

# 2020/21 AmeriCorps SC Notice of Funding Opportunity

South Carolina New, Recompete, & Continuation Applicants

As applicable to the SC AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity

Concept Paper Due Date: February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Full Application Due Date: March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**INTRODUCTION:**

The South Carolina Commission on National and Community Service (SC Commission) and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) are pleased to announce the opportunity of federal funds to support South Carolina’s AmeriCorps programs for the 2020/21 grant year.

Publication of this Announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity (Notice) does not obligate the SC Commission to award any specific number of grants or to obligate any particular amount of funding.

**INTENDED AUDIENCE:**

This NOFO is for New, Recompeting, and Continuation applicants that intent to operate an AmeriCorps program solely in South Carolina. Key policies that differ from the national AmeriCorps competition, are specific to South Carolina, or have significantly changed since the prior grant year have been highlighted in light blue. Please be aware that this is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather, a helpful indication. Applicants are responsible for adhering to all guidance provided through this Notice.

This *Notice* should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520–2550, and the Narrative, Budget, eGrants, and Performance Measure Instructions, which will be provided to applicant organizations that are selected to advance to stage three of the selection process.

**APPLICATION PHASES, IMPORTANT DATES, AND HOW TO APPLY**

**Summary**

Feb. 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2020	Concept paper and supplemental financial documents due via online survey link.
Feb. 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2020	Applicants will be notified of whether or not their concept paper has been selected to advance to the full application phase.
March 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2020	Full applications due via eGrants portal.
August 1, 2020	Grant awards issued to successful applicants.

## Further Information

### **PHASE 1: TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

*(Only applicable to New and Recompeting Applicants)*

All New and Recompeting applicants that wish to apply for an AmeriCorps SC grant must first review an online training module. The training module is 1 hour in length and includes a link to an applicant eligibility quiz at the end of the presentation. Organizations that successfully complete the training and eligibility quiz will be provided with a link to the online form that can be used to submit their organization's Concept Paper.

Link to Required Training Module: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/7684428895580143372>

### **PHASE 2: CONCEPT PAPER + SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS**

*(Only applicable to New and Recompeting Applicants)*

- **Concept Paper Deadline: February 17th, 2020 5 PM EST**
  - The concept paper will be a highly condensed preliminary paper that asks applicants to provide estimates regarding key information. Applicants with strong concept papers will be invited to submit a full application.
  - Elements of the concept paper include: Instructions, Contact Details, Organizational Information, Fiscal Capacity Statement, Focus Area(s), Narratives, Estimated Service Schedule, Estimated Slot and MSY Request, Funding Matrix Calculation, Estimated Funding Request, Summary and Next Steps.
  - Applicant organizations will be asked to upload the following documents when completing the Concept Paper. Concept Paper entries that do not include the supplemental documents included below will be considered incomplete and will be ineligible to advance.
    - I. A copy of the organization's most recent IRS Form 990 (*Only applicable to organizations with 501c3 status*)
    - II. A copy of the organization's most recent audit report. If no audit report is available, please submit the organization's most recent financial statement.
    - III. (If applicable) A copy of the organization's Federally-Approved Indirect Cost Rate.
    - IV. Completed SC Financial Management SurveyDownload at: <https://www.uwasc.org/ameriCorps-sc-host-site-funding-opportunities>
  - The link to the Concept Paper online form, which contains full instructions for completing Phase 2, will be sent to applicants once they have successfully completed the eligibility quiz detailed in Phase I above.
  
- **Notification of Advancement to Full Application: February 21st, 2020 by 5 PM EST**
  - The SC Commission may request follow-up information via email or request a conference call with Members of your staff to seek further clarification regarding the organization's Concept Paper proposal between the dates of Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>.
  - Commission staff will notify applicants if their proposal is invited to advance to the third phase of application process.
  - Applicants that are selected to advance will receive additional one-on-one consultation from Commission staff as they work to develop their full program proposal.

**PHASE 3: FULL APPLICATION**

(By invitation only)

(Applicable to all applicants – New, Re-competing, and Continuation)

- **Full Application Deadline: Submit via eGrants by March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 5 PM EST**
  - The AmeriCorps SC application consists of two sections; narrative and budget. An overview of each has been provided below.

Narrative – 75%	Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy – 25% / 25pts
<p><b>1. Executive Summary - 0%</b></p> <p><b>2. Program Design – 50%</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Need – 8pts</li> <li>B. Theory of Change and Logic Model – 15pts</li> <li>C. Evidence Base – 12pts</li> <li>D. Target Interventions/Communities – 0pts</li> <li>E. Member Experience – 15pts</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Organizational Capability – 25%</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Organizational Background and Staffing – 8pts</li> <li>B. Support of Leadership – 4pts</li> <li>C. Program Staff Recruitment – 1pts</li> <li>D. Compliance and Accountability – 3pts</li> <li>E. Culture that Values Learning – 3pts</li> <li>F. Member Supervision – 6pts</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Evaluation Summary or Plan - 0%</b></p> <p><b>5. Clarification Summary - 0%</b></p> <p><b>6. Amendment Justification - 0%</b></p> <p><b>7. Continuation Changes- 0%</b></p>	<p><b>Section I – Program Operating Costs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Personnel Expenses</li> <li>B. Personnel Fringe Benefits</li> <li>C. Travel               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Staff</li> <li>b. Member</li> </ul> </li> <li>D. Equipment</li> <li>E. Supplies</li> <li>F. Contractual and Consultant Services</li> <li>G. Training               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Staff</li> <li>b. Member</li> </ul> </li> <li>H. Evaluation</li> <li>I. Other Program Operating Costs</li> </ul> <p><b>Section II – Member Costs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Living Allowance</li> <li>B. Member Support Costs</li> </ul> <p><b>Section III – Administrative Costs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Corporation-fixed percentage Rate</li> </ul>

- **DUNS and SAM Registration/Update Deadline: March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 5 PM EST**  
 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. The SC Commission recommends registering at least three weeks before the application due date.

