant, capability to manage and support AmeriCorps members in their service, compliance with grant requirements, CV priorities, and the availability of appropriation funds. CaliforniaVolunteers reserves the right to adjust the amount of a grant award for subsequent years, or elect to discontinue funding for subsequent years.

C. Maximum Grant Size

Programs being considered for competitive funds do not have a maximum limit; however, grants generally do not exceed \$7 million. Applicants who are unsuccessful in securing competitive funding will be considered for formula funding, based on their state ranking. Such programs may be subjected to a reduced budget up to \$850,000. The median grant award for 2015 was \$397,983.

D. Minimum Program Size

The minimum program size funded by CV for this application is 20 MSYs. CaliforniaVolunteers believes this MSY requirement is necessary to provide members in quantities that make a substantial difference relative to locally identified needs. Applicants requesting less than the minimum required MSY level must include a compelling rationale in the program narrative as part of their application to CV.

E. Minimum Number of Members per Service Site

To ensure strong program design and to provide members with at least a minimal mutual support network, successful applicants must place a minimum of two AmeriCorps members at each operating or service site as part of their program design. Exceptions to this requirement must be supported by compelling rationale in the program narrative of the application, requested in contracting, and receive approval from CV.

F. Living Allowance

The proposed budget must include a living allowance for full-time members that is within the required minimum and maximum per member (except as noted below). A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage. Programs are prohibited from comparing the member living allowance to an "hourly wage" in any recruitment materials, member handbooks, etc.

Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members who serve less than full-time terms of service. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time member, it must comply with the maximum limits in the table below and should follow the guidelines below for minimum limits. For cost-reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either CNCS or grantee share. While Fixed-amount grantees' final grant award does not include a detailed

budget, providing a living allowance to members that complies with the minimum and maximum requirements is still required.

Table 5: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance*

Term of Service	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Living Allowance
Full-time	1,700	\$12,530	\$25,060
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

* The Living Allowance requirements presented are for the 2015-16 funding year. The requirements for 2016-17 are yet to be published by CNCS.

In most instances, the grant received by an applicant will not cover the full amount of the living allowance provided to members and the applicant must use its own or other resources to supplement member living allowance. Because the minimum living allowance may not fully cover the actual living expenses of members, programs may wish to offer living allowances in excess of the minimum requirements.

Exceptions to Living Allowance Requirements

Prior to September 21, 1993

If a program existed prior to the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (enacted September 21, 1993), the law does not require a living allowance. 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.

EAP Fixed-Amount Grantees

EAP grantees are not required to provide a living allowance for less-than-full-time members, but if a living allowance is provided, it must comply with the maximum requirements set forth in the Living Allowance section above.

Professional Corps Grantees

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

G. Enrollment Requirements

Enrollment rates ultimately effect the total number of AmeriCorps members awarded to California for service in California communities. Grantees are expected to enroll all MSYs awarded in the grant. Grantees may not use unexpended funds resulting from not fully enrolling members for any other purpose in the operating budget. Grantee budgets will be adjusted as needed to maintain awarded/contracted cost per member MSY. Enrollment rates have a direct bearing on the number of slots and the size of awards approved in the continuation and recompute processes. Recompeting grantees that have not achieved full enrollment in the previous year must provide an explanation and a corrective action plan in the application. Successful applicants that do not fully enroll are likely to receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years.

H. Retention Requirements

Retention rates are an indicator of the grantee's ability to properly design and manage an AmeriCorps program that results in achieving the outcomes contracted. We expect grantees to pursue the highest member retention rate possible. Grantees may not use unexpended funds resulting from not fully retaining members to support other areas of the budget, and as such, grantee budgets will be adjusted to maintain awarded/contracted cost per MSY. Retention rates will have a direct bearing on the number of

slots and the size of awards approved in the continuation and re compete processes. Successful applicants that do not retain members are likely to receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years. Re competing grantees that have not achieved full retention in the most recently completed program year must provide an explanation and a corrective action plan in the application.

