

State Of Alaska
Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development
Serve Alaska, State Service Commission



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

FOR AMERICORPS PROGRAMS

**SOLICITATION NUMBER:
AC-17-F**

DATE OF ISSUE: February 1, 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

IMPORTANT NOTICE – Read This First	3
Valuable Online Resources/References.....	7
New and Recompeting Program Application Process	9
RFP Timeline.....	10
Other Information	11
Requirements:	12
Application Review Information	13

IMPORTANT NOTICE – Read This First

Proposals are DUE (4 pm) March 20, 2017. See the [RFP Timeline](#).

This Serve Alaska RFP is an overview of the process for submitting AmeriCorps applications. The federal agency that oversees and funds AmeriCorps programs is the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). This RFP should be read in conjunction with the Notice of Funding Opportunity (*Notice*) and the Application Instructions for a complete picture of the grant/application needs and expectations. The complete federal documents can be found [here](#). However, **DO NOT follow any timeline other than what is in this RFP.**

Applications may not exceed 15 pages for the Narratives (18 pages for Multi-Focus Intermediaries.) Application content considered in determining page limit compliance includes the Executive Summary, SF 424 Facesheet; and the Narrative Sections contained in the Program Design, Organizational Capacity, and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy as the pages print out from eGrants. Please note the length of a document in word processing software may be different than what will print out in eGrants. Serve Alaska strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the “Review and Submit” page in eGrants prior to submission to check that the application does not exceed the page limit. This limit does not include the narrative portion of the evaluation plan or the logic model, budget, budget narrative, performance measures, or the supplementary materials, if applicable.

The Theory of Change Logic Model may not exceed more than three pages when printed from eGrants.

Reviewers will not consider submitted material that is over the page limits in the printed report, even if eGrants allows an applicant to enter and submit text over the limit. This applies to both the application page limit and the logic model page limit. Do not submit other items not requested in the *Notice*, Application Instructions or this RFP. Serve Alaska will not review or return them.

Re-Focusing of Funding

Serve Alaska and CNCS reserves the right to re-focus funding in the event of disaster or other compelling need for service.

Funding Restrictions

A. Types of Grants

AmeriCorps grants can be awarded on a cost reimbursement or fixed amount basis. CNCS will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year. New organizations are ineligible for the fixed amount option until after three years of successful cost reimbursement grant management. Fixed cost grants are allowed for any EAP (Education Award Program) applications.

Continuation Applications: Organizations that have AmeriCorps awards that are currently in their first or second year of operation must submit an application in order to

be eligible to receive funding for the following year. Please **see p. 13** of the Application Instructions. Requests by existing continuation applicants for increases in the level of funding or number of positions will be assessed on a case by case basis, and by reviewing the overall Formula portfolio ability to provide extra funds.

EAP (Education Award Programs): Organizations wishing to participate in an EAP program are eligible to apply for a small grant and use their own resources for the members' living allowance and program costs. Applicants can apply for up to \$800 per MSY. There is no match requirement for EAP grants.

Funds for all Member supported grants are connected to the number of AmeriCorps Members recruited and retained (except EAP). Programs should make every effort to recruit the number of Members requested. Inability to recruit and retain at least 75% of requested Members will likely have an impact on the amount of the grant funds accessed by the program. Decision on budget reduction due to inadequate recruitment and retention is at the discretion of Serve Alaska. There will be discussion with the program prior to any budget reduction.

A program's recruitment and retention rates may be factors in future funding decisions.

B. 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); labor organizations; partnerships and consortia; and federally recognized Indian Tribes. Receiving funding previously from CNCS or another Federal agency is not a prerequisite to apply under this *Notice*.

In addition to being eligible to apply under this *Notice*, federally recognized Indian Tribes will also be eligible to apply under a separate Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity for Indian Tribes for operating or planning grants traditionally with an application deadline of spring 2017. Check [here](#) for all CNCS funding opportunities.

Organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime are disqualified from receiving the 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.

C. Member living Allowance

A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage. Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time terms of service. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time member, it must comply with the maximum limits in the table on **page 9** of the *Notice*. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as CNCS and/ or grantee share. Exceptions are noted on **page 9** of the *Notice*.

While Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to submit detailed budgets, they are still required to provide a living allowance to members that complies with the minimum and maximum requirements. Exceptions noted in the Notice. Most Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to indicate that amount in the application and should request those positions as “without living allowance” in the budget.

More details on living allowance, including minimum and maximum amounts, can be found on **page 9** of the *Notice*.

D. Maximum Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)

The CNCS cost per MSY is determined by dividing the CNCS share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested. It does not include child care or the value of the education award a member may earn. The maximum amount an applicant may request from CNCS per MSY is determined on an annual basis.

New and recompeting State Commission sub-grantees/applicants may be held to the maximum cost per MSY for their grant type. More information on Cost per MSY can be found on **page 10** of the Notice.

Notice of Intent to Apply (NOIA): Due February 10, 2017 at 4pm. Each program that will be applying through Serve Alaska (recompetes and new applicants) for an AmeriCorps grant **must** complete a “Notice of Intent to Apply.” Submit the NOIA utilizing the NOIA form attached to this RFP to: Serve.Alaska@alaska.gov. This notice must include:

1. *Summary (one or two paragraphs) of what the program is proposing*
2. *Number of AmeriCorps members the program is expecting to enroll*
3. *Performance Measure(s)*
4. *A general budget (not detailed)*
5. *Include estimated match source(s)*

The NOIA does not commit an organization to apply, but ensures that agencies interested in applying receive all documents and information.

Theory of Change (TOC) Matrix: Due February 22, 2017 at 4pm. Each new or recompeting program that will submit an application, must submit a **DRAFT** Theory of Change Matrix to Serve Alaska via email: Serve.Alaska@alaska.gov. A TOC Matrix form is attached to this RFP. Additional documents and trainings addressing the Theory of Change (TOC) can be found [here](#). If more TOC information is needed, please contact Serve Alaska via the email above. Applications submitted without a Theory of Change matrix will be considered non-compliant and will not be reviewed. The Theory of Change matrix may be submitted earlier than the due date. Serve Alaska will review the draft TOC document and help the applicant strengthen the TOC if necessary.

National Service Priorities:

This AmeriCorps State and National (AmeriCorps) *Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity Notice (Notice)* will focus grant making for fiscal year 2017 in following focus areas:

2017 AmeriCorps Funding Priorities

CNCS seeks to prioritize the investment of national service resources in:

- Disaster Services - improving community resiliency through disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation
- Economic Opportunity - increasing economic opportunities for communities, specifically opportunity youth. See Mandatory Supplemental Guidance (MSG), either as the population served and/or as AmeriCorps members.
- Education - improving student academic performance in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Mathematics (STEM)
- Environment - 21st Century Service Corps (see MSG)
- Veterans and Military Families -- positively impacting the quality of life of veterans and improving military family strength
- Governor and Mayor Initiatives (see MSG)
- Programming that supports My Brother's Keeper (see MSG)
- Multi-focus intermediaries that demonstrate measureable impact and primarily serve communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure. i.e. rural and other underserved communities. (see MSG)
- Safer communities - activities that focus on public safety and preventing and mitigating civil unrest e.g., summer programming or engaging communities that are part of The National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention.
- Encore Programs (see MSG)

In order to receive priority consideration and three points for submitting an application within a *Notice* priority(ies), 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. Responses that propose programs for the purpose of receiving priority consideration are not guaranteed funding.

Serve Alaska:

A prime focus of Serve Alaska, as directed by the agency's Commission, is to address the unmet needs of underserved communities. Reviewers will assess Program Design, particularly focusing on evidence-basis for the proposed solution(s) to the identified community problem(s), appropriateness of national service as a solution, and potential quality of the member experience; Organizational Capability; and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy.

