

**NOTICE OF FEDERAL FUNDS AVAILABLE**  
**OVERVIEW**

**Federal Agency Name:** Corporation for National and Community Service  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** Expanding Research on Volunteerism and National Service  
**Announcement Type:** Initial announcement  
**CFDA No.:** 94.007  
**Dates:** **Deadline is Friday, June 13, 2008**

**Funding Opportunity Description:**

The Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) announces the availability of approximately \$500,000 which will be used to make one to five awards, ranging from approximately \$50,000 to \$300,000 to expand scholarly and policy research in three areas:

1. Volunteering and civic engagement, using the Current Population Survey's Annual Volunteer Supplement (CPS Volunteer Supplement);
2. The impact of national service on service participants, using datasets from *Serving Country and Community: A Longitudinal Study of Service in AmeriCorps*; and
3. Trends in the nonprofit sector that either impact or are created by national service.

The goal is to increase the Nation's understanding and knowledge about the importance and potential of volunteering, national and community service, and/or civic engagement in America. Applicants should submit a three year plan with the knowledge that funding for years two and three of the agreement is contingent upon the availability of funds and the recipient's satisfactory progress towards agreed-upon objectives.

This assistance is being offered under Section 179 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 USC 12639). This assistance will be awarded and administered under the Corporation's uniform administrative requirements for higher education institutions (see 45 CFR Part 2543) and OMB's cost principles for educational institutions (see 2 CFR Part 220; OMB circular A-21).

**Eligibility:**

The competition is open to institutions of higher education (colleges and universities). Applicants must demonstrate their capacity to support a Federal grant and carryout this type of research. Please see specific eligibility criteria in section III.

**Submission Dates and Times:**

Please submit an e-mail stating your intent to apply to [research@cns.gov](mailto:research@cns.gov) by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, May 16, 2008. The deadline for applications is 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, June 13, 2008.

Submit applications via e-mail to: [research@cns.gov](mailto:research@cns.gov). Applications submitted by hard copy or fax will not be accepted. This *Notice* contains all application instructions, and is available at [http://www.nationalservice.gov/for\\_organizations/funding/nofa.asp](http://www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp) or by e-mailing [research@cns.gov](mailto:research@cns.gov).

## **FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

#### **A. Funding Opportunity Description**

For more than a decade the Corporation—through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve programs—has worked to mobilize new generations of engaged citizens. As part of that work, the Corporation seeks to increase the field’s knowledge and understanding of volunteerism, service, and civic engagement through evaluation and research. We are seeking proposals that build on our recent research, provide new ideas and approaches to the issues of volunteering, service and civic engagement, and make use of the extensive datasets we have assembled. Specifically, we seek to fund research in at least one of the following three areas:

##### **1) Volunteering and Civic Engagement**

In partnership with the Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Corporation sponsors a *Current Population Survey (CPS) Annual Volunteer Supplement* (volunteer supplement). The volunteer supplement has been administered to approximately 50,000 households (100,000 individuals) each September since 2002, and covers the volunteer behavior of individuals 15 years and older within each household over the previous 12 months. The supplement can be linked to the main CPS and to other CPS supplements and surveys, such as the voting and food security supplements, and the American Time Use Survey (ATUS). Since 2006, the Volunteer Supplement has asked civic engagement questions, including, “Have you worked with other people in your neighborhood to fix a problem or improve a condition in your community?” and, “Have you attended any public meetings in which there was discussion of community affairs?” The volunteer supplement also provides researchers a series of two-year panels of respondents.

The Corporation has used the CPS Volunteer Supplement to produce several research reports, available at [http://www.cns.gov/about/role\\_impact/performance\\_research.asp](http://www.cns.gov/about/role_impact/performance_research.asp) and <http://www.cns.gov/about/volunteering/index.asp>. We believe this data provides a rich resource for additional research on volunteering and civic engagement and we seek proposals with interesting and pertinent research questions that could be answered with this data. Additional information about the CPS volunteer supplement can be found at the Census Bureau website: <http://www.census.gov/aprd/techdoc/cps/cps-main.html>.

