

CNCS FY2017 National Service and Civic Engagement Research Competition

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Could you please clarify the page limit that is mentioned on p. 11 of the Notice? Does Organizational Capability and Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy narratives also count toward the 16 page limit?**
 - Yes, Organizational Capability and Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy narratives also count toward the 16 page limit. Not clarifying that in the NOFO was an oversight on our part, and we will be amending the NOFO shortly to reflect this important clarification.
2. **The survey monkey portal for the letter of intent is not accepting my institutional affiliation. Can you assist me with this issue?**
 - Please ensure that you are entering the Institution name, and not the department or division/office name <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/nationalserviceresearch2017> .
 - Please contact nationalserviceresearch@cns.gov if you continue to have an issue.
3. **For applications in the scholar category, are graduate students required to be part of the study team?**
 - CNCS would prefer to see teams include graduate students, and undergraduates depending on the team and needs. If the applicant is an undergraduate institution, and does not have graduate students, please explain that in the application.
4. **Is it possible for two institutions to submit a single application, like a joint application?**
 - It would not be a joint application, per se, but it is possible for two institutions to collaborate. When submitting the application to CNCS, one institution will be the grantee, while the other institution would serve as a consultant to the legal applicant/grantee institution, pursuant to an agreement between the two institutions. See Contractual and Consultant Services in the Application Instructions under Budgets.
5. **Can we design and submit a 2 year study?**
 - All applicants should plan their ideal study to last 1 to 2 years. The budget submitted with this application will only be for Year 1. However, if you believe that the study is a 2-year study, you should estimate in your budget narrative the amount you will need for Year 2. Therefore, if awarded, the initial award will be for Year 1 only. Grantees who received Year 1 funds will be asked to submit a Continuation Application in order to receive funding for Year 2. Requests for Year 2 funding will dependent on funding availability. Finally, the application will be assessed using the review criteria published in this Notice.

6. **Where can I find FAQs? Which website should I check?**
 - This web link should take you to all the information on this research competition: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/fy17-civic-engagement-research-competition>
7. **Are there any guidelines on budget amounts for dissertators?**
 - CNCS expects the dissertator applications to be smaller in scope than the scholar applications. The awards will be proportionate to the work proposed.
8. **Is the maximum funding level \$300,000?**
 - Yes, the maximum level for two years is \$300,000. However, receiving Year 2 funds is dependent on the availability of funds, as well as the grant recipient meeting the review criteria. See *Notice* Section F.7.
9. **Can the applying institution be in a contractual agreement, and working with a community partner and a consultant from another university?**
 - Yes. The application will need to include a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the community partner. The consultant would be paid via a legally binding contractual agreement that will be negotiated between with the consultant and grantee institution.
10. **Does the total funding level of \$150,000 include indirect costs?**
 - Yes, the funding level includes indirect costs.
11. **Is dual funding possible?**
 - Yes, but the application will need to clearly delineate the deliverables that follow from CNCS funding, and also state clearly the various aspects of the study that both funding sources will be covering.
12. **Since funding is for each year, should the application list what year two work might entail?**
 - Yes, the application should include the research design and plan for both years. CNCS will want to see the plan for Year 2 to determine the overall merit of the proposal.
13. **Does the proposed research have to be centered on national service, or can it be about civic engagement in general?**
 - Please review the Notice, especially the Funding Criteria. There is no requirement that the proposed research has to explicitly include national service.
14. **I am currently working on my dissertation, and will have graduated by the time the award is made. If our application is funded, can I be a post-doctoral researcher working on this grant?**
 - Please see the eligibility criteria in the *Notice*. A post-doc is considered under the scholar category. The legal applicant will be the institution of higher education and not the individual researcher; therefore, if the postdoc were to take a position at another institution of higher education, the funding cannot move with the post doc. To be

funded, the post doc would have to demonstrate that he or she has \indeed been hired as a postdoc at the grantee institution.

15. What is a cooperative agreement?

- See the Notice, Section B.4. See also 31 United States Code, Section 6305 (<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/USCODE-2010-title31/USCODE-2010-title31-subtitleV-chap63-sec6305>)

16. Can one institution submit multiple applications?

- Yes, CNCS allows for multiple applications from the same institution. But often times, institutions of higher education have policies that limit multiple applications for the same grant, so check with your Office of Sponsored Programs (or the equivalent) and check on your institution's policy. Also, see Notice, A.1. Funding Categories, "Legal applicants can submit more than one application from Program Directors to either category, though to the extent possible, CNCS seeks to fund a diverse pool of applicants and it is likely only one application per legal applicant will be funded."

17. Are there any parameters around Year 1 and Year 2 that applicants should be aware of?

- CNCS follows the federal fiscal calendar; in other words, the grant for Year 1 will start on October 1st, 2017 and end on September 30th, 2018. If a grantee is awarded Year 2 funding, the grant period will begin on October 1st, 2018 and end on September 30th, 2019.

18. How can we participate in the monthly webinar series from CNCS?

- Interested parties can email evaluation@cns.gov stating their interest in attending the webinars, and CNCS will add you to the list serve where you can receive email announcements of webinars and other related items.

19. Is it possible to get copies of the successful grant applications for 2015 in preparation for writing the grant?

- See the following webpage: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/about/open-government-initiative/transparency/results-grants-competition>

20. Could the 2015 National Service and Civic Engagement grantees apply to the 2017 competition?

- Yes. The 2015 grantees can apply to the 2017 competition. However, they cannot conflate or combine budgets.

21. What margins are to be used for the Project Narrative?

You do not have to set the margin or font, since you are copying and pasting onto eGrants, the system sets everything for you. As stated in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), CNCS 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. We also recommend calling the eGrants National Service Hotline (contact information is on page 14 of the NOFO) if you have questions about how to print.

22. **It doesn't appear that there is a place to upload a traditional "Budget Explanation", so I gather this should be described in the Narrative section on Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy?**

Yes, that is correct.

23. **Appendix I lists the criterion for inclusion (i: a-d) for the biographical sketches which excludes information found in Part D.7.b. Should I follow the instructions from D.7.b and include a paragraph on my past research experience or follow the guidelines in Appendix I, and exclude that information?**

We recommend applicants defer to Appendix I when building the biographical sketch, and past research experience can be reflected in the organizational capability section.

24. **When we print out the application from eGrants it also includes tabs for: Continuation Changes, Research Plan for Year 2, Plan for Supplemental Funding Request, and Clarification Responses. I just want to double check that we do not need to complete these 4 items for our initial submission.**

If you see the following fields appear in your eGrants application (Continuation Changes, Research Plan for Year 2, Plan for Supplemental Funding Request, Clarification Responses), those fields do not apply to the 2017 research competition applicants. But unfortunately the fields still show up on all eGrant applications. You can just put N/A or something similar to indicate that the fields do not apply to you as a 2017 research competition applicant.