

**2020 – 2021**  
**MICHIGAN'S AMERICORPS**  
**CONCEPT PAPER GUIDELINES**  
**FOR NEW & RECOMPETING APPLICANTS**



**IMPORTANT DATES:**

**Friday, September 20, 2019: Notice of Intent to Apply** must be received by **5:00 p.m. EST**  
*Intent to Apply form is available at:*  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JD2JQG6>

**Friday, September 20, 2019: Financial management survey** and a **copy of the applicant organization's most recent independent audit** must be received by **5:00 p.m. EST**  
*Financial management surveys and independent audits should be submitted to*  
[rushwittc@michigan.gov](mailto:rushwittc@michigan.gov)

**Wednesday, October 2, 2019: Concept papers & budgets** must be received by **5:00 p.m. EST**  
*Concept papers with budgets should be submitted to*  
[zoets@michigan.gov](mailto:zoets@michigan.gov)

**Tuesday, October 29, 2019:** If selected to submit a full application, applicants must attend a mandatory **Application Training & Technical Assistance Training** in Lansing

**For more information:** [www.michigan.gov/mcsc](http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc)

**If you have additional questions, please contact:**

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## ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

**Notice of Intent to Apply:** Submission of a Notice of Intent to Apply is **required to be eligible for this competition** and is due **Friday, September 20, 2019 by 5:00 p.m. EST** at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JD2JQG6>.

**Financial management surveys** and a **copy of the applicant organization's most recent independent audit:** Must be received by **Friday, September 20, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. EST** via email to [rushwittc@michigan.gov](mailto:rushwittc@michigan.gov).

**Concept paper & budget:** Concept paper applications and budgets are due **Wednesday, October 2, 2019 by 5:00 p.m. EST** via email to [zoets@michigan.gov](mailto:zoets@michigan.gov).

### OVERVIEW

AmeriCorps is a national network of service programs designed to engage thousands of Americans on a full- or part-time basis to help communities address their toughest challenges. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) administers AmeriCorps at the federal level and works in partnership with states to develop service programs and to create a community-based national service network. CNCS seeks to fund AmeriCorps programs that address goals in the areas of disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and services for veterans and military families. Programs must demonstrate community impact and solve community problems through an evidence-based approach (e.g. performance data, research, theory of change).

The Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC) is the administrative agent for Michigan's AmeriCorps programs receiving CNCS funding. The MCSC utilizes service as a strategy to address the state's most pressing issues and empowers volunteers to strengthen communities. For more information on the MCSC, including currently funded programs, please visit our website at [www.michigan.gov/mcsc](http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc).

The mission of CNCS is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic participation through service and volunteering. Through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Volunteer Generation Fund, CNCS has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that members can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

In order to maximize the impact of the public investment in national service, CNCS will provide grants to programs that demonstrate that they will engage AmeriCorps members in an evidence-based or evidence-informed approach to providing a service intervention that will result in intended solutions to community problems (e.g., based on proposed program's performance and evaluation data or research demonstrating the effectiveness of a similar intervention).

CNCS requires that programs co-brand as AmeriCorps programs and that their participants consistently identify, and are recognized, as AmeriCorps members providing value to the community.

***Applicants may be asked to respond to additional and/or different application questions in the comprehensive application if the applicant's concept is successful in the first phase of review.***

## **A. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **1. Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding**

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that members can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

### **CNCS Focus Areas**

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. In order to carry out Congress' intent and to maximize the impact of investment in national service, CNCS has the following focus areas:

#### Disaster Services

Grant activities will provide support to increase the preparedness of individuals for disasters, improve individuals' readiness to respond to disasters, help individuals recover from disasters, and/or help individuals mitigate disasters.

#### Economic Opportunity

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people; help economically disadvantaged people, to have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy; transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing; and/or have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed.

#### Education

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children; improved school readiness for economically disadvantaged young children; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or support economically disadvantaged students' preparation for success in post-secondary educational institutions.