After obtaining a DUNS number, all applicants must register with the SAM at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) 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. The SC Commission suggests finalizing a new registration or renewing an existing one at least three 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 the SC Service Commission. Please ensure that your organization’s SAM account is open for “Public View.”

All organizations registered in [sam.gov](http://sam.gov) are required to submit an original, signed notarized letter designating their Entity Administrator at the time of renewal. Applicants who do not comply with these requirements may be ineligible to receive or maintain an award. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees at [https://sam.gov/sam/transcript/Quick\\_Guide\\_for\\_Grants\\_Registrations.pdf](https://sam.gov/sam/transcript/Quick_Guide_for_Grants_Registrations.pdf)

**NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO FUND:**

The SC Commission anticipates announcing the results of this competition by **May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020**, dependent on the availability of appropriations.

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## PART I: OVERVIEW

### A. Background

CNCS is a federal agency whose mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic participation through service and volunteering. Through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Volunteer Generation Fund, CNCS has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

In South Carolina, CNCS funds for AmeriCorps\*State programs are administered through the Governor-appointed SC Commission on National and Community Service, which is housed within the United Way Association of South Carolina (UWASC). Governor-appointed Commissioners and UWASC Board Members oversee the legal and policy governance of the South Carolina Commission program portfolio. A description of programs funded during the 2019-20 grant year can be found at <https://www.uwasc.org/ameriCorps>.

## PART II: DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

### A. Eligible Applicants and Requirements

The following Non-Federal entities (as defined in 2 C.F.R. §200.69) who have a DUNS number and are registered in System for Award Management (SAM) are eligible to apply:

- Indian Tribes - 2 C.F.R. §200.54
- Local governments - 2 C.F.R. §200.64
- Nonprofit organizations (including faith-based entities) - 2 C.F.R. §200.70
- School Districts and Institutions of higher education - 2 C. F.R. §200.54
- States - 2 C.F.R. §200.90

Previously receiving funding from CNCS or another Federal agency is not a prerequisite to applying under this Notice. Additionally, under section 132A(b) of the NCSA, organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this Notice.

Note that under section 745 of Title VII, Division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, A similar restriction may be enacted if CNCS or the SC Service Commission is aware that any corporation has any unpaid Federal tax liability which—

- has been assessed
- for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and
- 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 Notice.4.

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(4) that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for CNCS funding.

## B. Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding

Best summarized as the domestic Peace Corps, AmeriCorps enables host agencies to recruit passionate individuals who will serve to increase the capacity of the organization to expand services or engage additional beneficiaries. To help support their service, AmeriCorps Members may receive a modest living allowance, may place eligible student loan repayment on forbearance, and also earn an education award that ranges between \$1,311.11 to \$6,195 that can be used to continue their education or pay back eligible student loans. Additionally, full-time AmeriCorps Members also receive grant-supported health insurance and childcare benefits. The following link will direct you to a concise video that provides a further overview of what AmeriCorps is all about: <http://bit.ly/2r4W0WE>

AmeriCorps projects can be single site (all AmeriCorps Members serve with a single organization) or multi-site (AmeriCorps Members serve at a variety of partner agency service sites). Additionally, AmeriCorps projects can be designed to be local, regional, or statewide.

The AmeriCorps host organization is responsible for recruiting the individuals who will be enrolled as AmeriCorps Members in their program. There are several platforms that AmeriCorps programs can use to conduct outreach to potential applicants who have already expressed interest in serving in AmeriCorps, but much of the Member recruitment is conducted using similar methods to those used to recruit traditional employees. Member payroll is administered by the AmeriCorps program.

CNCS and the SC Commission require that programs co-brand as AmeriCorps programs and that their participants consistently identify, and are recognized, as AmeriCorps Members providing value to the community.

## C. Focus Areas

In order to carry out Congress' and the [SC State Service Plan's](#) intent to maximize the impact of investment in national service, CNCS and the SC Commission are targeting AmeriCorps funds to the following focus areas:

### ***Disaster Services***

Grant 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.

### ***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.

### ***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' preparation for success in post-secondary educational institutions.

### ***Environmental Stewardship***

Grants will provide 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.

### ***Healthy Futures***

Grants will provide support for activities that will address the opioid crisis; 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 with the purpose of reducing obesity.

### ***Veterans and Military Families***

Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength; increase the number of veterans, wounded warriors, military service Members, and their families served by CNCS programs; and/or increase the number of veterans and military family Members engaged in service through CNCS programs.

### ***Capacity Building***

A set of activities that expand the scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of programs and organizations. These activities achieve lasting positive outcomes for the beneficiary populations served by CNCS-supported organizations (i.e., AmeriCorps programs). As a general rule, CNCS and the SC Commission considers capacity building activities to be indirect services that enable CNCS-supported organizations to provide more, better, and sustained direct services. Capacity building may be a small portion of AmeriCorps member activities, as it specifically relates to the direct services to be provided in one or more of the focus areas listed above. Capacity building activities cannot be solely intended to support the administration or operations of the organization. Capacity building activities must:

1. Be intended to support or enhance the program delivery model;
2. Respond to the program's goal of increasing, expanding, or enhancing services in order to address the most pressing needs identified in the community; and
3. Enable the program to provide a sustained level of more or better direct services after the capacity building services end.

## **D. SC Target Interventions and Communities for 2020-2021**

The SC Commission will seek to build a diverse portfolio and will accept and consider funding applications across all six of the CNCS focus areas. The SC Commission also encourages organizations to

submit an application under one of the *SC Target Interventions or Communities*. Applications submitted under target areas are not guaranteed funding and must demonstrate significant program focus, design, and outcomes to receive priority consideration.

### **Target Interventions**

In an effort to promote a diverse program portfolio that seeks to address a variety of needs throughout the state, the South Carolina Commission encourages organizations to submit proposals that align with the following program models.

