

## NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

**Federal Agency Name:** AmeriCorps  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** FY 2021 AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program Q4 Continuation and Renewal  
**Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement  
**Assistance Listing Number:** 94.016

**Disclosure:** This Notice is for current grantees going into a renewal application (Year 1) or continuations applications (Years two or *three*). Publication of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (Notice) does not obligate AmeriCorps to award any specific number of grants or to commit any particular amount of funding.

**Important Dates** – For all AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program renewals or continuations.

- Applications are due **Wednesday, March 10, 2021** by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.
- Successful applicants will be issued awards by June 2021.

### FULL TEXT OF THE NOTICE

**A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION** – For all AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program renewals and continuations.

**A.1. Purpose of AmeriCorps Seniors’ Senior Companion Program Funding**

*AmeriCorps brings people together to tackle the country’s most pressing challenges through national service and volunteering. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities. AmeriCorps helps make service a cornerstone of our national culture.*

Established in 1974, the AmeriCorps Seniors’ Senior Companion Program engages adults age 55 and over to provide companionship and support to other adults in need of extra assistance to remain at home or in the community for as long as possible. AmeriCorps Seniors’ volunteers in the Senior Companion program serve an average of 20 hours per week, with most of the volunteer service taking place in the homes of their clients. Among other activities, they provide companionship to ease loneliness and social isolation, assist with transportation and light chores, help to serve as eyes and ears to professionals who can intervene in the case of medical or other deterioration on the part of the clients, and give support to informal caregivers. While serving, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the Senior Companion Program improve their own lives by staying active and civically engaged.

**A.2. Funding Priorities**

Incumbent projects that currently receive an AmeriCorps Seniors’ Senior Companion Program grant are invited to submit applications for the AmeriCorps Seniors’ Senior Companion Program grant sponsored by their organization. Incumbent are invited to apply for grant renewal or continuation based on the determination that your project is continuing to meet the eligibility criteria as detailed in this document.

AmeriCorps Seniors funding priorities for this grant cycle are:

- AmeriCorps Seniors is committed, in this grant cycle, to focus on programs that actively engage in removing structural racial inequities, advancing racial equality, and increasing opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities.

- AmeriCorps Seniors encourages grant applications to include work plans that advance justice and equality in areas such as healthy futures.
- AmeriCorps Seniors encourages applicants to focus on efforts to help local communities respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants may propose programming in the healthy futures focus area to aid communities as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- AmeriCorps Senior prioritizes grant making in the Healthy Futures focus area identified by the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act. Under this focus area, grants must address health needs within communities by focusing specifically on independent living (aging in place), and access to health care. Activities may include supporting the ability of homebound, older adults and individuals with disabilities to live independently.

To receive priority consideration, applicants must show that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes and must include a high-quality program design. Proposing programs that receive priority consideration does not guarantee funding.

*\*In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, flexibilities have been made to facilitate safe volunteer practices. Please note these program flexibilities are temporary and can be rescinded at any time. For more information on AmeriCorps Seniors response to COVID-19, please visit the COVID -19 section on our Manage AmeriCorps Seniors page at : <https://nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps/manage-senior-corps-grants>*

### **A.3. Performance Goals or Expected Outcomes**

#### **National Performance Measures**

AmeriCorps expects applicants to use National Performance Measures as part of a comprehensive performance measurement strategy that relies on both performance and evaluation data to learn from their work and make tactical and strategic adjustments to achieve their 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 <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement>. Program-specific evaluation requirements can be found at <https://nationalservice.gov/documents/2015/fgp-appendix-b-performance-measure-instructions>

Applicants must identify Healthy Futures as the primary focus area. Work plans must include at least one service activity in the selected primary focus area. The primary focus area should represent the area in which the applicant aims to make the most impact.

This funding opportunity requires applicants to demonstrate cost-effective practices in achieving performance goals through the services described in the proposed work plans. Applications must include work plans that meet the following minimum requirements: For every \$6,500 in annual base federal funding, at least one Volunteer Service Year's (VSY's) worth of service must be incorporated in work plans, and must produce:

1. National Performance Measure outcomes in the Healthy Futures focus area; or
2. National Performance Measure outcomes in "Inclusion of people with disabilities" (H15A) work plans for applicants that have historically supported programming in this area (see Appendix B).