##### **2) The Impacts of National Service on Service Participants**

In May 2008, the Corporation for National and Community Service will release the 7-year follow up report on the AmeriCorps Longitudinal Study. A report on short-term impacts, *Serving Country and Community: A Longitudinal Study of Service in AmeriCorps*, was published in 2004. The longitudinal study of AmeriCorps members has followed a cohort of more than 2,000 AmeriCorps

members and similarly-motivated individuals in a comparison group from 1999 to 2007 to assess the long-term impact of AmeriCorps participation on members' civic engagement, education, employment and life skills. Following the release of the evaluation results, the Corporation will add the datasets from the most recent wave of data collection to the public release files currently available for this study. The datasets contain over 1,200 variables covering several outcome areas including education, employment, civic engagement, and life skills. The datasets also include information on the characteristics of the AmeriCorps programs where members served. The Corporation is interested in encouraging the use of these datasets among researchers thereby furthering the field and contributing to our knowledge of the effects of participation in AmeriCorps. More information about the study and public use data sets is available at: [http://www.cns.gov/about/role\\_impact/performance\\_research.asp](http://www.cns.gov/about/role_impact/performance_research.asp).

### **3) The Relationship between the Nonprofit Sector and National Service**

As the nation's largest funder of nonprofit community service organizations, the Corporation is interested in learning how nonprofit organizations receiving funding from the Corporation are responding to pressures facing the nonprofit sector as a whole. For example, research on how fiscal trends in the nonprofit sector impact our grantees would provide the Corporation with valuable information that could shed light on the feasibility of our matching requirement and other policies.

Additional areas of interest may include trends in the nonprofit workforce, governance, accountability, performance measurement, financial management, fundraising, and other aspects of the environment facing our grantees. Our goal in supporting this research is to understand the current issues facing our national service grantees, discover the degree to which different types of grantees face different issues and examine how the issues faced by our grantees relate to issues faced by other organizations in the nonprofit sector. We are also interested in the degree to which our grantees are having an impact on the sector. Are our grantees leading or innovating in some way that is changing the sector?

Applicants must propose at least one area of research described above. We will consider proposals that address more than one of the areas described, but there will be no preference given to a proposal because it addresses more than one of the research areas. The Corporation requests that applicants limit their submissions to one proposal per applicant.

The Corporation intends to support research in these areas by awarding one to five cooperative agreements to provide assistance to researchers **at institutions of higher education who have a demonstrated interest in volunteerism, national and community service and/or civic engagement**. The annual awards, to be made for three years, will be in the range of approximately \$50,000 - \$300,000.

Activities to be funded through this competition, and conducted in cooperation with the Corporation, include:

- Develop high quality research to examine volunteering, national and community service, and/or civic engagement;
- Fully utilize the data available from existing resources and datasets, and potentially collect new data on select topics;
- Publish research findings in public reports and articles in scholarly and policy journals;
- Present research findings at a variety of venues;
- Convene meetings on research related to volunteerism, national and community service and/or civic engagement for researchers, policymakers and practitioners; and
- Encourage practitioners and policymakers to use research findings to support their work with communities, volunteers and/or national service participants.

Applicants should propose a three-year plan that is consistent with the Corporation's research interests outlined above. We also encourage applicants to consider if their proposal could advance one or more of the agency's five strategic initiatives and to briefly outline any connections in their proposal. You can find our agency's strategic initiatives detailed at this link:

[http://www.nationalservice.org/about/focus\\_areas/index.asp](http://www.nationalservice.org/about/focus_areas/index.asp)

#### **B. Authority**

These funds will be available under Section 179 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12639).

## **II. AWARD INFORMATION**

#### **A. Number of Awards and Award Amount**

The Corporation anticipates making approximately one to five awards in the amount of approximately \$50,000 to \$300,000 annually.

#### **B. Award Period and Future Funding**

The successful applicant(s) will receive a one to three-year award with funding for the first year of the award. While the Corporation has no obligation to provide funds beyond the initial one-year performance period and award amount, additional funding may be made available pending satisfactory performance and availability of appropriations for years two and three. Additional funds may also be awarded for initiatives and activities that fall within the scope of this agreement, but were not funded during the initial award or subsequent continuation awards.

#### **C. Type of Funding Instrument**

The funding instrument is a cooperative agreement, which is a type of grant that will allow the successful applicant and the Corporation to work together to advance research on volunteering, national and community service, and civic engagement.

## **D. Selection Criteria**

In awarding this cooperative agreement, the Corporation will consider:

Research Design (45%)

Organizational Capacity (40%)

Budget/Cost Effectiveness (15%)

The Corporation will make all final decisions concerning awards and may require revisions to the grant proposal in order to achieve the objectives under this *Notice*.

### **1. Research Design**

The Corporation will consider the quality of the proposed design based on:

- a. The soundness, relevance and creativity of the applicant's research plan. In particular the Corporation is interested in how applicants plan to develop innovative research projects, disseminate research findings to the research community, and policymakers and practitioners;
- b. The applicant's standing and experience as a researcher in the volunteer, national and community service, and civic engagement fields.

