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CaliforniaVolunteers.CA.GOV

2022-23 Connecting Californians in Service

Grant Funding Opportunity



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Applications due May 6, 2022

Table of Contents

Overview	3
Application & Implementation Timeline.....	5
Program Description	6
Application Process & Requirements	9
Post Award Administration.....	12

CONTACT INFORMATION

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OVERVIEW

State Entity Name: California Volunteers
Funding Opportunity Title: Connecting Californians through Service
State Funds: General Fund: 0650-102-001

Important Dates:

- Applicants are asked to submit a notice of intent to apply by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on **Friday, April 29, 2022.**
- Applications are due to California Volunteers by **5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on Friday, May 6, 2022.**
- Applicants will be notified of selection decisions **by May 17, 2022.**

Summary:

California Volunteers, Office of the Governor, is the State Service Commission 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 has engaged local communities through innovative and impactful grant making and program development at both the state and local levels for nearly 30 years. By supporting more than 4,000 AmeriCorps State members annually, California Volunteers aims to inspire the next generation of civic leaders, create a pathway to debt-free college, and build a culture of service and civic engagement in California.

Polarization and division have reached a boiling point that threatens our democracy. A diverse society relies on each of us to live, work, and serve alongside people who believe differently than we do. A healthy civic life requires finding common ground to bind people around shared goals, shared struggle, and shared accomplishment. As such, **Connecting Californians through Service**, a new Governor's Initiative, focuses on demonstrating the impact service has on building social cohesion to increase connection and community while reducing polarization, division, and othering. It is California Volunteer's intent that the tool and resources created and insights gained from this demonstration project will grow national service in California in an impactful way, while ensuring that building connection among members and the communities they serve is an intentional program design element of every AmeriCorps programs.

Through this funding opportunity, California Volunteers will launch *Connecting Californians through Service* with a \$750,000 state grant to a California higher education institution for the following scope of work:

- 1) Develop Building Connection Training Curriculum
 - Conduct a quick state of the art survey of resources and curriculum that exist for building connection to identify the most effective practices and curriculum appropriate for national service programs.
 - Collaborate with CV and selected current AmeriCorps programs to create a training curriculum on building connection that is customized for service programs.
 - Create or curate an AmeriCorps building connection curriculum, including a facilitator' guide
 - Impact of training can be measured both on how a diverse set of members change their own perceptions and behaviors, and how they use training to adjust their approach to service in host organizations
- 2) Deliver Building Connection Curriculum Training

- Deliver Train-the-Trainer training on building connection curriculum for a subset of AmeriCorps programs
 - Administer building connection curriculum with a subset of current AmeriCorps members
- 3) Create Building Connection Evaluation Tool
- Survey evaluation tools that exist for building social cohesion and connection
 - Establish a set of indicators of perceptions and behaviors that furthers understanding and clarifies “building connection” (e.g., curiosity, empathy, connection, trust, respect, division, polarization, othering)
 - Create an evaluation tool that measures how trainings, service and/or volunteer programs influence these indicators (positively/negatively)
 - Evaluation tool should collect both quantitative and qualitative data from program participants
 - Pilot evaluation tool with a group of partners with AmeriCorps members to test and enhance tool for scaling
 - Make this tool available for all AmeriCorps programs to use in assessing building connection in their own program beyond this pilot.
- 4) Conduct Evaluation
- Using the Building Connection Evaluation Tool, evaluate the effectiveness of both the Training Curriculum and current AmeriCorps program models in reducing polarization, division, and othering (emphasis on: partisanship, race, socioeconomics, religion, geography)
 - Where appropriate, create control groups to isolate impact of specific AmeriCorps program models and the Training Curriculum
 - Prepare a summative report that shows evaluation data – both quantitative and qualitative – that identifies effective and ineffective program models and trainings

APPLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE (**timeline subject to change*)

Milestone	Date
RFA Released	April 22, 2022
Notice of Intent to apply	April 29, 2022
Application Deadline for RFA	May 6, 2022
Application Review & Clarification Period	May 7- 12, 2022
Award to Notice of Recommended Awards	May 13, 2022
Funding Notification	May 19, 2022
Contract Executed	May 20-June 10, 2022
Initial Building Connection Curriculum and Evaluation Tool Completed	December 2022
Initial Building Connection Curriculum Training Administered	December 2022
Initial Report with insights from Evaluation Tool and Curriculum, and training completed	December 2022
Ongoing Training Administration & Evaluation Implementation	December 2022-December 2023
Final Report with final tool, curriculum, and evaluation report	December 2023

I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. Program Description

Within the Office of the Governor, **California Volunteers** (CV) serves as the State Service Commission responsible for promoting service and volunteerism. 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.

Over the next two program years (2022-2023, 2023-2024), California Volunteers will be engaging over 7,000 Californians annually in service through a number of AmeriCorps state programs and Governor's service initiatives such as CaliforniansForAll College Service Fellowship (College Corps) and California Climate Action Corps. Through these various service programs, Californians serve side-by-side as AmeriCorps members or fellows to address pressing issues in their communities while receiving training to understand the communities they support and gain the skills necessary to effectively tackle community problems.

B. Connecting Californians in Service Purpose and Focus

Polarization and division have reached a boiling point that threatens our democracy. A diverse society relies on each of us to live, work, and serve alongside people who believe differently than we do. A healthy civic life requires finding common ground to bind people around shared goals, shared struggle, and shared accomplishment. As such, **Connecting Californians through Service**, a new Governor's Initiative, focuses on demonstrating the impact service has on building social cohesion to increase connection and community while reducing polarization, division, and othering. It is California Volunteer's intent that the tool and resources created and insights gained from this demonstration project will grow national service in California in an impactful way, while ensuring that building connection among members and the communities they serve is an intentional program design element of every AmeriCorps programs.

Through this funding opportunity, California Volunteers will launch *Connecting Californians through Service* with a \$750,000 state grant to a California higher education institution for the following scope of work:

- 5) Develop Building Connection Training Curriculum
 - Conduct a quick state of the art survey of resources and curriculum that exist for building connection to identify the most effective practices and curriculum appropriate for national service programs.
 - Collaborate with CV and selected current AmeriCorps programs to create a training curriculum on building connection that is customized for service programs.
 - Create or curate an AmeriCorps building connection curriculum, including a facilitator' guide
 - Impact of training can be measured both on how a diverse set of members change their own perceptions and behaviors, and how they use training to adjust their approach to service in host organizations
- 6) Deliver Building Connection Curriculum Training
 - Deliver Train-the-Trainer training on building connection curriculum for a subset of AmeriCorps programs
 - Administer building connection curriculum with a subset of current AmeriCorps members
- 7) Create Building Connection Evaluation Tool
 - Survey evaluation tools that exist for building social cohesion and connection

- Establish a set of indicators of perceptions and behaviors that furthers understanding and clarifies “building connection” (e.g., curiosity, empathy, connection, trust, respect, division, polarization, othering)
- Create an evaluation tool that measures how trainings, service and/or volunteer programs influence these indicators (positively/negatively)
- Evaluation tool should collect both quantitative and qualitative data from program participants
- Pilot evaluation tool with a group of partners with AmeriCorps members to test and enhance tool for scaling
- Make this tool available for all AmeriCorps programs to use in assessing building connection in their own program beyond this pilot.

8) Conduct Evaluation

- Using the Building Connection Evaluation Tool, evaluate the effectiveness of both the Training Curriculum and current AmeriCorps program models in reducing polarization, division, and othering (emphasis on: partisanship, race, socioeconomics, religion, geography)
- Where appropriate, create control groups to isolate impact of specific AmeriCorps program models and the Training Curriculum
- Prepare a summative report that shows evaluation data – both quantitative and qualitative – that identifies effective and ineffective program models and trainings

C. Minimum Grant Deliverables

In collaboration with California Volunteers and a subset of AmeriCorps programs, the successful grant applicant will be responsible for completion of the following deliverables:

1. Building Connection Training Curriculum Development
 - a. A summary of survey findings on existing building connection curriculum and resources
 - b. Initial version completed by December 2022
 - c. Curriculum incorporated to train members in at least 5 AmeriCorps programs (including #CaliforniansForAll College Corps and California Conservation Corps AmeriCorps programs) and evaluate at least 250 members (by Dec 2023)
2. Building Connection Curriculum Training
 - a. Initial Train-the-Trainer training delivered by December 2022
 - b. Initial building connection training administered to subset of AmeriCorps members by December 2022
3. Building Connection Evaluation Tool
 - a. Initial version completed by December 2022
 - b. Tool incorporated to evaluate at least 5 AmeriCorps models (including #CaliforniansForAll College Corps and California Conservation Corps AmeriCorps programs) and evaluate at least 250 members (by Dec 2023)
4. Evaluation Report
 - a. Final report with insights from evaluation of tool and curriculum completed and submitted by December 2023

D. Available Funds

This opportunity will award up to \$750,000 in one-time state general funding appropriated through the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 to one higher education institution in California to deliver the stated scope of work and grant deliverables.

E. Type of Award

California Volunteers will award State General Funds for this opportunity. As such, grants awarded will be issued on a cost-reimbursement basis. Grantees will send invoices no less frequently than quarterly and may invoice monthly.

F. Project Period

California Volunteers expects to issue the grant award by June 2022. All grant activities must be completed during the project period of June 1, 2022 through December 31, 2023. The project period start date may be adjusted to align with the grant contract execution date.

Please note project costs cannot be charged to the grant prior to the contract execution date.

G. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must be a higher education institution in California. For-profit private higher education institutions are not eligible for this opportunity.

II. APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

A. Intent to Apply

Any institution that plans to submit an application is asked to indicate their intent by submitting the Notice of Intent to Apply Form to California Volunteers via email at funding@cv.ca.gov no later than **Friday, April 29, 2022**. The form requests for the name of your institution and contact information for the individual responsible for completing and submitting your application. This notice is non-binding; we recognize that some institutions may subsequently opt out of the process. In addition, institutions that do *not* submit this Intent to Apply form may still submit an application prior to the final application due date.

B. Application Instructions

Each application must clearly describe the applicant's plans to use grant funding to achieve the stated project scope and grant deliverables. We urge all applicants to submit a high-quality application which carefully follows the guidance in the RFA. Applications will be assessed based on the quality of the response to criteria described below.

A complete application must include the following components:

- Connecting Californians through Service Title Page
- Narrative
 - No longer than eight (8) double-spaced pages using size 12 font
 - Title Page and Narrative(s) should be submitted as a single PDF named INSTITUTION NAME-Connecting Californians through Service-2022.pdf
- Budget
 - Excel document using Template named INSTITUTION NAME-Connecting Californians in Service Budget-2022.xls
 - Note: Indirect costs are limited to 10% of modified total direct costs unless the applicant has a federally approved indirect cost rate.

Please submit Title Page and Narrative documents as a single PDF. Please submit the Budget document as an Excel spreadsheet.

C. Application Deadline

Applications should be submitted via email to funding@cv.ca.gov no later than **5:00 PM PDT May 6, 2022**.

Any application or part of an application submitted after May 6, 2022, 5:00 P.M., PDT shall not be considered for this solicitation.

Any application received past the deadline will not be reviewed.

D. Review Criteria

1. NARRATIVE (40 pts)

Narrative responses should be no longer than eight double-spaced pages using size 12 font (for each funding request). Applicants are asked to provide a narrative that address the following criteria:

- a. A detailed plan on the approach to achieving the stated project goals and grant deliverables for this opportunity, including a project plan, a communication plan with CV and program participants, and timeline for completing all grant deliverables. (25 pts)

- b. The institution has a track record in curriculum development and research and evaluation related to building social cohesion and connection.
- c. Adequate and appropriately experienced staffing are in place to successfully carry out this program, or the organization must demonstrate the ability and commitment to contract with paid and/or pro bono staffing to do so. This includes program development and implementation staff, in addition to administrative and support staff. (10 pt)
- d. A list of key personnel and partner(s), including any potential subcontractors who will be working on the project including their titles and job descriptions must be included in the narrative. (5 pts)

2. BUDGET (20 points)

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

E. Review Process

Applications will be reviewed and selected for funding using a multi-stage process that includes Compliance Review, CV Staff Review, and Clarification/Feedback as described below.

Compliance Review

California Volunteers staff will review all applications to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completion requirements.

An application is compliant if the applicant:

- is an eligible organization
- submitted an application by the submission deadline
- includes all required application components

Staff Review

In Staff Review, reviewers will evaluate each application against assessment criteria outlined in advance.

Clarification

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.

Selection

The primary consideration in the selection of AmeriCorps programs is merit. Eligible applicants that satisfactorily address the clarification request will be considered for funding in rank order based on the application's total score by each priority area.

Results of the grant review process are presented to Chief Service Officer, who makes final approval of funding decisions.

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.

III. POST AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. Reporting Requirements

The grant recipient will be required to submit the reports/deliverable below to California Volunteers.

Due by December 2022:

- A summary of survey findings on existing building connection curriculum and resources
- An initial version of the building connection curriculum, including a facilitator's guide
- Administration of initial building connection curriculum training for select programs and AmeriCorps members
- An initial evaluation tool and evaluation plan
- An initial progress report with insights from evaluation tool and curriculum and training completed

Due by December 2023:

- A Final Report with insights from evaluation of tool and curriculum completed

B. Contract Execution

California Volunteers expects to enter into a fully executed contract with the awardee by June 10, 2022.

Please note that any failure to comply with any post-award requirements may result in cancellation of the award. As such, California Volunteers reserves the right to award the contract to the next ranking applicant.