- **Special Populations:** AmeriCorps programming has been shown to be an effective tool for bridging gaps that may exist in services that are needed to support individuals with disabilities, veterans and military families, aging adults, and youth (age 24 or below) who have been removed from school or work for more than six months or who have received services from the social service system (e.g. foster care, juvenile justice). The SC Service Commission is interested in investing in organizations that either serve the populations listed above, or engage those populations in AmeriCorps service positions. If your organization would like to be provided with information regarding existing AmeriCorps programs that serve the populations listed above, please email [brent.kossick@uwasc.org](mailto:brent.kossick@uwasc.org)
  
- **Healthy Futures:** In an effort to continue develop a portfolio of AmeriCorps programs that can address a diverse array of community needs, the SC Service Commission is also interested in investing in organizations that submit grant proposals that seek to support one or more of the following:
  - Food security
  - Independent living
  - Physical or mental health
  - Access to medical care
  - Parenting skills
  - Behavioral skills
  - Combatting substance abuse
  - Preventing child mistreatment

Information regarding current evidence-informed AmeriCorps program models implementing healthy future initiatives can be found at the following two links:

- [https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/HF\\_Evidence\\_Brief\\_FINAL\\_v2\\_508.pdf](https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/HF_Evidence_Brief_FINAL_v2_508.pdf)
- <https://www.nationalservice.gov/focus-areas/healthy-futures/ameri-corps-and-senior-corps-respond-nations-opioid-epidemic>

### **Target Communities**

The SC Commission accepts and is willing to fund applications that propose to provide services to any South Carolina community, but specifically seeks to receive applications proposing to serve communities located in the following counties that are currently underrepresented by National Service resources.

#### *High Need*

- Allendale (Promise Zone)
- Bamberg (Promise Zone)
- Cherokee

#### *Significant Need*

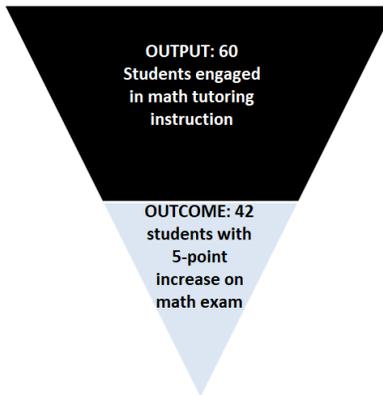
- Colleton (Promise Zone)
- Barnwell (Promise Zone)
- Hampton (Promise Zone)
- Jasper (Promise Zone)
- Florence
- Chester
- Darlington
- Dillon
- Marlboro
- Marion

#### *Need*

- Abbeville
- Aiken
- Chesterfield
- Edgefield
- McCormick
- Oconee
- Union

## E. Performance Measures

Performance measures enable AmeriCorps grantees to clearly demonstrate the impact that of their program’s primary intervention. Performance measures are typically structured using an *Output* that captures the total number of interventions provided or beneficiaries engaged, which is then paired with one or more *Outcomes* that measures the results of the intervention that was provided. Example:



In prior years, the SC Service Commission required all applicants to include at least one National Performance Measure that was included in the CNCS Performance Measure Instructions. Additionally, applicants were also required to ensure that at least 80% of Member service activities were captured using performance measures. These two requirements will no longer be applicable to AmeriCorps SC grantees. 2020/21 applicants should instead adhere to the guidance listed below to develop their program performance measures.

All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output and outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention of their program. This may be a National Performance Measure or an applicant-determined measure. Additional performance measures, including output-only National Performance Measures, may also be included if desired; however, all performance measures must be consistent with the program’s Theory of Change and represent significant program activities. It is only recommended that applicants include multiple performance measures if they intend to have Members serving within multiple focus areas.

The SC Commission does not expect applicants to select performance measures to correspond to each and every potential Member activity or community impact. CNCS and the SC Commission values the quality of performance measures over the quantity of performance measures. AmeriCorps SC programs will no longer be expected to capture at least 80% of Member service activities using performance measures; however, the SC Commission will still expect that the majority of Member Service activities align with the program’s Theory of Change/Logic Model.

The SC Commission expects applicants to use Performance Measures as part of their comprehensive performance measurement strategy if the National Performance Measures are part of the applicant's theory of change. 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. A list of national performance measures and further guidance on how to develop/structure performance measures for your program can be found at the following link:

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2020%20Performance%20Measures%20Instructions%20FINAL.508.pdf>

All applicants should be aware that CNCS has made significant adjustments to the 2019/20 Performance Measure Instructions as compared to prior years. In an effort to better align the national performance measures with Member service activities, as well as streamline reporting, CNCS has both updated and eliminated many national performance measures that were previously available to AmeriCorps applicants. All AmeriCorps SC applicants, including Continuation applicants, should closely examine the changes that have occurred to the national performance measures and adjust their measures according to both the CNCS updates and the revised AmeriCorps SC guidance included above.

Grantees will be expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are providing the SC Commission with high quality performance measure data. At a minimum, Grantees should have policies and practices that address the following five aspects of data quality:

- The data measures what it intends to measure;
- The Grantee collects data in a consistent manner;
- The data that is reported is only applicable to interventions that occurred because of the support provided by AmeriCorps Members.
- 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.

Additional information regarding national performance measures can be found at:  
<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement/ameri-corps>

## **F. Program Authority**

CNCS's legal authority to award these grants is found in the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, (NCSA) (42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.)

## **PART III. AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Estimated Available Funds for Fiscal Year 2020**

The SC Commission expects a highly competitive AmeriCorps 2020/21 grant competition. The SC Commission expects to award New, Re-competing, Continuation, and possibly Planning Grants. The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

The SC Commission will set aside a small percentage of the State's formula allocation to ensure that funds are available to support budget line items that are required by the SC Commission. Required line items may include, but are not limited to; statewide consultation/evaluation fees. The SC Commission will add these required line-items to each applicable subgrantee budget at the end of the grant review process. Each applicant will have the opportunity to view and approve these budget revisions.

