**CNCS Template for Notices of Federal Funding Opportunity or Availability**

## Purpose

The purpose of the CNCS Template for Notices of Federal Funding Opportunity or Availability (Notice) is to increase consistency of the agency’s Notices; ensure compliance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=1fc202dd3afa9d46ba434c9db6e9aac6&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5#_top) (Uniform Guidance) published on December 19, 2014.; facilitate drafting, reviewing, and clearing agency Notices; and to streamline the overall Notice development and approval process.

## Definitions

CNCS issues a Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity when funding is contingent upon appropriations. CNCS issues a Notice of Federal Funding Availability when appropriated funds are available at the time the Notice is published.

## Content

The first part of this document includes guidance on the intended use of the template and serves as a reference for drafting a Notice. The second part is the actual template, which includes instructions and standard language, and indicates where you will need to edit or incorporate information relevant to your program.

## Guidance

You are required to maintain the standardized content, formatting, and overall structure of the templatein order for the Notice to be compliant with OMB requirements, as well as consistent agency-wide. Any requested changes must be done in consultation with OGPO.

**Color Key**

* **Black**: Standard language that must be maintained.
* **Red**: Text that the drafter must enter, update, edit, or revise based on the program and competition requirements. There should be no red text when a Notice is sent for clearance.
* **Blue**: Text that includes guidance and is for the drafter’s use only. All blue text should be removed before the Notice is sent for clearance.

## Tips for Drafting a Notice

* Review the template before the Noticedevelopment process and allow time for questions. OGPO is your main resource for using the template.
* Make sure that eGrants is able to support the Notice. Find out if any changes are needed.
* Schedule and devote enough time for Notice development. This includes internal and external consultations, and the review and clearance process.
* Include all information an applicant needs to know in order to determine whether to apply for funding.
* Include all information an applicant needs to know about the competition*.* Clearly state important deadlines, contact information, and submission requirements.
* Ensure references are clear when directing applicants to another section of the Notice.
* If an Appendix is included, label it with a different numbering format than the body of the Notice, e.g. Roman numerals vs. capitalized letters.
* Be sure that the information would make sense to a first time applicant. Spell out all acronyms and do not make assumptions about the reader’s familiarity with the program or competition.
* Before submitting for review/approval, proofread the whole document and carefully check for repetitive language, and errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Print a copy to check for any formatting issues.
* Use consistent grammar, style, spelling, and hyphenation that complies with the CNCS Style Guide.
* Test all embedded hyperlinks and reconfirm all phone numbers before posting.

## Key Reference Material

* [Application Deadlines and Late Submissions (OGPO-2009-01-2014-4)](http://portal.cns.gov/Portals/0/2012%20Policies/Grant%20Application%20Deadlines.pdf)
* [CNCS Editorial Style Guide](http://portal.cns.gov/Portals/0/OfficeOfExternalAffairs/CNCS%20Style%20Guide-Final-Revised%20March%202013.pdf)
* [CNCS's Grant Application Review: Procedure Manual](file:///\\cns.gov\data\shared\everyone\OGPO%20Ops\Procedures%20Manual%202013%20-%205%208%2013%20FINAL%20APPROVED.pdf)
* [Grant Competition Posting (OGPO-2010-03-2014-8)](http://portal.cns.gov/Portals/0/2012%20Policies/Grant%20Competition%20Posting.pdf)
* [Office of External Affairs’ Guidance on 508 Compliance](http://portal.cns.gov/Home/CNCSPolicies/508Compliance.aspx)
* [Policies, Procedures, and Other Documents (CEO-100-2013-22)](http://portal.cns.gov/Portals/0/2012%20Policies/Preparing%20Corporation%20Policies%20and%20Procedures.pdf)
* [Producing Public Documents: Print, Online, and Digital (OEA-104-2013-3)](http://portal.cns.gov/Portals/0/2012%20Policies/Publications%20Print%20and%20Digital.pdf)
* Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance, now consolidated in [2 CFR Parts 200](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=379c69c6a453c93b76142986a4ce5ad4&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5) and [2205](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=f7425ef67312ab84da9e76ed5d79dff7&node=pt2.1.2205&rgn=div5))

## Helpful Links

* CNCS Funding Opportunities: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities>
* Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Request Service: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>
* Federal Plain Language Guidelines: http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/guidelines/FederalPLGuidelines/TOC.cfm
* National Service Hotline: <https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask>
* Obama Administration Open Government Initiative: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/open-government-initiative>
* Results of Grant Competitions: <http://nationalservice.gov/about/open-government-initiative/transparency/results-grants-competition>
* System for Award Management (SAM): [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)
* SAM Quick Guide for Grantees: <https://www.sam.gov/sam/transcript/SAM_Quick_Guide_Grants_Registrations-v1.6.pdf>