#### Environmental Stewardship

Grants will support responsible stewardship of the environment, while preparing communities for challenging circumstances and helping Americans respond to and recover from disruptive life events; programs that conserve natural habitats; protect clean air and water; maintain public lands; support wildland fire mitigation; cultivate individual and community self-sufficiency; and provide reforestation services after floods or fires.

#### Healthy Futures

Grants will provide support for activities that will address the opioid crisis; increase seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible; and/or increase physical activity and improve nutrition with the purpose of reducing obesity.

### Veterans and Military Families

Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength; increase the number of veterans, wounded warriors, military service members, and their families served by CNCS programs; and/or increase the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through CNCS programs.

### **MCSC Focus Areas**

In addition to the CNCS Focus Areas, the MCSC has identified the following focus area as a priority in our state:

#### Safer Communities

Grants will focus on public safety and/or partnerships between law enforcement and the community; increase public safety and decrease victimization in neighborhoods by participating and engaging residents in activities that improve neighborhood guardianship, reduce victim susceptibility, and enhance neighborhood communication around public safety.

### **2. Funding Priorities**

CNCS determines funding priorities each program year. As of publication of this document, the 2020-21 CNCS Notice of Funding Opportunity has not been publicly released and priority areas have not been announced.

In order to receive priority consideration for submitting an application within a *Notice* priority(ies), applicants must demonstrate that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes and must include a high-quality program design. Responses that propose programs for the purpose of receiving priority consideration are not guaranteed funding.

## **B. AWARD INFORMATION**

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

CNCS and the MCSC expect a highly competitive AmeriCorps grant competition. MCSC expects to award new, re-competing, and continuation AmeriCorps grants. The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

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

Awards will be for operating funds and AmeriCorps member positions. The MCSC and/or CNCS will review applications and determine the appropriate award amount, if any. Grant award amounts vary – both in the level of operating funds and in the type and amount of AmeriCorps member positions – as determined by the scope of the projects.

### **3. Project and Award Period**

The project period is generally one year with a start date proposed by the applicant. The grant award covers a three-year project period unless otherwise specified. The concept paper is submitted with a one-year budget. Continuation funding for subsequent years is not guaranteed and shall be dependent upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance.

The project start date may not occur prior to the date CNCS awards the grant and the MCSC fully executes the grant. AmeriCorps members may not enroll prior to the start date of the award. AmeriCorps members may not begin service prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period as designated in the grant award. A program may not certify any hours a member performs prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period.

#### **4. Types of Grants**

AmeriCorps grants can be awarded on a cost reimbursement or fixed amount basis. CNCS will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year. Fixed amount grants are only available to re-competing programs. New applicants are not eligible to apply for fixed amount grants.

### **C. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

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

The following Non-Federal entities (as defined in 2 C.F.R. §200.69) who have DUNS numbers and are registered in System for Award Management (SAM) are eligible to apply:

- Indian Tribes (2 C.F.R. §200.54)
- Institutions of higher education (2 C.F.R. §200.54)
- Local governments (2 C.F.R. §200.64)
- Nonprofit organizations (2 C.F.R. §200.70)
- States (2 C.F.R. §200.90)

#### ***New Applicants***

Previously receiving funds from CNCS or another federal agency is not a prerequisite to apply. CNCS encourages organizations that have never received funding from CNCS to apply. The general practice is to award no more than 50 member positions (slots) to organizations receiving an AmeriCorps grant for the first time. The MCSC will consider applications for as few as 10 full-time equivalent member slots.

#### **2. Threshold Requirements**

Applications should reflect that they meet the following threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying.

- All applicants should request at least 10 full-time equivalent member slots.
- Professional Corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a Professional Corps by CNCS must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.
- If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs (45 CFR §2522.910-.940)), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.

