

State of Alaska

Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development

Division of Community and Regional Affairs

Serve Alaska, State Service Commission



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

**FOR AMERICORPS PROGRAMS IN ALASKA
CFDA 94.006**

**SOLICITATION NUMBER:
AC-18-F**

DATE OF ISSUE: February 20, 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	3
Eligible Applicants	3
Types of Grants	4
Timeline and Deadlines- New and Re-Compete	5
Application Process.....	6
Review Process.....	7
Federal Funding Priorities.....	7
Serve Alaska Funding Priorities.....	8
Administrative and National Service Policy Requirements:	8
New Continuation Application Process.....	9
Continuation Application Process.....	10
Other Information.....	10
RFP Requirements:.....	11
Appeal Process.....	13
Mandatory Online Resources/References.....	13

Overview

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*), the Application Instructions and the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for a complete picture of the grant/application needs and expectations. The complete federal documents can be found [here](#). **DO NOT follow any timeline other than what is in this RFP.**

Applications are DUE (4 pm) March 20, 2018. See the [RFP Timeline](#).

Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding: The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) 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.

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations (see *Eligible Applicants* section of the *Notice* and below) proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions/practices to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that members can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

Eligible Applicants

The following Non-Federal entities (as defined in 2 CFR §200.69) who have DUNS numbers and are registered in System for Award Management (SAM) are eligible to apply:

- Indian Tribes (2 CFR §200.54)
- Institutions of higher education (2 CFR §200.54)
- Local governments (2 CFR §200.64)
- Nonprofit organizations (2 CFR §200.70)
- States (2 CFR §200.90)

CNCS encourages organizations that have not received prior funding from CNCS to apply.

In addition to being eligible to apply under this *Notice*, federally recognized Indian Tribes may 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 2018. 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.

Serve Alaska requires that any organization applying to this RFP has attended one of the AmeriCorps Academy trainings provided by Serve Alaska. This will be documented on the Notice of Intent to apply, and verified through sign in sheets of an Academy. Failure to document attendance in the Notice of Intent to Apply, or not being on the sign-in sheets, may disqualify any application.

Reallocation of Funding

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

Types of Grants

The only funding available with this RFP/ *Notice* are EAP AmeriCorps grants and Continuation of current (year 1 or 2) 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 full-time 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 consecutive year. These grants only report on ‘continuation changes’ (how the program is different from the previous year) and edit of the operating budget, if necessary. Performance Measure edits may be allowed. Please consult the Application Instructions for more information.

EAP (Education Award Programs): This type of program has to do with the budget type and can be part of a New or Continuation funding cycle. 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 which focuses on enrollment only). 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 accessible to 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.

Timeline and Deadlines- New and Re-Compete

RFP Timeline	Date
AmeriCorps RFP Released	February 20, 2018
<u>Notice of Intent Due by 4pm</u>	February 27, 2018
Mandatory Pre-Application Teleconference @ 10am	March 1, 2018
Draft <u>Theory of Change Matrix Due by 4pm</u>	March 9, 2018
Applications Due @ 4PM	March 20, 2018
Application Clarification	April 17-25, 2018
Applications Re-submitted in CNCS's eGrants (due by 4pm)	April 26, 2018
Commission Decision on Funding	May 16, 2018
Notify Applicants of Status	May 17, 2018
Appeal Due by 4pm	June 1, 2018
Funding Announcements (estimate)	August 1, 2018

Notice of Intent to Apply (NOIA):

Due February 27, 2018 by 4pm. Each program that will be applying through Serve Alaska (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. *Certification of attendance at a Serve Alaska AmeriCorps Academy (new agency only)*
2. *Summary (one or two paragraphs) of what the program is proposing*
3. *Number of AmeriCorps members the program is expecting to enroll*
4. *Performance Measure(s)*
5. *A general budget (not detailed)*
6. *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.

DRAFT Theory of Change (TOC) Matrix:

Due March 9, 2018 by 4pm. Each new or re-competing program that will submit an application, must submit a DRAFT Theory of Change Matrix via email to: Serve.Alaska@alaska.gov. A TOC Matrix form is attached to this RFP. Additional documents and trainings addressing the TOC can be found [here](#). If more TOC information is needed, please contact Serve Alaska via email. Applications submitted without a TOC matrix will be considered non-compliant and will not be reviewed. The TOC 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.