### NOTICE of Federal Funding Opportunity or Availability

**Federal Agency Name: Corporation for National and Community Service**

**Funding Opportunity Title:** [Fiscal Year] [Competition Name] *To the extent possible the competition name should be consistent with the name of the NOFA in eGrants*

**Announcement Type:** [Initial Announcement or Amended Announcement]

**CFDA Number:** 94.XXX

**Important Dates**

* *If required:*Applicants are required to submit a Notice of Intent to Apply in order to be eligible for this competition. The Notice of Intent to Apply is due [**MM DD, YYYY**] at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. *If optional:* A Notice of Intent to Apply is due by [**MM DD, YYYY**] at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.
* Applicationsare due [**MM DD, YYYY**] at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. *Generally, the application deadline should be at least 60 calendar days from the date the Notice is released. Shorter application times are allowable, but any application period of less than 30 days must be based on exigent circumstances as determined by the CEO or the CEO’s designee.*
* Successful applicants will be notified by [**MM YYYY**].
* **Disclosure**: Publication of this Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity or Availability (Notice) does not obligate the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to award any specific number of [grants] or [cooperative agreements] or to obligate any particular amount of funding.

**FULL TEXT OF THE NOTICE**

**A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

*This section includes the full programmatic description of the funding opportunity. It may be as long as needed to adequately tell potential applicants the areas in which funding may be provided. It should describe CNCS’s funding priorities or the technical or Focus Areas in which CNCS intends to provide assistance. It may include any program history (e.g., whether this is a new program or a new or changed area of program emphasis), communicate indicators of successful projects (e.g., if the program encourages collaborative efforts), and include examples of projects that previously have been funded. This section also may include other information CNCS deems necessary, and must include citations for authorizing statutes and regulations for the funding opportunity. Programs can add separate sub-headings to reflect their competition’s requirements.*

**1.** **Purpose of [Program Name]** **Funding**

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

[Insert purpose of the program funding]

**2. Funding Priorities**

*When drafting this section, be as clear as possible and add sub-headings as needed. If applications will receive priority consideration(s), clearly identify what the applicant must demonstrate in order to receive such consideration(s) and clearly state that priority consideration(s) does not guarantee funding. If funding priorities include any Focus Areas, add a brief description for each Focus Area below or include it in Appendix I. If applicable, also incorporate the goal of capacity building.*

CNCS seeks to prioritize ….

In order to receive priority consideration, applicants must demonstrate that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes, and must include a high quality program design. Applicants proposing programs that receive priority consideration are not guaranteed funding.

**3. National Performance Measures (*If applicable*)**

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. CNCS’s five-year Strategic Plan established an ambitious set of objectives that guided the development of 16 agency-wide National Performance Measures. CNCS expects applicants to use National Performance Measures as part of a comprehensive performance management strategy that relies on both performance and evaluation data to learn from its work, as well as make strategic adjustments to achieve its goals. Applicants are required to use the specific performance measures outlined in this Notice*.* For more information, please refer to the National Performance Measures Instructions at [URL]. Some applicants must also meet program-specific evaluation requirements. [URL for ACSN, SIF].

**4. Program Authority**

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, (42 U.S.C. § 12501 et seq.). The Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 4950 et seq.). XX CFR §§ [xxxx – xxxx]. The full regulations are available online at [URL].

**B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

**1. Estimated Available Funds**

*If posting a Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity:*

CNCS anticipates approximately [Dollar Amount] for [Competition Name] [Fiscal Year] awards. The actual level of funding is subject to the availability of annual appropriations, which has not yet been made. *If applicable:* CNCS reserves the right to prioritize providing funding to existing awards over making new awards.

*If posting a Notice of Federal Funding Availability:*

According to the [FY] Appropriations, [Dollar Amount] is available for [Competition Name] [grants] or [cooperative agreements]. *If applicable:* CNCS reserves the right to prioritize providing funding to existing awards over making new awards.

**2. Estimated Award Amount**

Award amounts will vary as determined by the scope of the projects. CNCS will make awards in the range of [Dollar Amount] to [Dollar Amount].

**3. Project Period**

*Use the applicable language based on the award period. Add the appropriate language if the award includes up-front funding for all years of the award.*

*For one-year awards:* CNCS anticipates making one-year [grants] or [cooperative agreements] awards. Applicants must submit applications for funding that are based on a one-year project period and a one-year budget. While CNCS anticipates awarding one-year awards, it is possible that actual award periods will vary as a result of program requirements, the availability of appropriations, orspecific circumstances of an individual application.

*For multi-year awards:* The [grants] or [cooperative agreements] award covers a [Number]-year project period. CNCS generally makes an initial award for the first year of operation. Continuation funding for subsequent years is not guaranteed and may be dependent upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance. CNCS reserves the right to adjust the amount of an award or elect not to continue funding.