*\*Volunteer Service Year (VSY): VSY is a budget term which equals 1044 service hours. The standardized stipend cost per VSY is calculated by multiplying the number of hours served by the current cost per hour for the stipend (1044 hours x \$3.00 per hour).*

#### **A.4. Program Authority**

Awards under this Notice are authorized by the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, (42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.) and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended (42 U.S.C. 5013).

**B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION** - For all AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program renewals and continuations.

#### **B.1. Estimated Available Funds**

AmeriCorps Seniors anticipates approximately \$3,400,000 for FY 2021 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Q4 continuation and renewal awards. The actual level of funding is subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

#### **B.2. Estimated Award Amount**

Award amounts will vary, as determined by the scope of the projects. AmeriCorps Seniors expects to make awards in the range of \$0 to \$685,443.

#### **B.3. Period of Performance**

Successful applicants will be issued awards by June 2021.

AmeriCorps Seniors anticipates making three-year grant awards. AmeriCorps Seniors generally makes an initial award for the first year of the period of performance, based on a one-year budget.

Continuation funding for years 2 and 3 is not guaranteed and may be dependent upon:

- Satisfactory performance that signals the grantee is on track to achieve its proposed performance measures at the end of the grant;
- Demonstrated capacity to manage the grant;
- Compliance with grant requirements, including terms and conditions, criminal history checks, reporting and securing the required non-federal share; and/or;
- Availability of Congressional appropriations.

AmeriCorps Seniors reserves the right to adjust the amount of an award or elect not to continue funding.

#### **B.4. Type of Award**

Award recipients will be assigned to an AmeriCorps Portfolio Manager, who will be responsible for reviewing recipient performance, providing training and technical assistance, and serving as the primary point of contact for the AmeriCorps Seniors grant.

The FY 2021 AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program grants will be awarded on a cost reimbursement basis.

**C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION** - For all AmeriCorps Seniors' Senior Companion Program renewals and continuations.

### **C.1. Eligible Applicants**

Through this Notice, only AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program incumbent applicants who currently receive federal funds for a Senior Companion Program grant may apply for funding in the currently awarded geographic service area.

The following non-federal entities (all of which are defined in 2 CFR 200.69) are eligible to apply:

- Indian tribes
- institutions of higher education
- local governments
- nonprofit organizations
- states

In addition to Indian tribes as defined in 2 CFR 200.1, tribal organizations that are controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by federally recognized Indian tribes are also eligible to apply. If an entity applies for an award as a tribal organization that is controlled or chartered by one or more Indian tribes, the organization must provide copies of, or links to, documentation which demonstrates that the organization is controlled or chartered by a federally recognized Indian tribe. If an entity applies as an organization sanctioned by a federally recognized tribe, or multiple specific federally recognized tribes, it must submit a sanctioning resolution, adopted by the Tribal Council (or comparable tribal governing body) of each Indian tribe. The resolution(s) must identify the entity applying for an AmeriCorps Seniors award by name as a tribal organization that is sanctioned by the Indian tribe(s) for the purpose of applying for AmeriCorps Seniors funding (or federal grant funds generally).

Entities must have a valid SAM registration and DUNS and/or Unique Entity Identifier to receive an award. See Section D.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) for more information.

### **C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching**

Applicants are required to match funds equal to ten percent of their requested program budget. The applicant's match can be non-AmeriCorps Seniors cash and/or in-kind contributions. Applicants must indicate whether the match is proposed or secured. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet the ten percent match requirement at the time of application submission. See Section D.6. *Funding Restrictions* for more information. *Please note, all grant match for AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors grants have been waived for the fiscal year 2021, however, applicants should still include match in their budgets.*

### **C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements**

Applications that propose to engage in activities that are prohibited under AmeriCorps statutes, regulations, or the terms and conditions of its awards are not eligible to receive AmeriCorps funding.