I. Performance Measurement Requirements

Applicants are required to develop a set of performance measures using the California Performance Measurement Worksheets (PMWs) that account for all member service hours requested. Each applicant will need to complete at least three PMWs, titled as follows:

- *Primary Needs and Service Performance Measurement Worksheet*—Applicants must have a paired output and outcome that reflects the program’s primary intervention and aligns with the program’s theory of change.
- *Common Member Development Worksheet*—Applicants must have a paired output and outcome that reflects the knowledge and skills members will gain through the program.
- *Common Strengthening Communities Worksheet*—Applicants must track the number of volunteers recruited by AmeriCorps members and service hours contributed by those volunteers to expand the impact and reach of the program in the communities served.

Additional specific requirements for each performance measurement area are outlined in the *2016 AmeriCorps Application Instructions*.

National Performance Measures

National performance measures are developed by CNCS. Within each focus area, CNCS has created National Performance Measures in order to aggregate the results of similar programs and demonstrate the impact across its programs and initiatives. Applicants whose program activities are aligned with National Performance Measures are strongly encouraged to use them. The National Performance Measures can be found in CNCS’s National Performance Measures Instructions from the 2015 program year. An updated version for 2016 will be made available once released by CNCS. This document provides definitions, requirements, and guidelines that will help applicants determine which measures best apply to their program. Successful applicants will be required to report on the measures they select.

J. Evaluation Requirements

CaliforniaVolunteers strongly encourages grantees to use evaluation as a tool to continuously improve programs and demonstrate impact and effectiveness. In doing so, programs will have the opportunity to test their program delivery model, adjust services to best meet community needs, and collect trustworthy data to support their work. In turn, these data and program improvements will strengthen the evidence base for the impact of national service as well as inform strong funding and technical assistance decisions. Evaluation requirements vary by types of applicants. See *2016 AmeriCorps Application Instructions* for details.

III. ELIGIBILITY

A. How to Apply

Please note: this is the first year that CaliforniaVolunteers is holding a grantmaking process that begins before the federal process. Follow the attached *2016 AmeriCorps Application Instructions* to complete and submit a hardcopy application packaged by the deadline. Incomplete or late applications will be disqualified.

B. Eligible Applicants

Public or private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations; institutions of higher education; government entities within California (e.g., cities, counties); Indian Tribes; labor organizations; partnerships and consortia; and intermediaries planning to subgrant funds awarded are encouraged to apply. Organizations that have been convicted of a Federal crime are disqualified from receiving the assistance described in this RFA.

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, any 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, serve as a host site for member placements, or act in any type of supervisory role in the program.

Organizations that operate solely in California apply through CaliforniaVolunteers using this RFA. Organizations that operate in more than one state are eligible to apply for national grants directly from CNCS in the fall. Indian tribes may apply through CV or directly to CNCS. An Indian Tribe is defined as a federally recognized Indian Tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Native village, regional Corporation, or Village Corporation, as defined under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1602), that the United States Government determines is eligible for special programs and service provided under federal law to Indians because of their status as Indians. Indian Tribes also include tribal organizations controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by one of the entities described above.

C. Community Partnerships Requirements

In order to maximize community involvement in AmeriCorps that goes beyond AmeriCorps placement sites and the grantee, all applicants are required to develop a program partnership. Successful applicants must have a partnership of at least three independent entities that include *one public and one private* partner (nonprofit or for-profit entity). CaliforniaVolunteers considers 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations to be private entities. CaliforniaVolunteers prefers partners to have a significant role in planning, operating, and sustaining the program (e.g. match contribution, training resources, continuous improvement assessment, etc.). All primary partners and placement sites where members will be performing service are required to be identified on the *Partnership Form* submitted on-line as part of the application.

D. Types of Applicants

Several types of applicants will seek AmeriCorps grant funding through this RFA. Details regarding these applicant types are provided below.

Note: “Continuation” programs (i.e., current recipients of AmeriCorps operating grants that are not entering the final year of their current grant period) should NOT use this RFA.

New Applicants

A “new” applicant is one in which the legal applicant has not operated an AmeriCorps program and/or whose staff have not been employed as core program staff of a funded program, National Direct organization staff, state commission staff, or CNCS staff in the last five years. California Volunteers strongly encourages all new applicants to review technical assistance materials as they become available on the CV website at www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org.

New applicants may receive up to an additional 10% of the total possible score at each review stage. A new applicant submitting a re-competing application for a previously-funded program would not qualify for

the additional points. Similarly, a new applicant that intends to pass on the program implementation responsibility to an existing grantee or another entity that has experience operating an AmeriCorps program in the last five years does not qualify for the additional 10% of the total possible score.

