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CaliforniaVolunteers.CA.GOV

2019 AmeriCorps Service Fellowship Pilot



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Applications due January 27, 2020

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO APPLICANTS: The following documents are necessary to complete a 2019-20 operating grant application for AmeriCorps funding. All can be found on the California Volunteers website, californiavolunteers.ca.gov/Grants/ameriCorps/.

- (1) 2019 AmeriCorps Service Fellowship Request for Applications (RFA)
- (2) 2019 AmeriCorps Service Fellowship Application Instructions
- (3) 2019 AmeriCorps Service Fellowship Application Forms
- (4) 2019 National Performance Measures Instructions

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OVERVIEW

State Entity Name: California Volunteers
Funding Opportunity Title: 2019 AmeriCorps Service Fellowship Pilot
CFDA Number: 94.006
State Funds: 0650-102-001 General Fund

Disclosure: 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:

- Proposals are due to California Volunteers at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on Monday, January 27, 2020.
- Final approved proposals will be submitted electronically in the federal eGrants system by February 10, 2020

Our Purpose:

Authorized through the federal Serve America Act (2009) and Executive Order S-24-06, California Volunteers is the State Service Commission for California. California Volunteers is responsible for engaging Californians in service, volunteering and civic action to tackle our State's most pressing challenges and lift-up all communities. California Volunteers supports more than 4,000 AmeriCorps State Fellows annually who serve in communities across the state in the areas of education, disaster services, economic opportunity, healthy futures, environmental stewardship, and veterans and military families.

The AmeriCorps Service Fellowship is a Governor's initiative administered by California Volunteers in partnership with California universities with strong track records in civic engagement. The purpose of this initiative is to create a new Civic Action Fellowship dedicated to building the next generation of civic leaders by engaging college students in advancing solutions to the major problems of our time, while providing them with a path toward reducing college debt. The Civic Action Fellowship will address three key goals: (1) students who dedicate time to public service will receive financial support to obtain a college degree designed to position them for success in career and in life; (2) ensure a new cohort of California citizens committed to addressing public concerns and a life of public engagement; and (3) address state and local priority challenges by establishing a new model for partnership between the State of California and those universities dedicated to civic engagement.

Each participating university will receive a planning grant and an operating grant to support the planning and administration of the fellowship program on their campus.

This *Grant Application Guidance* should be read together with the AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR Sections 2520-2550. The following documents are necessary to complete the grant application for 2019-2020 Funding:

- (1) 2019 AmeriCorps Service Fellowship Grant Application Guidance
- (2) 2019 AmeriCorps Service Fellowship Application Instructions
- (3) 2019 AmeriCorps State Grant Application Forms
- (4) 2019 National Performance Measures Instructions



APPLICATION TIMELINE

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

January 27, 2020	Planning and Implementation Grant Applications Due to CV
January 27-February 3, 2020	CV Review and Provide Feedback on Applications*
February 10, 2020	Universities Submit Final Applications in Federal eGrants System**
February 10-February 25, 2020	CNCS Review and Award Federal Grants
February 11-March 3, 2020	Contracting Process with the State
February-July 2020	Complete planning and operational preparation
September 2020-June 2021	Civic Action Service Period
March 31, 2021	Final State Grant invoice due to CV
April 2021 – May 2021	Complete State Grant Closeout
June 30, 2021	Last Day to Complete Civic Action Service
July 2021-August 2021	Complete Federal Grant Closeout

* Applicants must be available during this timeframe to respond to any CV requests for additional information/clarification.

** During this period, applicants must have appropriate staff available to enter and submit application into the federal web-based grants management system.



I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Funding Program Description

California Volunteers

Within the Office of the Governor, California Volunteers (CV) serves as the State Service Commission responsible for promoting service and volunteerism for the state. California Volunteers' mission is to empower and mobilize Californians to actively help tackle state and local challenges through volunteer and service action. Since 1993, the office has successfully addressed many state and local challenges by investing in service solutions, while leveraging public, private, and nonprofit resources.