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 below in the Contact Person section. Missed deadlines are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Any exceptions/ approval of extension require written approval by Serve Alaska.

Application Process

Applications must be entered into CNCS's 'eGrants. Additional information on applying and the link to eGrants is found in this document: [CNCS Application Instructions](#).

Applications may not exceed 12 pages for the Narratives. 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 CNCS's eGrants system. 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 prior to submission to check that the application does not exceed the page limit.

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

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 either CNCS and/or grantee share. Exceptions are noted on **page 9** of the *Notice*.

While EAP grant applicants are not required to submit detailed budgets, if a program chooses to provide a living allowance to members, the amount must comply with the maximum requirements. Exceptions noted below. EAP 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 starting on **page 9** of the *Notice*.

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 continuation State Commission sub-grantees/applicants will 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*.

Review Process

Serve Alaska's Review Committee will review submitted applications and give feedback to the applicant. Some of the feedback requires edits to the application, while others are suggestions for strengthening. This process is called 'clarification' (see timeline). During clarification, the applicant will take the Review Committee comments and incorporate them into the application.

After the applicant re-submits clarification changes into CNCS's eGrants, the Review Committee will assess the applications a final time to ensure required elements have been incorporated. The Review Committee will also ensure the scope of the project has not been substantially altered between the two submission times. The Review Committee, based on the content of the re-submitted application, will then recommend (or not) funding for applications to the entire commission.

Reviewers will not consider submitted material that is over the page limits in the printed application, even if CNCS's eGrants system 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.

Federal Funding Priorities

2018 AmeriCorps Funding Priorities (See [Mandatory Supplemental Guidance](#) for further information about some of the priorities). CNCS seeks to prioritize the investment of national service resources in the following areas:

- Disaster Services - improving community resiliency through disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation
- Economic Opportunity - increasing economic opportunities for communities by engaging opportunity youth, either as the population served and/or as AmeriCorps members, to prepare them for the workforce
- Education - improving student academic performance in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Mathematics (STEM)
- Healthy Futures - reducing and/or preventing prescription drug and opioid abuse
- Veterans and Military Families - positively impacting the quality of life of veterans and improving military family strength
- Governor and Mayor Initiatives
- Rural intermediaries - organizations that demonstrate measureable impact and primarily serve communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure.
- Safer Communities - programs that focus on public safety, preventing and mitigating civil unrest, and/or partnerships between law enforcement and the community
- Evidence Based Intervention Planning Grants

- Encore Programs - programs that engage Americans age 55 and older

In order to receive priority consideration 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 Funding Priorities

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 <https://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities/2018/ameri-corps-state-and-national-grants-fy-2018>. The full regulations are available online at [45 CFR 2500-2556](#).

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.

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.

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 (2 CFR 200). 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 2200-2245](#).

Pre-Award Risk Assessment

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 agency submitting an AmeriCorps application 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.

New Application Process

Please use the following guidelines if you are a new applicant applying for the following grants: AmeriCorps State Education Award Program (EAP). Applications will only be accepted electronically, via CNCS's e Grants system. *Continuation proposals (grants currently in year 1 or 2 of their cycle) please review the next section 'Continuation Application Process'.* **For complete application instructions, refer to the 2018 Application Instructions referenced above.**

The deadline for the new and continuation applications is **March 20, 2018 at 4:00 pm Alaska Time.**

State of Alaska Contact Person:

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

Jill Furbish
Grant Administrator
550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1640
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Serve.Alaska@alaska.gov
(907) 269-4537

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

Mandatory Pre-Application Teleconference

A mandatory Pre-Application Teleconference for new applications will be held on March 1, 2018 at 10 AM. A call in number will be sent out to those agencies having submitted the Notice of Intent to Apply. If you have any questions, contact Serve Alaska at serve.alaska@alaska.gov.