#### **3. Other Requirements**

Under section 132A(b) of the NCSA, organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance. Note that under section 745 of Title VII, Division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, if CNCS is aware that any corporation has any unpaid Federal tax liability which:

- has been assessed;
- for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed; and
- 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.<sup>1</sup> A similar restriction may be enacted with the appropriation which will fund awards.

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

## D. MEMBER ELIGIBILITY, RECRUITMENT, AND SELECTION

### 1. Term of Service

Programs may engage members on a full- or less than full-time basis. Regardless of the type of service term, the maximum time limit is one calendar year. The following slots can be utilized:

Member Slot Type	Minimum Number of Service Hours	Member Service Year (MSY) Conversion
Full-Time	1700	1.0 MSY
Reduced Full-Time	1200	0.7 MSY
Half-Time	900	0.5 MSY
Reduced Half-Time	675	0.38 MSY
Quarter-Time	450	0.27 MSY
Minimum-Time	300	0.21 MSY

### 2. Member Eligibility

At the time of enrollment in a Michigan's AmeriCorps program, members must:

- Be at least 17 years of age;
- Possess a high school diploma or its equivalent, or agree to obtain a high school diploma or equivalent prior to using the education award;
- Not have dropped out of elementary or secondary school (unless the program is designed to engage opportunity youth, defined as economically disadvantaged individuals ages 16-24 who are disconnected from school or work);
- Be a U.S. citizen, a U.S. national, or lawful permanent resident alien; and
- Meet the task-related eligibility requirements established by the program.

### 3. Selection

Each individual program selects its own Michigan's AmeriCorps members, and the selection criteria may vary among programs. Programs must select members in a non-partisan, non-political, non-discriminatory manner that is in accordance with State and Federal equal employment opportunity laws. Programs must establish minimum qualifications for members related to the service they will provide, including the successful completion of an AmeriCorps orientation period. Programs must ensure they do not displace any existing paid employees.

Programs must conduct criminal history checks on member candidates in accordance with CNCS requirements as part of the screening process.

### 4. Reasonable Accommodations for Disabilities

Increasing the participation of people with disabilities in national service programs is a key interest of the CNCS. All AmeriCorps programs are encouraged to actively reach out to and include people with disabilities. Programs and activities must be accessible.

Programs must provide reasonable accommodation for known mental or physical disabilities of otherwise qualified members, service recipients, applicants, and program staff. All selections and project assignments must be made without regard to the need to provide reasonable accommodations. The vast majority of accommodations are inexpensive.

## **5. Participation in National Days of Service**

As part of the national service network, there are a number of opportunities for AmeriCorps programs related to national days of service. The MCSC and CNCS encourage all national service programs, including AmeriCorps programs, to participate in one or more days of service, including the 9-11 National Day of Service and Remembrance, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, National AmeriCorps Week, National Volunteer Week, and Global Youth Service Day. National days of service represent one way for programs to engage volunteers.

## **6. Program Monitoring and Management Responsibilities**

If approved for an AmeriCorps grant, the host organization is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of grant-supported activities. Activities must be in compliance with applicable federal and state requirements and must be aligned with performance goals. Monitoring must cover each program, function, and activity, including those of sub-sites. The organization is responsible for ensuring program quality and that the program has an impact on the identified community problem(s). This includes monitoring member activities, including the timely and accurate documentation of member eligibility and service hours. Each program must develop systems to track and monitor these requirements.

## **7. Program Reporting**

Michigan's AmeriCorps programs must comply with all reporting required by the MCSC, including quarterly progress reports, monthly expenditure reports, member hours tracking, and member enrollment, termination, and end-of-term-of-service procedures. Programs are required to use an MCSC designated online reporting system for all aspects of reporting including member timekeeping.

## **8. Michigan's AmeriCorps Program Director Meetings**

Michigan's AmeriCorps program directors must participate in regularly scheduled program director meetings, conference calls, and trainings.