#### **B. Estimated Award Amount for Fiscal Year 2020**

Grant awards have three components: operating funds, AmeriCorps Member positions, and Indirect/Admin Costs. 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 projects.

The SC Commission's current AmeriCorps grant awards range from \$45,000 to \$400,000, with an average grant award being around \$150,000. Grant awards are limited to a maximum cost per MSY of \$20,000/MSY; however, grants are rarely funded at this level (a detailed description on how to determine MSY is included in Part IV.A). The Concept Paper includes a calculator which will calculate a range of potential award based on the proposed structure of the program.

The SC Commission will review applications and determine the appropriate award amount, if any. Award amounts vary. The SC Commission is not obligated to fund grant proposals in their entirety and reserves the right to request applicants to make revisions to any portion of their organization's proposal.

**\*\*\*Only Applicable to Continuation Applications\*\*\***

Option A – Cost Increase	Option B – Expansion Request
<p>The SC Commission recognizes that programs may experience an increased cost of doing business from year-to-year based on increases in staff salaries, mileage costs, contracts, etc. For this reason, applicants may request up to \$10,000 in additional CNCS funding from the organization’s FY19 grant award without being considered a request for expansion. All requests for additional funding must be described in both the Continuation Changes and Budget Narrative sections of the program’s application. The SC Commission reserves the right to approve or deny these requests.</p> <p>A mandatory minimum living allowance increase has been issued for Full-Time Member positions during the 2020/21 program year. Any increase to organization’s budget that occurs because of this mandatory increase will not be factored into the \$10,000 allowable increase.</p>	<p>In order to further increase the ability for organizations to apply to meet the needs outlined in the <i>Target Interventions and Communities</i> section of the Notice, AmeriCorps SC programs that are currently in a Continuation year may apply for program expansions if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) They intent to begin implementing a new <i>Target Intervention</i>, or significantly increase the number of AmeriCorps Member placements in a Target Community, and;</li> <li>b) Currently fall within the SC Commission’s low-risk monitoring category.</li> </ul> <p>Continuation applicants requesting an expansion will not be at risk of losing their current grant award/Continuation status and will also still be eligible to request a \$10,000 increase if their expansion request is not selected for funding.</p> <p>To submit a request for expansion, Continuation applicants should submit an email to <a href="mailto:brent.kossick@uwasc.org">brent.kossick@uwasc.org</a> by Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019. That addresses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Outline of the Target Intervention or Target Community(ies) that the program would like to expand in to.</li> <li>2) A brief summary of the organization’s experience or relationships that could be leveraged in order to produce a successful expansion.</li> <li>3) Estimate of the additional number of MSY that the program may want to request in order to allow for expansion.</li> <li>4) An estimate of the additional CNCS funding that may be requested to support the expansion.</li> </ul> <p>Programs that are selected to submit further information regarding an expansion request will be provided with additional guidance by Commission staff.</p>

### C. Award Period

The AmeriCorps SC program year for this grant cycle will begin August 1, 2020 and end on July 31, 2021. Projects must be designed to take place within the program year.

Applications should be submitted with a one-year budget, but unless otherwise specified, the grant generally covers a three-year project period and grantees can submit Continuation requests without recompeting for funding in year two and three of the project. Factors considered in awarding Continuation grants include satisfactory performance, demonstrated capacity to manage the grant, compliance with grant requirements, agency priorities, and the availability of appropriated funds. The SC Commission reserves the right to adjust the amount of a grant or elect not to continue funding for subsequent years.

The SC Board of Commissioners will review any proposed changes to program design, slot allocation, or budget submitted as part of a program's Continuation application. The SC Board of Commissioners reserves the right to approve or reject any of the proposed changes.

### D. Types of Grants

**Cost Reimbursement Grants:** These grants fund a portion of program operating costs and Member living allowances, with flexibility to use all of the funds for allowable costs regardless of whether or not the program recruits and retains all AmeriCorps Members. Cost reimbursement grants include a formal matching requirement and require the submission of a budget and financial reports.

The SC Service Commission requires that all applicant organizations that will be hosting an AmeriCorps program for the first time apply as a cost-reimbursement application. (This excludes Professional Corps programs.)

**Fixed Amount Grants:** These grants provide a fixed amount of funding per Member Service Year (MSY) that is substantially lower than the amount required to operate the program. Organizations use their own or other resources to cover the remaining costs. Programs are not required to submit budgets or detailed reimbursement requests, there is no specific match requirement, and programs are not required to track and maintain documentation of match. However, the grant only provides a portion of the cost of running the program and organizations must still raise the additional resources needed to run the program. Programs can access all of the funds, provided they recruit and retain the Members supported under the grant based on the MSY level awarded.

Types of Fixed Amount Grants Include:

- **Fixed amount grants:** In 2019 CNCS expanded the ability for AmeriCorps programs administering any AmeriCorps Member slot type (e.g. minimum time, quarter time, reduced half time, half time, three quarter time, or full time) to apply for a fixed amount grant. The SC Service Commission encourages all current AmeriCorps grantees to consider whether or not converting to a fixed-amount grant would be the right fit for their organization.

- **Professional Corps:** Professional Corps programs recruit and place qualified Members in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals in positions as teachers, health care providers, police officers, engineers, or other professionals. Professional Corps Members' salaries are paid entirely by the organizations with which the Members serve, and are not included in the budget. In order to be considered for funding, applicants must demonstrate that there are an inadequate number of professionals in the community (ies) where the program seeks to place Members. Professional Corps are not eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement grants, and may not request more than \$1,000/MSY.
- **Education Award Grants (EAP) fixed amount grant:** Programs apply for a small fixed amount per MSY, can enroll less than full-time Members, and use their own resources to cover all other costs. Programs can access funds under the grant based on enrolling the full complement of Members supported under the grant. As with full-time fixed amount grants, there are no specific match or financial reporting requirements for EAP fixed amount grants, but these programs may not request more than \$800/MSY.

**Planning Grants:** Planning grants are a form of cost reimbursement grants, but the purpose of a planning grant is to support the development of AmeriCorps programs that will engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based interventions to solve community problems in future years. Planning grant recipients are expected to be better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle (2020/21).

Unlike full Program Grants, Planning Grants do not support AmeriCorps Member positions. Instead, Planning Grants provide funding that allows organizations to hire/designate a staff person who is responsible for working with SC Commission staff and outside consultants to develop a high-quality AmeriCorps program that is designed to meet a community need. In addition to providing funding for a staff position, planning grants may also be utilized to fund some additional operation expenses such as travel, training, and consultation fees.

Applicant organizations are not able to directly apply for an AmeriCorps SC planning grant. Instead, each organization's full program proposal will be assessed during the selection process, and grant reviewers may choose to recommend that an application be funded as a planning grant rather than a full program grant. To make this determination, reviewers will assess where an applicant organization may still need to grow in order to increase their ability to successfully administer a full AmeriCorps program. Areas of growth may include: building Member recruitment pipelines, programmatic or fiscal capacity building, staff selection, policy and procedure development, securing placement site agreements, etc.

If an applicant organization is recommended to receive Planning Grant funding, the organization will be contacted by Commission staff, which will assist the organization in revising their grant narrative, budget and performance measures to align with a planning grant year.

Planning Grant award amounts will likely not exceed \$75,000 per grantee, and will be awarded on a cost reimbursement basis. Planning grantees are required to provide a 24% match to assist with administering the grant, which can be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions.

Organizations that receive a planning grant will be expected to work collaboratively with SC Commission staff during the entirety of the project period. This will entail that planning grant staff participate in regular meetings, phone calls, and training events scheduled by Commission staff. Additionally, organizations that receive planning grant funds will be expected to submit a full AmeriCorps funding proposal for the 2021/22 program year.

## PART IV: Grant Expectations and Requirements

### A. Program Size

#### Member Service Year (MSY):

One Member Service Year (MSY) is equivalent to a full-time AmeriCorps position (at least 1700 service hours.)

Organizations should aim to engage the equivalency of at least 8 MSY/Full-Time AmeriCorps Member positions (ex. 16 Half Time x 0.5MSY = 8 total MSY). Applicants should use the formulas included below for calculating MSY. It is recommended that New applicants not apply for any more than 30 total Member slots.

- Full-time (1700 Hours) Members x 1.000
- Reduced Full Time (1200 Hours) Members x .700
- Half-time (900 Hours) Members x 0.500
- Reduced Half Time (675 hours) Members x 0.3809524
- Quarter Time (450 hours) Members x 0.26455027
- Minimum time (300 hours) Members x 0.21164022

### B. Maximum Cost Per MSY

The Cost Per MSY is determined by dividing the total CNCS funding request by the number of MSY that the program proposes to host. (i.e. \$150,000 funding request / 9MSY = \$16,666 cost/MSY)

The SC Commission considers comparative costs per MSY in making funding decisions.

#### Recommended cost per MSY for Cost Reimbursement programs:

- No more than \$17,000/MSY for programs proposing to host less than 13 MSY.
  - No more than \$15,479 for programs proposing to host more than 13 MSY.
- The maximum cost per MSY that an applicant can request is \$20,000/MSY. Please note that request for maximum cost per MSY is rarely approved.*

#### Required cost per MSY for Fixed-Amount programs:

- No more than \$15,479/MSY for traditional fixed-amount applicants.
- No more than \$1,000/MSY for professional corps applicants
- No more than \$800/MSY for EAP applicants

### C. Evidence-Based or Evidence-Informed Priority Consideration

In order to maximize the impact of the public investment in national service, The SC Commission will provide grants to programs that demonstrate that they will engage AmeriCorps Members in an evidence-based or evidence-informed approach to providing a service intervention that will result in intended solutions to community problems (e.g., based on proposed program's performance and evaluation data or research demonstrating the effectiveness of a similar intervention). More information is provided in the Narrative Instructions, which will be provided to applicant organizations that are selected to advance to phase III of the competition.

### D. AmeriCorps Member Enrollment Requirements

The SC Commission expects grantees to enroll all the Member slots included in their grant award. Enrollment rates have a direct bearing on the number of slots and the size of awards approved in the Continuation and Recompete processes. Continuation and Recompeting Grantees that have not achieved full enrollment in the previous year must provide an explanation and a corrective action plan in their application. Successful applicants that do not fully enroll are likely to receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years.

### E. AmeriCorps Member Retention Requirements

The SC Commission expects grantees to pursue the highest 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 recompetite processes. Successful applicants that do not retain their members are likely to receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years. The SC Commission also recognizes retention rates may vary among equally effective programs depending on the program model. Continuation or Recompeting Grantees that have not achieved an 85% retention in the most recently completed program year must provide an explanation and a corrective action plan in their application.

### F. AmeriCorps Member Living Allowance

The proposed budget must include a living allowance for full-time Members that is between \$14,279 (minimum) and \$28,558 (maximum) per Member. A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage and there is no employer-employee relationship that exist between the AmeriCorps program and AmeriCorps Member.

Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for Members serving in less than full-time terms of service (*Note: Programs that choose to not provide a living allowance to part-time Members oftentimes experience challenges with recruiting and meeting full enrollment. If the applicant proposes to not offer a living allowance, or offer a very small living allowance, to its part time Members, the applicant will need to present a very strong argument within the grant application that demonstrates why the program will still be able to successfully recruit AmeriCorps Members.*) 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; however, it is ultimately up to the applicant to determine the living allowance rate that the organization wishes to provide to part-time Members. For cost-reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either CNCS or Grantee Share.

While fixed-amount grant applicants are not required to submit detailed budgets, they are still required to provide a living allowance that complies with the minimum and maximum requirements to Members. Fixed-amount grant applicants are not required to indicate that amount in the application and request those positions as “without living allowance” in the budget.

