

serve KENTUCKY

STATE SERVICE COMMISSION

FY20 AmeriCorps Grant Review Tool

New or Recompete Applications

Applicant:		Reviewer:			
A. Executive Summary (0%)		While no points will be assigned to this section, reviewers will be asked to examine whether or not the applicant followed the required format below, as described in the NOFO.			
<p>The [Name of the organization] proposes to have [Number of] AmeriCorps members who will [service activities the members will be doing] in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will serve]. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing.]</p> <p>This program will focus on the CNCS focus area(s) of [Focus Area(s)].* The CNCS investment of [\$[amount of request]] will be matched with [\$[amount of projected match]], [\$[amount of local, state, and federal funds]] in public funding and [\$[amount of non-governmental funds]] in private funding. <i>*If the program is not operating in a CNCS focus area, omit this sentence.</i></p>					
Criteria	Yes/No	If no, please provide comments indicating items that must be changed, added, or removed.	Possible Points	Points Awarded	
Executive Summary does not deviate from required format			0		
A. Executive Summary (Total Points)			0	0	
B. Program Design (50%)		Responses should be found in the Rationale and Approach/Program Design narrative section. Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.			

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1. Theory of Change and Logic Model (24 points)

Note: The logic model is a visual representation of the applicant's theory of change. Programs may include short, medium or long-term outcomes in the logic model. Applicants are not required to measure all components of their theory of change. The applicant's performance measures should be consistent with the program's theory of change and should represent significant program activities.

In the application narrative, applicants should discuss their rationale for setting output and outcome targets for their performance measures.

Rationales and justifications should be informed by the organization's performance data (e.g., program data observed over time that suggests targets are reasonable), relevant research (e.g. targets documented by organizations running similar programs with similar populations), or prior program evaluation findings.

Applicants with multiple interventions should complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each intervention.

Criteria (24 points possible)	Comments	
<p>The Theory of Change shall address:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community problem. 2. The applicant's proposed intervention is clearly articulated including the design, dosage, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) leveraged volunteers. 3. The applicant's intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change. 4. The expected outcomes articulated in the application narrative and logic model represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem identified by the applicant. 5. The rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention(s) is reasonable. 6. The service role of AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem. 		
<p>The Logic Model shall depict:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A summary of the community problem/need. 2. The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Locations or sites in which members will provide services o Number of AmeriCorps members that will deliver the intervention 3. The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention) o The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week) o The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level) 4. The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served, types and number of activities conducted.) If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as output indicators 5. Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators. 		
<p><i>Logic model content that exceeds three pages will not be reviewed.</i></p>	Possible Points	Points Awarded
Theory of Change and Logic Model	24	

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2. Evidence Base (20 points)		
<p>Responses should be found in the Rationale and Approach/Program Design narrative section. The assessment of an applicant's evidence base has two steps. First, the applicant will be assigned to an evidence tier. (See the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance.) Second, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the applicant's overall capacity to collect and use data (including performance measurement and evaluation data) will be assessed and scored. <i>Note: CNCS values and funds programs at all points along the evidence continuum and expects programs to progress along the evidence continuum over time.</i></p>		
Criteria (16 points possible)	Possible Points	Points Awarded
<p>Evidence Tier (12 points) An evidence tier will be assessed for each applicant for the purpose of applying the strategic characteristics (moderate/strong evidence) and understanding the relative strength of each applicant's evidence base and the likelihood that the proposed intervention will lead to outcomes identified in the logic model. In the Evidence Tier section of the application narrative, applicants must (1) summarize the study design and key findings of any evaluation report(s) submitted and (2) describe any other evidence that supports their program, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies that inform their program design. Applicants who submit evaluation reports for consideration must also describe in the Evidence Base section of the application narrative how the intervention described in the submitted reports is the same as the intervention described in the application (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance). Applicants should provide citations for the studies they describe, if applicable; however, reviewers will not review any documents external to the application other than evaluation report(s) submitted in accordance with the Notice instructions. Applicants must meet all requirements of an evidence tier in order to be considered for that tier.</p>	12	
<p>Applicants who have evaluation reports of the same intervention described in the application may submit up to 2 of those reports, plus (if applicable) the evaluation report from their last three-year grant cycle, to qualify for the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tier. In order to qualify for consideration, the intervention evaluated in the submitted report(s) must match the intervention proposed by the applicant in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the Program Design and Logic Model sections of the application: Characteristics of the beneficiary population; Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention; Dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention; The context in which the intervention is delivered; Outcomes of the intervention</p>	Evaluation Report submitted? Yes or No	
<p>Evidence Quality (8 points) After the applicant's evidence tier has been assessed, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the extent to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored. For applicants who are assessed as being in the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tiers, reviewers will score the submitted evaluation reports using the following standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The submitted reports are of satisfactory methodological quality and rigor for the type of evaluation conducted (e.g., adequate sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, appropriate use of control or comparison groups, etc.); • The submitted reports describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years; • The submitted reports show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest. <p>For applicants who are assessed as being in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier, reviewers will score the narrative provided in the Evidence Base section of the application using the following standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant uses relevant evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies, to inform their proposed program design; • The described evidence is relatively recent, preferably from the last six years; • The evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest. 	8	