## **9. MCSC Trainings and Special Events**

Michigan's AmeriCorps staff and members are strongly encouraged to participate in all MCSC sponsored program trainings and service events, including the annual Michigan's AmeriCorps Member Celebration and Regional Russ Mawby Signature Service Projects. In addition, organizational leaders are required to attend an annual meeting to discuss sustainability and national service issues.

## **E. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. Dun and Bradstreet University Numbering System (DUNS) Number & System for Award Management (SAM)**

Before submitting a comprehensive application, applicants must have a DUNS number **and** an Employer Identification Number. 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: [DUNS Request Service](#).

After obtaining a DUNS number, all applicants **must** register with the [SAM](#) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete and, if a grant is awarded, throughout the life of the award. SAM registration must be renewed annually. CNCS suggests finalizing a new registration or renewing an existing one at least two weeks before the application deadline to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise.

### **2. Funding Restrictions**

#### **a. Member Living Allowance**

A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage. Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time terms of service, but it is highly recommend that they do as this aids in recruitment and retention of members. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time

member, it must comply with the maximum limits determined by CNCS. For cost reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either CNCS or grantee share. Exceptions are noted below.

While fixed amount grant applicants are not required to submit detailed budgets, they are still required to provide a living allowance to members that complies with the minimum and maximum requirements. Exceptions noted below. Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to indicate that amount in the application and should request those positions as “without living allowance” in the budget.

***Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements***

**1. Programs existing prior to September 21, 1993** are not required to offer a living allowance. If an applicant chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement, but not the maximum requirement.

**2. EAP Grantees** are not required to provide a living allowance, but if a living allowance is provided, it must comply with the maximum requirements set forth in the Living Allowance Table above.

**3. Professional Corps Grantees** must provide members a living allowance or salary, which must meet the minimum, but may exceed the maximum living allowance set in the Living Allowance Table above. Professional Corps member salaries are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve, and are not included in the budget request to CNCS (federal or matching share.)

The 2020-21 minimum and maximum living allowance amounts have not yet been announced by CNCS. This information will be available in the full application instructions and guidelines shared with applicants invited to submit a comprehensive application. For the purposes of the concept paper budget, please use 2019-20 program year living allowance guidelines as detailed in the Concept Paper Budget Instructions.

***b. Maximum Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)***

The CNCS cost per MSY is determined by dividing the CNCS share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested. 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 CNCS per MSY is determined on an annual basis. New and re-competing State Commission sub-grantees/applicants will be held to the maximum cost per MSY for their grant type.

The 2020-21 maximum cost per MSY has not yet been announced by CNCS. This information will be available in the full application instructions and guidelines shared with applicants invited to submit a comprehensive application. For the purpose of the concept paper, please use the 2019-20 maximum cost per MSY as detailed in the Concept Paper Budget Instructions.

***c. Amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award for FY 2020***

AmeriCorps members serving in programs funded with FY 2020 dollars who successfully complete a term of service will receive an education award from the National Service Trust. The amount of a full-time education award is equivalent to the maximum value of the Pell Grant for the award year in which the term of national service is approved.

The amount of the Pell Grant can change every year. Therefore, the amount of a full-time award can change in the future. However, once a member earns an award, the dollar value of that particular award will not increase. For all programs, award amounts for part-time terms of service vary based upon the length of the required term of service.



The 2020-21 Segal Education Award amounts have not yet been announced by CNCS. This information will be available in the full application instructions and guidelines shared with applicants invited to submit a comprehensive application.

**d. Member Enrollment Requirements for Existing Grantees**

Grantees are expected to fill all member slots 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 and re-compete processes. Continuation and re-competing Grantees that have not achieved full enrollment in the previous year must provide an explanation and a corrective action plan in their application. Successful applicants that do not fully enroll may receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years.

**e. Member Retention Requirements for Existing Grantees**

Grantees are expected to pursue the highest retention rate possible. Retention rates will have a direct bearing on the number of slots and the size of awards approved in the continuation and re-compete processes. Successful applicants that do not retain their members are likely to receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years. We recognize retention rates may vary among equally effective programs depending on the program model. Continuation or re-competing grantees that have not achieved at least 85% retention in the most recently completed program year must provide an explanation and a corrective action plan in their application.

**f. Generating Volunteers**

A fundamental purpose of AmeriCorps is to help recruit, support, and manage volunteers that meet community needs. By creating volunteer opportunities and helping organizations to effectively engage volunteers, AmeriCorps programs multiply their impact, build organizational capacity, and support the development of sustainable programs. All Michigan's AmeriCorps programs are required to recruit volunteers and report on volunteer recruitment to the MCSC. Each program is required to recruit a minimum of 20 volunteers per MSY.

MCSC's expectation is that volunteers will be engaged in ways that support the mission of the AmeriCorps program in which members serve. The involvement of volunteers should enhance or build upon any direct service goals of the program or organization of which the AmeriCorps members are a part. *Volunteer recruitment and management is not intended to replace direct service activities of AmeriCorps members.*

If an applicant believes it is unable to include volunteer recruitment and management as part of their program, either because of the program model or for any other reason, the applicant must request a waiver in their comprehensive application.

**g. 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 C.F.R. §200.413. States, local governments and Indian Tribes may use approved indirect cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across 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 the CNCS's web-based management system. However, under section 121(d) of the NCSA and CNCS's regulations at 45 C.F.R. §2517.710, no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps grants. See the Concept Paper Budget Instructions for more details about indirect cost rates.

**g. Match Requirements**

**Fixed Amount Grants**

There is no specific match requirement for fixed amount grants, but CNCS does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program. Organizations must raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.

**Cost Reimbursement Grants**

A first-time successful applicant is required to match at 24 percent of the total program cost for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in 45 CFR §2521.60.

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

Section 121(e)(5) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, requires programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant to report the amount and source of these funds to CNCS on the Federal Financial Report. Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year.

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

**Alternative Match**

Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in the regulations at 45 CFR §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. Applicants who plan to request an alternative match schedule must submit a request at the time the comprehensive application is submitted. State programs submit requests for alternative match to the Commission. For the purposes of the concept paper budget, please use the standard match schedule above.

**F. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

**1. How to Apply**

Organizations that propose to operate in a single state apply directly to the State Commission for the state in which they will operate. In Michigan, this is the Michigan Community Service Commission. Single-state applicants must follow the state-specific deadlines and application instructions as detailed in these guidelines. Organizations that propose to operate in more than one state apply directly to CNCS. Organizations in states and territories without commissions apply directly to CNCS.

**a. Notice of Intent to Apply (required for concept paper and application submission), financial management survey, and a copy of the most recent independent audit**

Applicants are **required** to submit a Notice of Intent to Apply by **5:00 p.m. EST September 20, 2019** at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JD2JQG6>. MCSC will not consider notifications received after the deadline. Failure to submit a Notice of Intent to Apply will render an applicant ineligible to apply. The Notice of Intent to Apply helps MCSC plan more efficiently the concept paper review.

Applicants are also required to submit a financial management survey and a copy of the applicant organization's most recent independent audit by **5:00 p.m. EST September 20, 2019** via email to [rushwittc@michigan.gov](mailto:rushwittc@michigan.gov).

***b. Submission Dates and Times***

The deadline for submitting concept paper applications and budgets is **5:00 p.m. EST on October 2, 2019**. Concept papers with budgets must be submitted via email to [zoets@michigan.gov](mailto:zoets@michigan.gov). MCSC will not consider applications received after the deadline, except when noted below. MCSC reserves the right to extend the submission deadline and any notice of such extended deadline will be posted publicly. This deadline applies to new and re-competing applicants.

***c. Late Concept Papers***

MCSC may consider an application received after the deadline if the applicant submits a request to [zoets@michigan.gov](mailto:zoets@michigan.gov) explaining the extenuating circumstance that caused the delay. Communication with MCSC staff is not a substitution for sending this formal request. The request must be received no later than one business day after the application deadline.

