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CaliforniaVolunteers.CA.GOV

2020 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Applications due November 18, 2019

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO APPLICANTS: The following documents are necessary to complete a 2020-21 operating grant application for AmeriCorps funding. All can be found on the CaliforniaVolunteers website, <https://californiavolunteers.ca.gov/grants/ameri-corps/>.

- (1) 2020 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Request for Applications (RFA)
- (2) 2020 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Mandatory Supplemental Guidance
- (3) 2020 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Application Instructions
- (4) 2020 AmeriCorps State Grant Application Forms
- (5) 2020 CNCS National Performance Measures Instructions

NOTE FOR CONTINUATION PROGRAMS: 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.

NOTE ON ELIGIBILITY: This Funding Opportunity is only open to re-competing AmeriCorps programs operating their third and final year of a grant cycle in 2019-20.

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CONTACT INFORMATION

This Request for Applications (RFA) is available on the California Volunteers (CV) AmeriCorps funding webpage at californiavolunteers.ca.gov/grants/americorps.

California Volunteers 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@cv.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 the 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



OVERVIEW

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| State Entity Name: | California Volunteers |
| Funding Opportunity Title: | 2020 AmeriCorps State Grants |
| Announcement Type: | Initial Announcement |
| CFDA Number: | 94.006 |

Disclosure: Publication of this Announcement of AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity (RFA) does not obligate California Volunteers (CV) to award any specific number of grants or to obligate any particular amount of funding. The actual level and timing of grant funding will be subject to the availability of annual federal appropriations.

Funds requested under this opportunity are subject to applicable federal laws, rules, and regulations. References to specific regulations will be linked to e-CFR at www.ecfr.gov.

Important Dates:

- **Deadline:** The **Complete Application** is due to CV by **5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on Monday, November 18, 2019**.
- **Application Notification:** Successful applicants will be notified in May 2020.

Our Purpose: California Volunteers, as part of the Office of the Governor, addresses state and community challenges by investing in high impact service solutions, while leveraging public, private, and nonprofit partnerships and resources. CV invests \$40 million annually in AmeriCorps grants to support effective community service solutions.

The *2020 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity* awards AmeriCorps grants to eligible community partnerships that will engage AmeriCorps members in *evidence-informed* or *evidence-based* interventions/practices (see *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*) to address state and local community problems. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that members can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

This *2020 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity* should be read together with the AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR Sections 2520-2550. The following documents are necessary to complete the application for 2020-2021 AmeriCorps Funding:

- (1) 2020 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Request for Applications (RFA)
- (2) 2020 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Mandatory Supplemental Guidance (Mandatory Supplemental Guidance)
- (3) 2020 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Application Instructions (Application Instructions)
- (4) 2020 AmeriCorps State Grant Application Forms
- (5) 2020 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 to you. 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 federal announcements and other events.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| November 18, 2019 | Applications due to CV by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time |
| November 19 – December 4, 2019 | Application Review Period |
| December 4, 2019 | Applicants Selected for Competitive Submission or Release Notified |
| December 4 - 13, 2019 | Competitive Applicant Clarification Period* |
| December 13, 2019 | Approved competitive applications submitted electronically to CNCS's web-based grant management system** |
| December 13 - 20, 2019 | Competitive Electronic Application Review/Final Edits ** |
| May 2020 | Final funding decisions announced |
| July-October 2019 | 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 CNCS's web-based management system.



I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Funding Program Description

California Volunteers

As the State Service Commission for California, California Volunteers (CV) addresses community and state challenges by investing in high impact service solutions, while leveraging public, private, and nonprofit partnerships and resources. Through AmeriCorps, Disaster Volunteering, and Volunteer Action, CV transforms small investments into big community impact. Karen Baker, State of California Chief Service Officer, leads the agency 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.

California Volunteers receives federal funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to support AmeriCorps programs. CNCS's mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. Through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Volunteer Generation Fund, CNCS has helped to engage millions of citizens in community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding

AmeriCorps is a national service program that provides opportunities for Americans each year to serve their country as AmeriCorps members by engaging in intensive results-driven service that addresses community problems. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who 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 that they can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans. 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 more information on member eligibility requirements, please visit: http://www.americorps.gov/for_individuals/ready/eligibility.asp.

AmeriCorps grants are awarded on a competitive basis to eligible organizations that engage members in *evidence-based or evidence-informed* interventions to strengthen communities (see *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*). 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.**

California Volunteers AmeriCorps Values

As home to the largest and most diverse population in the country, California faces many challenges that need our attention. California Volunteers 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. California Volunteers 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 how AmeriCorps member service activities will enhance or expand an organization's ability to better address a community problem, and how the AmeriCorps program will not duplicate, displace or supplant resources that already exist to address the stated problem.

