



# **2012 AmeriCorps Request for Applications**

**State Competitive**

**APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY:  
11:59 p.m. – Friday, December 16, 2011**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE TO APPLICANTS:** If you are currently funded by the CCCS and need to apply for year two or three of continuation funding, this RFA does not apply to you. Instructions will be e-mailed directly to you by the CCCS at a later time.

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## I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

### A. Funding Program Description

#### **Corporation for National and Community Service**

The Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) is the federal agency that oversees the AmeriCorps State and National program and other national service programs such as AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps NCCC, and Senior Corps. The Corporation's mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. For more than twenty years, the Corporation – through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps and Learn and Serve programs – has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

In the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act (April 2009), Congress directed the Corporation to focus national service in areas where service can have a major impact, including education, energy conservation, health, economic opportunity for economically vulnerable individuals, increasing service by and for veterans and providing disaster services.

The Corporation is carrying out the intentions of Congress by targeting AmeriCorps funding in these six focus areas. In accordance with the Act, through the Corporation's 2012 Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity (Notice) and its other activities, the Corporation seeks to: Direct the power of national service to solve a common set of national challenges.

Expand opportunities for all Americans to serve.

- Embrace innovative solutions that work.
- Build the enduring capacity of individuals, organizations and communities to effectively use service and volunteering to solve community problems.

Through Governor-appointed State Service Commissions, the Corporation provides grants to public and nonprofit organizations that sponsor service programs around the country, including hundreds of faith-based and community organizations, higher education institutions, and public agencies. Grants assist these groups in recruiting, training, and placing AmeriCorps members to meet state and local community challenges through service and volunteer action.

#### **Connecticut Commission on Community Service**

The Connecticut Commission on Community Service (CCCS) is the State Service Commission in Connecticut. As such, CCCS is the state entity responsible for increasing the number and impact of Connecticut residents engaged in service and volunteering. The Executive Director of the Commission leads the organization in collaboration with a 25-member Commission appointed by the Governor. The Commission develops and adopts policies that guide the State's AmeriCorps grant making process.

As home to one of New England's largest and most diverse populations, Connecticut faces many challenges that need our attention. The Connecticut Commission on Community Service is seeking to invest AmeriCorps resources in programs that are:

**Targeted at solving a critical challenge facing Connecticut.** The CCCS values program models that clearly address an identified critical community issue, not merely the expansion of a single organization's mission. AmeriCorps programs are required to perform activities that are designed, implemented, and evaluated with extensive and broad-based local input. This input is provided in consultation with representatives from

the community served and agencies with a demonstrated record of experience in providing services.

**Focus on measurable outcomes.** The CCCS values strong program designs built to address the community need by logically connecting all performance measure components back to the need. The program design is built to deliver the services that will achieve the desired result and can quantifiably measure and report on that impact annually.

**Uses national service as an appropriate strategy.** The CCCS is committed to demonstrating that service is a powerful strategy to address community challenges. Successful program designs clearly identify direct beneficiaries of the stated community need, identify an evidence-based intervention proven to address the need, and clearly articulate why the efforts of an AmeriCorps members is an appropriate strategy to deliver the intervention.

**Dedicated to quality.** The CCCS seeks to invest in programs that are committed to making a difference and incorporate quality management practices to oversee the program and ensure appropriate investment of public funds. The CCCS values programs which can successfully implement the program design by assuring that the systems and processes necessary for managing and assessing the effectiveness of the program model are in place prior to operation. This includes adequate oversight in the management of each component to assure that the program design and systems are implemented and assessed, and that stakeholder feedback leads to continuous improvement.

### **AmeriCorps**

AmeriCorps provides opportunities for Americans each year to provide intensive results-driven service. AmeriCorps grants support the efforts of national and community-based nonprofit organizations to recruit and deploy AmeriCorps members and the volunteers with whom they serve to tackle unmet community needs. AmeriCorps grants are awarded on a competitive basis to eligible organizations that engaged in evidence-based interventions that utilize AmeriCorps members to strengthen communities.

An AmeriCorps member is an individual who is enrolled in an approved national service position and engages in community service. AmeriCorps members are recruited, trained, supervised, and managed by the funded organization, and may receive a living allowance and other benefits while service. Upon successful completion of their service, AmeriCorps members are eligible to receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust. For member eligibility requirements, please visit:

[http://www.americorps.gov/for\\_individuals/ready/eligibility.asp](http://www.americorps.gov/for_individuals/ready/eligibility.asp).