Recompeting Applicants

“Recompeting” applicants are programs that have completed a three-year grant cycle (in most instances) and opt to “recompete” for another three-year award. AmeriCorps programs entering the final year of their grant period must submit a new application if they wish to be considered for future AmeriCorps funding. Recompeting programs are reminded that submitting an application does not guarantee success in securing future funding. Recompeting applicants are advised that previous site visit reports, progress reports, financial reports, formal corrective action history, and member enrollment and retention rates, will be reviewed as part of the selection process.

Previously Funded Applicants

The previously funded program designation applies to any applicant who has previously received an AmeriCorps operating grant from CV or the Corporation. This definition holds true even if the proposed program differs in scope and purpose from the program previously operated and/or the legal applicant for the previously operated program has changed. Previously funded applicants would not qualify for the additional points available to new applications

IV. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. CaliforniaVolunteers Review and Selection Process

CaliforniaVolunteers' 2016 AmeriCorps grantmaking process will take place over two phases. Phase 1 includes the submission of the required Notice of Intent to Apply and a program design proposal. Phase 2 will include applicants who meet the minimum threshold to advance beyond Phase 1. Applications will be reviewed and selected for funding using an intensive multi-stage process that includes CV Staff Review, Clarification and Feedback, and CV Commission approval. The 2016 grantmaking process follows the policies adopted by the Commission, available on the CV website at www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org.

CaliforniaVolunteers' review and selection process will occur in several stages (see page 22 for timeline):

Phase 1

Applications that are submitted by the deadline will be reviewed in Phase 1. Applications in Phase 1 will be subject to an initial compliance check and full staff review before being scored and ranked for invitation to Phase 2.

Compliance Check

CaliforniaVolunteers staff will review all applications to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completeness requirements. Applications that are submitted by eligible organizations, by the deadline, and that meet compliance check requirements stated in the *Application Checklist* and *Packaging Checklist* will advance to Staff Review.

Staff Review

In Staff Review, reviewers will evaluate each application against a selection matrix based on assessment criteria outlined in the RFA. Applicants that meet the minimum score threshold will be invited to participate in Phase 2 of the 2016 AmeriCorps grantmaking process.

Phase 2

Clarification and Feedback

Applicants in Phase 2 may receive requests to provide clarifying information. The purpose of this stage is to clarify issues identified during the review process. Clarification may take the form of an in-person interview, conference call, or written response. New applicants are more likely to receive a clarification request through an in-person interview. Should an interview be requested and held, all costs for travel are assumed to be the responsibility of the applicant. Please note that failure to respond to CVs' clarification requests in a timely manner may result in removal from funding consideration. All applicants in Phase 2 will receive feedback and guidance to update their application to conform to CNCS guidelines once the NOFO is released in the fall.

National Competition Participation

CaliforniaVolunteers has the responsibility to determine the best strategy in selecting applicants for the national AmeriCorps*State competition. Following the clarification process, CV will identify and recommend applications that meet certain criteria or competitive factors to the Commission for approval to be submitted to the CNCS AmeriCorps State and National grant competition. Utilizing the clarification and feedback process, CV will work with selected applicants to improve their applications so that they can be more competitive at the federal level.

Selection

The primary consideration in the selection of AmeriCorps programs is merit. Applicants must meet a minimum score in Phase 1 **and** receive a positive recommendation in Phase 2 in order to be considered for funding.

To help achieve a balanced portfolio for the State of California, final selections will be made with consideration of the following:

- CaliforniaVolunteers' Statewide Geographic Distribution Policy, in which the Commission will seek to ensure a minimum of 40 MSYs are placed in the Los Angeles region and 20 MSYs are placed in the remaining eight regions as determined by the California's Economic Strategy Panel. In order to achieve geographic parity, a program in an already represented region may be skipped, and another program may be selected. Under no circumstances will the Commission provide formula funding to an applicant that receives a score that is 10 or more points below the applicant it may displace.
- Ensure a minimum amount of funding for programs led by non-profit and non-state governmental organizations as required by AmeriCorps regulations.
- Ensure CV maintains a statewide cost per member average at or below the established federal limit.