### **2. Organizational Capacity**

The Corporation will consider the capacity of applicants to deliver the proposed activities based on:

- a. The standing, experience and body of work, including existing publications, of the applicant researchers;
- b. Capacity of applicant organizations to produce and manage high quality research projects;
- c. Ability to manage a Federal grant and/or apply sound fiscal management principles to grants, as evidenced by previous grants experience;
- d. Ability to undertake broad-based dissemination activities of research findings;
- e. Experience and track record of promoting the research findings to engage policymakers, practitioners and other influential non-researchers.

### **3. Budget/Cost Effectiveness**

The Corporation will consider the budget based on:

- a. Cost-effectiveness of the proposed research;
- b. The clarity and completeness of the budget and budget narrative; and
- c. The proposed level of non-federal share funding (match). (There is no requirement to match, but providing match makes the application more competitive. Please see IV.B.3 on indirect cost rates and match.)

### III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

#### A. Eligible Applicants

This competition is open to institutions of higher education or higher education research partnerships. (Partnerships are a single application filed jointly from more than one institution of higher education.) Applicants must have a demonstrated track record in research in the fields of volunteering, community service or civic engagement. All applicants must also demonstrate an institutional capacity to manage large research projects and Federal or other grants. In addition, we expect the successful applicant will demonstrate relationships with policymakers and practitioners.

The reason this competition is limited to institutions of higher education is two-fold. First, we already have large contracts with nonprofit research organizations and would like to expand the number and type of researchers examining volunteering and service. Second, we would like to grow an interest in volunteering, service, and civic engagement at institutions of higher education. Our hope is that increased research on volunteering, service and civic engagement on college campuses will expose more professors, students and administrators to these ideas.

#### B. Other Eligibility Requirements

##### 1. Lobbying:

Any 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.

##### 2. Current Grantees:

A higher education institution (or partnership of higher education institutions) that currently operates a Corporation-funded program or is applying for other Corporation funding is eligible to apply.

### IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

#### A. Address to Request Application Package

This *Notice* contains all application instructions, and is available at [http://www.nationalservice.gov/for\\_organizations/funding/nofa.asp](http://www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp) or by e-mailing [research@cns.gov](mailto:research@cns.gov).

#### B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Your application consists of:

- Standard Form 424
- *Page one only* of Standard Form 424A; and
- A narrative that addresses Program Design, Organizational Capability, Cost Effectiveness, and Budget Adequacy.
- Equal Opportunity Survey (see Section V)

You can find the Standard Forms at:

[http://www.nationalservice.gov/for\\_organizations/funding/nofa.asp](http://www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp). If you are approved for funding, you will create a more detailed budget prior to award of the cooperative agreement.

Your narrative can be no longer than 15 pages single spaced in a font no smaller than 12 point Times New Roman, with one inch margins. Your narrative should provide a well-designed plan with a clear and compelling justification for the requested funds. The narrative will cover the three year project period, indicating when activities are planned to take place. Please address the following elements in your narrative.

### **1) Research Design**

Describe your approach to addressing the need described in this *Notice*. Your strategy should address the following:

#### **a) Goals and Objectives.**

What are your proposed research goals and objectives? What are the expected outcomes and products and how will you measure them? In describing the strategy, address the following:

- What research questions do you intend to pursue?
- What methods will you use to pursue these research questions?
- What research products and research tools will be produced from this research?
- How will the research findings be disseminated not only to other researchers, but also to policymakers and practitioners?

#### **b) Description of Activities**

Please describe in detail the research activities proposed and provide a timeline for the activities.

### **2) Organizational Capacity**

Describe your capacity to implement and manage the proposed program. Your description should address the following:

#### **a) Areas of Expertise**

Please provide information on the researchers who would manage the project and conduct the key activities. Please describe the researchers':

- Research background in the volunteering, national and community service, and civic engagement fields;
- Experience in disseminating research findings and research tools to the research community, policymakers, practitioners, and the general public;
- Capacity to conduct large on-going research projects;
- Experience and capacity to develop and manage large datasets;
- Capacity to manage Federal or other grants; and

- Experience convening conferences and meetings, and any relevant results of these meetings.

**b) Ability to Provide Program Oversight**

Describe the demonstrated experience and infrastructure your organization has in managing research projects similar to the one proposed in this application. Who are the key staff responsible for program oversight? Detail the responsibilities of each key staff member.