Note that under appropriations provisions annually enacted by Congress, if AmeriCorps is aware that any corporation has any unpaid federal tax liability—

- that has been assessed
- for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed
- that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability—

that corporation is not eligible for an award under this Notice. However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has made a determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the federal government.

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

**D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION-** For all AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program renewals and continuations.

This Notice should be read together with the AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program regulations, 45 CFR §§ Part – 2551, AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program Grant Application Instructions, Appendix A: List of Funding Opportunities, and the AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program Performance Measures. These documents are available online at <https://nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities/2019/2020-foster-grandparent-program-and-senior>.

#### **D.1. Address to Request an Application Package**

All information associated with this funding opportunity is available through the AmeriCorps Seniors Funding Opportunities webpages. Applicants should refer to AmeriCorps Funding Opportunities for more information and instructions on how to fully respond to this Notice. Applicants can also send an email to the assigned AmeriCorps Seniors Portfolio Manager in the Regional Office for a printed copy of the Notice and Guidance. AmeriCorps Seniors also offers live text chat at <https://www.NationalService.gov/contact-us>.

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

##### **D.2.a. Application Content**

Complete applications must include the following elements:

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: This is automatically generated when applicants complete the data elements in the eGrants system.
- Narrative Sections:
  - Executive Summary: This is a brief description of the proposed program.
  - Program Design
  - Organizational Capability
  - Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy
- Standard Form 424A Budget
- Performance Measures
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications (<https://egrants.cns.gov/cnsmisc/ECERTS.HTM>, and <https://egrants.cns.gov/cnsmisc/EASSUR.HTM>)

##### **D.2.b. Page Limits**

Applications may not exceed **15** double-spaced pages as the pages print out from eGrants. The application sections that count towards the page limit are the:

- SF-424 Face Sheet
- Executive Summary
- Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy narratives.

The application page limit does not include the Budget, Performance Measures, or any required additional documents.

Please note that the length of the application as a word processing document may differ from the length of the document printed out from eGrants. The character limits in eGrants do not align with page limits set in the Notice. **AmeriCorps Seniors strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the “Review and Submit” tab in eGrants prior to submission in order to confirm that the application does not exceed the page limit.**

AmeriCorps Seniors will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods when determining if an application complies with the page limit. Reviewers will also not consider material that is over the page limit, even if eGrants allows applicants to enter and submit additional text.

### **D.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)**

All applicants **must** register with the System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/> and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If an applicant is awarded a grant, it must maintain an active SAM registration throughout the life of the award. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees at: [https://sam.gov/SAM/transcript/Quick\\_Guide\\_for\\_Grants\\_Registrations.pdf](https://sam.gov/SAM/transcript/Quick_Guide_for_Grants_Registrations.pdf).

SAM registration must be renewed annually. AmeriCorps Seniors suggests that applicants finalize a new registration or renew an existing one at least three weeks before the application deadline, to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise. **Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and address on all grant applications to AmeriCorps Seniors.**

AmeriCorps Seniors will not make awards to entities that do not have a valid SAM registration and DUNS. If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time AmeriCorps Seniors is ready to make a Federal award, AmeriCorps Seniors may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Applications must include an Employer Identification Number.

Applications must include a DUNS 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 the [DUNS Request Service](#). AmeriCorps Seniors recommends registering at least 30 days before the application due date.

The Federal government is implementing Unique Entity Identifiers (UEI) as part of the SAM registration process to eventually replace DUNS numbers. AmeriCorps Seniors may ask applicants to add the UEI to their application as part of the clarification or pre-award process. AmeriCorps Seniors is adding a field to capture the UEI in eGrants. If you already have a UEI and the UEI field is available in eGrants, you can enter it at the time you submit your application.

#### **D.4. Submission Dates and Times**

##### **D.4.a. Application Submission Deadline**

Applications are due **Wednesday, March 10, 2021 by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.**

AmeriCorps Seniors will not consider applications submitted after the deadline, except as noted in Section *D.4.c. Late Applications*. AmeriCorps Seniors reserves the right to extend the submission deadline. AmeriCorps Seniors will post a notification in the event of an extended deadline on Manage AmeriCorps Seniors website.