Continuation Application Process

Continuation Timeline

RFP Timeline	Date
AmeriCorps RFP Released	February 20, 2018
Continuation teleconference	March 2, 2018
Continuation Changes Due @ 4PM	March 30, 2018
Clarification (if necessary)	April 17-25, 2018
Applications Re-submitted in CNCS’s eGrants (if necessary)	April 26, 2018
Funding Announcements (estimate)	August 1, 2018

Applications applying for the second or third year of funding are considered ‘continuation applications.’ As long as the program is in good standing with Serve Alaska (reports are submitted on time, monitoring visits show minor, correctable issues and risk assessment has not increased, for example) the program can submit a ‘continuation’ application. If unsure of your agency’s standing, please contact Serve Alaska at serve.alaska@alaska.gov.

Other Information

Threshold Issues

Applications should reflect that they meet the threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying.

- Professional Corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a Professional Corps by CNCS must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.
- Applications for the Governor and Mayor Initiative must clearly reflect that they are from one Governor, one or more Mayors, 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.

Strategic Considerations:

Based on the evaluation of the below strategic considerations, CNCS may assess applications to be selected for funding over applications with a greater degree of alignment with the review criteria. In selecting applicants to receive awards under this *Notice*, the Chief Executive Officer will endeavor to include a diverse portfolio of applications based on staff evaluations, recommendations, priorities, and strategic considerations.

- Meaningful representation of:
 - Geographic diversity
 - Rural communities (see definition in Mandatory Supplemental Guidance)
 - Single and multi-state programs
 - Faith- based organizations
 - CNCS *Notice* Priorities representation
 - Focus area representation
 - Moderate and Strong evidence levels
 - Program models that demonstrate a new approach to solving a community problem based on thorough review of existing research and evaluation about existing approaches to the problem
 - Program models that will utilize AmeriCorps members to replicate evidence-based programs with fidelity

CNCS will assess an applicant's strategic considerations. Applicants must check the relevant boxes in the Program Information tab in CNCS's web-based management system in order to be considered for CNCS's assessment of the strategic considerations (see *Selection for Funding* section.) Applicants should only check the boxes if the strategic consideration is a significant and if intentional part of their program design and implementation strategies are described in the application.

RFP Requirements:

An application is only complete if it includes all required documentation and is received by the application due date. Incomplete applications may not be considered. All additional required documents that are not possible to place in CNCS's Web-based grants management system are due by the application deadline. Serve Alaska specific documents are included are noted in 'Required Additional Documents' below.

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 CNCS's eGrants). **Do NOT send documents directly to CNCS.**

Required Additional Documents: (due 3/30/18 unless noted)

- Draft Theory of Change Worksheet (due 3/9/18)
- 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)
- Volunteer/ Project Projection Form (Serve Alaska specific)
- Serve Alaska Documents Checklist, completed
- Evidence Base supporting reports/studies/briefs (if applicable)
- Application Writing Tool 2018 (sent out to those agencies submitting a Notice of Intent to apply- follow instructions)
- New applicants must submit their agency's most recent single audit report.

Requirement Specific for Serve Alaska State Commission 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.

Volunteer / Project Projection:

ALL applicants, including Continuations, will need to submit a Volunteer/ Project Projection Form (attached) concerning volunteer generation. A sub-grantee will need to report on this projection as a Serve Alaska grant requirement (not the Corporation):

1. Volunteer / Project Projection Form (VPPF)

- 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
- e. Demographic of Volunteers

This VPPF will NOT be entered into the eGrants. Use the provided Volunteer/ Project Projection Form provided in this RFP packet and submit as directed.

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.

Days of Service project is submitted on the 'Documents Checklist' contained in this RFP and submitted as directed.

Staff Capacity:

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. EAP programs will discuss their plan with Serve Alaska to ensure coverage.

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 by 4pm June 1, 2018.

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.
 - o Appeals must be sent via email to the Contact person listed above.
 - o Follow below, c-e.

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.

Mandatory Online Resources/References

2018 Application Instructions: This is a **MUST** read – this document has all the details needed to submit a complete 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.

2018 Notice of Funding Opportunity (*Notice*): The *Notice* is also a **MUST** read for applicants. Any instructions that are not contained in the Application Instructions are included in the *Notice*.

The *Notice* 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 2018 AmeriCorps State and National Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity.

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

CNCS's eGrants: Online system to submit your application. A link will be provided to all agencies submitting the NOI.

Create a New CNCS's eGrants system Account: Applicants will 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.