Administrative and National Service policy requirements:

This *RFP* should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520–2550, the *Notice*, Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, Application Instructions, and the Performance Measure Instructions which are incorporated by reference. The documents can be found at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities/2017/ameri-corps-state-and-national-grants-fy-2017#FundAnnounce>. The full regulations are available online at www.ecfr.gov. The TTY number is 800-833-3722. For a printed copy of related material, call 202-606-7508.

The *Notice* includes eligibility requirements, submission requirements, maximum amount of funding per Member Service Year (MSY),¹ and other information that changes each year for all AmeriCorps grant programs.

If there is any inconsistency between the AmeriCorps regulations, the *Notice*, and the Application Instructions, the order of precedence is as follows:

1. AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR §§ 2520–2550 take precedence over the
2. *Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity/Notice of Federal Funding Availability*, which takes precedence over the
3. Application Instructions which takes precedence over the
4. Serve Alaska RFP (except for Serve Alaska specific requirements and timelines)

Do not submit any other supplementary materials such as videos, brochures, letters of support, or any other item not requested. Serve Alaska will not review or return them.

Documents that Govern the Grant

The Notice of Grant Award incorporates the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant as well as the AmeriCorps regulations and grant provisions. Serve Alaska RFP and grant agreement are also included in the governing documents.

Compliance

Programs must comply with all applicable Serve Alaska policy, state and federal laws, regulations, and the requirements of the Omni Circular. Please refer to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200) for allowable, allocable, and reasonable cost information, as well as, audit requirements, including the need to provide audits to the Clearinghouse if expending over \$750,000 in federal funds as required in the Omni Circular. The OMB Omni Circular can be found on-line at https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_default/

Valuable Online Resources/References

2017 Application Instructions: This is a **MUST** read – this document has all the details needed to submit a complete and nationally competitive application. Any details that are not included on this document are included in CNCS's Application Instructions. **Be sure to use the timeline in this RFP only, if submitting grants to the State Commission.**

2017 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): The NOFO is also a **MUST** read for applicants. Any instructions that are not contained in the Application Instructions are

¹ One MSY is equivalent to at least 1700 service hours, a full-time AmeriCorps position. The CNCS cost per MSY is determined by dividing the CNCS share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested in the application. It does not include childcare or the cost of the education award.

included in the NOFO. The NOFO explains in more detail Performance Measures, the Tier status of funding priorities and other important, specific grant information.

[Mandatory Supplemental Guidance](#) (MSG): This is a **MUST** read. The MSG is intended to provide applicants with additional information for the preparation of their applications under the 2017 AmeriCorps State and National Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity.

[Technical Assistance Documents](#): Information on Key Terms, Regulations, Program Management and more.

[eGrants](#): Online system to submit your application

[Create a New eGrants Account](#): Need to do this to apply, if one doesn't exist for your organization. Please have available your organization's EIN number for all new accounts. The EIN is what connects an individual's account to a common organization.

New Program Application Process

Please use the following guidelines if you are a new or re-competing applicant applying for the following grants: AmeriCorps State and /or State Education Award Program (EAP) Formula programs. Applications will only be accepted electronically, via eGrants. *Continuation proposals (grants currently in year 1 or 2 of their cycle) refer to the Application Instructions for guidance.* **For complete application instructions, refer to the 2017 Application Instructions referenced above.**

The deadline for this competition (new, recompete and continuation applications) is **March 20, 2017 at 4:00 pm Alaska Time.**

State of Alaska Contact Person:

All correspondence having to do with this RFP shall be sent to:

Katie Abbott
Executive Director
550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1640
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Serve.Alaska@alaska.gov
(907) 269-6720

Inquiries specific to this RFP must be via writing/email.