The AmeriCorps Service Fellowship is a Governor's initiative administered by California Volunteers in partnership with California universities with strong track records in civic engagement. The purpose of this initiative is to create a new Civic Action Fellowship dedicated to building the next generation of civic leaders by engaging college students in advancing solutions to the major problems of our time, while providing them with a path toward reducing college debt. The Civic Action Fellowship will address three key goals: (1) students who dedicate time to public service will receive financial support to obtain a college degree designed to position them for success in career and in life; (2) ensure a new cohort of California citizens committed to addressing public concerns and a life of public engagement; and (3) address state and local priority challenges by establishing a new model for partnership between the State of California and those universities dedicated to civic engagement.

The AmeriCorps Service Fellowship initiative will be supported with FY 2019 State General Fund and federal funds allocated to California Volunteers from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to support AmeriCorps State programs.

Each participating university will receive a planning grant and an operating grant to support the planning and administration of the fellowship program on their campus.

Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding

AmeriCorps is a national service program that provides opportunities for Americans each year to serve their country as AmeriCorps Fellows (also known as Fellows) by engaging in intensive results-driven service that addresses community problems. An AmeriCorps service commitment is organized to have an important community impact while making a lasting difference in the lives of those who serve. College students eligible to participate in the AmeriCorps Service Fellowship must meet the following minimum federal eligibility requirements: Be a 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 pass required criminal history checks. Each sponsoring university may add additional program-specific eligibility requirements.

Each participating university are responsible for the recruitment, training, and management of college students serving as AmeriCorps Fellows. Fellows may receive a living allowance and other benefits proportionate to their level of time commitment while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, AmeriCorps Fellows 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. In addition to receiving the federal Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, full-time Fellows who complete a minimum of 1700 service hours will receive a California For All Education Award for a combined total value of \$10,000.

AmeriCorps grants include an allotment of service positions and provide partial funding to support program operating costs, including a living allowance for the AmeriCorps Fellows. Grants are solely for program expenses and cannot be used for general organizational operating expenses. **AmeriCorps Fellows 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.

B. Priority Issue Areas

California Volunteers values focusing AmeriCorps Fellows in service activities and projects that align with pressing local and/or regional community challenges. Where there's an alignment with state priorities, California Volunteers would prefer to see AmeriCorps Fellows engaged in service supporting the following areas:

- **Disaster Services**—improving community resiliency through climate change mitigation, including carbon emission reduction, food systems sustainability, lighting in disadvantaged communities, regenerative agriculture, and energy efficiency, etc.
- **Education**—supporting and/or facilitating access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children; improved school readiness for economically disadvantaged children; and/or help economically disadvantaged students prepare for success in post-secondary educational institutions or post-secondary employment opportunities.
- **Economic Opportunity**--improving economic opportunity for economically disadvantaged people, including the homeless population;
- **Healthy Futures**--improving access to primary and preventative care for uninsured and/or low-income individuals and families and other populations with high health disparity, including providing healthcare enrollment and navigation support, connecting service recipients to affordable healthcare programs, providing health education, patient rights and responsibilities, and health care access and benefits; and/or strengthening families by providing family stabilizing services, building Family Protective Factors, and building the parenting knowledge, skills, and practices of mothers and fathers living in poverty.

C. Available Funds

This opportunity includes approximately \$5.1 million in both state and federal dollars that have been appropriated for the Fiscal Year 2019-2020. The available funds support up to 207 full-time equivalent service positions, enabling a maximum of 544 college students to enroll as AmeriCorps Fellows serving in a 675-hour term of service over one or two semesters. These are one-year federal and state funds that must be matched by at least 15% in other funding (in-kind and/or cash) secured by each university partner. Funds awarded through this opportunity are only available to support one year of program implementation. Funding for subsequent years are contingent upon state and federal appropriations and may be subject to a higher level of match requirements consistent with AmeriCorps federal grants.

D. Types of Grants Available

Universities may apply for both an implementation grant and a planning grant or just an implementation grant alone.