The Commission reserves the right to bypass an applicant's state ranking on a case-by-case basis under the following circumstances:

- An applicant has multiple national service funding opportunities available;
- The Commission has constrained resources; and/or
- The legal applicant presents serious concerns around grant performance and/or fiduciary responsibilities discovered after rankings have been completed.

Results of the grant review process are presented to the Commission, which makes final approval of funding decisions. Funding decisions are final—there is no appeal process.

B. Assessment Criteria

Each application must clearly describe a project that will effectively deploy AmeriCorps members to address a significant community need. We urge all applicants to submit a high quality application which carefully follows the guidance in the RFA and in the *2016 AmeriCorps Application Instructions*. Applications will be assessed based on the quality of the response to criteria described in the *2016 AmeriCorps Application Instructions*. The following outlines the corresponding weight for each application component:

Program Design – 50%

Fifty percent of the applicant's score will come from their description of the proposed program design addressing all application instructions. This includes presenting a well-documented community need, a logical and well-thought out theory of change/logic model supported by evidence, specific activities that AmeriCorps members will perform in the program, and measureable outputs and outcomes as a result of member activities.

Organizational Capacity – 25%

Twenty-five percent of the applicant's score will come from their description of the legal applicant's organizational capacity addressing all relative application instructions. This includes presenting the organization's background in managing federal grants, staffing structure, plans in place to ensure compliance and accountability, and plans in place to supervise, train, and ensure members have a meaningful service experience. Re-competing applicants will also be assessed on their past performance.

Cost Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy – 25%

Twenty-five percent of the applicant's score will come from their description of the cost effectiveness of their program and the adequacy of their program's budget addressing all relative application instructions. This includes a budget that describes all necessary costs and a description of the program's cost effectiveness compared to other interventions.

Points will be awarded based on an applicant's ability to address each required criterion as described in the *2016 AmeriCorps Application Instructions*.

C. Threshold Issues

Applications should reflect that they meet the threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying. For example: If an applicant is applying for a Professional Corps grant, the application should demonstrate that the community in which it will place professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals. If an applicant is applying for a 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. If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: 45 CFR §2522.910-.940), the applicant must clearly describe how the program will meet these requirements.

D. Risk Assessment Evaluation

CV 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 or the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If CV determines that an award will be made, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award.

E. Potential Change to RFA Guidelines and Supplemental Guidance

This *Request for Applications* was created in good faith and based on the most recent federal guidance available. The amount of funds available for AmeriCorps, as well as new grant limits and requirements, are contingent on final federal appropriations and CNCS guidance articulated in the Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity (NOFO) yet to be released. These and other factors may require changes to the guidance and to this RFA. As necessary, CV will issue all updates and supplemental materials at the earliest possible date. All supplemental materials and updates will be available on the CV website at www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org. **Applicants are advised to check the website at least weekly.**

This RFA provides a broad overview of AmeriCorps guidance, highlighting many basic components and rules to provide a general understanding of the complexities and intricacies of AmeriCorps programming and requirements. **Since CaliforniaVolunteers’ 2016 AmeriCorps grantmaking process began before CNCS has released its NOFO, applicants invited to participate in Phase 2 will receive additional guidance at a later time to conform their application to CNCS requirements.**

The full AmeriCorps regulations, 45 CFR § 2520-2550, are available online at www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr. Successful applicants will be required to comply with these regulations, AmeriCorps provisions, and federal and state policies. Federal funds provided under this grant are identified by the Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 94.006.

The AmeriCorps regulations include federal criteria used to select applicants for funding and other pertinent information (Table 6).

Table 6: Program Requirements in the AmeriCorps Regulations

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

V. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Notice of Intent to Apply

Please complete and submit the *Notice of Intent to Apply Form* (found on CV's website) to CV at funding@CaliforniaVolunteers.ca.gov by **5:00 p.m. PDT on Friday, June 19, 2015**. Submission of the Notice of Intent to Apply is required and will help CV plan more efficiently for review.

B. Submission to CaliforniaVolunteers

Phase 1:

Applicants must submit a hardcopy application package and related electronic submission requirements to CaliforniaVolunteers by the application deadline. To complete the application, please:

1. Download the following documents from the CV website at <http://www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org/index.php/Grants/americorps/>:
 - a. *2016 AmeriCorps Request for Applications (RFA)*,
 - b. *2016 AmeriCorps Application Instructions*,
 - c. *2016 AmeriCorps Application Forms*,
 - d. *2016 Budget Narrative*,
 - e. *2016 Budget Form* [Note: The Budget Narrative and Budget Form are contained within one Excel workbook], and
 - f. *National Performance Measures Instructions*
2. Follow the instructions included in the *2016 AmeriCorps Application Instructions* document in completing and submitting an application. The *Application Instructions* document also contains directions for completing the required Electronic Submission.
3. A complete **Paper Application** must include one original containing items #1-14 (as applicable) and five copies containing items #1-9, as listed on the AmeriCorps Application Checklist. See *2016 AmeriCorps Application Forms*.
4. An **Electronic Submission** of the AmeriCorps Program Title Page (electronic submission of any other pieces of the application will not be reviewed). This form will be submitted online using the link provided in the *2016 AmeriCorps Application Instructions*.

Page Limits

The Program Narrative may not exceed 18 double spaced, single-sided, pages (including the Executive Summary Page). This limit does not include the budget, logic model, performance measures, evaluation plan, program diagram, or required supplementary materials (e.g. letters of commitment, financial documents, etc.) **Do not submit supplementary materials such as videos, brochures, or any other items not requested in these application instructions.** CaliforniaVolunteers will not review or return them.

Phase 2:

Applicants invited to Phase 2 must ensure timely responses to CVs' requests for clarification and ensure that all additional required documents are submitted in the manner requested by CV. See Phase 2 Application Checklist included in the *2016 AmeriCorps Application Forms*.

C. Application Submission Deadline

Applications (both the full Paper Application and Electronic Submission items) must arrive at CaliforniaVolunteers by **Tuesday, July 14, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time** in order to be considered.

Please send Paper Application to:

CaliforniaVolunteers
ATTN: AmeriCorps 2016
1400 10th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Electronic Submissions will be completed online. Please refer to the *2016 AmeriCorps Application Instructions*.

Applications that do not meet the *Application Checklist* and *Application Packaging Checklist* requirements included in the *2016 AmeriCorps Application Instructions* will be disqualified.

CV will not consider application received after the deadline, except when noted below. CV reserves the right to extend the submission deadline and any notice of such extended deadline will be posted. This deadline

Late Applications

CV may, at its discretion, consider an application received after the deadline, but only if the applicant submits a letter to funding@cv.ca.gov explaining the extenuating circumstance that caused the delay. Communication with CV staff, including program officer of a current grantee, is not a substitution for the above protocol. The letter must be received no later than one business day after the application deadline. CV determines whether or not to accept a late application for review on a case-by-case basis.

D. Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and 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. All applicants must be registered with the Systems for Award Management (SAM).

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, we suggest registering at least 30 days in advance of the application due date. After obtaining a DUNS number register with 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. To register online go to <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>.

E. Submission to CNCS

In Phase 2 of the AmeriCorps application review process, applicants will be required to submit their applications electronically into CNCS's web-based application system, eGrants. Applicants selected to represent California in the national competition must be prepared to resubmit their application incorporating feedback from the CV grant review process before submitting their applications into eGrants. Please ensure staff availability to enter the application into eGrants as well as respond to CVs' requests for clarification. Applications selected for formula funding will submit their applications in eGrants at a later date. California Volunteers will provide instructions to this process during Phase 2.

F. Funding Restrictions

Grants under this program, except for fixed-amount and EAP grants, are subject to the applicable Cost Principles under OMB Uniform Administrative Guidance (2 CFR parts 200 & 2205).

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Governing Documents

A grantee's fully executed AmeriCorps contract incorporates the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant as well as the AmeriCorps regulations (45 CFR Sections 2520-2550) and grant provisions.

Grants under this program are subject to 2 CFR 200 & 2205 and CNCS regulations issued to implement the part. This final guidance, published on Dec. 26, 2013, supersedes and streamlines 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.

B. Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants are required to submit programmatic and/or financial reports as designated by CaliforniaVolunteers. In addition to required programmatic and financial reports, successful applicants will be required to collect and report certain demographic information on AmeriCorps members, volunteers recruited and/or managed by members, and beneficiaries served by members.

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 CV 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.

C. Re-focusing of Funding

CaliforniaVolunteers reserves the right to re-focus program dollars in the event of disaster or other compelling need for service.

D. Use of Material

To ensure that materials generated with CNCS funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, CV and 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