CNCS and Serve Alaska require that all applicants make every effort to submit their applications electronically utilizing the Corporation's web-based application system, eGrants. ***All requirements described herein apply to electronic applications. If you cannot apply electronically, due to extenuating circumstances, you must contact Serve Alaska immediately.***

Deadlines

Deadlines listed in this RFP must be followed. If a deadline cannot be made, and prior to any deadline, applicants must submit an email explaining the extenuating circumstance which caused the delay. Such notice must be sent to Serve Alaska via email to serve.alaska@alaska.gov, prior to the deadline. If email is not available, use the phone number listed above in Contact Person section. Missed deadlines are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Any exceptions/ approval of extension require written approval by Serve Alaska.

RFP Timeline

RFP Timeline	Date
AmeriCorps RFP Released	February 1, 2017
<u>Notice of Intent Due @ 4pm</u>	February 10, 2017
Mandatory Pre-Application Teleconference @ 2pm	February 13, 2017
Draft <u>Theory of Change Matrix Due @ 4pm</u>	February 22, 2017
Applications Due @ 4PM	March 20, 2017
Clarification	April 12-25, 2017
Applications Re-submitted in eGrants	April 26, 2017
Commission Decision on Funding	May 16, 2017
Notify Applicants of Status	May 17, 2017
Appeal Due- 4pm	June 1, 2017
Funding Announcements (estimate)	August 1, 2017

Mandatory Pre-Application Teleconference

A mandatory Pre-Application Teleconference for new and re-competing applications will be held on February 13th at 2 pm. A call in number will be sent out. If you have any questions, contact Serve Alaska at serve.alaska@alaska.gov.

A pre-award risk assessment is a requirement under the new 2 CFR 200 regulations. The information contained in the assessment is intended to help the Commission understand the agency/organization and to evaluate its overall operational and financial controls.

Serve Alaska will conduct a pre-award risk assessment regarding financial and organizational capacity to administer federal grants with each new AmeriCorps application submitted for funding. Serve Alaska will review all assessments prior to awarding a grant. If Serve Alaska determines that an applicant's operational and financial controls are deficient, the Commission may postpone the grant award until sufficient corrective action is completed or may refrain from awarding the grant altogether. Monitoring timelines will be created in consideration of pre-award risk assessment results.

Appeal Process

In the event the Commission does not recommend funding an application, or a deadline has been missed, the following appeal procedure must be followed. All correspondence must be sent to the contact person listed above (page 9).

The appeal procedure of Serve Alaska is as follows:

Missed Deadline:

- a. A request for appeal of a missed deadline must be made prior to the missed deadline.
 - Appeals must be sent via email to the Contact person listed above.
 - Follow c-e, below.

Funding:

Serve Alaska will notify proposal applicants of the Application Review results and potential funding recommendations.

- a. If the applicant has substantive objections to the results of the Application Review Group and/ or the Commission decision, the applicant may request an appeal.
- b. A request for appeal must be made to the Chair of Serve Alaska by the due date noted in this RFP.
 - o Appeals must be sent via email to the Contact person listed above.
- c. If a request for an appeal is made, Serve Alaska shall hear such additional information as may be deemed appropriate and pertinent to the matter involved. A delegation of not more than three representatives of the requesting applicant may present such additional information. In its discretion, Serve Alaska may invite discussion or comments from others knowledgeable in the matter being appealed.
- d. Serve Alaska shall send to the applicant and others as deemed appropriate, its written determination pursuant to the request for appeal. The Chair's determination shall be final.
- e. If an application, which has previously been rejected by Serve Alaska, is submitted for future funding in a substantially altered condition, Serve Alaska shall treat this grant as a new grant request, and all policies and procedures relating to a new grant will apply.

Other Information

Program Types

CNCS offers a number of types of AmeriCorps programs. Please see the [2017 Supplemental Guidance document](#) for more information.

Threshold Issues

Applications should reflect that they meet the threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying. Please note: The threshold listed in the Notice of 20 member slots does NOT apply to the funding pool of AC17-F.

If an applicant is applying for a Professional Corps grant, its application should demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.