##### **D.4.b. Additional Documents Deadline**

Additional documents are due by the application submission deadline. See *Sections D.4.a. Application Submission Deadline* and *D.7.b. Submission of Additional Documents* for more information.

##### **D.4.c. Late Applications**

All applications received after the submission deadline published in this Notice are presumed to be non-compliant. To overcome this presumption, the applicant must:

- submit a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that caused the delay, including:
  - the timing and specific cause(s) of the delay
  - the ticket number if a request for assistance was submitted to the National Service Hotline
  - any information provided to the applicant by the National Service Hotline
  - any other documentation or evidence that supports the justification
- ensure that AmeriCorps Seniors receives the written explanation or justification and any other evidence that substantiates the claimed extenuating circumstance(s), via email to [AmeriCorpsSeniors@cns.gov](mailto:AmeriCorpsSeniors@cns.gov) no later than 24 hours after the application deadline stated in the Notice.

Communication with AmeriCorps Seniors staff, including an applicant's Portfolio Manager, is not a substitute for a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance that caused the delay as outlined above. Applicants are required to continue working in eGrants, AmeriCorps Seniors web-based application system and with the National Service Hotline to submit the application.

**Please note:** AmeriCorps Seniors will *not* consider an advance request to submit a late application. Please carefully review and follow the guidance in this section and submit your application as soon as possible.

#### **D.5. Intergovernmental Review**

This Notice is not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

#### **D.6. Funding Restrictions**

##### **D.6.a. Award Funding Requirements**

Awards under this Notice are subject to cost share or matching requirements. The amount of AmeriCorps Seniors funding provided will be limited to 90 percent of the total allowable costs for the funded activity, as determined under 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E-Cost Principles.

There are also limitations on the use of federal funds to recover indirect costs. As provided in 2 CFR 200.306(c), unrecovered indirect costs may be included as part of an applicant's cost sharing or matching requirements.

#### **D.6.b. Indirect Costs**

Application budgets may include indirect costs. Based on qualifying factors, applicants may either use a federally-approved indirect cost rate, a 10 percent *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly, as outlined in 2 CFR 200.413. States, local governments, and Indian tribes may use previously approved indirect cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across all federal awards. Applicants that have a federal negotiated indirect cost rate or that will be using the 10 percent *de minimis* rate must enter that information in the Organization section in eGrants. The instructions for how to enter the organization's indirect cost rate are located here: eGrants Indirect Cost Rate User Instructions. Applicants should not submit documentation addressing the indirect cost rate agreement via email.

Please note: To request a Federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, when AmeriCorps is the applicable cognizant agency for an organization's indirect costs, the applicant must submit a request to IndirectCostRate@cns.gov. The applicant may also obtain instructions and additional information by contacting the email address above.

#### **D.6.c. Pre-Award Costs**

Pre-award costs are not authorized for this funding opportunity.

#### **D.6.d. Budget Guidance**

All applicants must include a line item in the budget for training of the Project Director, which may include any training events approved by AmeriCorps Seniors. Applicants may budget for an additional staff member to attend the training events, if funds permit. The recommended amount, for budgeting purposes is \$1,000. Long distance travel funds may be re-budgeted later in the year, depending on actual training activities.

#### **D.7. Other Submission Requirements**

##### **D.7.a. Electronic Application Submission in eGrants**

Applicants must submit applications electronically via eGrants, AmeriCorps' web-based application system. AmeriCorps Seniors 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 text into the appropriate eGrants field no later than 10 days before the deadline.

The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must use their own eGrants account 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.

Applicants should contact the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via eGrants Questions if they have a problem when they create an account, prepare, or submit the application. National Service Hotline hours are posted at <https://questions.americorps.gov/app/ask>.



Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the grant cycle 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 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 address below. Applicants must include a written explanation and any other documentation or evidence that support their inability to submit their application electronically.