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

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1700	\$14,279	\$28,558
Reduced Full-time	1200	n/a	\$20,159
Half Time	900	n/a	\$15,119
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	\$11,339
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$7,559
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$5,040

**i. Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements**

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

***Professional Corps Grantees***

Professional Corps programs Members must receive a living allowance or salary, which must meet the minimum, but may exceed the maximum living allowance set in the Living Allowance Table above.

**G. Amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award for FY 2020**

AmeriCorps Members serving in programs funded with FY 2020 dollars who successfully complete a term of service will receive an Education Award from the National Service Trust of \$6,195 for a year of full-time service, with correspondingly smaller awards for less-than-full-time service. The amount of the Education Award is determined on the basis of the Pell Grant award. A Member has up to seven years after his or her term of service to use the Education Award. The Segal Education Award is distributed to AmeriCorps alumni through the National Service Trust and should not be included as a line item in the AmeriCorps program budget.

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Education Award Amount
Full-time	1700	\$6,195.00
Three Quarters Time	1200	\$4,336.50
Half Time	900	\$3,097.50
Reduced Half-time	675	\$2,360.00
Quarter-time	450	\$1,638.89
Minimum-time	300	\$1,311.11

## PART V. ADMINISTRATIVE AND FISCAL REQUIREMENTS

### A. Administrative Requirements

All awards under this Notice 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.

CNCS and the SC Commission may, from time to time, request documentation from recipients 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, the SC Service Commission may, in appropriate circumstances, consider in its funding decisions any previous failures to make timely responses.

### B. National Service Criminal History Check Requirements

The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. The law requires recipients to conduct and document NSCHCs on any person (including award-funded staff, grantee share staff, national service participant, or volunteer) receiving a salary, living allowance, stipend or education award through a program receiving CNCS funds. This includes staff that receive part of their salary through the grant (CNCS or match side) or a subgrant of the AmeriCorps grant award. An individual is ineligible to serve in a position that receives such support 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 grant award.

Unless the SC Commission has provided a recipient with a written exemption or written approval of an alternative search procedure dated after August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, grantees must use Truescreen and Fieldprint to screen all covered positions for the following NSCHCs:

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

*\* Please note that as of December 31, 2019, many pre-approved Alternative Search Procedures (ASPs) and any existing, individual ASP/Exemption requests will expire and will no longer be available for use.*

Inability of a grantee to demonstrate that they have conducted all components of the NSCHC, as specified in SC Commission policies and procedures documents may result in sanctions and fines.

See 45 CFR § 2540.200–§ 2540.207 and CNCS Criminal History Check Resources for complete information and FAQs. <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/criminal-history-check>

### C. Match Requirements

#### *Cost Reimbursement Grants (includes Planning Grants)*

Grantees are required to meet an overall minimum matching rate of the total cost of operating the AmeriCorps program that increases over time. Grantees have the flexibility to meet the overall match requirements in any of the three budget areas, as long as the minimum match of 24% for the first three years, and the increasing minimums in years thereafter, are maintained. See 45 CFR § 2521.60 for the specific regulations.

In addition to federal regulations, the SC Commission requires that programs who have received SC Formula funding for more than 10 years to increase their match commitment by 5% for every year past year 10. Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to remain at a 50% matching requirement. To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a severely economically distressed community or that the organization faces substantial challenges in raising non CNCS resources. For more information on applying for an alternative match, please reference the Narrative and Budget Instructions.

An applicant’s match obligation can be met through either cash or in-kind contributions.

- Example of Cash Contribution: The host organization pays 50% of the program Director’s salary.
- Example of In-Kind Contribution: The host organization establishes an agreement with a local church that allows its AmeriCorps Members to use an office space valued at \$400/month to provide after school tutoring services.

Many organizations choose to contribute matching resources that exceed the required minimums outlined in the table below. Applicants whose match contribution exceeds the minimum amount are usually viewed favorably by grant reviewers. It is important to note that organizations are required to meet and provide documentation for the match percentage that appears in their application’s Budget Narrative, even if it exceeds the minimum percentage outlined in the table below. When entering a full application, your program’s required match percentage can be found by reviewing the Grantee Share column of the “Budget Totals” line item of the Budget Narrative.

| Year                                    |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---|
| 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9    | 10   | 11+                                     |
| 24%  | 24%  | 24%  | 26%  | 30%  | 34%  | 38%  | 42%  | 46%  | 50%  | An additional 5% each year past year 10 |

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

### ***Fixed amount Grants***

Only organizations that have previously administered AmeriCorps programs are eligible for fixed amount grants.

Below is an overview of the requirements governing AmeriCorps Fixed-Amount awards:

- There is no specific match requirement for fixed amount grants, but the SC Commission does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program. Organizations must raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.
- Organizations are able to submit applications to administer all Member slot types under a fixed amount grant. (e.g. minimum time, quarter time, reduced half time, half time, three quarter time, or full time)
- Applicants may not request more than \$15,479 per full-time slot. Requests for part-time positions should not exceed the prorated-amount of the full-time maximum amount (i.e. 1200hr Slots = 0.7 MSY X \$15,479=\$10,835 max).
- Reimbursement for fixed-amount grants are based on the number of Members enrolled/retained. Fixed-Amount grantees are reimbursed monthly based on the program's retention of AmeriCorps Members and those Members' progress towards meeting their service hour requirements.
- Fixed Amount grantees are required to meet the same programmatic requirements as Reimbursement grantees including all programmatic requirements listed in the Reimbursement Grant Budget Instructions.

Additional resources regarding fixed-amount grants can be found here:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management/fixed-amount-grants>

## **PART VII. REPORTING AND MONITORING REQUIREMENTS**

### Programmatic

*Both Reimbursement and Fixed-Amount Grantees* are required to provide progress reports (Due November 2020, and March 2021), End-Of-Year Closeout Packets (Due October 2021), and participate in annual desk audits and site visits and monthly training/monitoring events scheduled by the SC Commission.

### Fiscal

*Reimbursement Grantees'* reimbursement requests are required to include documentation such as receipts, paid invoice records, payroll documentation, etc. that supports all expenditures, regardless of amount, for which reimbursement is requested. All staff listed under the Personnel Section of the Grant Budget Narrative are required to complete timesheets that utilize OMB best practices. Personnel timesheets must:

- Be completed and approved at a minimum of once per month.
- Be signed by both the employee and his or her supervisor.
- Represent the actual time spent conducting activities directly associated with management of the AmeriCorps grant/program.
- Accurately capture the total amount of hours worked on all projects.

*Fixed Amount Grantees* reimbursement request must include verification of Member hours served.

The SC Commission requires monthly requests for reimbursement from cost reimbursement subgrantees. Reimbursement requests and all supporting documentation is due no later than 5pm on the 15th of the following month (i.e. reimbursements request for September are due October 15).

Note: If the subgrantee has not submitted a request by the 15<sup>th</sup>, or has submitted incomplete documentation, both the subgrantee and the SC Commission's Programmatic staff will be notified that the program's requests will not be processed until the following month, providing documentation is complete. Typically, it takes several months for first-year AmeriCorps SC grantees to submit adequate reimbursement request documentation. For this reason, all applicants should ensure that they can adequately cover their AmeriCorps program's operational expenses for 90+ days without receiving a reimbursement payment.

## **PART VIII. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **A. Assessment Criteria**

Each applicant must clearly describe a project that will deploy AmeriCorps Members effectively to solve a significant community problem. We urge your organization to submit a high quality application carefully following the guidance in the *Notice* and in the Application Instructions. The quality of your application will be an important factor in determining whether your organization will receive funding.

### **B. Goals of the Review and Selection Process**

The assessment of applications involves a wide range of factors and considerations.

SC Commission staff and the SC Board of Commissioners will apply their experience and expertise in evaluating applications. In the end, the review and selection process will produce a diversified set of high- quality programs that represent the priorities and selection factors described in this *Notice*.

Specifically, the review and selection process will:

#### ***1. Identify eligible applications that satisfy the following considerations:***

- High alignment with criteria.
- Applicants proposing to implement an AmeriCorps program serving a CNCS Focus Area, or SC Target Communities/Interventions.
- Relative risk and opportunity.

#### ***2. Consider:***

- Recruitment and deployment of community volunteers to leverage impact
- The strength of the need and evidence base for the program

**3. Yield a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:**

- Geographic representation.
- Meaningful representation of:
  - Rural and urban communities
  - Small and large programs
  - Faith- and community-based organizations
  - Focus area representation
- Organizations and/or program models that build capacity for individuals, nonprofits and communities to solve problems
- Organizations and/or program models that recruit and engage traditionally underrepresented populations such as rural residents, people with disabilities, veterans and military families, Native Americans Opportunity Youth or individuals 55 years of age or older.
- Organizations that embrace innovative approaches to solving problems, including service-learning

**C. Stages in the Review and Selection process**

***Risk Assessment Evaluation:***

SC Commission staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant, including conducting due diligence to ensure an applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility or the quality of its concept paper or application on the basis of the selection criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. This process may include SC Commission staff or SC Commissioners scheduling a time to visit the applicant's place of business. In evaluating risks, the SC Commission may consider the following:

- Financial stability;
- Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in applicable OMB Guidance;
- History of performance as reflected in the applicant's record in managing previous SC Commission awards.
- Reports and findings from any available audits performed under;
- IRS Tax Form 990;
- Information contained in the applicant's Financial Management Survey.
- An applicant organization's annual report;
- Publicly available information including information from an applicant organization's website;
- The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other Requirements; and
- Information gathered during in-person visits by SC Commission Staff or Commissioners.

### **1. *Review of Concept Papers and supplemental financial documentation***

Commission staff will review all complete Concept Forms and financial documentation submitted prior to the deadline. Staff will assess concept papers and financial documents based on all criteria listed in this notice and application instructions and select the top proposals to be further reviewed by members of the Commission's Grant Review Committee

With the goal of a diversified portfolio based on the NOFO priorities, available funding, strategic considerations, and likelihood of success, the Grant Review Committee will select Concept papers to advance to the next round of grant competition and to submit a full application.

### **2. *SC Board of Commissioners Review Full Applications***

Applicants must be invited to continue beyond the Concept Paper stage of the application process to be considered. Of those invited, applications must be submitted compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completeness requirements to be considered.

During this stage of the process, several elements of review will take place:

#### ***Commission Staff Assessment:***

Commission staff will complete a Program Assessment based on their review of the applicant's proposal and, if previously funded, the past performance/compliance of the organization. Program Assessments for each application will be provided to the SC Board of Commissioners for review in conjunction with the applicant's grant proposal.

SC Commission staff will assess Program Design, particularly focusing on the theory of change and evidence-base for the proposed solution(s) to the identified community problem(s), appropriateness of AmeriCorps service as a solution, and potential quality of the Member experience; Organizational Capability; Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy, and Continuation Changes.

#### ***Application Clarification***

Some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information and/or make changes to their application including the budget. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to requests for additional information in a timely fashion will result in the removal of applications from consideration.

### **3. *Selection for funding***

With the goal of a diversified portfolio based on the NOFO priorities and strategic considerations, South Carolina Commissioners and the UWASC Board of Directors will select the final portfolio.

### **4. *Feedback to Applicants***

Upon request, SC Commission staff will provide feedback gathered during the review process to organizations not selected for funding. Feedback will not include completed scoring tools or the final score given to the grant application, the names/contact information of individuals who were involved in the review of the grant application, or how far the grant progressed.

## PART IX. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

### A. Late Applications

South Carolina Commissioners determine whether or not to accept a late concept paper or application for review on a case-by-case basis. To submit a late proposal, the applicant must complete the following:

- Submit an email, no later than three business days after the application deadline, to [Carson.Carroll@uwasc.org](mailto:Carson.Carroll@uwasc.org) explaining the extenuating circumstance that caused the delay. If the applicant experiences technical difficulties with eGrants that are unresolved, the correspondence must include the eGrants help desk ticket number. (Communication with SC Commission staff is not a substitution for sending a letter.)