**c) Ability to Provide Fiscal Oversight**

Describe the demonstrated experience and infrastructure your organization has in managing grants and cooperative agreements as well as any subgrant process.

What is your current organizational budget? How will you ensure that the fiscal management is compliant with Federal requirements? Who are the key staff responsible for fiscal oversight, and what past experience will they bring to program? Detail the responsibilities of each key staff member

**3) Budget/Cost Effectiveness**

Explain how the proposed program budget reflects the program's goals and design. You do not have to provide detailed budgets for years two and three; please provide a narrative of how years two and three budgets will differ from year one.

Applicants are limited to budgeting and claiming no more than 5% of the total Federal funds requested as indirect costs. However, applicants with federally approved negotiated indirect cost rates may propose that unfunded indirect cost share be recognized as a voluntary matching contribution against the Federal funding if awarded.

**V. OTHER SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

**A. Equal Opportunity Survey**

Applicants must complete the Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants. You can find this Survey at

[http://www.nationalservice.gov/for\\_organizations/funding/nofa.asp](http://www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp).

**B. Universal Identifier**

Applications must include a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number on the Standard Form 424. The DUNS number is an identifier that helps the Federal government improve statistical reports on Federal grants and cooperative agreements. The DUNS number does not replace your 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 at [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com).



The website indicates a 24-hour email turnaround time on requests for DUNS numbers; however, we suggest registering as far in advance of the application due date as possible. Expedited DUNS numbers may be obtained by telephone at a cost of \$99 by calling the DUNS number request line. Applications without DUNS numbers or with invalid DUNS numbers are subject to potential rejection.

**C. E-mail Submission**

Submit your application as four attachments to an e-mail message addressed to [research@cns.gov](mailto:research@cns.gov). Attach the 424, 424A, narrative, and Survey on Equal Opportunity. **All four attachments are required for a valid submission.**

**D. Submission Dates and Times**

The deadline for applications is **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, June 13, 2008.** Applications submitted by hardcopy or fax will not be accepted.

**E. Technical Assistance Call**

A technical assistance phone call to answer questions about this *Notice* will take place on **Wednesday, May 14 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time.** Please email [research@cns.gov](mailto:research@cns.gov) to sign up for the call and receive call-in information.

**F. Intent to Apply**

Please submit an e-mail stating your intent to apply to [research@cns.gov](mailto:research@cns.gov) by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time Friday, May 16, 2008.** This is not required, but helps us plan the review of the applications.

**D. Intergovernmental Review**

Applicants under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372 “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

**E. Funding Restrictions**

Agreements under this program are subject to the applicable OMB Cost Principles (for educational institutions see 2 CFR Part 220, OMB circular A-21, at [www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/circulars/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/circulars/)).

**VI. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

Corporation staff will review all proposals using the selection criteria in Section II. D. During the Staff Review process, Corporation staff may request supporting documentation from the applicant.

## **VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **A. Anticipated Announcement and Award Notices**

The Corporation anticipates making approximately one to five awards for this competition, but may make more if deemed the best approach to addressing the desired outcomes outlined in this *Notice*. We anticipate announcing selections under this *Notice* by approximately August 1, 2008.

Selected applicants will be approved to negotiate with the Corporation for a cooperative agreement. During the negotiation period, any issues or questions identified during the review of your application must be satisfactorily resolved before a cooperative agreement can be awarded. Upon successful conclusion of negotiations, a Notice of Grant Award (NGA) will be issued. The successful recipient(s) will also be required to negotiate and enter into a cooperative agreement in addition to the NGA-based award. The cooperative agreement will establish the particular obligations of the parties based on the funded application(s), and must be established either prior to award of the NGA-based funding, or within 30 days of the NGA award.

Awards made under this *Notice* will be in the form of a cooperative agreement. Administration of cooperative agreements to institutions of higher education is controlled by 45 CFR Part 2543 as well as any Provisions or Special Conditions attached to the award(s) by the Corporation.

Cooperative agreements require substantial involvement on the part of the government. Substantial involvement includes frequent and regular communication with and monitoring by the Corporation. The Corporation's program officer will confer with the award recipient on a regular basis to review service delivery and project status, including work plans, research designs, analyses, budgets, periodic reports, schedules for disseminating and publishing research, and other relevant materials.

### **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

The applicable regulations and other specific conditions are incorporated in the Notice of Grant Award (NGA). The NGA also incorporates your approved application and budget as part of your binding commitments under this grant.

The award recipient must comply with the following requirements:

#### **1. Access for Persons with Disabilities**

All grant recipients will ensure that all training and technical assistance services and resources including web sites are accessible to persons with disabilities, as required by law.

- Notify potential participants that reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request;

- Provide sign language interpreters, special assistance, and documents in alternate formats;
- Use accessible locations for training events;
- Use accessible technology, captioning videos. Avoid non-voice-over formats and, when indicating a telephone number, include a non-voice telephone alternative such as TTY or e-mail.
- Provide materials that are accessible to persons with disabilities, and incorporate into all activities planning for needs of clients without Internet access, by using accessible technology, providing materials in alternate formats upon request.

## **2. Code of Conduct**

Entities that are subject to 45 CFR part 2543 are required to develop and maintain a written code of conduct (See Section 2543.42). The code of conduct must prohibit real and apparent conflicts of interest that may arise among employees, officers, or agents. The code should prohibit the solicitation and acceptance of gifts or gratuities by your officers, employers and agents for personal benefit in excess of minimal value and outline administrative and disciplinary actions available to remedy violations of such standards. Self-recusal will not eliminate a potential or apparent conflict of interest. At a time designated by and prior to entering into a grant agreement with the Corporation, the applicant will be required to submit a copy of its code of conduct and describe methods it will use to ensure that all officers, employees, and agents of the organization are aware of the code of conduct.

## **3. Financial Management Systems**

Applicants selected for funding must provide documentation demonstrating that the applicant's financial management system satisfies the requirements in 45 CFR 2543.21(b). Consistent with the requirements of the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 (31 U.S.C.7501-07), if the applicant expended \$500,000 or more in Federal awards in its most recent fiscal year, such documentation must include a certification form or most recent audit by the applicant's independent public accountant that the applicant maintains internal controls over Federal awards, complies with applicable laws, regulations and contract or grant provisions, and prepares appropriate financial statements. If approved for funding applicants will be notified by the Corporation of any additional documentation to be provided. The applicant will have at least 30 calendar days to respond to this requirement. If an applicant does not respond within the prescribed time or responds with insufficient documentation, then the Corporation may determine that the applicant has not met this requirement and may withdraw the grant.

## **4. Ownership and Use of Materials and Copyright under the Cooperative Agreement**

To ensure that materials generated with Corporation funding are available to the general public and readily accessible to other grantees and interested parties, the Corporation reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain,

use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate all information, data, and materials produced under the agreement, and to authorize others to do so.

### **C. Reports and Other Requirements**

All grant recipients will be required to report to the Corporation on an annual basis during the period of performance.

#### **1. Performance Measurement and Accountability**

The Corporation is committed to accountability and to measuring the performance of all of its grantees. The award recipient for this competition must identify the critical outcomes of their work, indicators of success, and how progress can be judged or measured. The recipient will be required to report annually on agreed upon performance measures. The Corporation may also require an independent or peer-reviewed assessment of grantee performance and the quality of the research produced.

#### **2. Planning and Progress Reports**

##### **a) Planning documents**

At the beginning of a new performance period, please provide budget projections for the upcoming budget period, list upcoming activities and make any amendment to the initial three year plan.

##### **b) Progress reports**

An annual progress report is due thirty days after completion of the performance period for the award. The report will include:

- Budget report for the completed budget period.
- Narrative analysis of the budget report, explaining differences between budgeted and actual activities and costs by funding source.
- Progress towards performance measurements.
- Discussion of any problems observed or experienced and recommended solutions.

#### **3. Financial Reports**

Financial status reports (FSRs) must be submitted semi-annually. The reports are cumulative and must be submitted on the Corporation's web-based grants management system, eGrants, no later than 30 days after the close of each reporting period.

#### **4. Final Reports**

In addition to an annual report the award recipient completing their agreement periods will be required to submit a final report that is cumulative over the entire award period and consistent with the close-out requirements of the Corporation's Office of Grants Management. The final report is due 90 days after the end of the agreement. In lieu of the last semi-annual FSR, a final FSR must also be submitted. The final FSR is due 90 days after the end of the agreement.

### **VIII. AGENCY CONTACTS**

This *Notice* is available at

[http://www.nationalservice.gov/for\\_organizations/funding/nofa.asp](http://www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp). The TTY number is 202–606-3472. For further information or for a printed copy of this *Notice*, call the Special Initiatives Hotline at (202) 606-7507. Or send an e-mail to [research@cns.gov](mailto:research@cns.gov).

### **IX. OTHER INFORMATION**

The government is not obligated to make any award as a result of this *Notice*.