Corporation for National and Community Service  
ATTN: Office of Grant Administration (OGA)/ FY 2021 AmeriCorps Seniors SCP Q4 Application  
250 E Street, SW, Suite 300  
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. AmeriCorps Seniors does not accept applications submitted via fax or email.**

#### **D.7.b. Submission of Additional Documents**

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

- All renewal applicants are required to submit an Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS) located at: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management/financial-and-grants-management> - select Applicant Operational and Financial Management Survey under the Pre-Award/Application Certification Forms Section. Please submit the OFMS as a Word document. Forms submitted as a PDF or any other document format may not be accepted.

Failure to submit the required additional documents by the deadline will have a negative effect on the assessment of your application.

Additional documents must be emailed to [AdditionalDocuments@cns.gov](mailto:AdditionalDocuments@cns.gov) with the following subject line: "*Legal Applicant Name*" – "*Application ID Number.*" Emails should include:

- the legal applicant name and its point of contact information
- the application ID number
- a list of documents that are attached to the email
- individually attached files that are clearly labeled, and that include the legal applicant name and application ID number within the heading of each document. To ensure that all required additional documents are received, please provide each document as an individual file. Please do not send all documents as one scanned file.
- If the size of an applicant's files requires multiple emails, please also include an ordering system in the subject line, such as "(1 of 3)."

***Do not submit any additional items that are not requested in this Notice and Application Instructions, AmeriCorps Seniors will not review or return them.***

**E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION** - For all AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program renewals and continuations.

### E.1. Review Criteria

Applications should include a well-designed plan with clear and compelling justifications for receiving the requested funds. Reviewers will assess the quality of applications by using the selection criteria described below and will rate them accordingly. They will also consider the weights assigned to each criterion.

Categories/Subcategories
<b>Program Design</b>
• <b>Strengthening Communities</b>
• <b>Recruitment and Development</b>
<b>Organizational Capability</b>
• <b>Program Management</b>
• <b>Organizational Capability</b>
<b>Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy</b>
• <b>Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy</b>

#### E.1.a. Program Design:

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the proposed project addresses:

##### **Strengthening Communities**

- Q1. Workplans describe and demonstrate the community need.
- Q2. Workplans articulate a theory of change- meaning how service activities will address the community needs, and how the service activity described provides a significant contribution to the outcomes listed in the work plan. This question will focus on work plans that lead to National Performance Measure outcomes (for more information see Appendix B).
- Q3. Work plans logically connect four major elements to each other:
  - The community need(s) identified;
  - The service activities that will be carried out by AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers;
  - The instrument description and data collection plans; and
  - Work plans that include target numbers that lead to outcomes or outputs, and are appropriate for the total number of volunteers assigned to the work plan
- Q4. Work plan outputs and outcomes are aligned with National Performance Measure requirements instructions.
- Q5. Work plans have outputs and outcomes that are achievable, based on resources, program design and the number of volunteers engaged.
- Q6. Work plans have performance measure outputs and outcomes that were reported in alignment with National Performance Measure requirements and data collection plans as stated in approved prior application as submitted in the most recent required Project Progress Reports and Project Progress Report Lite.
- Q7. The program is achieving its AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer recruitment goals in the current grant cycle.

##### **Recruitment and Development of Volunteers**

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the proposed project addresses:

- Q8. Narrative demonstrates a plan and infrastructure to ensure AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers receive training needed to succeed in the service activities described in the work plan.

- Q9. Narrative describes the demographics of the community served and plans to recruit a volunteer pool reflective of the community served. This could possibly include:
  - Individuals from diverse races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, or degrees of English language proficiency
  - Veterans and military family members as AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers
  - AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers with disabilities
  - AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers between the ages of 55 and 70 years old
- Q10. Narrative demonstrates a plan and infrastructure to retain and recognize AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.

### **E.1.b. Organizational Capability:**

Reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant demonstrates:

#### **Program Management**

- Q11. Plans and infrastructure to ensure management of volunteer stations in compliance with AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program regulations.
- Q12. Plans and infrastructure to develop and/or oversee volunteer stations to ensure that volunteers are performing their assigned service activities.
- Q13. Demonstrated an organizational track record in work plans the lead to National Performance Measure outcomes (for more information see Appendix B).
- Q14. Met applicable reporting deadlines.
- Q15. Demonstrated a pattern of consistent communication and receptiveness to instructions from AmeriCorps Seniors over the life of the grant.

#### **Organizational Capability**

- Q16. Plans and infrastructure to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight (both financial and in-kind) and day to day operational support to ensure the following:
  - Compliance with AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program requirements (statutes, regulations, and applicable OMB circulars)
  - Accountability;
  - Efficient and effective use of available resources.
- Q17. Demonstrated clearly defined paid staff positions, including identification of current staff assigned to the project, (name, title, and brief position description) and how these positions will ensure the accomplishment of program objectives.
- Q18. Demonstrated organizational capacity to develop and implement internal policies and operating procedures to provide governance and manage risk, such as accounting, personnel management, and purchasing.

### **E.1.c. Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy:**

Reviewers will consider the completeness and reasonableness of the budget:

- Q19. Have a reasonable cost per volunteer in proposed work plans that lead to National Performance Measure requirements (for more information, see Appendix B).
- Q20. Have plans and infrastructure to secure the non-federal share, including dedicated staff, grant proposal process, and other plans.

## **E.2. Review and Selection Process**

AmeriCorps Seniors will engage Staff Reviewers with relevant knowledge and expertise to assess and provide input on the eligible applications. The review and selection process is intended to produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and strategic considerations described in this Notice. The determinations made by AmeriCorps Seniors reviewers may be different from what the applicant self-determined upon submission of its application. The stages of the review and selection process follow:

#### **E.2.a. Initial Application Compliance and Eligibility Review**

AmeriCorps Seniors will conduct an initial Compliance and Eligibility Review to determine if an application meets the eligibility requirements published in this Notice and advances to the next stage of the review process.

An application is compliant if the applicant:

- is an eligible organization
- submitted an application by the submission deadline
- submitted an application that complies with the following program-specific requirements:
  - submitted required additional documents by the submission deadline:
  - submitted an application for entire geographic service areas in Appendix A; as only the areas listed in Appendix A are eligible for funding.

Reviewing for eligibility is intended to ensure that only those applications that are eligible for award are further reviewed. However, determinations of eligibility can take place at any point during the application review and selection process. Applicants that are determined to be ineligible will not receive an award.

#### **E.2.b. Application Review**

##### **Internal Review**

AmeriCorps Seniors 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 priorities and strategic considerations detailed in this Notice. AmeriCorps Seniors will recruit and select Staff Reviewers on the basis of demonstrated expertise in AmeriCorps Seniors and/or the Focus Areas, as well as experience assessing applications. All Staff Reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

##### **Post-Review Quality Control**

After the initial review process is complete, AmeriCorps Seniors staff will review the initial 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 ensure fairness and provide assurances that an application was not disadvantaged in the original review.

#### **E.2.c. Applicant Clarification**

AmeriCorps Seniors may ask an applicant for clarifying information. AmeriCorps Seniors staff will use this information 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 clarifying information. An applicant's failure to respond to a request for clarification adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of its application from consideration. AmeriCorps Seniors staff may conduct a site visit inspection as part of the clarification process, as appropriate.

#### **E.2.d. Pre-Award Risk Assessment**

AmeriCorps Seniors staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant to assess an applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to assessments of the applicant's eligibility and the quality of its application on the basis of the selection criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If AmeriCorps Seniors determines that an award will be made to an applicant with assessed risks, special conditions that correspond to the degree of assessed risk may be applied to the award. Additionally, if AmeriCorps Seniors concludes that the reasons for applicants having poor risk assessment are not likely to be mitigated, those applications may not be selected for funding.

In evaluating risks, AmeriCorps Seniors may consider the following criteria:

##### *Due Diligence:*

- federal debt delinquency
- suspension and debarment
- information available through OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as:
  - Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIS)
  - U.S. Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services
  - System for Award Management (SAM)
  - "Do Not Pay"
- reports and findings from single audits performed under Uniform Administrative Guidance and findings of any other available audits or investigations
- IRS Tax Form 990
- Oversight.gov
- Public Litigation Records

##### *Operational and Financial Management:*

- financial stability
- Operational and Financial Management Survey

##### *Past Performance:*

- applicant's record in managing previous AmeriCorps Seniors 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
- applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on award recipients
- meeting matching requirements
- the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
- criminal history check compliance. Note that AmeriCorps Seniors is best able to determine compliance with criminal history check requirements for grant recipients using the AmeriCorps Seniors approved contracted vendors

*Other Programmatic Risks:*

- publicly available information, including information from the applicant organization's website
- amount of funding requested by the organization

**E.2.e. Consideration of Integrity and Performance System Information**

Prior to making any award that exceeds the \$250,000, AmeriCorps is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (See [41 U.S.C. 2313](#)). Additionally, AmeriCorps may expand upon these requirements and use its discretion to review and consider information about any applicant receiving an award, including those under \$250,000.

Any applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through FAPIIS and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through FAPIIS.

AmeriCorps may consider comments by any applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing its review of risk posed by the applicant under the Risk Assessment Evaluation section of this Notice.

**E.2.f. Selection for Funding**

The review and selection process is designed to:

- identify how well eligible applications are aligned with the application review criteria
- build a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:
  - AmeriCorps Seniors Funding Priorities (See Section A.2. *Funding Priorities*)
  - meaningful representation of
    - geographic diversity
    - rural communities
    - small and medium programs
    - single and multi-state programs
    - faith-based organizations
    - Focus Area

Based on the evaluation of these strategic considerations, applications may 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 Program Director will endeavor to include a diverse portfolio of applications based on staff recommendations and strategic considerations.

AmeriCorps Seniors reserves the right to award applications in an amount other than at the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so.

***AmeriCorps Seniors reserves the right to adjust or make changes to the review process, if unforeseen challenges or urgent circumstances make it impossible, impracticable, or inefficient to conduct the review process as planned. Any such adjustments or changes will not affect the selection criteria that will be used to assess applications.***

**F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION** - For all AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program renewals and continuations.

**F.1. Federal Award Notices**

AmeriCorps Seniors will make awards following the selection announcement. AmeriCorps Seniors anticipates announcing the results of this funding opportunity by mid- June 2021 contingent on the availability of congressional appropriations. All applicants, successful or not, will be notified of funding decisions via email.

Notification of an award is not an authorization to begin activities. The Notice of Grant Award signed by the Office of Grant Administration is the authorizing document. An awardee may not expend federal funds until the start of the Period of Performance identified on the Notice of Grant Award.

**F.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

**F.2.a. Uniform Guidance**

All awards made under this Notice will be subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 2205.

**F.2.b. Requests for Improper Payment Information**

AmeriCorps may request documentation from recipients in order to monitor the award or to comply with other legal requirements, such as the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002, as amended. Failure to make timely responses to these requests may result in award funds being placed on manual hold, reimbursement only status, or other remedies may be applied as appropriate.

**F.2.c. AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions**

All awards made under this Notice will be subject to the FY 2021 AmeriCorps General Terms and Conditions, and the AmeriCorps Seniors 2021 Program-Specific Terms and Conditions for the particular program (when applicable). These Terms and Conditions contain detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the AmeriCorps General and Program-Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/terms-and-conditions-cnsc-grants>.

**F.2.d. National Service Criminal History Check Requirements**

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

Grantees should utilize the two vendors AmeriCorps has engaged to conduct the required NSCHCs. Information regarding use of these two vendors can be found at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/2018/nschc-using-fieldprint-and-truescreen-manual>.

Failure to conduct compliant NSCHC may result in significant disallowed costs.

Unless AmeriCorps has provided a grant recipient with a written exemption or written approval of an alternative search procedure, recipients **must** perform the following checks:

All award-funded staff and volunteers must undergo NSCHCs that include:

- A nationwide name-based search of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW); *and*
- Either
  - A name- or finger-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:

- A nationwide name-based check of the NSOPW; *and*
- 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 CFR 2540.200– 2540.207 and CNCS Criminal History Check Resources for complete information and FAQs.