Applying an evidence-based approach. California Volunteers expects those seeking an investment from AmeriCorps to demonstrate that their proposed intervention is guided by the best available research evidence that supports its effectiveness. 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. 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. California Volunteers 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 *Grant Application Forms; California Performance Measurement Worksheets*)

Dedicated to quality. California Volunteers 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. California Volunteers 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.

B. National Service Focus Areas

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. In order to carry out Congress's intent and to maximize the impact of the investment in national service, AmeriCorps grants support 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.
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 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 support responsible stewardship of the environment, while preparing communities for challenging circumstances and helping Americans respond to and recover from disruptive life events: programs that conserve natural habitats; protect clean air and water; maintain public lands; support wildland fire mitigation; cultivate individual and community self-sufficiency; and provide reforestation services after floods or fires.
5. **Healthy Futures**— Grants will provide support for activities that will address the opioid crisis; 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, wounded warriors, military service members, and their families served by CNCS-supported programs; and/or increase the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through CNCS-supported programs.

Capacity Building: In addition to the above core focus areas, grants can provide support for capacity building activities provided by AmeriCorps members. 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. Funding Priorities

California Volunteers is accepting applications addressing community needs in any of the National Service focus areas above, with priority consideration for specific geographic and issue areas. Funding priorities for CV are informed by federal funding priorities established by CNCS and the interests and priorities of the Governor-appointed Commission. CV is particularly interested in reaching high-need communities that are currently not leveraging AmeriCorps resources. In the 2020 AmeriCorps grant competition, CV will prioritize the investment of grant resources in the following priority areas:

- **Economic Opportunity** – evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange. In order to qualify for this priority, the applicant must be assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence by the reviewers.
https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/CNCS_Economic_Opportunity_Evidence_Brief_2019_508.pdf
OR
increasing economic opportunities for communities by preparing people for the workforce.
- **Education** – evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange. In order to qualify for this priority, the applicant must be assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence by the reviewers.
https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/CNCS_Education_Evidence_Brief_112318_508.pdf
- **Healthy Futures** – evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange. In order to qualify for this priority, the applicant must be assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence by the reviewers.
https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/HF_Evidence_Brief_FINAL_v2_508.pdf
OR
reducing and/or preventing prescription drug and opioid abuse.
- **Veterans and Military Families** – positively impacting the quality of life of veterans and improving military family strength.



- Rural intermediaries – organizations that demonstrate measureable impact and primarily serve rural communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure.
- Safer Communities – programs that focus on public safety, and/or partnerships between law enforcement and the community.
- Faith-based organizations.

In addition, California Volunteers seek to support programs that address unmet needs in any of the following communities or geographic areas:

- 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
- Counties that currently have no AmeriCorps state presence²: Amador, Kings, Lassen, Merced, Modoc, Mono, Sierra, Sutter

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.

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

D. Available Funds

The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual federal appropriations, which has yet to be determined for FY 2020. Generally, CV receives AmeriCorps grant funding from CNCS through two federal pots of money: **formula** and **competitive** funds. California Volunteers receives formula funds from CNCS through a population-based allocation. Competitive funds are awarded to CV to support a select number of programs that have competed successfully in both the state grant competition administered by CV and the national grant competition administered by CNCS. All applicants first apply for funding through CV to receive a state ranking and then CV selects which applications are submitted to the CNCS AmeriCorps State and National competition for competitive funding consideration. Applications submitted to the national competition are not guaranteed funding at any level. CNCS makes final award decisions for competitive funds; those applicants approved for competitive grant awards are considered grantees of CV. Unsuccessful applicants submitted to the CNCS national grant competition will return to a rank-order list for consideration of formula funds based on results from the CV state grant review process.

In making formula funding decisions, CV will award funds in the following order: continuation programs followed by successful new/recompeting applicants in rank order from the initial FY 2020 grant competition, followed by successful applicants in any supplemental competitions that may be held.

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 the most recent complete program year (2017-18).



E. Performance Measurement Requirements

Applicants are required to develop a set of performance measures using the California Performance Measurement Worksheets (PMWs) that addresses requirements described in the *Application Instructions*. Each applicant will need to complete at least three PMWs, titled as follows:

- *Primary Needs and Service Performance Measurement Worksheet*—Applicants must have at least one aligned performance measure (output and outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary program intervention. Applicants proposing program service activities beyond the primary intervention are required to include additional aligned performance measures for those activities. Please note that CV values the quality of performance measures over the quantity of performance measures. Applicants should focus member service hours in service activities that are significant to the program’s theory of change and intended outcomes.
- *Common Member Development Worksheet*—Applicants must have an aligned 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.

All three PMWs combined must account for all member service hours requested. Applicants should use both performance and evaluation data to learn from their work as well as make tactical and strategic adjustments to achieve their goals. CV values the quality of performance measures over the quantity of measures. For more information, see the *Application Instructions* for specific requirements for each required performance measurement area.

National Performance Measures

National Performance Measures are developed by CNCS for each focus area. CV expects applicants to use National Performance Measures as part of their comprehensive performance measurement strategy if the National Performance Measures are part of the applicant’s theory of change. The National Performance Measures can be found in the *2020 National Performance Measures Instructions*. This document provides definitions, requirements, and guidelines that will help applicants determine which measures best apply to their program. All requirements for any National Performance Measures selected must be clearly included in the Performance Measurement Worksheets. Providing performance measures information elsewhere in the narrative cannot be in lieu of providing full information in the PMWs. Successful applicants will be required to report on the measures they select.

F. Authority

These funds are available under authority of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1990, as amended, (NCSA) (42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.).



II. ELIGIBILITY

A. Eligible Applicants

Typically, the following non-federal entities (as defined in [2 CFR §200.69](#)) that propose to operate only within California who have DUNS numbers and are registered in System for Award Management (SAM) are eligible to apply for AmeriCorps funding through California Volunteers:

- Nonprofit organizations ([2 CFR §200.70](#))
- Institutions of higher education ([2 CFR §200.55](#))
- Local government/public agencies ([2 CFR §200.64](#))
- State government agencies ([2 CFR §200.90](#))
- Indian Tribes within the state of California ([2 CFR §200.54](#))

Note: Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one State or Territory apply directly to CNCS. Federally-recognized Indian Tribes may also apply directly to CNCS.

Other Requirements

Under section 132A(b) of the National & Community Service Act, organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this RFA.

Note that under section 745 of Title VII, Division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, if CNCS is aware that any corporation has any unpaid Federal tax liability which—

- 1) Has been assessed,
- 2) For which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and
- 3) That is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, that corporation is not eligible for an award under this RFA. A similar restriction may be enacted with the appropriation which will fund awards under 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 for funding.

B. Community Partnerships Requirements

In order to maximize community involvement in the AmeriCorps program, all applicants are required to develop partnerships with at least three independent entities that include *one public and one private* partner (nonprofit or for-profit entity). Partners should have a significant role in planning, operating, and sustaining the program (e.g. match contribution, training resources, continuous improvement assessment, etc.).

C. Dun and Bradstreet University Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management System (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: [DUNS Request Service](#). CNCS recommends registering at least 30 days before the application due date.

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

Applicants that do not comply with these requirements may become ineligible to receive an award. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees at https://sam.gov/sam/transcript/Quick_Guide_for_Grants_Registrations.pdf



III. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

A. Project and Award Period

The project period is generally one year. The grant award covers a three-year project period unless otherwise specified. Applications must include proposed activities and a detailed proposed budget for the first year of operation. California Volunteers 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. Continuation funding for subsequent years is not guaranteed and shall be dependent upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance. California Volunteers reserves the right to adjust the amount of a grant award for subsequent years, or elect to discontinue funding for subsequent years.

Grants awarded through this funding opportunity will support programming beginning in late summer of 2020. Successful applicants must start member service activities no later than mid-October 2020 and allow up to 12 months for members to complete a term of service. Any exception to this start date expectation must be included in the application. Additionally, the program may not start prior to the execution of the program's contract with CV, which means AmeriCorps members may not begin service, certify any member hours, or accrue costs on the CNCS share of the budget prior to the conclusion of the contracting process. More information on the contracting process will be provided at funding notification.

B. Award Amount

Grant awards have two components: operating funds and AmeriCorps member positions. Grant award amounts vary – both in the level of operating funds and in the type and amount of AmeriCorps member positions - as determined by the scope of the program. CV will review applications and determine the final award amount based on availability of funds. Award amounts may vary from the requested amounts.

C. Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)

Applicants request for the number and types of AmeriCorps member positions that are needed to address the community need stated in their application. Types of member positions available are Full-time (1,700 hour service term), Three-Quarter-time (1,200 hours), Half-time (900 hours), Reduced Half-time (675 hours), Quarter-time (450 hours), and Minimum-time (300 hours).

A 1700-hour (Full-time) AmeriCorps member position is designed for one service year; hereafter referred to as 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 based on the cost per the number of MSYs that a grantee will support.

An applicant's federal or CNCS cost per MSY is determined by dividing the total CNCS share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested. It does not include child care or the value of the education award a member may earn—these benefits are provided directly to members outside of the grant. Successful applicants are required to maintain their awarded cost per MSY throughout the grant period. The cost per MSY is matched by funding secured by the legal applicant to supplement the costs of the program which can include member living allowance, staff salaries, and other program expenses.

For example, a request of \$325,000 to support 25 MSYs would have a cost per MSY of \$13,000 ($\$325,000 \div 25 \text{ MSY}$). The average cost per MSY for CVs' 2019-20 AmeriCorps programs is \$14,518.

Table 1 below sets the maximum cost per MSY amount an applicant may request for each grant type. See below for more information on each grant type.

Table 1: Maximum Cost per MSY

| Grant Program | Maximum |
|--|----------------|
| Cost reimbursement | \$15,479* |
| Full-Cost Fixed Amount Grant | \$15,479 |
| Professional Corps Fixed Amount Applicants | \$1,000** |



| | |
|--|-------|
| Education Award Program Fixed Amount Grant | \$800 |
| No-Cost Slots | \$0 |

*Cost reimbursement programs operating in rural communities (as defined in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance) and cost reimbursement programs that recruit opportunity youth as AmeriCorps members may request up to \$15,360 cost per MSY for the AmeriCorps members who will be serving in rural areas or who are opportunity youth.

Applicants applying for **Professional Corps grants are required to cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non CNCS resources. CV will only consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate significant organizational financial need based on the materials reviewed by CV.

For purposes of fundamental fairness, CV may review an application which meets the statutory characteristics of a professional corps as a professional corps, regardless of whether the organization applied as a professional corps program. CV reserves the right to determine whether an applicant (whether or not the applicant has applied as a **Professional Corps**) has sufficiently demonstrated that they cannot effectively operate an AmeriCorps program without receiving CV operating funds. There may be specific circumstances where CV determines that a legal applicant has not demonstrated the need for operational grant funds due to other funding resources. Where CV's due diligence review of an application shows that the applicant has a historically high level of support from non-CNCS sources, and as a result has levels of unrestricted funding that is in excess of the requested level of CNCS funding, CV may choose to not provide operational grant funding.

D. 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. The chart below provides a summary of each grant type. available through this RFA: Please see the *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance* for detailed explanations of each grant type.

| Grant Types | Cost Reimbursement | Fixed Amount | | | |
|--|---|---|---|------------------------------------|---|
| | | Full-Cost | Education Award Program (EAP) | Professional Corps | No Cost Slots |
| Available Subtypes | Traditional | | | | |
| Maximum Cost per MSY | \$15,479 | \$15,479 | \$800 | \$1,000* | \$0 |
| Type of Slots in the National Service Trust | Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum Time | Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum Time | Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum Time | Full-time only | Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum Time |
| Budget Submission Required at | Yes | Yes | | Yes, if requesting operating funds | No |



| | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|---|-----|
| time of Application | | | | |
| Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSYs | No | Yes | | No |
| Special Requirements | N/A | N/A | Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries and benefits must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in budget. | N/A |
| Financial Reporting Requirements | Yes | No | | |
| Available to new Applicants | Yes | No | Yes | |



E. Cost Sharing or Matching

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

Table 2: Match Requirements in the AmeriCorps Regulations

| Grant Type | Match Requirement |
|---|--|
| Cost Reimbursement Grants (Traditional and Non Fixed Amount Professional Corps) | 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-Cost | 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. |
| No-Cost Slots | Grantees pay all program costs. |

Cost Reimbursement Grants

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 year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to minimum overall share chart found in [45 CFR § 2521.60](#) and below:

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

Section 121(e)(5) of the National Community Service Act (42 U.S.C. 12571(e)) 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 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 match their share of operating costs through cash or in-kind resources. 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. Additionally, successful applicants are required to maintain the awarded match and support any new costs not included in the grant award through match or its own or other resources.

Alternative Match

Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in the regulations at [45 CFR §2521.60\(b\)](#). To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Application Instructions. Applicants that plan to request an alternative match schedule must submit a request at the time the application is submitted.

Fixed Amount Grants (EAP, Full-Cost, Professional Corps, No-Cost Slots)

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



F. Indirect Costs

Applicants are allowed to include indirect costs in application budgets. Based on qualifying factors, applicants will either use a federally approved indirect cost rate, a 5/10 percent fixed option, a 10% *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly as outlined in [2 CFR § 200.413](#) Direct costs. States, local governments and Indian Tribes may use approved cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across federal awards. Applicants that have a federal negotiated indirect cost rate or that will be using the 10% *de minimis* rate must include the agreement in the application. However, under section 121(d) of the NCSA and CNCS's regulations at [45 CFR 2517.710](#), no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps grants, of which up to two percent may be allocated to cover CV share of indirect costs. See *Grant Application Instructions* for more information on calculating indirect costs.