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

***a. Submitting the Concept Paper Application via Email***

- First round concept papers must be submitted in a Word document, double-spaced, one-inch margins, and size 12 Times New Roman font.
- Submit the budget using the excel budget template provided with these guidelines.

***b. Submitting the Comprehensive Application***

Concept paper applicants that are successful in the initial review process and are invited to submit a comprehensive application, must submit comprehensive applications in eGrants. MCSC staff will provide additional instructions in advance of the due date.

**3. Page Limits**

*Concept Paper Applications may not exceed **seven (7) pages**. Page limits do not include the title page, logic model, or budget.* Reviewers will not consider submitted material that is over the page limit. Do not submit non-required supplemental materials such as videos, brochures, letters of support. These items will not be reviewed or returned.

**G. CONCEPT PAPER AND APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

**Assessment Criteria**

Each applicant must describe a project that will deploy AmeriCorps members effectively in evidence-based or evidence-informed activities to solve a significant community problem. The MCSC urges applicants to submit high quality applications that carefully follow the instructions in these guidelines. The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization will be invited to submit a comprehensive application.

Please note that additional criteria will be required and considered, per the CNCS NOFO and Application Guidelines, should your organization be invited to submit a comprehensive application.

## **NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

### ***A. Title Page (use form provided)***

### ***B. Program Design***

#### **1. Need**

Describe how the problem the program will address is prevalent and severe in communities where members will serve and has been documented with relevant data.

#### **2. Theory of Change**

The Theory of Change shall address:

- The proposed intervention including design, dosage, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members.
- How the proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community need.
- Briefly, the evidence available to suggest that the proposed intervention will contribute to meaningful progress in addressing the identified community need.
- The rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention.

*Please note that if invited to submit a comprehensive application, applicants will be asked to provide specific evidence for their proposed intervention. The evidence will be assessed by evidence tier based on the strength and relevance of the evidence.*

#### **3. Member Experience**

Describe how:

- AmeriCorps members will gain skills as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers.
- The applicant will foster an inclusive service culture where different backgrounds, talents, and capabilities are welcomed and leveraged for learning and effective service delivery.

### ***C. Organizational Capability***

#### **1. Organizational Background and Staffing**

Describe the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing the AmeriCorps program, as well as providing oversight and monitoring.

#### **2. Member Supervision**

Describe how AmeriCorps members will receive sufficient guidance and support from their supervisor, and how AmeriCorps supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations and expectations.

### ***D. Logic Model***

The logic model is a visual representation of the applicant's theory of change. Programs may include short, medium or long-term outcomes in the logic model. Applicants are not required to measure all components of their theory of change. *Concept paper applicants should use the logic model template provided with these guidelines.*

The Logic Model shall depict:

- A summary of the community need outlined in the narrative.
- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:
  - Number of locations or sites in which members will provide services
  - Number of AmeriCorps members that will deliver the intervention
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
  - The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention)
  - The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
  - The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level)
- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served, hours of service delivered, types and number of activities conducted.) If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as output indicators.
- Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

## **H. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

### **1. Goals of the Review and Selection Process**

The assessment of applications involves a wide range of factors and considerations. As in the past, the MCSC will engage external reviewers to provide insight and input with respect to eligible applications. In addition, the MCSC staff will apply their experience and expertise in evaluating applications. Specifically, the review and selection process will:

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

- High alignment with criteria
- Align with funding priorities
- Relative risk and opportunity

*b. Yield a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:*

- Geographic representation
- Meaningful representation of
  - Rural and urban communities
  - Small and large programs
  - Faith- and community-based organizations
- Focus area representation
- Organizations and/or program models that build capacity for individuals, nonprofits and communities to solve problems
- Organizations and/or program models that recruit and engage traditionally underrepresented populations as AmeriCorps members and expand opportunities to serve as AmeriCorps members
- Organizations that embrace innovative approaches to solving problems

