

## NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY

**Federal Agency Name:** AmeriCorps  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** FY 2021 Volunteer Generation Fund Announcement  
**Type:** Initial Announcement  
**CFDA Number:** 94.021

**Disclosure:** 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

- Applications are due **Wednesday, June 23, 2021** by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.
- Successful applicants will be notified in **late July 2021**.

## FULL TEXT OF THE NOTICE

### A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

#### A.1. Purpose of Volunteer Generation Funding

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

VGF grants will be used to develop and/or support community-based entities to recruit, manage, and support volunteers. AmeriCorps seeks to fund effective approaches that expand volunteering, strengthen the capacity of volunteer connector organizations to recruit and retain skill-based volunteers, and develop strategies to use volunteers effectively to solve problems. Specifically, the VGF grants will support efforts that expand the capacity of volunteer connector organizations to recruit, manage, support and retain individuals to serve in high quality volunteer assignments.

Applicants that receive funding under this Notice may directly carry out the activities supported under the award or may carry out the activities by making subgrants to community-based entities, supporting volunteer generation at these entities.

Subgrants to community-based entities must include one or more of the following:

- Address activities consistent with the priorities set by the state's national service plan
- Recruit, manage, or support volunteers to a community-based entity such as a volunteer coordinating agency, a nonprofit resource center, a volunteer training clearinghouse, an institution of higher education, or a collaborative partnership of faith-based and community-based organizations

- Provide technical assistance and support to strengthen the capacity of local infrastructure organizations, address areas of national need, and expand the number of volunteers nationally.

## **A.2. Funding Priorities**

AmeriCorps’s priorities for this grant competition are:

- Programs that actively engage in removing structural racial inequities, advancing racial equality, and increasing opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities. VGF encourages grant applications to include work plans that advance justice and equality in areas such as education, access to food and healthcare, workforce development, elder justice, and living independently.
- Efforts to help local communities respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants may propose programming in any AmeriCorps focus area to aid communities as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Programs that are likely to generate significant, measurable improvements in the number of volunteers generated and retained from specific demographic groups such as youth service, generational/family volunteering, skill-based volunteering or senior volunteering
- Initiatives that specifically recruit, train and deploy volunteers as a strategy to address a clearly identified pressing community need or to address education
- Activities that specifically recruit skill-based and pro-bono volunteers.

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.

## **A.3. 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.

All applicants are required to use the following National Performance Measures:

- G3-3.4 (output): Number of organizations that received capacity building services

AND

- G3-3.10A (outcome): Number of organizations that increased their effectiveness, efficiency, and/or program scale/reach.\*

\*In the Described Instrument section of measure G3-3.10A, applicants must specifically describe how they will measure organizational effectiveness, efficiency, or program scale/reach with respect to volunteer recruitment or management.

Applicants may optionally select additional performance measure(s), either National Performance Measures or applicant determined performance measures, to describe the type and

amount of activities carried out by volunteers managed and/or generated through their program. All performance measures must align with the 2021 VGF Performance Measure Instructions posted on the AmeriCorps website. *Note: the number of volunteers recruited/coordinated/supported by your grant, and the number of hours served by these volunteers, will be reported via standard Performance Data Elements and should not be included as performance measures.*

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

AmeriCorps's legal authority to award these grants is the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended ([42 U.S.C. § 12653p](#)).

### **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

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

AmeriCorps anticipates approximately \$6.1 million for VGF 2021 awards.

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

Award amounts will vary, as determined by the scope of the projects. AmeriCorps expects to make awards of a minimum of \$100,000.

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

AmeriCorps anticipates making two-year grant awards. AmeriCorps generally makes an initial award for the first year of operation, based on a one-year project period. Continuation awards for subsequent years are not guaranteed; they depend upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance.

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

VGF grants will be awarded on a cost reimbursement basis.

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 agency's primary point of contact.

### **C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

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

The following non-federal entities are eligible to apply:

- state commissions (as defined in [42 U.S.C. § 12511\(27\)](#))

Entities must have a Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) 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 a percentage of their total program budget (AmeriCorps Share plus the Grantee Share equals the total program budget). The applicant's match (Grantee Share) can be cash and/or in-kind contributions. See Section *D.6. Funding*

*Restrictions* for more information. Match requirements increase with each year and are as follows:

- 20% in the first year
- 30% in the second year
- 40% in the third year
- 50% in the fourth year and any later year in which a recipient receives a VGF grant.

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

Applications that propose to engage in activities that are prohibited under AmeriCorps's 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 funding.

## **D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

This *Notice* should be read together with the VGF Performance Measures Instructions and Budget Instructions. These documents are available online at <http://www.americorps.gov/partner/funding-opportunities>.

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

All information associated with this funding opportunity is available through the AmeriCorps Funding Opportunities webpages. Applicants should refer to <https://americorps.gov/partner/funding-opportunities> for more information and instructions on how to fully respond to this Notice. Applicants can also send an email to [AmeriCorpsGrants@cns.gov](mailto:AmeriCorpsGrants@cns.gov) for a printed copy of the Notice. AmeriCorps also offers live text chat at <https://www.americorps.gov/contact>.

### **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://espan.cns.gov/cnsmisc/ECERTS.HTM>, and <https://espan.cns.gov/cnsmisc/EASSUR.HTM>).

### D.2.b. Page Limits

Applications may not exceed 12 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 the page limits set in the Notice. AmeriCorps **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 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 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.**

AmeriCorps 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 is ready to make a Federal award, AmeriCorps 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 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 may ask applicants to add the UEI to their application as part of the clarification or pre-award process. AmeriCorps 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, June 23, 2021 by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.**

AmeriCorps will not consider applications submitted after the deadline, except as noted in Section *D.4.c. Late Applications*. AmeriCorps reserves the right to extend the submission deadline. AmeriCorps will post a notification in the event of an extended deadline on AmeriCorps's 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 AmeriCorps Hotline
  - any information provided to the applicant by the AmeriCorps Hotline
  - any other documentation or evidence that supports the justification
- ensure that AmeriCorps receives the written explanation or justification and any other evidence that substantiates the claimed extenuating circumstance(s), via email to

LateApplications@cns.gov no later than 24 hours after the application deadline stated in the Notice.

Communication with AmeriCorps 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's web-based application system and with the AmeriCorps Hotline to submit the application. AmeriCorps will determine whether or not to accept a late application on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants that do not meet the application submission deadline, and do not submit a written explanation or justification or any other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the published timeframe, will be deemed noncompliant. If AmeriCorps sustains a noncompliant determination the application will not be reviewed or selected for award.

**Please note:** AmeriCorps 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 funding AmeriCorps provides will be limited to the required percent of the total allowable costs for the funded activity, as determined under 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E-Cost Principles and described in Section C.2. However, in December 2020, AmeriCorps issued a match waiver on FY 2021 Volunteer Generation awards. Applicants who wish to take advantage of this waiver do not need to submit additional requests to have the match waived. While match does not have to be included in the proposed applications' budgets, it is encouraged, when applicable, to represent full support of the program.

Applicants who will be pass-through entities must include in their subawards terms and conditions that will ensure that the pass-through entity's award under this Notice will comply with the cost share and matching requirements. See 2 CFR 200.331(a)(2)-(4) and 2 CFR 200.74.

##### **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. However, under section 121(d) of the NCSA

and AmeriCorps' regulations at 45 CFR 2517.710, no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on VGF grants.

The instructions for how to enter the organization's indirect cost rate can be located here: [eGrants Indirect Cost Rate User Instructions](#).

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](mailto: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, where authorized, are allowed after receiving written approval from the Office of Grant Administration.

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

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

Applicants must submit applications electronically via [eGrants, AmeriCorps's web-based application system](#). AmeriCorps 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 his or her 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 AmeriCorps Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via [eGrants Questions](#) if they have a problem when they create an account, prepare, or submit the application. The general public hours for the AmeriCorps Hotline are as follows:

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

Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the competition to which the organization is applying. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the AmeriCorps 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 below. Applicants must include a written explanation and any other documentation or evidence that support their inability to submit their application electronically.