G. Minimum Program Size

The minimum program size funded by CV is 20 MSY (full-time equivalent member positions). California Volunteers believes this MSY requirement is necessary to provide members in quantities that make a substantial difference in meeting community needs. Applicants requesting less than the minimum required MSY level must include a compelling rationale with the application in order for the application to not be disqualified.

H. Maximum Grant Size

Applications being considered by CV for competitive funds do not have a maximum limit. 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 2018 was \$473,184 to support 34.5 MSY.

I. 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 service location as part of their program design. Exceptions to this requirement must be supported by compelling rationale in the application and receive approval from CV.

J. Living Allowance

The proposed budget must include a living allowance for full-time members that are within the required range 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. The amount must be included in the proposed budget as either CNCS or grantee share.

Table 3: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance

| Term of Service | MSY Equivalence | Minimum # of Hours | Minimum Living Allowance | Maximum Living Allowance |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Full Time | 1.00 | 1,700 | \$14,279 | \$28,558 |
| Three-Quarter Time | .700 | 1,200 | n/a | \$20,159 |
| Half Time | .500 | 900 | n/a | \$15,119 |
| Reduced Half Time | .3809524 | 675 | n/a | \$11,339 |
| Quarter Time | .26455027 | 450 | n/a | \$7,559 |
| Minimum Time | .21164022 | 300 | n/a | \$5,040 |



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

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

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

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

K. Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards

AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service will be eligible for an Education Award from the National Service Trust. The amount of the Education Award is linked to the value of the Pell Grant. A member has up to seven years after his or her term of service to use the Education Award. CV will provide the updated Education Award amounts at the time of grant award. Learn more about the Education Award here: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amerikorps/segal-amerikorps-education-award>

L. 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 and 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. Successful applicants that do not fully enroll may be subject to a reduction in grant award amount and are likely to receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years.

M. 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. Retention rates will have a direct bearing on the number of slots and the size of awards approved in the continuation and recompetes processes. Successful applicants that do not retain members are likely to receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years.

N. Evaluation Requirements

California Volunteers 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.

New Applicants

New applicants competing for the first time are required to submit [a data collection plan](#) as part of their application. Data Collection Plans must not exceed 10,000 characters and must include the following:

- A description of the applicant's data collection system and how it is sufficient to collect high quality performance measurement data during the first three years of the grant. If the applicant does not yet have a data collection system, describe the plan and timeline for developing a high



quality system.

- A description of how the applicant will use performance data (including CNCS performance measures and other process and outcome measures if applicable) to improve its program in the first three years of funding.

Recompeting Applicants (both previously funded Formula and Competitive programs)

All recompeting programs are required to submit an evaluation plan as part of their application. Evaluation Plans must not exceed 10,000 characters and must include as much information as possible for each of the following (see Frequently Asked Questions: Evaluation, available at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/evaluation/cnccs-evaluation-policies>):

- A short description of the theory of change - why the proposed intervention is expected to produce the proposed results
- Outcome of interest - clear and measurable outcomes that are aligned with the theory of change and will be assessed during the evaluation
- Research questions to be addressed by the study - concrete research questions (or hypotheses) that are clearly connected to the outcomes
- Proposed research design for the evaluation including a rationale for the design selected, an assessment of its strengths and limitations, and a description of the main components;
- Description of the data sources, sampling methods, measurement tools, and data collection procedures that will be used in the intervention
- Analysis plan that clearly describes the methodology/ies that will be used to analyze the collected data
- A timeline for the evaluation that describes how the evaluation will cover at least one year of CNCS-funded activity and will be completed within the three-year timeframe of the grant
- Qualifications needed for the evaluator
- The estimated budget.

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

Recompeting Competitive Applicants

In addition to submitting an evaluation plan for the next three year period, recompeting competitive programs that are applying for their third three-year grant period and beyond will need to submit the report of their evaluation conducted during their current three-year grant period.

The evaluation requirements for competitive grantees (successful applicants funded through the national competition) differ depending on the amount of the grant, as described in [45 CFR §2522.710](#):

- If a competitive program's average annual CNCS program grant is \$500,000 or more, it must arrange for an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in [§2522.730](#) of this subpart.
- If a competitive program or an Education Award Program's average annual CNCS program grant is less than \$500,000, it must conduct an internal or an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in [§2522.730](#) of this subpart.

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



Alternative Evaluation Approach

Grantees with an average annual CNCS program grant of \$500,000 or more that are recompeting for funds are eligible to apply for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. Grantees requesting approval of an alternative evaluation approach should submit a request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach along with their evaluation plan. 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 *RFA*. The evaluation plan must be consistent with the information submitted in the funding application and in the request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. More information on alternative evaluation approaches can be found at:

https://www.nationalservicerresources.gov/files/guidance_for_grantees_approval_of_alternative_evaluation_approach.pdf.



IV. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. California Volunteers Review and Selection Process

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 2020 grantmaking process follows the policies adopted by the Commission, available on the CV website at californiavolunteers.ca.gov. California Volunteers' review and selection process will occur in several stages as follow.

Compliance Check

California Volunteers 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 minimal compliance check requirements will advance to Staff Review. See the *Application Instructions* and *Application Forms* to ensure submission of a complete and compliant grant application.

Applications that have noncompliant issues identified may be disqualified or have points deducted from the application's total raw score. Criteria for assessing compliance includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Minor Issues (3 point deduction): Packaging not completed according to guidance (see *Application Instructions* for specific packaging guidelines).
- Major Issues (6 point deduction): Items incomplete, or required items not submitted. Applicant will have 24 hours to submit incomplete or missing documents (other than those listed in Disqualifying Issues). If documents are received, the application will still receive a point deduction for Major Issues.
- Disqualifying Issues: The application will be disqualified if any of the following are missing: Program Narrative, Logic Model, Program Diagram, Performance Measurement Worksheets, or Budget Narrative.

Staff Review

In Staff Review, reviewers will evaluate each application against assessment criteria outlined in this RFA and the accompanying Application Forms and Instructions. Staff will review applications in teams of at least three and come to a consensus score for each criteria. Applications that do not meet the minimum score threshold will be released from consideration.

Clarification Period

The application review process for this grant competition will include a Clarification Period. During the Clarification Period, applicants may be asked for clarifying information regarding issues of significance, and may be asked for corrections or changes to elements of the application and budget. This information is used by CV in making final funding recommendations. Applications may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked clarification questions. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to a request for clarification adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of its application from consideration.

NOTE: Applicants selected for competitive submission may need to respond to another round of clarification from the Corporation for National and Community Service as part of their national grant application review process. This is scheduled to occur between March 20, 2020 and April 3, 2020. CNCS will send clarification to CV during that time, which will then be forwarded to the applicant with instructions for submission.

Risk Assessment Evaluation

CV 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 and the applicant's past performance (if applicable.) This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding and the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If CV 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, CV may consider the following, but not limited to:

- Financial capability and capacity to manage Federal funds
- 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),
 - U.S. Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services
 - Dun and Bradstreet, or
 - "Do Not Pay"
- Reports and findings from single audits performed under Uniform Administrative Guidance (formerly 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 45 CFR § 2522.140
- The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.
- Past Performance

Applications submitted to the national grant competition will be subjected to a similar Risk Assessment Evaluation conducted by CNCS.

CV will assess re-competing programs' past performance and submit those assessments to CNCS. This assessment is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding or the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this assessment will inform funding decisions for both formula and competitive grant selection. In evaluating programmatic performance, CV will consider the following for applicants that are current formula and competitive grantees:

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

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

Selection

The primary consideration in the selection of AmeriCorps programs is merit. Applicants must meet a minimum score threshold **and** satisfactorily address all clarification issues in order to be considered for funding. In lieu of a three-year operating grant, California Volunteers may award an application a limited-term "planning" or "program development" grant. A planning grant provides funds to support the development of an AmeriCorps program design and infrastructures needed to operate the program. A program development grant provides funds to support one year of implementation; where continued funding would be subject to available funds and satisfactory performance.



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

- California Volunteers' 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.

Feedback to Applicants

At the conclusion of the grant review process (usually late June) applicants may request their review results and feedback on their application by email funding@cv.ca.gov.

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

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 *Application Instructions*. Applications will be assessed based on the quality of the response to criteria described in the *Application Instructions*. The following outlines the corresponding weight for each application component. The specific criteria that will be assessed is described in the Program Narrative section of the *Application Instructions*.

Program Design (Program Narrative, Performance Measurement Worksheets, Logic Model) – 50%

Fifty percent of the applicant's score will come from their description of the proposed program design addressing all relevant application instructions. This includes presenting a well-documented community need, a logical and well-thought out theory of change and logic model supported by evidence, the specific program intervention that AmeriCorps members will perform, and measureable outputs and outcomes as a result of member activities. Applicants will also be assessed on the plans they have in place to ensure effective service delivery and meaningful member service experience. See *Application Instructions* for the weights of specific subsections in Program Design.

Organizational Capacity (Program Narrative) – 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 experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program and plans in place to ensure compliance and accountability. Applicants will also need to



demonstrate that their organization values learning and that they have a plan to supervise members. See *Application Instructions* for the weights of specific subsections of Organizational Capacity.

In addition, recompeting applicants will be assessed on the following:

- The applicant has demonstrated satisfactory performance in meeting primary outcome targets, enrolling slots awarded, and retaining members enrolled.
- The required evaluation report meets CNCS requirements (if applicable).
- The required evaluation plan is of satisfactory quality.

Cost Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy (Budget) – 25%

Twenty-five percent of the applicant's score will come from the quality of the application's budget based on the following criteria:

- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget is in compliance with the budget instructions.
- Match is submitted with adequate information to support the amount written in the budget.
- The budgeted match is equal to or more than the required match for the given program year.
- The cost per MSY is equal to or less than the maximum cost per MSY.

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

Applicants must complete the budget and ensure the following information is included:

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

C. Threshold Issues

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

- All applicants should request at least 20 MSY. Applicants requesting less than 20 MSYs must include a compelling rationale as part of the program narrative or their application will be deemed noncompliant and will not be reviewed.
- Professional Corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a Professional Corps by CV must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.
- If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: [45 CFR §2522.910-.940](#)), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.
- All applicants must propose program designs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. Applicants assessed as lower than the Preliminary evidence tier (i.e., Pre-Preliminary) must provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality review criteria in order to be considered for funding.

D. Consideration of Integrity and Performance System Information

Prior to making any award that exceeds \$150,000, CNCS is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

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



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

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's final allocation of formula funds. 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 CaliforniaVolunteers.ca.gov. **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.

The full AmeriCorps regulations, [45 CFR § 2520-2550](#), are available online at www.ecfr.gov. 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 4).

Table 2: 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. Submission to California Volunteers

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

1. Download the following documents from the CV website at <https://californiavolunteers.ca.gov/grants/ameri corps/>:
 - a. 2020 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Request for Applications (this document),
 - b. 2020 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Mandatory Supplemental Guidance,
 - c. 2020 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Application Instructions,
 - d. 2020 AmeriCorps State Grant Application Forms,
 - e. 2020 CNCS National Performance Measures Instructions
2. Follow the instructions included in the *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 and five copies containing required items (as applicable), as listed on the AmeriCorps State Grant Application Checklist. See *Application Instructions* and *Forms*.
4. An **Electronic Submission** of the required documents by email to Funding@cv.ca.gov (electronic submission of any other pieces of the application will not be reviewed). See the *Application Instructions* for more information.

Page Limits

The Program Narrative may not exceed 12 double spaced, single-sided, pages in portrait orientation (including the Executive Summary Page). This limit does not include other aspects of the application (e.g. the budget, logic model, performance measures, or program diagram), though individual documents may have their own limits. The other documents with page or character limitations are as follows:

- Logic Model may not exceed 3 pages
- Member Training Plan may not exceed 3 pages
- Evaluation Plan/Data Collection Plan (as applicable) may not exceed 10,000 characters
- Request for Alternative Match Schedule (if applicable) may not exceed 4 double-spaced pages

Do not submit unrequested materials such as videos, brochures, or any other items not requested in these application instructions. California Volunteers will not review or return them.

B. Application Submission Deadline

Applications (both the full Paper Application and Electronic Submission items) must arrive at California Volunteers by **Monday, November 18, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time** in order to be considered.

Please send Paper Application to:

California Volunteers
ATTN: AmeriCorps 2020
1400 10th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Applications that do not meet the *Application Checklist* and packaging requirements included in the *Application Instructions* will be subject to point deduction or disqualification.



Electronic Submissions will be completed by email to funding@cv.ca.gov with the subject line “2020 AmeriCorps Application Electronic Submission.” Please refer to the *Application Instructions*.

CV will not consider applications 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.

Late Applications

All applications received after the submission deadline published in this RFA are presumed to be non-compliant. CV may, at its discretion, consider an application received after the deadline, but only if the applicant submits a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that caused the delay, including the timing and specific cause(s) of the delay and any evidence that substantiates the claimed extenuating circumstance(s) via email to funding@cv.ca.gov. The written explanation and evidence must be received no later than one business day after the application deadline stated in the RFA. CV determines whether or not to accept a late application for review on a case-by-case basis.

Communication with CV staff, including program officer of a current grantee, is not a substitution for the above protocol. Applicants that do not submit a justification or any other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the required timeframe will not be reviewed or selected for award.

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

C. Submission to CNCS

Once selected for AmeriCorps funding, applicants will be required to submit their applications electronically into CNCS’s web-based management system. Please ensure staff availability to enter the application into the system as well as respond to CVs’ requests for clarification. California Volunteers will provide instructions for submitting applications into CNCS’s web-based management system at a later date.



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), CNCS General and Specific Terms and Conditions, and California Volunteers Policies and Requirements.

B. CNCS Terms and Conditions

All awards made under this RFA will be subject to the 2020 CNCS General Terms and Conditions, and the 2020 Specific Terms and Conditions for the particular program (when applicable.) These Terms and Conditions contain detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the CNCS General and Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/terms-and-conditions-cnccs-grants>.

C. Uniform Guidance

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

D. Reporting Requirements

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

Once the grant is awarded, 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 areas 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.

In addition to reporting of progress toward the grant's approved performance measure outputs and outcomes, additional demographic and narrative data must be reported annually (as applicable), including the number of applicants for AmeriCorps positions and the number of volunteers recruited and/or supported by members.

Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the grantee's ability to secure future AmeriCorps funding. For further guidance and training resources see – [CNCS Performance Measure Resources](#).

E. National Service Criminal History Check Requirement

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, AmeriCorps members, or volunteers) receiving a salary, living allowance, stipend or education award through a program receiving CNCS funds (through either federal or grantee share of the budget). An individual is ineligible to serve in a position that receives such CNCS funding if the individual is registered, or required to be registered, as a sex offender or has been convicted of murder. The cost of conducting NSCHCs is an allowable expense under the award. Please budget on the CNCS share at least \$54 plus the cost of a state criminal history check per covered individual (both staff and members).

California Volunteers requires that all "Covered Positions" (program staff and AmeriCorps applicants)



must undergo NSCHCs that include:

1. Nationwide³ name-based National Sex Offender Public Registry Check; **and**;
2. Statewide Criminal History Registry Check in the State of residence at the time of application **and** in the State where the individual will serve or work; **and**
3. FBI National Fingerprint-based Check

All checks must be conducted and any results considered according to Program and CV policy, with the individual cleared prior to the start of service and/or time on the grant. **This includes anyone listed on the budget whether grantee or match funded.**

California Volunteers requirements are that the legal applicant:

1. Follow all CNCS requirements outlined in [45 CFR §§ 2540.200 – 2540.207](#) and CNCS' most recent *NSCHC FAQs*; and
2. Follow CVs' definition that since all programs/grantees serve and/or enroll vulnerable populations, all covered staff and potential AmeriCorps members must complete the **State, FBI and NSOPW** checks; and
3. Recheck the NSOPW.gov nationwide search prior to the start of each term of service for all returning AmeriCorps **members**; and
4. Ensure all required checks are completed, results are considered and the individual is cleared prior to becoming an AmeriCorps member eligible to earn hours and/or a staff person beginning work on an AmeriCorps grant; and
5. Uses **only** California Volunteers approved sources for all checks (Vendors are not permitted without prior approval). The legal applicant may choose either option below until 12/31/19. From 1/1/20 forward, only the Truescreen/Fieldprint option will be compliant. (If a legal applicant requires additional checks to meet selection criteria, they may perform them, but do not have to report results to CV).
 - 7/1/19-12/31/19: CA DOJ (State check, Fingerprint based FBI check), NSOPW.gov ; and CNCS State Repository (for Out of State Check);
 - 1/1/20 forward: Truescreen (State Check, Out of State Check, NSPOW) Fieldprint (Finger-print based FBI);
6. Note that in the event of noncompliance, the legal applicant will be required to use Truescreen and Fieldprint to remedy;
7. Appropriately documents the checks process using CV National Service Criminal History Check Verification Form and NSOPW results in each staff/member file;
8. Has a written policy and procedures in place, which at a minimum addresses requirements 1-6.
9. Ensure one staff member be trained annually in National Service Criminal History Checks using CNCS' training module and maintain the resultant training certificate (per AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions).

F. Requests for Improper Payment Information

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

G. 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

³ An "Advanced Search" of geographic region will not satisfy this requirement. All states that make up the nationwide NSOPR database must be checked before the check is considered complete. Use of a vendor for this check is often not compliant. (See CNCS' NSCHC FAQs regarding Vendors).



to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so ([2 CFR §200.315 \(b\)](#)).

H. Reallocation of Funding

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