### **B. National Service Focus Areas (Focus Areas)**

In alignment with the Serve America Act, this AmeriCorps Request for Applications (RFA) will focus grant making in six Focus Areas identified by the Serve America Act:

1. **Disaster Services:** Grants will help individuals and communities prepare, respond, recover, and mitigate disasters and increase community resiliency. Grant activities will:
  - Increase the preparedness of individuals,

- Increase individuals' readiness to respond,
  - Help individuals recover from disasters, and
  - Help individuals mitigate disasters.
2. **Economic Opportunity:** Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people. Grant activities will help economically disadvantaged people to:
- Have *improved* access to services and benefits aimed at contributing to their enhanced financial literacy,
  - Transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing, and
  - Have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed.
3. **Education:** Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged people, especially children. The CCCS is particularly interested in program designs that use a need-based approach to supporting youth engagement as strategies to achieve high educational outcomes. Grant activities will improve:
- School readiness for economically disadvantaged young children,
  - Educational and behavioral outcomes for students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools, and
  - The preparation for and prospects of success in post-secondary education institutions for economically disadvantaged students.
4. **Environmental Stewardship:** Through direct service, grants will contribute to increased energy and water efficiency, renewable energy use, or improving at-risk ecosystems, and support increased citizen behavioral change leading to increased efficiency, renewable energy use, and ecosystem improvements particularly for economically disadvantaged households and economically disadvantaged communities. Grant activities will:
- decrease energy and water consumption,
  - improve at-risk ecosystems,
  - increase behavioral changes that lead directly to decreased energy and water consumption or improved at-risk ecosystems, and
  - increase green training opportunities that may lead to decreased energy and water consumption or improve at-risk ecosystems.
5. **Healthy Futures:** Grants will meet health needs within communities. This will include increased access to care, and reduced childhood obesity. Grants will also provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the physical health improvement of persons with chronic diseases, or persons at-risk of having chronic diseases. In particular, those that are uninsured, underinsured, or within communities facing significant health disparities. Grant activities will:
- improve access to primary and preventative health care for communities served by CCCS or Corporation-supported programs (access to health care),
  - increase physical health improvement in people that have chronic diseases or are at-risk of having chronic diseases, and
  - increase physical activity and improve nutrition in youth with the purpose of reducing childhood obesity.

6. **Veterans and Military Families:** Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength. Grant activities will increase:
- the number of veterans and military service members and their families served by the CCCS or Corporation-supported programs, and
  - the number of veterans and military families members engaged in service provision through the CCCS or Corporation-supported programs.

In addition to the six Focus Areas described above, grants also will provide support for capacity building activities provided by AmeriCorps members. As a rule, the CCCS considers capacity building activities to be indirect services that enable the CCCS or Corporation-supported organizations to provide more, better and sustained direct services. Capacity building activities cannot be solely intended to support the administration or operations of the organization. Examples of capacity building activities include:

- Recruiting and/or managing community volunteers,
- Implementing effective volunteer management practices,
- Completing community assessment that identify goals and recommendations,
- Developing new systems and business processes (technology, performance management, training, etc.) or enhancing existing systems and business processes.

### **C. National Performance Measures**

To carry out the intent of Congress and maximize the impact of the investment in national service, the CCCS and the Corporation are seeking to fund programs that can demonstrate community impact and address community problems through an evidence-based approach (e.g. performance data, research, theory of change).

In 2012, the Corporation will implement the third year of the National Performance Measures Pilot. National Performance Measures allow the Corporation to demonstrate the aggregated impact of all AmeriCorps programs. This year, the Corporation has focused and refined the Measures and aligned them with its Strategic Plan. This refinement process included adding a few new Measures to fill data gaps. The Commission on Community Service and the Corporation expect to invest a significant amount of available funding to programs working in the six Focus Areas. In particular, the CCCS and the Corporation seek to target two primary tiers and will give priority consideration to the following, in descending order of preference:

- **Tier 1:** Programs that select Priority Measures in Education, Veterans and Military Families and Disaster Services.
- **Tier 2:** Programs that select Priority Measures in Economic Opportunity, Environmental Stewardship, Health Futures and Capacity Building.

To learn more about the six focus areas and the national performance measures and how it can apply to your program, please reference the National Performance Measure section in the 2012 Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity at: [http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/2012-state\\_national\\_competitive\\_notice.pdf](http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/2012-state_national_competitive_notice.pdf)

### **D. Types of Grants**

The following types of AmeriCorps grants are offered through this funding opportunity:

### **Cost Reimbursement Grants (Non-Fixed Amount)**

A cost reimbursement grant is a standard AmeriCorps operating grant in which all program expenses are based on an approved budget as part of the grant award and are reimbursed through the submission of expense reports to the CCCS. The grant funds can only be spent on costs in the approved budget. A cost reimbursement grant provides funding to pay for program costs such as member support, operational costs, and administrative costs associated with the implementation of an AmeriCorps program. An applicant that applies for a cost reimbursement grant must provide and include in the budget cash and/or in-kind match to support its overall program costs. The minimum match level required varies for applicants depending on the number of years an applicant has received AmeriCorps funding.