#### **F.2e. Official Guidance**

All AmeriCorps Seniors active Guidance is available on the agency's Guidance webpage: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/official-guidance>. The contents of these documents do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way unless incorporated into a contract or grant agreement. These documents are intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

#### **F.3. Use of Material**

To ensure that materials generated with AmeriCorps Seniors funding are available to the public and readily accessible to recipients and non-recipients, AmeriCorps Seniors 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).

#### **F.4. 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.

Recipients are required to provide annual progress reports and semi-annual financial and narrative progress reports through eGrants, AmeriCorps' web-based grants management system. All recipients must submit quarterly financial reports to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Payment Management System.



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. The final reports are due 120 days after the end of the project period.

Award recipients will be required to report at <https://www.FSRS.gov> on all subawards over \$30,000, and may be required to report on executive compensation for the recipient organization and its subrecipients. Recipients must have the necessary systems in place to collect and report this information. See 2 CFR Part 170 for more information and to determine how these requirements apply.

Once the grant is awarded, recipients will be expected to have data collection and data management policies, processes, and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are reporting 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 AmeriCorps Seniors funding.

For further guidance and training resources see: [Resources: Data Collection and Instruments](#).

#### **F.5. Continuation Funding Information and Requirements**

Organizations that have current AmeriCorps Seniors' Senior Companion Program award that continue beyond FY 2021 must submit an application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. Please see the Application Instructions.

The review will also be based on progress reports, the federal financial report, evaluation plans, additional requirements, and AmeriCorps Seniors staff's knowledge of the grant program. To be approved for continuation funding, recipients must demonstrate satisfactory performance with respect to key program goals and requirements, as well as compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant.

AmeriCorps Seniors reserves the right to award applications in an amount other than at the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so.

**G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS-** For all AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program renewals and continuations.

For more information, email the grants assigned Portfolio Manager. AmeriCorps Seniors also offers live text chat at [www.NationalService.gov/contact-us](http://www.NationalService.gov/contact-us).

For technical questions and problems with the eGrants system, call the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677. National Service Hotline hours are posted at <https://questions.americorps.gov/app/ask>.

Potential applicants can also use this link: [eGrants Questions](#). Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the name of the Notice to which the organization is applying.

**H. OTHER INFORMATION** - For all AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program renewals and continuations.

#### **H.1. Technical Assistance**

AmeriCorps Seniors will host technical assistance calls to answer questions about the funding opportunity and eGrants. AmeriCorps Seniors strongly encourages all applicants to participate in these sessions. Call-in information for the technical assistance calls is on the AmeriCorps Seniors Training Calendar from the Manage AmeriCorps Seniors page.

#### **H.2. Re-Focusing of Funding**

AmeriCorps Seniors reserves the right to re-focus program dollars estimated for this continuation and renewal process in the event of disaster or other compelling needs.

**I. IMPORTANT NOTICES** - For all AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program renewals and continuations.

**Public Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for collection of information under this Notice of Funding is estimated to average six hours per submission, including reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing the application and reporting forms. AmeriCorps Seniors informs people who may respond to this Notice of Funding that they are not required to respond unless the OMB control number and expiration date are current valid. (See [5 C.F.R. 1320.5\(b\)\(2\)\(i\)](#).) The OMB Control Number for the information collection is 3045-0035. It expires on 12/31/2021.

**Privacy Act Statement:** The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C 552a) requires that we notify you that the information requested under this Notice of Funding is collected pursuant to the funding purposes set forth at 42 U.S.C. 5013(a) requirements of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 as amended. Purposes and Uses - The information requested is collected for the purposes of reviewing grant applications and granting funding requests. Routine uses may include disclosure of the information to federal, state, or local agencies pursuant to lawfully authorized requests. In some programs, the information may also be provided to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to determine the existence of any prior criminal convictions. The information may also be provided to appropriate federal agencies and contractors that have a need to know the information for the purpose of assisting the government to respond to a suspected or confirmed breach of the security or confidentiality or information maintained in this system of records, and the information disclosed is relevant and unnecessary for the assistance. Effects of Nondisclosure - The information requested is voluntary; however, to be a recipient of this grant program, disclosure of personal or sensitive information is required to receive federal benefits.