**4. Type of Award**

*Indicate and describe the type(s) of assistance that may be awarded if applications are successful (e.g. cost reimbursement grants, cooperative agreement, etc.).*

*If the funding mechanism is a grant, include the following:*

[Competition Name] grants will be awarded on a [cost reimbursement] basis…

*If the funding mechanism is a cooperative agreement, which allows for “substantial involvement” (programmatic not administrative), include the following:*

The funding mechanism for the [Program Name] is a cooperative agreement, which provides for substantial involvement by CNCS with the recipient organizations as the approved cooperative agreement activities are implemented. The assigned CNCS program officer will confer with the award recipient on a regular and frequent basis to develop and/or review service delivery and project status, including work plans, budgets, periodic reports, evaluations, etc. CNCS anticipates having substantial involvement in:

* reporting data and format setting parameters for subrecipient selection
* documenting and sharing lessons learned through a CNCS-sponsored learning community

**C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

**1. Eligible Applicants**

The following entities are eligible to apply: public or private nonprofit organizations (including faith-based and other community organizations); institutions of higher education; government entities within states or territories (e.g., cities, counties); government-recognized veteran service organizations; labor organizations; partnerships and consortia; and Indian Tribes.

An Indian Tribe is defined as an Indian tribe, band; nation; or other organized group or community; including any Native village, Regional Corporation, or Village Corporation, as defined under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act ([43 U.S.C. §1602](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2010-title43/pdf/USCODE-2010-title43-chap33-sec1602.pdf)); that is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States under Federal law to Indians because of their status as Indians. Indian Tribes also include tribal organizations controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by an entity described above. An entitythat desires to apply for an awardas a tribal organization on behalf of a Federally-recognized Tribe, or multiple specific Federally-recognized Tribes, must submit a sanctioning resolution adopted by the Tribal Council (or comparable tribal governing body) of each Indian Tribe. The resolution must identify the entity by name as a tribal organization and indicate whether it is controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by an Indian Tribe(s). It must authorize the entity to be the legal applicant and act on behalf of and include the Indian Tribe(s) in a CNCS application for the purpose of conducting the activities and providing the services described in the application.

Previously receiving funds from CNCS or another federal agency is not a prerequisite to apply to this Notice.

Organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this Notice*.*

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.

**2. Cost Share or Matching**

*Notices must state whether there is required cost sharing, matching, or cost participation, that if not met, an application would be ineligible* ***(if cost sharing is not required, you must explicitly say so).*** *Required cost sharing may be a certain percentage or amount, or may be in the form of contributions of specified items or activities (e.g., provision of equipment). Clearly address any restrictions on the types of cost (e.g., in-kind contributions) that are acceptable as cost sharing. In addition, if alternative match is an option, you must state the requirements. Cost sharing as an eligibility criterion includes requirements based in statute or regulation.*

*This section should also address any pre-award requirements for submission of letters or other documentation to verify commitments to meet cost sharing requirements if a federal award is made (refer to the appropriate portion(s) of section D. Application and Submission Information). Criteria for considering voluntary committed cost sharing and any other program policy factors that may be used to determine who may receive a federal award must be explicitly described in the Notice. Use the language provided or edit as necessary to meet your program requirements.*

There is no cost share or matching requirement.

-OR-

Applicants are required to match their award at an amount equal to [Number] percent of the total program budget. The recipient match can be [cash] or [non-federal cash] or [cash and in-kind contributions] or [non-federal cash and in-kind contributions] matching funds. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet [Number] percent of the cash match requirement by [ ].

*If applicants are required to subaward, please include the following guidance:*

Applicants must address any match requirements that will apply to subrecipients, including:

* matching requirements for subrecipients
* acceptable evidence of match
* timing for submission of acceptable evidence of match
* conditions for match waivers, if applicable.

**3. Other Requirements (*If applicable*)**

*Use this area to identify any other eligibility requirements for the competition. Such other eligibility criteria must include a reference to the regulation or requirement that describes the criteria.*

**D. Application and Submission InformaTion**

This Notice should be read together with the [Program Name] regulations, XX CFR §§ xxxx – xxxx), the Application Instructions, and the National Performance Measures. These documents are available online at [URL].

**1. Address to Request Application Package**

Applicants should refer to the CNCS website to obtain the necessary information to apply. Applicants can also send an email to [Email]@cns.gov or call (202)[xxx-xxxx] for a printed copy of the application package. The TTY (Text Telephone) number is (800) 833-3722.

**2. Content and Form of Application Submission**

**a. Application Content**

*Tailor this section to clearly indicate the requirements of the program’s application. Itemize each of the components so that the applicant can use it as a checklist.*

Complete applications must have the following components:

* Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: This is automatically generated when applicants complete the data elements in the eGrants system. Many of the fields will be filled automatically with information entered during the registration process.
* Narrative
  + Executive Summary: This is a brief description of the proposed program. Executive Summaries of all compliant applications are published on the CNCS website following [grant] or [cooperative agreement] awards.
  + Program Design
  + Organizational Capability
  + Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
* Standard Form 424A Budget
* Performance Measures
* Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications.