### B. Award Notice

The SC Commission will award grants following the grant selection announcement. Programs may not begin charging expenses to the AmeriCorps grant until a signed MOA and Grant Award are in place with the SC Commission. The SC Commission anticipates that MOA/Grant Awards will be issued by August 1, 2020.

### C. Documents that Govern the Grant

The AmeriCorps grant is governed by the National and Community Service Act of 1990 & 1993, Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009, FY20 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Terms and Condition, SC Operations Manual, SC Commission Policy Manual, Memorandum of Agreement for SC Subgrantees, and the FY20 SC Notice of Funding Opportunity and Application Instructions.

These documents provide a detailed description of the responsibilities of both the subgrantee and the Commission and are made available to subgrantees in advance of the Commission issuing the Grant Award and MOA.

### D. Use of Material

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

### E. Re-Focusing of Funding

SC Commission reserves the right to re-focus funding in the event of disaster, other compelling need for service, or if a grantee indicates that a substantial amount of funds will be left unexpended at the end of the grant term.

## PART X. COMMISSION CONTACT

All questions regarding this notice should be directed to Brent Kossick, Director of Advancement– SC Service Commission at [Brent.Kossick@uwasc.org](mailto:Brent.Kossick@uwasc.org) or 803.609.2437

## Appendix A – DEFINITIONS

### Applicant

- **New** applicants are those that have never had AmeriCorps State and/or National funding before. Current and former formula Grantees are not new.
- **Recompete** applicants are those that have received AmeriCorps State and/or National funding before and are in Year 3 of their grant cycle and are applying for continued funding for the program for another three years.
- **Continuation** applicants are those that are in their first or second year of a funding cycle.
- **Previous** applicants are those that have been funded through state formula grants and/or were unsuccessful applicants in previous years.

**Enrollment Rate:** Enrollment rate is calculated as slots filled, plus refill slots filled, divided by slots awarded.

**Member Service Location:** A Member service location is the site at which an AmeriCorps Member is placed to provide his/her service to the community.

**Other Revenue:** Funds necessary to operate an AmeriCorps program that are not CNCS funds or grantee share (match) identified in the budget. Programs should not enter the total operating budget for their organization unless the entire operating budget supports the AmeriCorps program. Programs that have additional revenue sources not included in the matching funds section of the budget should provide the amount of this additional revenue that supports the program. This amount should not include the CNCS or grantee share amounts in the budget. Fixed amount grantees should enter all non-CNCS funds that support the program in this field. All fixed grants will have other revenue.

**Prohibited Activities:** While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or CNCS, staff and Members 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 Such other activities as CNCS may prohibit.

AmeriCorps Members 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.

**Promise Zones:** Promise Zones are high poverty communities where the federal government partners with local leaders to increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, leverage private investment, reduce violent crime, enhance public health and address other priorities identified by the community. Through the Promise Zone designation, these communities will work directly with federal, state and local agencies to give local leaders proven tools to improve the quality of life in some of the country's most vulnerable areas. The current promise zones in South Carolina are: Barnwell, SC and the Low Country of South Carolina

**Retention Rate:** Retention rate is calculated as the number of Members exited with education award (full or partial award) divided by the number of Members enrolled.

**Rural Communities:** CNCS uses rural-urban commuting area (RUCA) codes to classify program addresses as either rural or urban for analytic purposes. RUCA codes classify U.S. census tracts using measures of population density, urbanization, and daily commuting. Census tracts with an urban cluster population less than 50,000 are considered rural (RUCA codes 4-10). Applicants are encouraged to designate themselves as serving rural communities if some or all service locations are in rural areas as defined by RUCA codes or if the program can provide other compelling evidence that the program is rural in the narrative portion of the application. This self-designation will be considered in grant-making decisions.

For more information about RUCA codes, please visit the USDA website found here:  
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-commuting-area-codes.aspx>

The Office of Grants Management uses Beale Codes when assessing alternative match requirements as the statute (45 CFR 2521.60(c)) requires it.

**Same Project:** Two projects will be considered the same if they: address the same issue areas, address the same priorities, address the same objectives, serve the same target communities and population, or utilize the same sites.

Programs must get approval from their CNCS program officers to be considered a new project.

If an applicant is applying for a different program model (a new project), select New. Current and previous grantees need to get approval from their Program Officer to be considered a new project. CNCS will consider a project to be new if there is a meaningful difference between it and previous projects in a comparison of the following characteristics, among others: the objectives and priorities of the projects; the nature of the services provided; the program staff, participants, and volunteers involved; the geographic locations in which the services are provided; the populations served; and the proposed community partnerships. (§ 2522.340).

Requests to be considered a new project should include information about how the new project differs from the previous project in the characteristics noted above. The request should also include the proposed name of the new project. CNCS staff will review the request to determine if the proposed project does represent a meaningful difference from the previous project or if the proposed project is an example of natural program evolution over time. If it is determined that the project is new, the Program Officer will create a new project in eGrants.

**Single-State Applicants:** Organizations that propose to operate in only one state must apply through the Governor-appointed State or Territory Commissions. Each state and territory commission administers its own selection process and submits to CNCS the applicants it selects to compete for funding. Single-State applicants must contact their State Commissions to learn about their state or territory processes and deadlines which may be significantly earlier than the CNCS deadlines and may have additional requirements. The list of State and Territory Commissions can be found here: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions>.

A single state application submitted directly to CNCS by the applicant rather than the State Commission will be considered noncompliant and will not be reviewed.

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

Nonduplication.

Corporation assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program. And, unless there is nondisplacement, 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.

Nondisplacement.

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—
  - a. Will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or
  - b. 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—
  - a. Presently employed worker;
  - b. Employee who recently resigned or was discharged;
  - c. Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures;
  - d. Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick); or
  - e. Employee who is on strike or who is being locked out.