KENTUCKY COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERISM AND SERVICE
Review Process and Selection Criteria for 2015-2016 AmeriCorps Programs

Applicant Name/Organization:_____

Program Name: _____

☐ **NEW APPLICANT** ☐**CURRENT OR PREVIOUS PROGRAM** ☐ **RECOMPETE APPLICANT**

			possible	reviewer
A. Executive Summary	**0**		**0**	
B. Program Design	**50% (50 points)**			
		Problem/Need	**9**	
		Theory of Change & Logic Model	**17**	
		Evidence Base	**8**	
		Notice Priority	**3**	
		Member Training	**4**	
		Member Supervision	**3**	
		Member Experience	**3**	
		Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification	**3**	
		TOTAL SECTION 2.	**50**	
C. Organizational Capacity	**25% (25 points)**		**25**	
D. Cost Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy	**25% (25 points)**		**25**	
		TOTAL SCORE:		

Do you recommend this application be sent forward to the Corporation for National and Community Service to be considered for possible AmeriCorps funding? ☐***Yes*** ☐***No***

Reviewer Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please print reviewer's name: _____

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: -0- Points

The applicant will fill in the blanks in the following template to complete the executive summary:

The [Name of the organization] proposed to have [Number of] AmeriCorps members who will [what the members will be doing] in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will serve]. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] that will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing.]

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area(s) of [Focus Area(s)]. * The CNCS investment of $[amount of request] will be matched with $[amount of projected match], $[amount of local, state, and federal funds] in public funding and $[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.

**If the program is not operating in a CNCS focus area, omit this sentence.*

Fixed amount grant applicants should list their leveraged resources (see Glossary) because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still must raise significant additional resources to operate the program.

•The Executive Summary of each funded applicant will be published on the CNCS website.

► Reviewer Comments/Notes: Is this applicant's Executive Summary publishable as is, or do you have suggestions to strengthen it?

B. PROGRAM DESIGN - 50 points total

In assessing how the applicant will meet the criteria, reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the following:

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
1. PROBLEM/NEED: 9 points possible	**0**	**4.5**	**9**	

•The applicant clearly describes how the community problem/need will be addressed by the program.

•The applicant clearly describes how the community need/problem is prevalent and serve in the communities where members will serve.

•The need is well documented with relevant data.

► Reviewer Comments/Notes re: The applicant provides persuasive and documented evidence that the identified needs exist in the targeted community(ies) and how the needs will be addressed by the program.

2. THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL = 17 points possible				
Selection Criteria	**Not Responsive Information missing**	**Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information**	**Responsive Needs little additional information**	**Total Score**
►LOGIC MODEL: 8.5 points possible	**0**	**4.25**	**8.5**	

Programs may include short, medium, or long-term outcomes in the logic model. While performance measure outcomes should be consistent with the program's theory of change, programs are not required to measure all outcomes that are included in the logic model. The Logic Model should identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.
Applicants with multiple interventions should complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each intervention.

Does the logic model (worksheet) depict:

- A summary of the community problem outlined in the narrative.

- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including:
  - 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.) 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.

►Reviewer Comments/Notes re: The applicant provides a clear and complete logic model

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
►THEORY OF CHANGE: 8.5 points possible	**0**	**4.25**	**8.5**	

- The applicant clearly describes the proposed intervention including the roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) the roles of leveraged volunteers.

- The applicant clearly describes how the intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change.

- The applicant clearly describes how the AmeriCorps members will produce significant and unique contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.

- All elements of the logic model are logically aligned.

►Reviewer Comments/Notes re: Theory of Change/Logic Model:

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
3. EVIDENCE BASE: 8 points possible	**0**	**4**	**8**	

Applicants will be awarded up to 8 points for providing evidence that their proposed intervention will lead to the outcomes identified in the theory of change (logic model).

Points will be awarded based on:

- The amount of evidence;
- The quality of the evidence based on the study design;
- The degree of match between the program model evaluated in the studies and the one proposed by the applicant; and
- Meeting the criteria for evidence–informed or evidence-based, with the higher points going towards evidence-based programs.

The following questions, and the descriptions of the tiered evidence levels (below) may assist you in scoring this section. Applicants are strongly encouraged to describe the evidence that supports the strongest evidence tier, and all relevant evidence presented must be included in this section.