### **2. Stages in the Review and Selection Process**

*a. MCSC External Review*

MCSC will engage external reviewers to assess concept papers. External reviewers will include the MCSC Board of Commissioners and/or individuals with demonstrated knowledge of AmeriCorps programming, and/or the selection criteria and focus areas. All external reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

*b. Notification*

Selected concept paper applicants will be notified by **October 21, 2019** whether they have been selected for comprehensive application submission. If an applicant is invited to submit a comprehensive application, they must do so in eGrants. Guidelines and instructions will be provided, as well as a mandatory technical assistance session on **October 29, 2019**.

*c. MCSC Internal Review*

MCSC staff will review comprehensive applications. Following this review, MCSC staff will make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners, who will approve which applications are submitted to CNCS for further review for competitive funding and which will be held for formula consideration.

*d. CNCS Review*

Comprehensive applications will be reviewed by CNCS to determine compliance with eligibility, the submission deadline, and completeness. This may include periods for application and budget clarifications and resolutions. Applications determined non-compliant will not be considered for funding. An application is compliant if the applicant:

- Is an eligible organization
- Submits an application by the submission deadline
- Submits an application that is complete
- Submits an application requesting a minimum of ten (10) full-time equivalent AmeriCorps member slots

CNCS and the MCSC will screen applications to determine if the applicant has met all eligibility and submission requirements. The screening may occur at various stages of the grant-making process. Applicants determined to be ineligible will not receive an award.

## **I. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION MATERIALS**

Applicants who wish to submit a 2020-21 Michigan's AmeriCorps concept paper should refer to the following materials in addition to these Concept Paper Guidelines:

- 2020-21 MI AmeriCorps Request for Proposals
- 2020-21 MI AmeriCorps Cover Page
- 2020-21 MI AmeriCorps Concept Paper Budget Instructions
- 2020-21 MI AmeriCorps Concept Paper Budget Narrative Template
- 2020-21 MI AmeriCorps Financial Management Survey
- 2020-21 MI AmeriCorps Logic Model Template

# MICHIGAN'S AMERICORPS CONCEPT PAPER SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

Please review this checklist to ensure that your concept paper meets the submission requirements. **Any concept paper not in compliance with any item on the checklist will be considered ineligible.**

## **Due September 20, 2019**

Applicants must complete the Intent to Apply form to be eligible to apply:

- INTENT TO APPLY FORM**
  - Access form at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JD2JQG6>

Applicants must submit the following via email to [rushwittc@michigan.gov](mailto:rushwittc@michigan.gov):

- FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SURVEY**
  - Applicants must use the form provided. The financial management survey was distributed with concept paper materials and is available at [www.michigan.gov/mcsc](http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc).
- ONE COPY OF THE APPLICANT ORGANIZATION'S MOST RECENT INDEPENDENT AUDIT**

## **Due October 2, 2019**

Applicants must submit one complete application package via email to [zoets@michigan.gov](mailto:zoets@michigan.gov) that includes:

- COVER PAGE**
  - Applicants must use the form provided. The cover page document was distributed with concept paper materials and is available at [www.michigan.gov/mcsc](http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc).
- NARRATIVE**
  - Submitted in a Word document, double-spaced, one-inch margins, and size 12 Times New Roman font.
- LOGIC MODEL**
  - Submitted using the logic model template provided. The template was distributed with concept paper materials and is available at [www.michigan.gov/mcsc](http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc).
- BUDGET NARRATIVE**
  - Submitted using the budget template provided. The template was distributed with concept paper materials and is available at [www.michigan.gov/mcsc](http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc).

## **Save the Date: October 29, 2019**

Applicants should save the date for the Application Training & Technical Assistance session on Tuesday, October 29 in Lansing. Those who are invited to submit a comprehensive application following the concept paper review will be required to attend this TTA session.