If an applicant is applying for a Full Time Fixed Amount grant, the application should reflect that only full-time or less than full-time positions serving in a full-time capacity will be permitted.

An application for the Governor and Mayor Initiative must clearly reflect that the application is from one Governor, one or more Mayor(s), and a minimum of two nonprofits.

If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: 45 CFR §2522.910-.940), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.

Serve Alaska will assess an applicant's strategic considerations. Applicants must check the relevant boxes in the Performance Measure tab in eGrants in order to be considered for CNCS' assessment of the strategic considerations. Applicants should only check the boxes if the strategic consideration is an intentional part of their program design and the implementation strategies are described in the application.

Serve Alaska requires one dedicated employee to manage the programmatic aspect of an AmeriCorps program of 10-20 AmeriCorps Members. The number of dedicated staff for larger than 20 Member programs will be assessed on a case by case basis. Dedicated staff must be clearly written in the grant and budget narratives.

RFP Requirements:

An application is only complete if it includes all required documentation and is received by the application due date. Incomplete applications will not be considered. All additional required documents that are not possible to place in eGrants are due by the application deadline unless otherwise noted. See below for a list of required documentation.

All documents should be attached to an email and sent to Serve.Alaska@alaska.gov. Your email subject should include your organization name and Application ID number (assigned in eGrants). **Do NOT send documents directly to CNCS.**

Required Additional Documents: (due March 20, 2017 unless noted)

- Draft Theory of Change Worksheet (due February 22, 2017)
- Letters of Commitment from most significant community partners (if applying for Governor/ Mayor Initiative)
- Evaluation Plan/ Report (if applicable)
- Letters from consortium members (for Multi-focused Intermediaries)
- Performance Measure worksheet on Volunteer Generation (Serve Alaska specific)
- Participation in the mandatory three Days of Service (Serve Alaska specific)
- Evidence Base supporting reports/studies/briefs (if applicable)
- Application Writing Tool 2017 (sent out to those agencies submitting a Notice of Intent to apply- follow instructions)

Requirement Specific for Serve Alaska State Programs:

When submitting the required documents, use the relevant forms from the RFP packet to describe how you will fulfill any of the Serve Alaska requirements or focus areas. This includes

- Serve Alaska Performance Measures on Volunteer Generation
- Explain how your program will plan and participate in the required Days of Service

Use this to address anything specific you feel is relevant to Serve Alaska's priorities and requirements.

Travel: A minimum \$2,000 line item for Staff Travel **must** be included in this year's proposed budget. This will be used for Serve Alaska's approved training or meeting attendance. (This does not apply to EAP programs.)

Volunteer Generation Performance Measure: ALL applicants will need to submit a performance measure concerning volunteer generation. A sub-grantees will need to track on this Performance Measure as a Serve Alaska grant requirement (not the Corporation):

1. Volunteer Generation Plan

- a. How your program will encourage and track Members' volunteer generation
- b. The number of volunteer opportunities created
- c. The number of volunteers generated
- d. The number of volunteer hours tracked

This Performance Measure will NOT be entered into e-grants. Use the provided Performance Measure Template.

Days of Service: Each year-round program is required to *organize* and have members participate in at least THREE National Days of Service during their program year. Ideally these National Days of Service, ***organized by the Sub Grantee***, and/or AmeriCorps Member(s) would encourage esprit d' Corps among members. MLK Day and 9/11 Day of Remembrance are required, with the third being the choice of the program. Less than year-round programs will have this requirement reduced by Serve Alaska on a sliding scale. Every program must register the Day of Service at least one week in advance on Serve Alaska's Facebook Page. Programs are also required to post their activities conducted (preferably with photos) on Serve Alaska's Facebook page after their day of service, if possible the day of, but no later than a week after the event.

~~~~~

## **Application Review Information**

Serve Alaska will review each application in a state-level pool. If your application is successful at the state level, it will be submitted for funding to CNCS.