**b. Page Limits**

Applications may not exceed **[Number]** double-space pages for the Narrative, including the SF-424 Face Sheet and Executive Summary as the pages print out from eGrants. The page limit does not include the Budget section and Performance Measures.

Reviewers will not consider material past the page limit in the printed report, even if eGrants allows applicants to enter and submit text over the limit. CNCS strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the “Review and Submit” page prior to its submission in order to check that it does not exceed the page limit.

**3. Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and System for Award Management (SAM)**

Applications must include a DUNS number **and** an Employer Identification. The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number. Applicants can obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. CNCS recommends registering at least 30 days before the application due date.

After obtaining a DUNS number, all applicants **must** register with the System for Award Management (SAM, [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete and, if a [grant] or [cooperative agreement]is awarded, throughout the life of the award. SAM registration must be renewed annually. CNCS suggests finalizing a new registration or renewing an existing one at least two weeks before the application deadline to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise.

Applicants that do not comply with these requirements may become ineligible to receive an award. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees at: <https://www.sam.gov/sam/transcript/SAM_Quick_Guide_Grants_Registrations-v1.6.pdf>.

**4. Submission Dates and Times**

**a. Notice of Intent to Apply**

*Submission of a Notice of Intent to Apply can be mandatory or highly recommended. Use the applicable text.*

Applicants are required to submit a **Notice of Intent to Apply** in order to be eligible for this competition. The Notice of Intent to Apply is due [**MM DD, YYYY**] at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Please submit the intent by using this link: [Survey Monkey URL]. -OR- Please submit the intent to [Email]@cns.gov with the email subject line: [Competition Name] Notice of Intent to Apply. The Notice of Intent to Apply must include the name of the applicant organization, address, contact person, email address, and phone number, as well as [any particular programmatic information]. All Notices of Intent to Apply will receive an email response acknowledging receipt.

-OR-

CNCS strongly encourages applicants to submit a **Notice of Intent to Apply** by [**MM DD, YYYY**]. Please submit the intent by using this link: [Survey Monkey URL]. -OR- Please submit the intent to [Email]@cns.gov with the email subject line: [Competition Name] Notice of Intent to Apply. The Notice of Intent to Apply must include the name of the applicant organization, address, contact person, email address, and phone number, as well as [any particular programmatic information]. All Notices of Intent to Apply will receive an email response acknowledging receipt.

**b. Application Submission Deadline**

Applications are due [**MM DD, YYYY**] by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. CNCS will not consider applications received after the deadline, except as noted below. CNCS reserves the right to extend the submission deadline and any notice of such extended deadline will be posted on the CNCS website.

**c. Late Applications**

CNCS may consider an application after the deadline, but only if the applicant submits a letter to [LateApplications@cns.gov](mailto:LateApplications@cns.gov) explaining the extenuating technical circumstances that caused the delay. CNCS must receive the letter within a business day after the deadline. If technical issues prevent an applicant from submitting an application on time, the letter should include the eGrants ticket number provided by the National Service Hotline. Communication with CNCS staff, including an applicant’s program officer, is not a substitute for sending the letter. CNCS will determine whether or not to accept a late application on a case-by-case basis. Please be advised that CNCS will not consider an advance request to submit a late application.

**5. Funding Restrictions**

*Notices must include information on funding restrictions in order to allow an applicant to develop an application and budget consistent with program requirements. Examples include if construction is an allowable activity or if there are any limitations on direct costs, etc. Revise this section based on specific program restrictions.*

The Administrative and National Policy Requirements section (at F.2.) of this Notice contain the regulations that outline the funding restrictions.

***Indirect Cost***

*Revise and enhance this section. Include the indirect cost policy applicable to your program. This is a new Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) requirement with which all Notices must comply.*

CNCS allows applicants to include administrative (indirect) costs in CNCS [grants] or [cooperative agreements] budgets. Applicants have the option of using an indirect cost rate that is approved by their cognizant state or federal agency, claiming selected costs directly or [specify the program’s third or fourth options, i.e. 10% diminimis or AmeriCorps’ 5% or 10%]. The option utilized methods must be applied consistently across all federal awards.

**6. Other Submission Requirements**

*This section must address any other submission requirements not included in the other paragraphs of this section.**This might include the format of submission, i.e., paper or electronic, for each type of required submission. Applicants should not be required to submit in more than one format. This section should indicate whether an applicant may choose to submit in hard copy or electronically, only in hard copy, or only electronically.*

*This section also must indicate where applications (and any pre-applications) must be submitted if sent by postal mail, electronic means, or hand-delivery. For postal mail submission, this must include the name of an office, official, individual, or function (e.g., application receipt center) and a complete mailing address. For electronic submission, this must include the URL or email address; whether a password(s) is required; whether particular software or other electronic capabilities are required; what to do in the event of system problems; and a point of contact who will be available in the event the applicant experiences technical difficulties.*

**a. Electronic Application Submission in eGrants**

*Update the bracketed information as appropriate per the schedule. The general public hours for the National Service Hotline are as follows:*

* *Mon - Fri, 9 am – 7 pm ET (Jan, May, June, July, Aug, Sept)*
* *Mon - Thu, 9 am – 7 pm ET (Feb, Mar, Apr, Oct, Nov, Dec)*

Applicants must submit applications electronically via eGrants, CNCS’s web-based system (<https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp>). CNCS recommends that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word document, then copy and paste the document into the appropriate eGrants field no later than 10 days before the deadline.

The person who submits the application must be the applicant’s authorized representative. The authorized representative must be using eGrants under his or her own account in order to sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body’s authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant’s office.

Contact the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via (<https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask_eg>) if a problem arises when creating an account or preparing or submitting the application. National Service Hotline hours are Monday through [Thursday] or [Friday], 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization’s name, and the Notice to which the organization is applying. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit via eGrants.

If extenuating circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit in eGrants, applicants may send a paper copy of the application via overnight carrier to the following address:

Corporation for National and Community Service

ATT: Office of Grants Policy and Operations/[Competition Name] Application

1201 New York Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20525

Please use a non-U.S. Postal Service carrier to avoid security-related delays. **All deadlines and requirements in this Notice also apply to paper applications.** Paper applications must include a cover letter detailing the circumstances that make it impossible to submit via eGrants. **CNCS does not accept applications submitted via fax or email.**

**b. Submission of Additional Documents (*If applicable*)**

*Only include this section if the competition requires the submission of additional documents. If no documents are required, remove this section. Programs should only require additional documents when absolutely necessary. Edit the bulleted list as appropriate and make sure that the list of documents corresponds with the documents listed in section* D.2. Content and Form of Application Submission.

Applicants are required to submit the following additional documents by the application submission deadline:

* match verification letters
* current indirect rate cost agreement, if used to claim indirect/administrative costs.

All required additional documents must be emailed to [Email]@cns.gov with the following subject line: [Competition Name] Additional Documents - Application ID number.Within the email, please include the following information:

* the legal applicant name and its point of contact information
* the application ID number
* a list of documents that should be attached to the email
* individually saved files that are clearly labeled
* files that include the legal applicant name and application ID number within the body of each document.

***Do not submit supplementary material such as videos, brochures, or any items not requested in this* Notice*. CNCS will not review or return them.***

**E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

**1. Criteria**

*The Selection Criteria are a set of measures that tell applicants how reviewers will assess the merits of an application in the context of the goals and requirements of the program during the grant review process. They also help make the review process as fair and equitable as possible. The Selection Criteria are distinct from the eligibility criteria that are addressed before an application is accepted for review or awarded, and from any program, policy, or other factors CNCS applies after the review process is complete.*

*Selection Criteria should be written using evaluative, clear and concise language. When crafting the criteria, consider the type of responses desired and how reviewers will use them to objectively measure the potential of the application.*

*The Notice should clearly describe all criteria, including any sub-criteria. If criteria vary in importance, the Notice should specify the percentages, weights, or other means used to distinguish among them. For statutory, regulatory, or other preferences, provide a detailed explanation of those preferences and an explicit indication of their effect (e.g., whether they result in additional points being assigned).*

*If an applicant’s proposed cost sharing will be considered in the review process (as opposed to being an eligibility criterion described in Section C), the Notice must specifically address how it will be considered (e.g., to assign a certain number of additional points to applicants who offer cost sharing, or to break ties among applications with equivalent scores after evaluation against all other factors). If cost sharing will not be considered in the evaluation, the Notice should clearly say so. It is also important to articulate any restrictions on the types of cost (e.g., in-kind contributions) that are acceptable as cost sharing.*

*Edit/revise this section to reflect the criteria for your competition and or the complexities of your criteria (use the criteria summary chart if applicable):*

Applications should include a well-designed plan with clear and compelling justifications for receiving the requested funds. Reviewers will assess the applications against the selection criteria and rate them accordingly considering the weights assigned to each criterion:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Categories/Subcategories** | **Percentage** |
| **Program Design** | **50** |
|  | 15 |
|  | 20 |
|  | 10 |
|  | 5 |
| **Organizational Capability** | **35** |
|  | 20 |
|  | 15 |
|  |  |
| **Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy** | **15** |
|  | 10 |
|  | 5 |

**a. Program Design (XX percent):**

In determining the quality of the application reviewers will assess the following criteria:

* the extent to which the proposed project addresses …
* the extent to which the proposed project would implement …
* the potential contribution …
* the clarity and importance …
* the extent to which the proposal logically connects …
* the likelihood that the intervention …

**b. Organizational Capability (XX percent):**

In determining the quality of the application reviewers will consider the following criteria:

* the extent to which the applicant demonstrates …
* **…**

**c. Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (XX percent):**

In determining the quality of the application reviewers will consider the following criteria:

* **…**
* **…**

**2. Review and Selection Process**

The assessment of applications involves a wide range of considerations. CNCS will engage [External] and/or [Staff] Reviewers with relevant knowledge and expertise to assess and provide input on the eligible applications. In the end, the review and selection process will produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and strategic considerations described in this Notice.

**a. Stages in the Review Process**

**Compliance and Eligibility Review**

CNCS staff will review all applications to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completeness. Applications determined non-compliant will not be considered. *Edit the following list as applicable:* An application is compliant if the applicant:

* *If required:* submitted a **Notice of Intent to Apply** by the submission deadline
* is an eligible organization
* submitted an application and all required documentation by the submission deadline
* submitted an application that is complete; in that it contains all required elements and additional documents, and follows the instructions provided in this Notice
* [others].

CNCS will screen applications in accordance with the requirements in this Notice to determine if the applicant has met all eligibility and submission requirements. The screening may occur at various stages of the grant-making process. Applicants determined to be ineligible will not receive an award.

*Select and edit, as necessary, the review model descriptions applicable to the competition.*

**External Review**

External Reviewers will assess applications based on the Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy Selection Criteria. CNCS will recruit and select reviewers on the basis of demonstrated expertise in [Program Name] programming and/or the Focus Areas, as well as experience assessing applications. All External Reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

**Post-Review Quality Control**

After the initial review process is complete, CNCS staff will review the results for fairness and consistency. Some applications may be selected for a Post-Review Quality Control assessment. This additional level of review will be used to assess the applications for which there were significant irregularities in the review panel.

**Selection of Applications for Internal Review**

Applications will advance to Internal Review based on the results of the External Review, Post Review Quality Control, as well as the consideration of the priorities and strategic considerations. Applications that do not advance to Internal Review will not be recommended for funding.

**Blended Review**

Panels of Expert Reviewers (External and CNCS Staff Reviewers) will assess applications based on the Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy Selection Criteria. CNCS will recruit and select reviewers on the basis of demonstrated expertise in [Program Name] programming and/or the Focus Areas, as well as experience assessing applications. All reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

**Internal Review**

CNCS Staff Reviewers will assess the applications based on the Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy Selection Criteria. Staff Reviewers will also consider the comprehensiveness and feasibility of the application, as well as the priorities and strategic considerations detailed in this Notice. CNCS will recruit and select Staff Reviewers on the basis of demonstrated expertise in [Program Name] programming and/or the Focus Areas, as well as experience assessing applications. All Staff Reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

**Clarification Process**

CNCS may ask some applicants to provide clarifying information. This information is used by CNCS staff to make funding recommendations. A request for clarification does not guarantee an award. Applicants may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked for clarification. Failure to respond to a request for clarification in a timely fashion will result in removal of the application from consideration. CNCS staff may conduct a site visit inspection, as appropriate.

**Risk Assessment Evaluation**

CNCS 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 assessment of the applicant’s eligibility and the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria, and results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If CNCS determines that an award will be made, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award.

In evaluating risks, CNCS may consider the following:

* financial stability
* quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in applicable OMB Guidance
* applicant’s record in managing previous CNCS awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
  + timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements
  + accuracy of data reported
  + validity of performance measure data reported
  + conformance to the terms and conditions of previous federal awards
  + if applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
* information available through OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as:
  + Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)
  + DUNS and SAM
  + “Do Not Pay”
* reports and findings from single audits performed under Subpart F – Audit Requirements, 2 CFR Part 200 and findings and reports of any other available audits
* IRS Tax Form 990
* applicant organization’s annual report
* publicly available information, including information from the applicant organization's website
* applicant’s ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on award recipients
* [Other elements considered relevant per Program Office].

**Selection for Funding**

*Revise as needed to address your program needs and requirements. A brief definition or description of the strategic considerations will help applicants understand agency terms and expectations.*

The review and selection process is designed to:

* identify applications that demonstrate:
  + high alignment with the selection criteria
  + high alignment with the priorities outlined in the Notice
  + **…**
* yield a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:
  + geographic representation: [Definition]
  + Focus Area representation: [Definition]
  + equitable treatment of:
    - rural and urban communities: [Definition]
    - small and large programs: [Definition]
    - …: [Definition]
  + representation of organizations that embrace innovative approaches to solving problems.

In order to obtain a diversified portfolio, the Chief Executive Officer will select the final awardees based on the staff recommendations, priorities, and strategic considerations.

***CNCS reserves the right to change the review and selection process in case of extenuating circumstances.***

**3. Feedback to Applicants**

Following awards, compliant applicants will receive summary comments from the [External Review], [Blended Review], or [Staff Review]. This feedback will be based on the review of the original application and will not reflect information that may have been provided in response to clarification.

**4. Transparency in Grant-making**

*Per the CNCS* [*Grant Competition Posting Policy*](http://portal.cns.gov/Portals/0/2012%20Policies/Grant%20Competition%20Posting.pdf)*, identify the specific competition materials that should be posted for the public, and edit the list below as appropriate.*

CNCS is committed to transparency in grant-making. The following information for new and re-competing applications will be published on the CNCS website (<http://nationalservice.gov/about/open-government-initiative/transparency/results-grants-competition>) within 90 business days after all [grants] or [cooperative agreements]are awarded:

* a list of all compliant applications submitted
* Executive Summaries of all compliant applications submitted by the applicants
* data extracted from the SF-424 Face Sheet and the submitted program narratives for successful applications
* a blank template of the external review worksheet
* a list of all external reviewers that completed the review process
* a summary of external reviewer comments for successful applications.

*If applicants are required to subaward, and recipients are required to release to the public information/materials about the subawarding process, the requirements for the subawarding process should be clearly stated in this section. Programs need to make sure that the requirements, if any, are reasonable and feasible for the specific competition. Materials that applicants may be required to release include:*

* *description of the subrecipient selection process*
* *list of reviewers for their subrecipient selection process*
* *list of awarded subrecipients*
* *summary of reviewer comments on successful subaward applications*
* *applications of awarded subrecipients.*

F. FEDERAL Award Administration Information

**1. Federal Award Notices**

CNCS will make awards following the [grant] or [cooperative agreement]selection announcement. CNCS anticipates announcing the results of this competition by[early, mid, or late] [MM YYYY] [contingent on the availability of congressional appropriations]. Applicants will be notified via email as to funding decisions. This notification is not an authorization to begin [grant] or [cooperative agreement]activities. The Notice of Grant Award signed by the grant officer is the authorizing document for [grant] or [cooperative agreement]activities. Unsuccessful applicants will also receive a notification that their application was not approved for funding.

An awardee may not expend federal funds until the start of the Project Period identified on the Notice of Grant Award.

**2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

The Notice of Grant Award incorporates the approved application as part of the binding commitments under the [grant award] or [cooperative agreement], as well as the requirements of applicable sections of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 and other applicable statutes. Awards will also be subject to the specific terms and conditions established for [discretionary grants] or [a cooperative agreement] or defined in the Terms and Conditions or Special Conditions attached to the award. If necessary, applicants will have an opportunity to negotiate conditions before they accept an award

[Grants] or [Cooperative agreements] under this program are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance, now consolidated in [2 CFR Parts 200](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=379c69c6a453c93b76142986a4ce5ad4&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5) and [2205](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=f7425ef67312ab84da9e76ed5d79dff7&node=pt2.1.2205&rgn=div5)). This final guidance supersedes and streamlines requirements from OMB Circulars A–21, A–87, and A–122 (the former Cost Principles), A-110 and A-102 (the former Administrative Requirements), A–133 and A-50 (the former Audits and Audit Follow up), and A-89 (the former Federal Domestic Assistance Program Information).

**3. 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, national service participant, or volunteer) receiving a salary, living allowance, stipend or education award through a program receiving CNCS funds.  An individual is ineligible to serve in a position that receives such CNCS funding if the individual is registered, or required to be registered, as a sex offender or has been convicted of murder. The cost of conducting NSCHCs is an allowable expense under the award.

Unless CNCS has provided a recipient with a written exemption or written approval of an alternative search procedure, recipients must perform the following checks–

All award-funded staff, national service participants, and volunteers must undergo NSCHCs that include:

1. A nationwide name-based search of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW); *and*
2. *Either*

* 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 *or*
* A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check.

Special Rule for Persons Serving Vulnerable Populations. Award-funded staff, national service participants, and volunteers *with recurring access to vulnerable populations* (i.e., children age 17 or younger, individuals age 60 or older, or individuals with disabilities) must undergo NSCHCs that include:

1. A nationwide name-based check of the [NSOPW](http://www.nsopw.gov/); *and*
2. *Both*

* 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*
* A fingerprint-based FBI criminal history check.

*See* 45 C.F.R. § 2540.200–§ 2540.207 and <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/criminal-history-check> for complete information and FAQs.

**4. Use of Material**

To ensure that materials generated with CNCS funding are available to the public and readily accessible to recipients and non-recipients, CNCS reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so (2 CFR §200.315).