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3. Notice Priority (0 points)				
<p>NOT THE SAME AS FOCUS AREAS: Applicants should only select Priorities that represent a significant part of the program focus, high quality program design, and outcomes. The applicant proposed program fits within one or more of the 2020 AmeriCorps funding priorities as outlined in the Funding Priorities section and more fully described in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance and the proposed program meets all of the requirements detailed.</p>				
<p>FY20 CNCS Funding Priorities (linked to CNCS Evidence Exchange)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Opportunity – evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange. In order to qualify for this priority, the applicant must be assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence by the reviewers. OR increasing economic opportunities for communities by preparing people for the workforce. • Education - evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange. In order to qualify for this priority, the applicant must be assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence by the reviewers. • Healthy Futures - evidence-based interventions on the CNCS Evidence Exchange. In order to qualify for this priority, the applicant must be assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence by the reviewers. OR 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. • Rural intermediaries - organizations that demonstrate measureable impact and primarily serve rural communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure. • Faith-based organizations. 				Yes/No
4. Member Experience (6 points)				
Criteria			Possible Points	Points Awarded
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AmeriCorps members will gain skills as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed. • The program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the programs operate. • The applicant will foster an inclusive service culture where different backgrounds, talents, and capabilities are welcomed and leveraged for learning and effective service delivery. 			6	
Overall Comments:				
B. Program Design (Total Points)			50	0
C. Organizational Capability (25%)		Responses should be found in the Organizational Capability narrative section. Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the following criteria below. Do not assume all		
1. Organizational Background and Staffing (9 points)				
Criteria	Yes/No	Comments on strengths and weaknesses	Possible	Points
The organization details the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing the AmeriCorps program as well as providing oversight and monitoring for the program.			9	

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2. Compliance and Accountability (8 points)				
Criteria	Yes/No	Comments on strengths and weaknesses	Possible	Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization has a monitoring and oversight plan to prevent and detect non-compliance and enforce compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities and criminal history checks at the grantee, subgrantee (if applicable), and service site locations. • The CNCS-required evaluation report meets CNCS requirements (if applicable), • The CNCS-required evaluation report is of satisfactory quality (if applicable). 			8	
3. Culture that Values Learning (4 points)				
Criteria	Yes/No	Comments on strengths and weaknesses	Possible	Points
The applicant's board, management, and staff collect and use information, including performance data, for learning and decision-making.			4	
4. Member Supervision (4 points)				
Criteria	Yes/No	Comments on strengths and weaknesses	Possible Points	Points Awarded
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AmeriCorps members will receive sufficient guidance and support from their supervisor to provide effective service. • AmeriCorps supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations. 			4	
C. Organizational Capability (Total Points)			25	0

D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25%)	Responses should be found in the Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy narrative section. Reviewers will consider the quality of the application’s response to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.		
1. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 points)			
<i>This criteria will be assessed based on the budget submitted. No narrative should be entered in the narrative box except for “See budget.”</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget is submitted without mathematical errors and proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award. • Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated. • Budget is in compliance with the budget instructions. • Match is submitted with adequate information to support the amount written in the budget. • The budgeted match is equal to or more than the required match for the given program year. • The cost per MSY is equal to or less than the maximum cost per MSY. <p>Proposed budgets that contain MSY costs that exceed the maximum cost per MSY and/or less than required match will be considered unresponsive to the application criteria.</p> <p>Applicants must complete the budget and ensure the following information is in the budget screens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current indirect rate cost if used to claim indirect/administrative costs. • Identify the non-CNCS funding and resources necessary to support the project, including for Fixed Amount applicants. • Indicate the amount of non-CNCS resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash), the sources of these commitments, and if the commitments are proposed or secured. 	<p>Submitted budget to be reviewed by Serve Kentucky staff using the Fiscal Grant Review Tool and other financial documentation. External Grant Reviewers should NOT assess points for this section.</p>		
D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (Total Points)		25	25
E. Evaluation Plan (0%)	Responses should be found in the Evaluation Summary or Plan narrative section.		
Evaluation Plan (0 points)		Points	
If the applicant is competing for the first time, please provide a data collection plan in the “Evaluation Summary or Plan” field that includes the following:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the applicant’s data collection system and how it is sufficient to collect high quality performance measurement data during the first three years of the grant. If the applicant does not yet have a data collection system, describe the plan and timeline for developing a high quality system. • A description of how the applicant will use performance data (including CNCS performance measures and other process and outcome measures if applicable) to improve its program in the first three years of funding. <p><i>First-time applicants should be aware that CNCS may require submission of data collection instruments if a grant is approved for funding.</i></p>	n/a		

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If the applicant is recompeting for AmeriCorps funds for the first time , the program must submit its evaluation plan in the "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field.			
If the applicant is recompeting for a subsequent time , the program must submit its evaluation report as an attachment, and must also submit an evaluation plan for the next three-year period.			
Evaluation plans must include as much information as possible for each of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A short description of the theory of change - why the proposed intervention is expected to produce the proposed results • Outcome(s) of interest - clear and measurable outcomes that are aligned with the theory of change and will be assessed during the evaluation • Research questions to be addressed by the study - concrete research questions (or hypotheses) that are clearly connected to the outcomes • Proposed research design for the evaluation including a rationale for the design selected, an assessment of its strengths and limitations, and a description of the main components; • Description of the data sources, sampling methods, measurement tools, and data collection procedures that will be used in the evaluation • Analysis plan that clearly describes the methodology/ies that will be used to analyze the collected data • A timeline for the evaluation that describes how the evaluation will cover at least one year of CNCS-funded activity and will be completed within the three-year timeframe of the grant • Qualifications needed for the evaluator • The proposed budget 			n/a
Evaluation Report Submitted? (Yes or No)			Yes
Overall Evaluation Comments	N/A - Serve Kentucky staff will ensure applicant follows CNCS evaluation requirements.		
E. Evaluation Plan (Total Points)		0	0
F. Amendment Justification (0%)	Enter N/A. This field will be used if the applicant is awarded a grant and needs to amend it.	0	0
G. Clarification Information (0%)	Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter information that requires clarification in the post-review period.	0	0
H. Continuation Changes (0%)	Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter changes in the application narratives in continuation requests.	0	0
E-H (Total Points)		0	0
Total Points		100	25