- **Implementation or operating grants** provide funds to support program costs. Grant size varies, depending upon the number and types of AmeriCorps Fellow positions requested.
- **Planning grants** provide up to \$75,000 to support building operational systems critical to managing an AmeriCorps grant and activities that will support strengthening or expanding partnerships to support program implementation and sustainability beyond year 1, including developing match funding strategies.



E. Authority

Federal 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.). State funds are available through 0650-102-001 2019-2020 General Fund.



II. ELIGIBILITY

A. Eligible Applicants

As this is a pilot initiative, participation in this opportunity is open to California public and private nonprofit universities with strong track records in civic engagement.

B. Partnerships Requirements

A key goal of this initiative is to establish a model for public/private partnership between the state of California, universities, and nonprofit organizations to address community problems. As such, each pilot university agrees to:

- Participate at least twice in year in the Civic Action Fellows Leadership Council to establish, evaluate, and scale the fellowship program
- Develop their own admission criteria and manage their campus admissions process
- Recruit and enroll students as AmeriCorps Service Fellows
- Administers the Fellows program on their campus
- Integrate civic engagement and academic work for all Fellows
- Offer academic credit for civic engagement work
- Identify public/nonprofit partners to host and support the service of Fellows
- Ensures adequate support and supervision of Fellows

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. IMPLEMENTATION GRANT FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

A. Project and Award Period

Planning grants will support project activities from January 1, 2020 through July 31, 2020.

Implementation grants will support fellowship service activities for one year of operation. The Fellowship must commence by Fall 2020 and civic action activities must be completed by June 30, 2021. State general funds are only available to support grant activities through March 30, 2021.

AmeriCorps Fellows may not begin service prior to the conclusion of the contracting process. More information on the contracting process will be provided at funding notification.

B. Cost per Service Year (MSY)

Applicants request for the number of AmeriCorps Fellow positions that are needed to address the community need stated in their application. A full-time (1700-hour) AmeriCorps Fellow position is equivalent to one Service Year (MSY). An AmeriCorps grant amount is determined based on the number of MSYs that a grantee will support at the cost per MSY amount established by California Volunteers for the state and federal cost shares.

The cost per Service Year limits for this opportunity are as follows:

Table 1: California For All AmeriCorps Cost per MSY Limit

Cost Share	Maximum Limit
Federal (CNCS Dollars)	\$7,920
State (CV Dollars)	\$20,000

Table 2: Fellow Service Year Conversion

Position Type	Minimum Hours	MSY Equivalence
Full-Time	1700	1
Third Quarter Time	1200	.70
Half-Time	900	.50
Reduced Half-Time	675	.3809524
Quarter Time	450	.26455027
Minimum Time	300	.21164022

C. Award Amount

Grant awards have two components: operating funds and AmeriCorps Fellow positions. Operating funds awarded will include up to \$7,920 of federal grant funding and up to \$20,000 in state funds per one full-time equivalent service position. The total grant award will depend on the number of full-time equivalent AmeriCorps Fellow positions requested. It does not include child care or the value of the education award a Fellow may earn, which is covered directly by CV or CNCS outside of the grant.

Any program costs can be included on any combination of the federal, state, or grantee shares as reflected in the budget as long as the costs per MSY for each funding category are maintained.

CV will review applications and determine the final award amount based on availability of funds. Award amounts may vary from the requested amounts.



Methodology for Calculating Grant Request Amount

An applicant's grant amount is determined by the number of full-time equivalent Fellow positions requested multiplied by the amount of federal/state funds being requested (not to exceed the maximum limit). See Table 2 Fellow Service Year Conversion above.