### **Education Award Programs (EAP) Fixed-Amount Grants**

An EAP program is an AmeriCorps program that receives minimal funding support. An EAP program receives an award for a specific amount per the number of Member Service Years (MSYs) enrolled. A MSY is equivalent to one full-time AmeriCorps position. An EAP program may request up to \$800 per MSY to implement an AmeriCorps program and use their own or other resources for the majority of members' living allowance and program costs. Because of the minimal financial support, EAP grants are best suited for pre-existing service programs or for organizations with other sources of funding, for whom becoming part of AmeriCorps will add value to their program. There is no match requirement for EAP grants. Unlike the Full-time Fixed-amount grant noted below, EAPs may enroll less-than-full-time members in addition to full-time members.

### **Full-time Fixed-Amount Grants**

These fixed-amount grants are available for programs that enroll full-time members only. Full-time fixed-amount grants allow programs to apply for a fixed dollar amount of up to \$13,000 per member. The fixed-amount awarded per member is significantly less than the cost of running an AmeriCorps program and the applicant must use their own or other resources for the remaining cost of the program. There is no match required for full-time fixed-amount grants, but successful applicants must still raise the additional funds needed to run the program. The final grant amount that a fixed-amount grantee may retain under its ward is tied to the number of service hours completed by each member. If a member completed the term of service and earned the education award, the program is entitled to the full amount approved per MSY. If a member did not complete the term of service, 1700 hours, the program is entitled to the pro-rated approved amount per MSY based on percentage of hours served divided by 1700 hours of service.

Full-time fixed-amount grant applicants in the Education Focus Area will be required to select either a Tier 1 Measure or Tier 3 Education Pilot Measure. Applicants proposing non-Education programs may select from Tiers 1-5. All performance measures may be negotiated prior to grant selection and award. Approved applicants must agree to participate in any evaluations conducted by the CCCS and/or the Corporation.

### **Professional Corps (Non-Fixed Amount)**

These grants are awarded to organizations that propose to operate a Professional Corps program that place AmeriCorps members as teachers, health care providers, police officers, engineers, or other professionals in communities where there is a documented shortage of such professionals. Applicants are eligible to apply for funding for a portion of program costs. Professional Corps member salaries are paid entirely by the organizations with which the

members serve, and are not included in the budget. A Professional Corps program may request up to \$2,500 per MSY to implement an AmeriCorps program.

### **Professional Corps Fixed-Amount Grants**

These grants are awarded to organizations that propose to operate a Professional Corps program. The Professional Corps program model places AmeriCorps members as teachers, health care providers, police officers, engineers, or other professionals in communities where there are an inadequate number of such professions. Applicants can apply for up to \$2,000 per MSY. Applicants are eligible to apply for funding for a portion of program costs, and use their own or other resources to pay the members' living allowance and additional member costs.

An AmeriCorps program that receives a fixed-amount grant (e.g. Full-time Fixed-amount, EAP, and Professional Corps Fixed-amount) is like any other AmeriCorps program and is still responsible for adhering to all AmeriCorps Regulations and Provisions such as the administrative and programmatic requirements related to the recruitment, placement, training, and management of members and the required documentation. The exception is that, unlike the cost reimbursement grant, the fixed-amount grant does not require:

- Compliance with OMB cost principles,
- Federal Financial Reports (FFR), or
- Documentation of match.

### **E. How to Apply**

Organizations that operate solely in Connecticut must apply to the Connecticut Commission on Community Service. Organizations that operate in more than one state are eligible to apply for national grants directly from the Corporation. Indian tribes may apply through the CCCS or directly to the Corporation. An Indian Tribe is defined as a federally recognized Indian Tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Native village, regional Corporation, or Village Corporation, as defined under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1602), that the United States Government determines is eligible for special programs and service provided under federal law to Indians because of their status as Indians. Indian Tribes also include tribal organizations controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by one of the entities described above.

### **F. Potential Change to RFA Guidelines and Supplemental Guidance**

This Request for Applications (RFA) was created in good faith and based on the most recent guidance provided by the Corporation. The amount of funds available for AmeriCorps, as well as new grant limits and requirements, are dependent on the congressional appropriations process yet to be concluded. These factors may require changes to the Corporation's guidance and to this RFA. As necessary, the CCCS will issue all supplemental materials at the earliest possible date. All supplemental materials and updates will be available on the CCCS website at [www.ctohe.org](http://www.ctohe.org). Applicants are advised to check the website frequently.