**5. Reporting**

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

*Edit this section as applicable to the program requirements.*

Recipients are required to provide annual progress reports and semi-annual financial and narrative progress reports through eGrants, CNCS’s web-based grants management system. All recipients must provide quarterly expense reports through the Payment Management System (PMS) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In addition, at the end of the award period, recipients must submit final financial and progress reports that are cumulative over the entire award period and consistent with the close-out requirements of CNCS’s Office of Grants Management. The final reports are due 90 days after the end of the agreement.

Award recipients will be required to report at [www.FSRS.gov](http://www.FSRS.gov) on all subawards over

$25,000, and may be required to report on executive compensation for the recipient organization and its subrecipients. Recipients [and subrecipients] must have the necessary systems in place to collect and report this information. See [2 CFR Part 170](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&SID=d3b45261ecbe5e9992ede00f23fd8d3b&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl) for more information and to determine how these requirements apply.

Once the [grant] or [cooperative agreement] is awarded, recipients will be expected to have data collection and data management policies, processes, and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are giving CNCS high quality performance measure data. At a minimum, recipients should have policies, processes, and practices that address the following five aspects of data quality for themselves and for subrecipients (if applicable):

* the data measures what it intends to measure
* the data reported is complete
* the recipient collects data in a consistent manner
* the recipient takes steps to correct data errors
* the recipient actively reviews data for accuracy prior to submission.

Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the recipient’s ability to secure future CNCS funding.

For further guidance and training resources see – Resources: Data Collection and Instruments: <https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/npm/home#.U9qVL_ldW3o>

**5. Continuation Funding Information and Requirements *(If applicable)***

G. FEDERAL AWARDING Agency Contacts

*The announcement must give potential applicants a point(s) of contact for answering questions or helping with problems while the funding opportunity is open. The purpose of this requirement is to be as helpful as possible to potential applicants. Please consider including the following:*

* *points of contact who can be reached in multiple ways*
* *different contact information for different kinds of help*
* *fax numbers and email addresses that are accessed and monitored by multiple people to ensure a timely responses.*

For more information or a printed copy of related material(s), call (202)[xxx-xxxx] or email [Email]@cns.gov]. The TTY number is (800) 833-3722. For questions regarding …

For technical questions and problems with the eGrants system, call the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677. National Service Hotline hours are Monday through [Thursday] or [Friday], 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Potential applicants can also use this link: <https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask> for questions. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization’s name, and the name of the Noticeto which the organization is applying.

**H. Other Information**

**1. Technical Assistance**

CNCS will host [technical assistance calls] and/or [workshops] to answer questions about the funding opportunity and eGrants. CNCS strongly encourages all applicants to participate in these sessions. The first call will be held on [MM DD, YYYY] at [X:XX p.m. Eastern Time]. Call-in information for the technical assistance calls can be found on CNCS’s website: [URL].

**2. Re-Focusing of Funding**

CNCS reserves the right to re-focus program dollars in the event of disaster or other compelling needs.

**APPENDIX I**

*For appendices please be sure to use a distinct numbering system so that applicants understand that the information is “in addition to” and not officially a part of the Notice. Any references to appendices within the Notice should be clear and consistent.*

**CNCS Focus Areas**

In order to carry out Congress’s intent and to maximize the impact of investment in national service, CNCS has the following Focus Areas:

**Disaster Services**

Awards will help individuals and communities prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of disasters and increase community resiliency.

**Economic Opportunity**

Awards will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged individuals.

**Education**

Awards will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged people, especially children. CNCS is particularly interested in program designs that support youth engagement and service learning as strategies to achieve high educational outcomes.

**Environmental Stewardship**

Awards will provide services – including efforts to change citizen behavior – that increase energy and water efficiency and renewable energy use or that improve at-risk ecosystems, especially in economically disadvantaged households and communities.

**Healthy Futures**

Awards will provide support for health needs within communities, including access to care, aging in place, and addressing childhood obesity.

**Veterans and Military Families**

Awards will improve the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength.

**Capacity Building**

In addition to the Focus Areas described above, awards also will provide support for capacity building activities provided by national service participants. Capacity building activities are *indirect services* that enable CNCS-supported organizations to provide more, better, and sustained *direct services*. Capacity building activities cannot be solely intended to support the administration or operations of the organization.

**APPENDIX II**

**APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS (*If applicable*)**

*Add this section only if application instruction information will be incorporated into the Notice. The OMB Control Number can be found on the approved Program or Universal Application Instructions.*

**1. Public Burden Statement**

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 requires CNCS to inform all potential persons who are to respond to this collection of information that such persons are not required to respond unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. [See 5 CFR 1320.5]. This collection is approved under OMB Control *#:* [XXXX-XXXX],[Name of the Data Collection Instrument], Expiration Date: [MM DD, YYYY].