Example 1: Applicant is requesting for 50 Reduced Half-Time service positions (19.05 MSYs) and seeking the maximum federal and state cost per MSY:

$(\$20,000 \text{ state dollars per MSY} \times 19.05 \text{ MSYs}) + (\$7,920 \text{ federal dollars per MSY} \times 19.05 \text{ MSYs}) =$
\$531,828 in total requested funds [\$380,952 in state funds and \$150,876 in federal funds]

Example 2: Applicant is requesting for 40 half-time (20 MSYs) and 5 full-time (5 MSYs) Fellow positions, for a total of 45 positions and 25 MSYs at the maximum cost per MSY:

$(\$20,000 \text{ state dollars per MSY} \times 25 \text{ MSYs}) + (\$7,920 \text{ federal dollars per MSY} \times 25 \text{ MSYs}) =$ **\$698,000 in total requested funds** [\$500,000 in state funds and \$198,000 in federal funds]

D. Type of Award

The AmeriCorps grant award under consideration in this funding opportunity is a Cost-Reimbursement grant. Funds are accessible after costs have been incurred, on a reimbursement basis.

E. Cost Share or Match Requirement

Successful implementation grant applicants are required to provide a single overall match of at least 15 percent of the total program budget. Match may be cash or in-kind.

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. 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.

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. 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 two PMWs, that account for all service hours as follows:



- **Primary Need and Service Performance Measurement Worksheet**—Applicants must have at least one aligned performance measure (output and outcome) that corresponds to the primary service activity. 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 Fellow service hours in service activities that are significant to the program’s theory of change and intended outcomes.
- **Common Fellow/Member Development Worksheet**—Applicants must have an aligned output and outcome that reflects the knowledge and skills Fellows will gain through the program.

Both PMWs combined should account for all Fellow service hours. 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. Applicants are strongly encouraged 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 *2019 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. Applicants will be required to report on the measures they select.

H. Minimum Program Size

The minimum program size generally funded by CV is 20 MSY (full-time equivalent Fellow positions). California Volunteers believes this MSY requirement is necessary to provide Fellows in quantities that make a substantial difference in meeting community needs. As this is funding opportunity is a pilot, university partners may propose to use less than 20 MSYs; however, not fewer than 10 MSYs. Applicants requesting less than the minimum required MSY level request for a waiver from this requirement by including a compelling rationale with the application. The justification should not exceed one page and is separate from the program narrative.

I. Minimum Number of Fellows per Service Site

To ensure strong program design and to provide Fellows with at least a minimal mutual support network, applicants must place a minimum of two AmeriCorps Fellows at each service location as part of their program design. Applicants may request for a waiver from this requirement by submitting a compelling rationale separate from the program narrative with the application.

J. Living Allowance

The proposed budget must include a living allowance for full-time Fellows that are within the required range per Fellow. Although strongly encouraged, living allowance are not required for part-time positions. A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage. Programs are prohibited from comparing the Fellow living allowance to an “hourly wage” in any recruitment materials, Fellow handbooks, etc. Living Allowance costs can be included on the federal, state, or grantee shares of the budget or any combination of the three.

Table 3: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance

Term of Service	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Living Allowance
Full Time	1,700	\$13,992	\$27,984



Three-Quarter Time	1,200	n/a	\$19,753
Half Time	900	n/a	\$14,815
Reduced Half Time	675	n/a	\$11,111
Quarter Time	450	n/a	\$7,408
Minimum Time	300	n/a	\$4,938

K. AmeriCorps Education Awards

AmeriCorps Fellows who successfully complete a term of service will receive a Segal Education Award from the National Service Trust. The amount of the Education Award is based on the value of the Pell Grant. The Education Award amounts for each Fellow slot type is listed in the table below. Learn more about the Education Award here: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps/segal-ameri-corps-education-award>.

The Segal Education Award for full-time AmeriCorps Fellows funded through this opportunity will be supplemented by state funds for a combined total Education Award of \$10,000. At this time, the State Education Award supplement is only available to full-time Fellows funded through this opportunity.

Table 4: AmeriCorps Education Awards

Term of Service	Minimum # of Hours	Federal Education Award	State Education Award
Full Time	1,700	\$6,095.00	\$3,905
Three-Quarter Time	1,200	\$4,266.50	n/a
Half Time	900	\$3,047.50	n/a
Reduced Half Time	675	\$2,321.90	n/a
Quarter Time	450	\$1,612.43	n/a
Minimum Time	300	\$1,289.95	n/a

L. Enrollment Requirements

Enrollment rates ultimately affect the total number of AmeriCorps Fellows awarded to California for service in California communities. Grantees are expected to enroll all MSYs awarded in the grant. California Volunteers reserves the right to adjust grantee budgets as needed in order to maintain awarded/contracted cost per Fellow MSY.