This RFA provides a broad overview of AmeriCorps guidance, highlighting many basic components and rules to provide a general understanding of the complexities and intricacies of AmeriCorps programming and requirements. The full AmeriCorps regulations, 45 CFR §2520-2550, are available online at [www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr). Successful applicants will be required to comply with these regulations, AmeriCorps provisions, and federal and state policies. Federal funds provided under this grant are identified by the Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance

Number 94.006. The AmeriCorps regulations include the criteria used to select applicants for funding and other pertinent information (Table 1).

**Table 1: Program Requirements in the AmeriCorps Regulations**

Requirements and Selection	Citation in the AmeriCorps Regulations
Member Service Activities	§2520.20 -§2520.55
Prohibited Activities	§2520.65
Tutoring Programs	§2522.900-2522.950
Matching Funds	§2521.35-2521.90
Member Benefits	§2522.240-2522.250
Calculating Cost Per Member Service Year (MSY)	§2522.485
Performance Measures	§2522.500-2522.650
Evaluation	§2522.500-2522.540 and §2522.700-2522.740
Selection Criteria and Selection Process	§2522.400-2522.475

### G. Authority

These funds will be available under authority of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1990 (42 USC §12571-12595) reauthorized by the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009.

## II. AWARD INFORMATION

### A. Grant Period

Grants awarded through this selection process will support programming beginning in the summer of 2012. Unless otherwise specified, the CCCS follows the Corporation's practice of awarding up to three-year grants, which are evaluated annually for continued funding. Continuation funding is contingent upon satisfactory performance, a grantee's demonstrated capacity to manage a grant and comply with grant requirements, and the availability of funds. The CCCS reserves the right to adjust the amount of a grant award for subsequent years, or elect not to continue funding, on these bases. Should continuation funds be granted, the program must enter into a contract for every year of the award.

Applications for 2012 must include proposed activities and a detailed proposed budget for the first year of operation. The Connecticut Commission on Community Service expects that programmatic activities for the second and third years of operation will build upon, and be similar in scope to, those of the first year. The project start date may not occur prior to a program's AmeriCorps contract execution date with CCCS. AmeriCorps members may not begin service prior to the program entering into a fully executed contract with the CCCS. A program may not certify any hours a member performs prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period.

### B. Match Requirements

Program requirements, including requirements on match, are located in the AmeriCorps regulations and summarized below.

**Table 2: Match Requirements in the AmeriCorps Regulations**

Grant Type	Match Requirement
Cost-Reimbursement Grants including	Minimum grantee share is 24% of program costs for the first

Professional Corps Non-Fixed Amount Grants	three years. Overall grantee share of total program costs increases gradually beginning in Year 4 to 50% by the tenth year of funding and any year thereafter
EAP Fixed-Amount Grants	There are no specific match requirements for fixed-amount grants. Grantees pay all program costs over \$800 per MSY provided by the Corporation
Professional Corps Fixed-Amount Grants	There are no specific match requirements for fixed-amount grants. Grantees pay all program costs over the \$2,000 per MSY provided by the Corporation.
Full-time Fixed-Amount Grants	There are no specific match requirements for fixed-amount grants. Grantees pay all program costs over the \$13,000 per MSY provided by the Corporation

**Fixed-Amount Grants (EAP, Full-time Fixed-Amount, Professional Corps Fixed-Amount)**

There is no match requirement for fixed-amount grants. However, the fixed-amount grant does not cover all costs. Fixed-amount grantees provide the additional resources needed to operate the program, but are not required to track or report on them.

**Cost Reimbursement Grants**

A first-time successful applicant is required to provide a single overall match of 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with the second three-year cycle, match gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the minimum overall chart found in 45 CFR §2521.60 summarized in the following table:

**Table 3: Single Match Requirements for Cost Reimbursement Grants**

AmeriCorps Funding Year	1,2,3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Match Requirements	24%	26%	30%	34%	38%	42%	46%	50%

Programs may provide their share of operating costs and overall match through cash or in-kind resources, and may use non-Corporation federal funds if specifically allowed by the other federal agency. Matching funds must be verifiable; not be included as match for other federal programs; be necessary and reasonable for the purpose of your program; and, be allowable under Office of Management and Budget (OMB) cost principles. Matching funds must be secured on an annual basis. Use of other federal funds as match requires approval from the other federal agency to use their funds for match on an AmeriCorps grant.

Section 121 (e )(5) of the National Community Service Act requires that programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant report the amount and source of these funds to the Corporation on the Federal Financial Report.

The living allowance or salary provided to Professional Corps AmeriCorps members does not count toward the matching requirement.

Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35% instead of 50% as specified in the regulations at §2521.60(b). To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the *Application Instructions*. Applicants that plan to request an alternative match schedule must

include a request as part of the application. Please reference the accompanying document: *2012 AmeriCorps Application Instructions*.

The legal applicant is the entity responsible for meeting matching funds requirements. The legal applicant may request that partnering organizations provide a share of the match necessary to meet matching funds requirements. Applicants must demonstrate sufficient match to meet the minimum requirements, but are advised not to include match in excess of the minimum if sources are uncertain. Failure to secure matching funds identified in the budget may result in adverse audit findings in addition to negatively affecting future grant applications to the CCCS.

### **C. Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)**

An AmeriCorps grant is determined based on the number of AmeriCorps members that a grantee will support. A 1700 hours or full-time AmeriCorps member position is equivalent to one MSY, the CCCS does consider the cost per MSY in making funding decisions. An applicant's cost per MSY is determined by dividing the total Corporation or federal share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested. For example, an applicant requesting 25 MSYs at a cost per MSY of \$13,000 would request \$325,000 (25 x \$13,000). It does not include child care or the value of the education award a member may earn. The maximum amount an applicant may request from the CCCS per MSY is determined on an annual basis. Re-competing grantees requesting a higher cost per MSY than in the previous year must include a compelling rationale for this increased cost. This applies even if the increased cost per MSY is less than the maximum.

### **D. Maximum Grant Size**

Programs being considered for competitive funds do not have maximum limit; however, grants generally do not exceed \$1 million. Applicants that are unsuccessful in their attempt to secure competitive funding will be considered for formula funding, based on their state ranking. Such programs may be subjected to a reduced budget.

### **E. Minimum Program Size**

The minimum program size funded by the CCCS for this application is 12 MSYs. The CCCS believes this MSY requirement is necessary to provide members in quantities that make a substantial difference relative to locally identified needs. Applicants proposing specialized programs that require reduced-hour positions or programs focused on a need that inherently requires a number of AmeriCorps members below the minimum required MSY level must include a compelling rationale as part of its application to the CCCS.

### **F. Minimum Number of Members per Service Site**

To ensure strong program design and to provide members with at least a minimal mutual support network, successful applicants must place a minimum of two (2) AmeriCorps members at each operating or service site as part of their program design. Requests for waiver from this requirement must show enhanced impact and member support mechanisms.

### **G. Living Allowance**

The proposed budget must include a living allowance for full-time members that is between \$12,100 (minimum) and \$24,200 (maximum) per member except as noted below. For cost-reimbursement grants, this amount must be included in the proposed budget. The living allowance is not required for members serving in less than full-time terms of service. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time member, it must comply with the maximum limits in the table below. While full-time fixed-amount grant applicants don't

submit detailed budgets, they are still required to provide a living allowance to members that comply with the minimum and maximum requirements. Full-time fixed-amount grant applicants are not required to identify that amount in the application.

**Table 4: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance**

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1700	\$12,100	\$24,200
One-year Half-time	900	n/a	\$12,800
Two-year Half-time	900	n/a	\$12,800
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	\$9,600
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$6,400
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$4,300

In most instances, the grant received by an applicant will not cover the full amount of the living allowance provided to members and the applicant must use its own or other resources to supplement member living allowance. Because the minimum living allowance may not fully cover the actual living expenses of members, programs may wish to offer living allowances in excess of the minimum requirements. Programs are prohibited from comparing member living allowances to an “hourly wage” in any recruitment materials, member handbooks, etc.

### **Exceptions to Living Allowance Requirements**

#### ***Prior to September 21, 1993***

If a program existed prior to the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (enacted September 21, 1993), the law does not require a living allowance. If an applicant chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement of \$12,100, but not the maximum requirement of \$24,200.

#### ***EAP Fixed-Amount Grantees***

EAP grantees are not required to provide a living allowance for less-than-full-time members, but if a living allowance is provided, it must comply with the maximum requirements set forth in the Living Allowance section above.

#### ***Professional Corps Grantees***

Professional Corps members must receive a living allowance or salary, which must meet the minimum, but may exceed the maximum living allowance set forth in the Living Allowance section above. Professional Corps member salaries are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve, and are not included in the budget.

### **H. Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards**

AmeriCorps members serving in programs funded with FY 2012 dollars who successfully complete a term of service will receive an Education Award from the National Service Trust of \$5,550 for a year of full-time service, with correspondingly smaller awards for less-than-full-time service. The amount of the Education Award is determined on the basis of the Pell Grant award. A member has up to seven years after the term of service has ended to use the award. AmeriCorps members who commence service on or after October 1, 2009, who are age 55 or older at the time they commence service, may, upon successful completion of a term of service, transfer the education award to a child, grandchild, or foster child. Education awards are granted directly to eligible members by the National Service Trust and are not included in the calculation of an AmeriCorps grant.