AmeriCorps  
ATTN: Office of Grant Administration (OGA)/VGF 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 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 applicants regardless of funding level are required to submit an Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS) located at: [https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/OFMS-Control-Number-3045\\_0102\\_FY20%20%282%29.docx](https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/OFMS-Control-Number-3045_0102_FY20%20%282%29.docx). 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 may 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 by filename noting document type
- individually attached files that are clearly labeled, and that include the legal applicant name and application ID number within the file name of each document.

***Do not submit any items that are not requested in this Notice. AmeriCorps will not review or return them.***

**E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

**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	Percentage
<b>Program Design</b>	<b>50</b>
• Goals and Objectives	25
• Program Impact	25
<b>Organizational Capability</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy</b>	<b>15</b>

### **E.1.a. Program Design (50 percent):**

Reviewers will assess:

#### Goals and Objectives (25 percent)

- The extent to which the applicant convincingly links the identified need, proposed interventions, and the anticipated outputs and outcomes.
- The extent to which the program design aligns with the purpose of the VGF.
- Whether the proposed interventions and activities are evidence-informed.

#### Program Impact (25 percent)

- The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the proposed project is likely to have a notable, positive impact as measured by the magnitude of the effect on the need(s).
- The extent to which the objectives and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.
- The applicant's plan to measure and collect data on National Performance Measures outcomes and outputs.

### **E.1.b. Organizational Capability (35 percent):**

Reviewers will assess:

- The extent to which the organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan, implement, and evaluate the proposed project.
  - The extent to which the organization has the necessary plans and infrastructure to provide programmatic and fiscal oversight, day-to-day operational support, and data collection
  - The applicant's track record raising funds to support service activities and initiatives
  - Likelihood of effectiveness of the applicant's plan for securing partners and community support for, and involvement in, the proposed project.
- If you are a former or a current VGF grantee, the extent to which you have met the program objectives and complied with the financial requirements during the past performance period.

### **E.1.c. Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (15 percent):**

Reviewers will assess:

- The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.
- The extent to which the budget is clear and in alignment with the program narrative.
- The extent to which the budget includes adequate resources to carry out the program effectively.
- The extent to which the program demonstrates that financial and in-kind resources will be obtained to support program implementation.
- Whether the applicant adequately budgets for its required share of costs.

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

AmeriCorps 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 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 will conduct an initial Compliance 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

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 Staff Reviewers will assess 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 will recruit and select reviewers. All Staff Reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

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

After the initial review process is complete, AmeriCorps staff will review the results for fairness and consistency. Some applications may be selected for a Quality Control assessment. This additional level of review may be used to assess applications for which there are significant reviewer anomalies.

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

AmeriCorps may ask an applicant for clarifying information. AmeriCorps 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. Clarification responses should be complete and correct upon submission.

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

AmeriCorps 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 the assessment 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 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 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 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 (FAPIIS)
  - 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 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
- national service criminal history check compliance. Grantees may easily demonstrate compliance by using the AmeriCorps-approved vendors.

*Other Programmatic Risks:*

- publicly available information, including information from the applicant organization's website

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

Prior to making any award that exceeds \$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.

CNCS 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 Funding Priorities (See *Section A.2. Funding Priorities*)
  - meaningful representation of
    - geographic diversity
    - rural communities
    - small and medium programs.

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 Chief Executive Officer will endeavor to include a diverse portfolio of applications based on staff recommendations and strategic considerations.

AmeriCorps reserves the right to prioritize funding existing awards over making new awards.

AmeriCorps 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 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.*

### **E.3. Feedback to Applicants**

Following awards, applicants will receive summary comments from the Staff Review of their compliant applications. This feedback will be based on the review of the original application and will not reflect information provided during clarification.

### **E.4. Transparency in Grant-making**

AmeriCorps is committed to transparency in grant-making. The following information for new and re-competing applications will be published on <https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/open-government> within 90 business days after all grants are awarded:

- a list of all compliant applications submitted
- executive summaries of all compliant applications
- data extracted from the SF-424 Face Sheet

*Submitted program narratives for successful applications will be available upon request via email to [OGAGarp@cns.gov](mailto:OGAGarp@cns.gov).*

## **F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **F.1. Federal Award Notices**

AmeriCorps will make awards following the grant selection announcement. AmeriCorps anticipates announcing the results of this competition **by late July 2021**. All applicants, successful or not, will be notified of funding decisions via email.

Notification of an award is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The Notice of Grant Award signed by the Office of Grant Administration Grant Award Specialist 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 FY 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 Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available at <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/state-commissions>.

#### **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. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the regulations and additional guidance at <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check> to fully understand how to comply with these requirements.

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

An NSCHC consists of the following components:

- (1) A nationwide check of the National Sex Offender Public website through NSOPW.gov;
- (2) A check of the State criminal history record repository or agency-designated alternative for the individual's State of residence *and* State of service; and
- (3) A fingerprint-based check of the FBI criminal history record database through the State criminal history record repository or agency-approved vendor.

All NSCHC components must be conducted, reviewed, and an eligibility determination made before the individual begins work or service. AmeriCorps strongly encourages funded applicants to utilize the two AmeriCorps-approved vendors to conduct the required NSCHCs. Information regarding use of these two vendors can be found at <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check>

In general, award recipients and subrecipients must conduct an NSCHC for AmeriCorps members, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, and staff funded under, or whose salary is reflected as match on, the award.

An individual is not eligible to serve or work in a position subject to the NSCHC requirements if:

- the individual refuses to consent to a criminal history check;
- makes a false statement in connection with a criminal history check;
- is registered, or is required to be registered, on a state sex offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry; or
- has been convicted of murder.

The cost of conducting NSCHC is an allowable expense under the award and the individual subject to the NSCHC may not be required to cover the cost without being reimbursed.

*See [45 CFR 2540.200– 2540.207](#) and [National Service Criminal History Check Resources](#) for complete information and FAQs.*

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

All AmeriCorps active Guidance is available on the agency's Guidance webpage: <https://www.americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/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 funding are available to the public and readily accessible to recipients and non-recipients, AmeriCorps 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 reports through eGrants, AmeriCorps's web-based grants management system. All recipients must provide quarterly financial reports through the Payment Management System (PMS) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In addition, at the end of the award period, recipients must submit final financial and progress reports that are cumulative over the entire award period and consistent with the close-out requirements. The final reports are due 120 days after the end of the period of performance.

Award recipients will be required to report at [www.FSRS.gov](http://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 and subrecipients 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 funding.

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

Organizations that have current VGF awards that continue into FY 2021 must submit an application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. Please see the Application Guidance. Requests by existing continuation applicants for increases in the level of funding will be assessed using the review criteria published in this Notice.

The review will also be based on progress reports, the federal financial report, and AmeriCorps 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 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 more information email [AmeriCorpsGrants@cns.gov](mailto:AmeriCorpsGrants@cns.gov). AmeriCorps also offers live text chat at <https://americorps.gov/contact>.

For technical questions and problems with the eGrants system, call the AmeriCorps Hotline at (800) 942-2677. The general public hours for the AmeriCorps Hotline are as follows:

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

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**

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

AmeriCorps will host technical assistance calls to answer questions about the funding opportunity and eGrants. AmeriCorps strongly encourages all applicants to participate in these sessions. Call-in information for the technical assistance calls is on AmeriCorps's website: <https://www.americorps.gov/partner/funding-opportunities>.

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

AmeriCorps reserves the right to re-focus program dollars for this competition in the event of disaster or other compelling needs.

## **I. IMPORTANT NOTICES**

**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 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 3045-0187. It expires on 9/30/2020.

**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 42 U.S.C. 12592 and 12615 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended, and 42 U.S.C. 4953 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.