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 Fellow 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 recompetete processes. Applicants that do not retain Fellows may receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years.



IV. PLANNING GRANT FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

A. Fundable Activities

Grant funds support activities that are directly tied to AmeriCorps program planning and development. The grant shall only be used to cover costs that directly support the development of planning grant deliverables described in *Section VII.D. Reporting Requirements/Planning Grants* that include but are not limited to:

- Staff or consultant(s) to facilitate project planning and provide training and technical assistance aimed at improving the Grantee's ability to implement an AmeriCorps program effectively;
- Outreach and establishment of community partnerships to support the planning, implementation, and sustainability of the AmeriCorps program;
- Partnership planning meetings;
- Meeting or office space;
- Developing plans for Fellow recruitment, selection, placement, training, and supervision;
- Developing plans for managing and supporting program site partners;
- Developing plans and systems for ensuring grant compliance and accountability
- Developing match funding strategies beyond year 1
- Travel to training and technical assistance sessions provided by CV
- Travel to see and learn about program models the applicant would like to replicate

Applicants must obtain prior written approval from CV for out of state travel costs or planning activities that occur outside of California.

B. Grant Award Amount

The maximum grant amount that can be requested through this opportunity is \$75,000.

C. Matching Requirement

The grantee is required to provide a match to support at least 24% of the project's total cost. Match may be cash and/or in-kind. For example, an applicant that is proposing a planning project at a combined total cost of \$65,000 (federal share and grantee match combined) and is requesting for \$49,400 from CV will need to provide a match of \$15,600 in cash or in-kind.

D. Staffing Requirement

California Volunteers requires at least one full-time staff at 100% time dedicated to managing the AmeriCorps implementation grant. Additionally, successful planning requires substantial staff to lead the oversight of planning activities. Planning grants have the best results when they have at least one full-time staff dedicated to the grant or a strong planning team with shared responsibilities and an identified lead spending a majority of their time on the grant. California Volunteers highly recommends assigning a full-time person to manage the planning grant activities.

Unless exempted by Federal Uniform Guidance, all time spent on the grant must be tracked using functional timesheets that allow for time allocation. No time can be charged to the grant unless National Service Criminal History Checks have been completed. Verification of timesheets and background check status must occur before any expenses can be incurred.

E. Award Period

The project period for this grant is up to 12 months. Grantees may choose to contract for up to twelve months depending on the amount of time needed to complete deliverables. **The project start date may not occur prior to a grantee's contract execution date with CV.**



V. 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 2019 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.

Staff Review

In Staff Review, reviewers will evaluate each application against assessment criteria outlined in this RFA and the accompanying Application Forms and Instructions. .

Clarification Period

Some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information and/or make changes to their application, including changes to the budget. .

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

Additionally, CV may use the results of the review of the risk assessment evaluation in determining which applications to fund. If CV 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 satisfactorily address all clarification issues in order to be considered for funding.

Feedback to Applicants

At the conclusion of the grant review process 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 implementation grant application must clearly describe a project that will effectively deploy AmeriCorps Fellows 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*. Planning grant applications will be assessed based on the criteria provided in the Planning Grant Narrative section of the *Application Instructions*.

As this funding opportunity represents Governor's initiative, the weight distribution provided for the purpose of evaluating the application to identify areas for strengthening to assure program quality and grant compliance.

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 Fellows will perform, and measureable outputs and outcomes as a result of Fellow activities. Applicants will also be assessed on the plans they have in place to ensure effective service delivery and meaningful Fellow 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 demonstrating that plans are 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 Fellows. See *Application Instructions* for the weights of specific subsections of Organizational Capacity.

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.
- Unless specifically noted for certain applicants, the cost per MSY must not exceed \$7,920 for the federal share and \$20,000 for the state share. The overall grantee share is at least 15 percent of the total proposed budget.

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:

- Identify the non-CNCS funding and resources necessary to support the project
- Indicate the amount of non-CNCS resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash), 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 10 MSYs. Please submit a request to waive the requirement (separate from the program narrative) if you will be requesting less than 20 MSYs.
- If the proposed service activities require specialized Fellow qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: [45 CFR §2522.910-.940](#)), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.

D. Consideration of Integrity and Performance System Information

Prior to making any award that exceeds \$150,000, CV/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.

CV/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 state and federal guidance available. 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.

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 5: Program Requirements in the AmeriCorps Regulations

Requirements and Selection	Citation in the AmeriCorps Regulations
Fellow Service Activities	§2520.20 - §2520.55
Prohibited Activities	§2520.65
Tutoring Programs	§2522.900-2522.950
Matching Funds	§2521.35-2521.90
Fellow Benefits	§2522.240-2522.250
Calculating Cost Per Fellow 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



VI. 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/americorps/>:
 - a. *Request for Applications* (this document),
 - b. *Application Instructions*,
 - c. *National Performance Measures Instructions*,
 - d. *Application Forms*
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 two 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 14 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
- Fellow Training Plan may not exceed 3 pages
- Planning Grant Narrative may not exceed 7 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, January 27, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time.**

Please send Paper Application to:

California Volunteers
ATTN: 2019 AmeriCorps Service Fellowship
1400 10th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Electronic Submissions will be completed by email to funding@cv.ca.gov with the subject line "2019 CFA Application Electronic Submission." Please refer to the *Application Instructions*.



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.



VII. 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 2019 CNCS General Terms and Conditions, and the 2019 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

Implementation Grants

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 Fellows.

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](#).

Planning Grants

Successful planning grant applicants will be required to complete and submit a variety of deliverables related to AmeriCorps program design and operation readiness. These deliverables are due to CV at specific times throughout the project period. Some deliverables may be waived by CV if an applicant can demonstrate that those components are already in place. All deliverables must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time. California Volunteers may withhold payment of invoices if required deliverables are incomplete or are of poor quality.

The following provides a brief description of each planning grant deliverable to be completed by the Grantee during the planning project period. Detailed instructions regarding each item will be provided during the planning period.



- 1) **Compliance and Accountability:** AmeriCorps programs must have monitoring and oversight plans to prevent and detect non-compliance and enforce compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities and criminal history checks at the grantee, subgrantee (if applicable), and service site locations. Grant recipients will be required to report on the specific systems, processes, and tools created to implement its compliance and accountability plans.
- 2) **Partnership Development:** Grant recipients are expected to build private and public partnerships that will support the ongoing implementation and sustainability of the AmeriCorps program. The partnership development deliverable will include a report of the existing and/or new partnerships strengthened or established during the planning process that will support the program beyond year 1.
- 3) **Fellow Support and Management:** Grant recipients are responsible for the recruitment, selection, placement, training, and supervision of AmeriCorps Fellows. The deliverable for this component includes written plans for the recruitment, selection, placement, training, and supervision of AmeriCorps Fellows.
- 4) **Securing Match Funding:** Grant recipients will develop fundraising strategies to secure match funding for year one and beyond and will report on progress made to secure match funding for years 2 and 3 shall the program reapply for funding to be continued.
- 5) **Data Collection Plan:** Grant recipients will ensure a data collection plan and system is in place to collect high quality performance measurement data, including a strategy for using performance data (including proposed performance measures and other process and outcome measures if applicable) to improve its program in year 1 and beyond. The deliverable for this component includes a completed CV Data Collection Plan and ready instruments for all performance measures included in the program's Performance Measurement Worksheets.
- 6) **Other Program Operational Readiness Deliverables**
AmeriCorps Program Readiness deliverables are critical preparedness pieces to effectively operate an AmeriCorps program. In some cases, entirely new systems and documents will be developed while in other instances, the legal applicant will need to adapt current systems to reflect the addition of AmeriCorps Fellows. As needed, grant recipients may leverage planning grant dollars to build or strengthen the following systems and processes that must be in place prior to a successful program launch:

Program Staffing and Management Structure:

- Program Oversight Plan
- Staff Position Descriptions
- Staff Timesheet Template (must be "functional")
- Staff Training Plan

Partnership Management:

- Fellow Placement Site Application/Selection Process
- Fellow Supervisor Roles and Responsibilities
- Partnership Agreements (MOUs)
- Orientation and Training Plan for Site Supervisors
- Policy and Procedure for Collecting and Approving Fellow Timesheets
- In-Kind Match Documentation for Partners (if applicable)

Fellow Support and Management:

Onboarding:



- Fellow Recruitment, Application, and Selection Plan (My AmeriCorps Portal optional)
- Fellow Position Description
- Fellow Eligibility/Citizenship Screening and Documentation Process
- Fellow Service Agreement

Training:

- Fellow Pre-Service Orientation Plan
- Fellow Placement Site Orientation Plan
- Fellow Ongoing Training Plan
- Fellow Timesheet Template
- Fellow Performance Evaluation Template

Support and Supervision:

- System for Tracking Fellow Hours
- Fellow Individual Development Plan
- Performance Review and Feedback Plan
- Performance Improvement Process

Other

- Labor Organization Certification
- National Service Criminal History Checks Policy and Procedure for Staff and Fellows
- Fellow Service Gear Plan

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 Fellows, 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 Fellows).

California Volunteers requires that all “Covered Positions” (program staff and AmeriCorps applicants) must undergo NSCHCs that include:

1. Nationwide¹ name-based National Sex Offender Public Registry Check using NSOPW;
2. Statewide Name- or Fingerprint-based 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;
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.**

In addition, California Volunteers requires that grantees comply with the following:

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 Fellows must complete the **State, FBI**

¹ 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).



- and NSOPW** checks; and
3. Recheck the NSOPW nationwide search prior to the start of each term of service for all returning AmeriCorps Fellows; and
 4. Ensure all required checks are completed, results are considered and the individual is cleared prior to becoming an AmeriCorps Fellow eligible to earn hours and/or a staff person beginning work on an AmeriCorps grant; and
 5. Appropriately documents the checks process and results in each staff/Fellow file; and
 6. Has a written policy and procedures in place, which at a minimum addresses requirements 1-5.
 7. 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).

Successful applicants will be required to use the CNCS approved vendors True Screen and Fieldprint to conduct all required checks. Inability of a grantee to demonstrate that they have conducted all required criminal history checks as specified by CV may result in disallowance of all or part of the costs associated with noncompliance.

F. Prohibited Activities

Prohibited Activities: While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or CV/CNCS, staff and Fellows may not engage in the following activities (see 45 CFR § 2520.65):

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

Fellows may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-CNCS funds.



G. Unallowable Activities

In addition to the *Prohibited Activities*, the following restrictions also apply to the service of AmeriCorps Fellows:

Non-duplication.

Corporation assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program. And, unless there is non-displacement, Corporation assistance will not be provided to a private nonprofit entity to conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities provided by a State or local government agency in which such entity resides.

Non-displacement.

- (1) An employer may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the use by such employer of a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance.
- (2) An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance.
- (3) A service opportunity will not be created under this chapter that will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual.
- (4) A participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance may not perform any services or duties or engage in activities that would otherwise be performed by an employee as part of the assigned duties of such employee.
- (5) A participant in any program receiving assistance may not perform any services or duties, or engage in activities, that—
 - (i) Will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or
 - (ii) Are services, duties, or activities with respect to which an individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures.
- (6) A participant in any program receiving assistance may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any—
 - (i) Presently employed worker;
 - (ii) Employee who recently resigned or was discharged;
 - (iii) Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures;
 - (iv) Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick); or
 - (v) Employee who is on strike or who is being locked out.

H. 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.

I. 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 ([2 CFR §200.315 \(b\)](#)).

J. Reallocation of Funding

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