**Table 5: Member Term of Service and FY12 Education Award**

<b>Term of Service</b>	<b>Minimum # of Hours</b>	<b>Education Award</b>
Full Time (1.00 MSY)	1700	\$5,550
One-Year Half Time (.500 MSY)	900	\$2,775
Reduced Half Time (.381 MSY)	675	\$2,114
Quarter Time (.265 MSY)	450	\$1,468
Minimum Time (.212 MSY)	300	\$1,175

**I. Enrollment Requirements**

We expect grantees to enroll the full number of members included in their grant award. Enrollment rates have a direct bearing on the number of slots and the size of awards approved in the continuation process. Applicants that do not fully enroll are likely to receive a decrease in funding. Continuation and re-competing grantees that haven't achieved full enrollment in the previous year must provide an explanation in their application and describe a corrective action plan. The Commission understands that programs may encounter some difficulty in having an enrollment rate of 100%. As such, the Commission has created a policy for all AmeriCorps\*State programs to meet minimum standards. The following is an overview of the policy.

<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3+</b>
Programs that are beginning their very first year in operating an AmeriCorps grant must meet a 50% enrollment rate,	Programs that are operating in their second year of their AmeriCorps grant must meet a 75% enrollment rate,	Programs that are operating their third year or more of their AmeriCorps grant must meet a 95% enrollment rate.

Failure to meet the above guidelines will adversely affect the program's risk level and may reduce the amount of grant allocation in future years. The Connecticut Commission on Community Service reserves the right to recommend a smaller amount of AmeriCorps members in a sub-grantee's second or third year of funding based on their enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. The Commission will work closely with sub-grantees to ensure that goals are met by identifying training and technical assistance if necessary.

**J. Retention Requirements**

We recognize retention rates may vary among equally effective programs depending on the program model. We expect grantees to pursue the highest retention rate possible (100%). Retention rates will have a direct bearing on the number of slots and the size of awards approved in the continuation process. Applicants that do not retain members are likely to receive a decrease in funding. Continuation and re-competing grantees that haven't achieved full retention in the most recently completed program year must provide an explanation in their application and describe a corrective action plan. The Connecticut Commission on Community Service wants to ensure that its programs improve gradually to meet an overall goal of a 100% retention rate. As such, the Commission has adopted the following retention policy.

<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3+</b>
Programs that are beginning their first year in operating an AmeriCorps grant must meet a	Programs that are operating in their second year of their AmeriCorps grant must meet a	Programs that are operating their third year or more of their AmeriCorps grant must meet a

50% retention rate.

75% retention rate.

95% retention rate.

Programs that recruit members from underserved communities and at-risk youth are strongly encouraged to outline their retention difficulties in their application (and subsequent continuation applications). The Commission will take any written and documented retention difficulties into consideration when reviewing an application and monitoring a program. Recruitment and retention percentages may be used to determine a program's risk designation and may be taken into consideration when determining funding decisions that could result in the loss of funding. Retention percentages will be monitored monthly.

### **III. ELIGIBILITY**

#### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Public or private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations; institutions of higher education; government entities within states or territories (e.g., cities, counties); Indian Tribes; labor organizations; partnerships and consortia; and intermediaries planning to sub grant funds awarded are encouraged to apply. Organizations that have been convicted of a Federal crime are disqualified from receiving the assistance described in this RFA.

#### **B. Types of Applicants**

For the 2012 competition, there will be several types of applicants seeking AmeriCorps grant funding through this RFA. Details regarding these applicant types are provided below.

#### **Re-competing Programs**

"Re-competing" applicants are programs that have completed a three-year grant cycle (in most instances) and opt to "re-compete" for another three-year award. AmeriCorps programs entering the final year of their grant period must submit a new application if they wish to be considered for future AmeriCorps funding. Re-competing programs are reminded that submitting an application does not guarantee success in securing future funding. Re-competing applicants are advised that previous site visit reports, program progress reports, financial reports, and member enrollment and retention rates, will be reviewed as part of the selection process.

#### **Previously Funded Programs**

The previously funded program designation applies to any program who has previously received an AmeriCorps operating grant from the CCCS or the Corporation in any of the past five completed program years (2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10, or 2010-11). Applications will receive this designation if the proposed program is similar in scope and purpose to the program previously operated. This definition holds true even if the legal applicant for the program has changed.