	YES	NO
Did the applicant provide a description of the studies and evaluations conducted that provide evidence that the proposed intervention is effective for the proposed population and community challenge?		
Did the applicant describe how the evidence presented places them in one of the five evidence levels listed below?		
Did the applicant fully describe how they meet the requirement of that evidence level, using results from studies and evaluations?		
Did the applicant full describe the evidence that supports the evidence tier?		
Is all relevant evidence presented in this section?		
Does this section include specific citations of studies and/or evaluation and research reports?		

The five tiered evidence levels are:
No evidence (0 points) means that the applicant has not provided evidence that they have collected any qualitative or quantitative data to date.

Pre-preliminary evidence (1 point) means the applicant presents evidence that it has collected quantitative or qualitative data from program staff, program participants, or beneficiaries that have been used for program improvement, performance measurement reporting, and/or tracking. An example could be gathering feedback from program participants following their receipt of the intervention.

Preliminary evidence (2 points) means the applicant presents an initial evidence base that can support conclusions about the program's contribution to observed outcomes. The evidence base consists of at least one non-experimental study conducted on the proposed program (or another similar program that uses a comparable intervention). A study that demonstrates improvement in program beneficiaries over time on one or more intended outcomes OR an implementation (process evaluation) study used to learn and improve program operations would constitute preliminary evidence. Examples of research that meet the standards include: 1) outcome studies that track program beneficiaries through a service pipeline and measure beneficiaries' responses at the end of the program; and 2) pre- and post-test research that determines whether beneficiaries have improved on an intended outcome.

Applicants classifying their evidence as Moderate or Strong must submit up to two studies, evaluation reports, briefs, or peer-reviewed articles cited in this section as separate attachments. Studies must be sent to CNCS by the application deadline.

Moderate evidence (4 points) means the applicant presents a reasonably developed evidence base that can support causal conclusions for the specific program proposed by the applicant with moderate confidence. The evidence base consists of one or more quasi-experimental studies conducted on the proposed program (or another similar program that uses a comparable intervention) with positive findings on one or more intended outcomes OR two or more non-experimental studies conducted on the proposed program with positive findings on one or more intended outcomes OR one or more experimental studies of another relevant program that uses a similar intervention. Examples of research that meet the standards include: well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies that compare outcomes between the group receiving the intervention and a matched comparison group (i.e. a similar population that does not receive the intervention).

Strong evidence (8 points) means the applicant presents an evidence base that can support causal conclusions for the specific program proposed by the applicant with the highest level of confidence. This consists of one or more well-designed and well-implemented experimental studies conducted on the proposed program with positive findings on one or more intended outcomes.

The description of evidence in this section should include as much detailed information as possible. Applicants are advised to focus on presenting high-quality evidence from their strongest studies rather than only cursory descriptions of many studies. Reviewers will examine criteria that may include: a) how closely the program model evaluated in the studies matches the one proposed by the applicant; b) the methodological quality of the studies presented (e.g., statistical power, internal and/or external validity, sample size, etc.); c) the recency of the studies, with a preference towards studies that have been conducted within the last six years; and d) strength of the findings, with preference given to findings that show a large and persistent positive effect on participants demonstrated with confidence levels.

► ***Reviewer Comments/Notes re: Evidence Base:***

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
4. NOTICE PRIORITY: 3 points possible	**0**	**1.5**	**3**	

This will not make or break funding decisions. The CNCS previously received many applications that said they focused on a specific CNCS priority but it was hard to determine this during review. In order to receive priority consideration, 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.

2015 AmeriCorps Funding Priorities: *CNCS seeks to prioritize the investment of national service resources in:*

- ***Disaster Services*** *-- improving community resiliency through disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation*
- ***Economic Opportunity*** *-- increasing economic opportunities for communities, specifically opportunity youth (see Glossary), both as the population served and as AmeriCorps members.*
- ***Education*** *-- improving student academic performance including STEM*
- ***Environment*** *-- 21st Century Service Corps (see Glossary)*
- ***Veterans and Military Families*** *-- positively impacting the quality of life of veterans and improving military family strength*
- ***Governor and Mayor Initiatives*** *(see Glossary)*
- ***Programming that supports My Brother's Keeper*** *(see Glossary)*
- ***Multi-focus intermediaries*** *that demonstrate measurable impact and primarily serve communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure. i.e. rural and other underserved communities. (See Glossary)*

- Does the applicant clearly describe how its proposed program is within one or more of the 2015 AmeriCorps funding priorities listed above?
- Does the applicant clearly describe how the proposed program meets all of the requirements detailed above and in the Glossary?