### **IV. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

#### **A. Basic Selection Criteria**

In addition to the focus areas and AmeriCorps values identified in the Funding Opportunity Description Section, reviewers at both the state and national level will assess program design, organizational capability, and cost-effectiveness and budget adequacy. Additional selection factors will be applied to balance the portfolio with regard to program models, program activities, geographic distribution, and communities served as described in 45 CFR §§ 2522.420–

2522.448. The weights assigned to each category and sub-category are listed in the table below. The Application Instructions accompanying this RFA provides additional details and recommendation for addressing each selection criteria.

**Table 6: Basic Selection Criteria: Categories, Sub-Categories, and Respective Weights**

Category	Sub-Categories and Weights
Program Design – 50%	Rationale and Approach (10%) Member Outputs and Outcomes (20%) Community Outputs and Outcomes (20%)
Organizational Capability – 25%	No sub-categories
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy -25%	Cost-Effectiveness (15%) Budget Adequacy (10%)

**B. The Connecticut Commission on Community Service Review and Selection Process Compliance Check**

The CCCS staff will review all applications to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline and completeness requirements. Applications that are submitted by eligible organizations, submitted by the deadline, and that are complete will advance to the Staff Review.

**Staff Review**

Following staff assessment, some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information. The purpose of “Clarification” is to provide an opportunity for applications to “fill-in gaps” identified from the Staff Review process. Clarification may take the form of an in-person interview, conference call, or written response. This new process will be determined at the discretion of the CCCS AmeriCorps Program Officer. Please note that failure to respond to the CCCS’ clarification requests in a timely manner will result in removal of application from funding consideration.

**Selection**

The primary consideration of selection of AmeriCorps programs is merit. In selecting applicants to participate in the national competition, the CCCS considers criteria in its strategy such as grant request size, cost per MSY, issue area focus, innovation, and past performance. The CCCS has the responsibility to determine the best strategy in selecting applicants for the national competition.

Specifically, the review and selection process is designed to:

**1. Identify eligible applications that satisfy the following considerations:**

- High-quality response to criteria.
- Priorities
- Recruitment and deployment of community volunteers to leverage impact.
- Data on applicant history and performance.
- Building capacity for individuals, nonprofits and communities to solve problems.
- Expanding opportunities to serve; particularly for new Americans, low-income individuals, rural residents, older Americans, veterans, members of faith-based organizations, communities of color, Native Americans, and people with disabilities.

- Embracing innovative approaches to solving problems.

## **2. Compile a balanced portfolio based on the following characteristics:**

- Geographic representation.
- Equitable treatment of suburban and urban communities; Small and large programs; and Involvement of underserved and economically disadvantaged communities.

Results of the grant review process are presented to the Connecticut Commission on Community Service along with staff recommendation of eligible applicants selected to represent Connecticut in the national competition. **Commission funding decisions are final—there is no appeal process.**

## **C. Review and Selection Process**

### **Selection Criteria**

Each application must clearly describe a project that will effectively deploy AmeriCorps members to solve significant community need and respond to the following criteria:

#### ***1. Program Design (50 percent)***

In assessing Program Design, reviewers will examine the degree to which the applicant demonstrates how AmeriCorps members are particularly well-suited to solving the identified community needs.

Specifically, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:

- Provides persuasive evidence that the identified needs exist in the targeted community(ies).
- Describes the ways in which AmeriCorps members are a highly effective means to solving the identified community needs, including the unique value added by AmeriCorps.
- Describes how the interventions the AmeriCorps members and volunteers are engaged in are both evidence-based and will have a measurable community impact. The intervention is evidence-based if programs can demonstrate community impact and solve community problems through an evidence-based approach (e.g. performance data, research, theory of change).
- Describes the program components that enable the AmeriCorps members to have powerful service experiences that produce increased community impact and lead to continued civic participation and connectivity with other AmeriCorps and national service participants.
- Convincingly links four major elements: (1) the needs identified, (2) the intervention that will be carried out by AmeriCorps members and community volunteers, (3) the ways in which AmeriCorps members are particularly well-suited to deliver the intervention, and (4) the anticipated outcomes.

Re-competing grantees must describe their efforts and impact to date, and provide persuasive evidence they should continue to be funded.

If a new applicant is already working to meet the community need identified in the application, the applicant should describe how the proposed use of AmeriCorps members will add value, i.e., be more effective than what is currently being implemented, or enhance existing efforts.

#### ***2. Organizational Capability (25 percent)***

Reviewers will assess the extent to which:

- The organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan, implement and evaluate the proposed program.
- The organization has secured, or describes an effective plan for securing, the financial and in-kind resources necessary to support program implementation and to demonstrate community stakeholder support.
- The organization has the ability and structure to ensure its and its sub-grantees and/or service locations' compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including prohibited activities.
- Multi-state applicants have consulted with state and territory service commissions to ensure non-duplication and coordination of CNCS resources.
- Current or previous AmeriCorps grantees filled the member positions they were awarded and retained the AmeriCorps members they enrolled or have provided an explanation for less than 100% enrollment and retention.
- Current or previous AmeriCorps grantees have met performance targets and demonstrated compliance with grant terms and conditions.