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
5. MEMBER TRAINING: 4 points possible	**0**	**2**	**4**	

The following criteria should assist you in determining whether the applicant has developed a solid training plan for members:

● Does the applicant clearly describe how members will receive high quality training to provide effective service?

● Does the applicant clearly describe how members and volunteers will be aware of, and will adhere to, the rules including prohibited activities?

► ***Reviewer Comments/Notes re: AmeriCorps Member Training:***

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
6. MEMBER SUPERVISION: 3 points possible	**0**	**1.5**	**3**	

- The applicant clearly describes how members will receive high quality guidance and support from their supervisor to provide effective service.
- The applicant clearly describes how supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations.
- The applicant clearly describes how supervisors will provide members with excellent guidance and support throughout their service.

► ***Reviewer Comments/Notes re: Member Supervision:***

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
7. MEMBER EXPERIENCE: 3 points possible	**0**	**1.5**	**3**	

- AmeriCorps members will gain skills and experience as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will have access to meaningful service experiences and opportunities for reflection.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will have opportunities to establish connections with each other and the broader National Service network to build esprit de corps.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will develop an ethic of and skills for active and productive citizenship and will be encouraged to continue to engage in public and community service after their AmeriCorps term.
- The applicant clearly describes how the program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the communities in which the programs operate.

► ***Reviewer Comments/Notes re: Member Experience:***

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
8. COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION: 3 points possible	**0**	**1.5**	**3**	

- The applicant clearly describes how members will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- The applicant clearly describes how the staff and community members where the members are serving will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will be provided with and will wear service gear that prominently displays the AmeriCorps logo daily.
- ***The narrative explains how the program will ensure participants are prepared to speak about their AmeriCorps experience to members of the community. THIS STATEMENT IS NOT IN NOFO.***

► ***Reviewer Comments/Notes re: Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification:***

REVIEWER COMMENTS/FEEDBACK ON OVERALL PROGRAM DESIGN:

C. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY - 25 POINTS TOTAL SECTION

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
1. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING/ CURRENT OR PREVIOUS PROGRAMS	**0**	**3.5**	**7**	
ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING/ NEW APPLICANTS	**0**	**5**	**10**	

Responses in the narrative to the following should assist you in determining if the applicant adequately responded to this section's criteria:

•The applicant clearly describes how the organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program.

•The applicant clearly describes how the organization has adequate experience administering AmeriCorps grants or other federal grants.

•The applicant clearly describes how the organization has sufficiently engaged community members and partner organizations in planning and implementing its intervention.

- Review copies of letters of community support and commitment to the program from the applicant's most significant community partners. Please note the letters should include what the partners see as the benefit to the community by the applicant's AmeriCorps members and what activities would not happen without the AmeriCorps members.

► ***Reviewer Comment/Notes RE: Organizational Background and Staffing:***

Selection Criteria	NOT APPLICABLE TO THIS APPLICANT	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
2. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY/CURRENT OR PREVIOUS PROGRAMS	**0**	**5.5**	**11**	
COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY/NEW APPLICANTS	**0**	**7.5**	**15**	

- The applicant clearly describes how the applicant's organization, in implementation and management of its AmeriCorps program, will prevent and detect compliance issues.
- The applicant clearly describes how the applicant will hold itself, subgrantees, and service site locations (if applicable) accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified.
- The applicant clearly describes how the organization will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities at the grantee, subgrantee, and service site locations (if applicable0>

► ***Reviewer Comment/Notes RE: Compliance and Accountability:***

Selection Criteria	NOT APPLICABLE TO THIS APPLICANT	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
3. PAST/CURRENT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE/ CURRENT/ FORMER GRANTEES ONLY	**0**	**3.5**	**7**	

NOTE: 7 points for recompeting applicants and formula Grantees. **Any applicant that has received competitive or formula funding for the same project in any of the past three years must address this criteria.**
Score NEW programs -0- in this section.

- The applicant clearly describes how it has met performance measurement targets during the last three years of program operations, or, if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.
- The applicant clearly describes how it achieved 100% member enrollment, in the most recent full year of program operations, or if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.
- The applicant clearly describes how it achieved 100% member retention, in the most recent full year of program operations, or, if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.
- The applicant clearly describes any compliance issues or areas of weakness/risk identified during the last three years of program operations (if applicable) and describes an effective corrective action plan that was implemented.