### **3. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)**

For cost-reimbursement grants, reviewers will assess the extent to which:

- The budget is clear, reasonable, cost-effective, and in alignment with the program narrative.
- The requested funds do not exceed the maximum cost per Member Service Year (MSY), or for existing programs, have not increased over previous years. The amount requested is a competitive factor in the selection process.

For EAPs and Full-time Fixed-amount grants, reviewers will assess:

- The applicant's understanding of total program cost and capacity to raise additional resources beyond the fixed-amount.
- The amount requested per member. Fixed-amount applicants are encouraged to request less than the full maximum amount allowed per MSY. The amount requested is a competitive factor in the selection process.

## **V. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **A. How to Apply**

Organizations that propose to operate in **one state only** must apply through the State Commission. Organizations that propose to operate in **more than one state** are eligible to apply directly to the Corporation. Indian Tribes may apply through State Commissions, or directly to the Corporation.

### **B. Universal Identifier**

Applications must include a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and register with the Central Contractor's Registry (CCR). **The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number.** DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online – [www.fedgov.dnb.com/webform](http://www.fedgov.dnb.com/webform). The website indicates a 24-hour e-mail turnaround time on requests for DUNS numbers; however, **we suggest registering at least 30 days in advance of the application due date.**

CCR is the primary registrant database for the U.S. Federal Government. CCR collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data in support of Federal agency contracts, grant awards, cooperative agreements, and other forms of federal assistance. All grant recipients are required to maintain a valid registration, which must be renewed annually. We urge applicants that are not already registered with the CCR to begin the registration process immediately in order to avoid any delays in submitting applications. Applicants must have a DUNS number in order to register with the CCR. It typically takes 3-5 days to finalize CCR registration. To register online go to [www.bpn.gov/CCR](http://www.bpn.gov/CCR).

## **C. Content and Form of Application Submission**

### **1. Submitting in eGrants**

It is required that all applicants submit applications electronically via the Corporation's web-based application system, eGrants. Applications must arrive at the Commission by December 16, 2011 at 11:59 p.m. ET in order to be considered.

We recommend 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 processing document, then copy and paste the document into eGrants no later than 10 days before the deadline.

Contact the eGrants Help Desk at (800) 942-2677 [TTY:800-833-3722 ] if a problem arises while creating an account, preparing, or submitting an application. Be prepared to provide the application ID. If technical issues will prevent an applicant from submitting an application on time, please contact the eGrants Help Desk prior to the deadline to explain the technical issue and receive a ticket number. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, the applicant must continue working with the eGrants Help Desk to submit via eGrants.

### **2. Late Applications**

If extenuating circumstances make the use of eGrants impossible, applicants may send a hard copy of the application to the address below, via overnight carrier. Please use a non-U.S. Postal Service because of security-related delays in receiving mail from the U.S. Postal Service. All deadlines and requirements in this *Notice* apply to hard copy applications. Hard copy applications must include a cover letter detailing the circumstances that make it impossible to submit via e-Grants.

**Do not submit supplementary materials such as videos, brochures, letters of support, or any other item not requested in these application instructions. The Commission will not review or return them.**

### **3. Page Limits**

In eGrants, applicants will enter text for:

- Executive Summary: a brief paragraph, maximum of a half-page. Executive Summaries of all compliant applications will be published on the CNCS website following grant notifications.
- Program Design.
- Organizational Capability.
- Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy.
- Evaluation Plan.

You may not exceed 26 double spaced pages in the Narratives, including the Executive Summary and Cover Page, as the pages print out from eGrants. Reviewers will not consider material submitted over the page limit, even if eGrants allows you to enter and submit text over the limit. **From the Review and Submit page, print out your application prior to final submission to ensure it is not over the 26 page limit.** This limit does not include the budget and performance measures.

#### **4. Funding Restrictions**

Grants under this program, except for fixed-amount and EAP grants, are subject to the applicable Cost Principles under OMB Circulars A-21 (2 CFR part 220), A-122 (2 CFR part 230), or A-87 (2 CFR part 225) and the Uniform Administrative Requirements for grants under A-102 (45 CFR part 2541) or A-110 (45 CFR 2543 or 2 CFR part 21).

#### **5. Equal Opportunity Survey**

Applicants are asked to complete the Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants. Applicants may complete the survey in eGrants while preparing the application for submission.