► ***Reviewer Comment/Notes RE:CURRENT/FORMER GRANTEES ONLY: PAST/CURRENT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE:***

REVIEWER COMMENTS/FEEDBACK ON OVERALL ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY:

D. COST EFFECTIVENESS and BUDGET ADEQUACY -25 points total

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
a. COST EFFECTIVENESS: 18 points possible	**0**	**9**	**18**	

In assessing how the program proposes to meet the criteria, reviewers will consider the quality of the proposal's response to the following:

- The budget is sufficient to carry out the program effectively.
- The budget aligns with the applicant's narrative.
- The program design is cost effective and the benefits justify the cost.
- The applicant has raised or describes an adequate plan to raise non-CNCS resources to fully support the program.
- The applicant, if recompeting, has a lower cost per Member Service Year (MSY – see Glossary) than approved in previous grants, or provides a compelling rationale for the same or increased cost including why this increase could not be covered by the grantee share.

Having a low Cost Per Member Service year (MSY) is a competitive advantage. New applicants that submit with a low cost per MSY and recompeting applicants that submit with a lower cost per MSY than previously funded may receive higher priority for funding. Applicants requesting a higher cost per MSY than in previous years must justify their requests. If an applicant requests above the maximum cost per MSY ($13,730) it must justify its request. Please note that such requests are rarely approved.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
b. BUDGET ADEQUACY: 7 points possible	**0**	**3.5**	**7**	

- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors.
- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget is in compliance with the budget instructions.

Applicants must fill out the budget and ensure the following information is in the budget narrative (requested information in the budget screens):
- Identify the non-CNCS funding and resources necessary to support the project.
- Indicate the amount of non-CNCS resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash) and the sources of these commitments.

► Reviewer Comment/Notes RE: Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

Evaluation Plan - 0 points

If the applicant is competing for the first time, please enter N/A in the Evaluation Plan field since it pertains only to recompeting grantees. If the applicant is recompeting for AmeriCorps funds for the first time (see definition of "recompeting" below) the program must submit its evaluation plan in the Evaluation Plan field in eGrants. If the applicant is recompeting for a subsequent time, the program must submit its evaluation report via email to AdditionalDocuments@cns.gov by the application deadline, as well as an evaluation plan for the next three-year period in the Evaluation Plan field in eGrants.

Evaluation plans must include the following:
- A description of the theory of change, or why the proposed intervention is expected to produce the proposed results;
- Clear and measurable outcomes that are aligned with the theory of change and will be assessed during the evaluation;
- Concrete research questions (or hypotheses) that are clearly connected to the outcomes;
- A proposed research design for the evaluation;

- Qualifications needed for the evaluator; and
- The estimated budget.

The evaluation requirements differ depending on the amount of the grant, as described in 45 CFR §2522.710:

- If the applicant is are a State/Territory subgrantee and/or National Direct Grantee (other than an Education Award Program grantee), and its average annual CNCS program grant is $500,000 or more, it must arrange for an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in §2522.730 of this subpart.
- If the applicant is are a State/Territory subgrantee and/or National Direct Grantee whose average annual CNCS program grant is less than $500,000, or an Education Award Program Grantee, it must conduct an internal or an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in §2522.730 of this subpart.

A program will be considered a recompeting application if it satisfies the CNCS definition of "same project" (see Glossary) and has been funded competitively for at least one complete three-year cycle. If the project satisfies the definition of same project and the applicant has completed one three-year cycle, it will be required to submit an evaluation plan. If the project satisfied the definition of same project and the applicant has completed two or more three-year cycles, the applicant will be required to submit an evaluation report as well as an evaluation plan. If the project does not satisfy the definition of recompeting, it will not be required to submit an evaluation plan, summary, or completed evaluation.

The Evaluation Plan field of eGrants does not count towards the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit. Applicants should print out the report to ensure the narrative is not cut off.

State/Territory subgrantees and/or National Direct Grantees with an average annual CNCS program grant of $500,000 or more that are recompeting for funds are eligible to apply for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. Grantees requesting approval of an alternative evaluation approach should submit a request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach along with their evaluation plan in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in eGrants. The request should clearly explain: (a) the evaluation constraints faced by the program, (b) why the proposed approach is the most rigorous option feasible, and (c) how the proposed alternative approach will help the grantee build their evidence base. Evaluation plans should include, at a minimum, the required elements listed in this Notice. The evaluation plan must be consistent with the information submitted in the competitive funding application and in the request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. More information on alternative evaluation approaches can be found at:
https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/files/guidance_for_grantees_approval_of_alternative_evaluation_approach.pdf.

► ***Reviewer Comment/Notes RE: Evaluation Plan***

OVERALL COMMENTS ON THIS GRANT APPLICATION: