

Notice of Funding Opportunity for New Program Awards for Fiscal Year 2006

OVERVIEW

Federal Agency Name: Corporation for National and Community Service
Learn and Serve America

Funding Opportunity Title: **FY 2006 Learn and Serve America Higher Education Grant Competition**

Announcement Type: **Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

CFDA No.: **94.005**

Key Dates: **See Table 1, below**

Overview Information

Background: Learn and Serve America provides grants to State Education Agencies (SEAs), State Commissions on National and Community Service, Grantmaking Entities (faith-based and other nonprofits serving two or more states), Indian Tribes and U.S. Territories, and institutions of higher education to support programs that combine learning and community service. This approach to education and youth development, called service-learning, engages youth in meeting pressing community needs while they develop leadership, civic competencies, and other skills.

Available Grants: The Corporation for National and Community Service (hereinafter the Corporation) announces the anticipated availability of approximately \$40 million--subject to Congressional appropriation-- in Learn and Serve America funds to implement and support School-Based, Community-Based, and Higher Education service-learning programs in FY 2006. The Grant competitions **in bold font** in Table 1 below are described in this NOFO. See the Community- and School-Based NOFOs for information about those competitions.

Table 1: Learn and Serve America Key Dates and Funding Opportunity

Name of Grant Program*	Approx. Funds Available	Application Deadline	Funding Announcement
Higher Education Consortia	\$8 million	February 28, 2006	June 12, 2006
Higher Education Individual	\$2 million	February 28, 2006	June 12, 2006
Community-Based Grants	\$4.5 million	March 7, 2006	June 12, 2006
School-Based Indian Tribe and U.S. Territory Set-Aside	\$765,000	March 7, 2006	June 12, 2006
School-Based Formula	\$19 million	February 2, 2006	June 12, 2006
School-Based Competitive	\$6.5 million	March 7, 2006	June 12, 2006

The Corporation anticipates making approximately thirty-five Higher Education program grants. Grant awards for Consortia will range from approximately \$350,000 to \$500,000 per year. Grant awards for individual institutions will range from approximately \$125,000 to \$200,000 per year. All grants awarded are for three successive years. Continuation for the second and third years of

funding are contingent upon satisfactory performance, the availability of funds, and other criteria established in the award agreement.

Funds for this grant competition are available under authority provided by Pub.L 108-447. All funding estimates are projections, and publication of this announcement does not obligate the Corporation to award any specific number of grants or to obligate the entire amount of funds available, or any part thereof, for grants under Learn and Serve America.

All potential applicants should read this entire document well in advance of completing an application as some application requirements may require action or planning up to 30 days prior to the application due date. In order to apply for a grant, applicants must read this NOFO and the general application and budget instructions. These documents, as well as the application itself, are available at http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/index.asp. The documents can also be obtained by contacting Learn and Serve America at 202-606-7510 or LSAHigherEd@cns.gov.

All applicants are required to propose performance measures as a part of their applications; see http://www.projectstar.org/star/Learn%20and%20Serve/ls_pmtoolkit.htm for a toolkit that explains how to craft performance measures.

Purpose of Grants: The purpose of higher education grants is to expand participation in community service and service-learning by supporting innovative community service programs carried out through institutions of higher education that act as civic institutions to meet the human, educational, environmental, or public safety needs of neighboring communities. Emphasis is placed both on institutional change to support service and service-learning within higher education and on community problem-solving and capacity-building.

Learn and Serve America Higher Education Grants support a variety of community service and service-learning activities including: creating and expanding community service and service-learning programs; training faculty, K-12 teachers, and others to conduct service-learning; integrating service-learning into professional education programs; strengthening the service-learning infrastructure within higher education institutions; and supplementing community service and service-learning activities through Federal Work-Study (FWS) programs. Participants in higher education programs include graduate and undergraduate students, faculty, staff, and community members.

Eligible Applicants: Applicants eligible for Learn and Serve America funds are institutions of higher education (as defined in the Higher Education Act), and consortia of higher education institutions, which may include other public or private nonprofit organizations. The Corporation requires all applicants to use the Corporation's web-based application system, eGrants, to submit applications electronically. Please go to www.nationalservice.gov/egrants/index.asp and establish an eGrants account to begin the process of submitting the application online.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Background

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that encourages Americans of all ages and backgrounds to engage in community-based service. Through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs, the Corporation has engaged citizens

of all ages and backgrounds in helping to meet pressing local needs for more than a decade. The Corporation's programs provide human and other resources to community- and faith-based groups to empower them to meet local needs in education, the environment, public safety, disaster preparedness and homeland security, and other critical areas. This year, more than two million individuals of all ages and backgrounds will serve through Corporation-supported programs, and those individuals will recruit, train, and manage an additional one million community volunteers. National and community service programs also work closely with America's volunteer-connector organizations to increase the number and impact of our nation's volunteers, and with schools and nonprofit groups to foster the ethic of good citizenship.

Learn and Serve America funds service-learning programs through state commissions on national and community service, State Education Agencies, institutions of higher education, Indian tribes and U.S. territories, and faith-based and other nonprofit organizations. Funding is intended to support the implementation of service-learning projects and to create long-lasting support structures for service-learning. Higher Education funds are designed to implement and support innovative community service and service-learning programs carried out through institutions of higher education, acting as civic institutions to meet the human, educational, environmental, or public safety needs of neighboring communities.

What is Service-Learning?

The Corporation uses the interpretation provided in the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, which defines service-learning as an educational method that:

- is conducted in and meets the needs of a community;
- is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program, and with the community; and
- helps foster civic responsibility; and that--
- is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the educational components of the community service program in which the participants are enrolled; and
- provides structured time for the students or participants to reflect on the service experience.

Service-learning is a teaching strategy in which students address community problems. Like any effective teaching strategy, service-learning is designed to help students acquire core course content knowledge and skills. Unlike other teaching strategies, service-learning places as much emphasis on community improvement as on student growth. Service-learning students make use of course material to do important work on pressing community needs. As a result of high-quality service-learning, students benefit by seeing practical uses for their studies, and communities benefit by having needs addressed. Through service-learning, students develop civic competencies, knowledge, and dispositions that lead to a lifetime of civic engagement and service to community.

Service-learning also demands the development of partnerships between colleges and universities and organizations and institutions in the surrounding community. These partnerships set the course for program activities, ensuring that the community needs identified and service activities conducted are of benefit to both community and college.

Corporation Strategic Goals

The nation's critical needs have driven the Corporation to focus on four goals across all its programs over the next five years. Applicants are expected to address one or more of these goals. Learn and Serve America and its programs have particular responsibility to support goal one, "Ensuring a Brighter Future for All of America's Youth," and goal four, "Engaging Students in Their Communities." While these two goals are consistent with the mission of Learn and Serve America, applicants may design programs to have an impact on the other two Corporation goals: "Harnessing Experience to Meet 21st Century Challenges," and "Providing More Opportunities for Citizens to Serve and Volunteer." A brief overview of the strategic goals and Learn and Serve America's role in each one is below. Applicants are strongly encouraged to learn more about the Corporation's Strategic Plan for 2005-2010. For more information, including the full text of the document, visit http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/role_impact/strategic_plan.asp.

1. Ensuring a Brighter Future for All of America's Youth: Youth who grow up in severely distressed communities, characterized by high poverty rates and a variety of social problems, are more likely to be at risk of school failure, unemployment, criminal behavior, and persistent poverty. By both engaging these youth in meaningful service and providing services to youth in difficult circumstances, the Corporation and its partners can improve the lives of our younger citizens.

We expect that many Learn and Serve America Higher Education applicants will propose to conduct programs that leverage higher education resources to meet the needs of youth in disadvantaged circumstances, particularly to prepare such young people for entry to and success in higher education. These activities may be of direct benefit to such youth by, for example, providing ongoing and summer tutoring and mentoring support to help prepare youth for postsecondary education. Programs may also provide indirect support by, for example, conducting policy research for a nonprofit to improve services to impoverished adolescents. Higher education programs are encouraged to engage school-age youth from disadvantaged circumstances in service-learning activities either by organizing such activities or by supporting the efforts of schools and school districts to provide rigorous service-learning opportunities to their students. Engaging more schools and youth in impoverished communities in service-learning improves the lives of higher education participants, serves and strengthens communities, and provides valuable academic, civic and service experience to school-aged youth.

2. Harnessing Experience to Meet 21st Century Challenges: Beginning in 2010, the share of the population that is age 65 and over will begin to climb substantially, bringing profound implications throughout our society. The aging of the Baby Boomers will increase their need for services, particularly independent living support and long-term care. For example, Americans ages 85+, the group most in need of long term care services, is projected to more than triple by 2040, from today's 4 million individuals to about 14 million Boomers.

At the same time, the Baby Boomers can help provide solutions to some of our most intractable social problems, including the expanding need for independent living support. Research tells us that Baby Boomers, as a whole, will not withdraw completely from the work place in "traditional retirement." Instead, they will seek a balance of work, leisure, civic engagement, and other interests. Offering opportunities to capture their talents and

experience and engaging them in helping to solve critical social issues through service must become a high-priority goal for the nation in the coming years.

Learn and Serve America applicants may address this strategic priority in a variety of ways. Service-learning programs may provide service to older Americans while also preparing students for careers in gerontology-related professions as well as building personal and organizational relationships that strengthen community ties. In addition, Learn and Serve programs may take advantage of Boomers' expertise by recruiting them as volunteers to support or coordinate service-learning activities. Learn and Serve also encourages programs in which youth and their elders serve side-by-side, significantly enriching the experience for participants and the recipients of service.

3. Providing More Opportunities for Citizens to Serve and Volunteer: President Bush issued a call to service in his 2002 State of the Union Address, appealing to all Americans to dedicate at least two years (or the equivalent of 4,000 hours) to service. According to Gallup's instant reaction poll following the address, 80% of Americans who watched the address felt willing and able to heed the call. Service opportunities now need to be available to enable volunteers to become involved.

Learn and Serve America programs should not only provide immediate opportunities for service, they should also strengthen the service infrastructure in the United States. Through the development and implementation of service-learning policies, educator professional development, and publicizing the impact of programs on youth and communities, Learn and Serve builds lasting frameworks and support for higher education service, service-learning and civic engagement. These sustainable programs will continue to engage in service-learning long after Learn and Serve funds have been redirected to support other programs.

In addition, Learn and Serve programs should intentionally introduce students to a lifetime of service and civic responsibility. Research indicates that individuals who serve when they are younger are more likely to serve as they age. By providing high quality service-learning opportunities, Learn and Serve programs can start or reinforce participants' service experience and develop a lifelong ethic of service and civic engagement. Yet, research also indicates the importance of highlighting for students the lessons they are learning, whether those lessons are academic, civic, service-related or all three. Participants in Learn and Serve programs must be made aware that they are part of a national service program, and should be introduced to other opportunities for service and civic engagement in their community and throughout their life span.

4. Engaging Students in Their Communities: Educational institutions (elementary, secondary, and higher education) have the responsibility of educating students to become responsible citizens and leaders who use their education and life experiences to support the common good. Service-learning is an effective strategy for the development of civic skills, leadership competencies, and academic success. The Corporation is committed to significantly expanding the use of service-learning in schools and communities.

All Learn and Serve America programs are expected to contribute to the expansion of service-learning to new schools, higher education institutions, and youth-serving community organizations. In 1984, only 9% of schools offered service-learning opportunities. By 1999, nine years after the start of Learn and Serve America programs, nearly a third of all schools offered service-learning. Research on the prevalence of service-learning in higher education is less succinct. More than half of all community colleges offer service-learning and the number of Campus Compact member institutions has grown to approximately 1000. While

this is excellent progress, it will take much more to reach half of all schools and half of all colleges by 2010, as the Corporation proposes, and far more to reach the goal set for schools by the National Commission on Service-Learning: service-learning for every student, every year.

Disaster Response

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that some ten million people lived in the region hit by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. It will take years for residents to re-establish their homes, resume economic activity, and rebuild communities. Similarly, hundreds of thousands are likely to relocate outside of the region on a long-term basis. Learn and Serve welcomes applications that propose innovative uses of service-learning to provide support to the individuals and communities affected by the Hurricanes of August 2005. Any region of the United States must face the possibility of a natural or man-made disaster. The hurricane disaster exposed many of the everyday difficulties that individuals living in poverty or limited by infirmity must confront. Learn and Serve applicants may also choose to address the dual challenge of helping those in disadvantaged circumstances to prepare to survive a disaster while helping to improve the conditions in impoverished communities.

Purpose

Learn and Serve America Higher Education grants expand participation in community service and service-learning programs by funding innovative programs carried out through institutions of higher education that act as civic institutions to meet the human, education, environmental, or public safety needs of neighboring communities. Funds may be used to further institutional change to support service and service-learning within higher education and support community problem-solving and capacity-building.

While all the Corporation's strategic goals are important, Learn and Serve America particularly invites applicants that propose the use of higher education resources to meet the needs of youth in disadvantaged circumstances. Activities in support of youth academic and civic engagement leading to school completion and college enrollment are particularly encouraged.

Successful applicants will propose to build upon proven strategies of integrating service-learning in the curriculum and campus culture, while adapting to the institution and local community's unique environment. Learn and Serve America will fund programs that demonstrate not only the spread of service-learning, but the deepening of those efforts across the curriculum and beyond. Additional examples of successful program strategies that Learn and Serve America encourages include those that:

- Facilitate the integration of community service and the use of service-learning methods into academic curricula, including the integration of clinical programs into the academic curriculum for students in professional schools, so that students can obtain credit for the learning achieved through their community service projects.
- Strengthen the community service and service-learning infrastructure at higher education institutions to meet the needs of local communities.
- Promote collaboration among campus offices and courses and local community agencies focused on expanding student community service and improving its quality. Collaboration with student financial aid and student employment offices to promote the expansion of Federal Work-Study (FWS) community service opportunities is especially encouraged.

- Strengthen the training, leadership, and instructional capacity of teachers and prospective teachers at the K-12 and postsecondary levels with respect to service-learning and civic education.
- Provide for the training of related education personnel and community leaders in the skills necessary to develop, supervise, and organize service-learning.
- Supplement the funds available to carry-out FWS programs to support service-learning and community service.
- Support student-initiated and designed service-learning projects.
- Support research that is conducted with community groups and meets community needs.

Program Elements

The program elements and policies listed below are illustrative of high-quality higher education service-learning projects. Applicants should take care to design programs that address one or more of the Corporation's strategic initiatives and incorporate these items appropriately:

- Participants collaborate for the purpose of community problem-solving;
- Service-learning activities have clear goals, meet compelling needs in the community, and have significant consequences for participants and recipients of service;
- Student participation and leadership in selecting, designing, implementing, and evaluating service;
- Students take responsibility for coordination of the service and service-learning efforts of others on campus, in the community, or more widely;
- Multiple opportunities for participant reflection including in the context of course or other educational content;
- Creation of significant, long-term reciprocal partnerships with community partners;
- Systematic assessment and evaluation of service-learning and its outcomes;
- Strategic implementation of policies and activities that strengthens the service-learning infrastructure locally and/or nationally;
- Efforts to engage staff, trustees, alumni and other higher education assets in service and civic engagement;
- Multiple opportunities to publicize service-learning efforts including, academic publications, site visits, press releases, and participant awards, including the Presidential Freedom Scholarships and the President's Volunteer Service Award.

II. Funding Information

Learn and Serve America will consider applications to implement service-learning programs in two general categories:

- 1) grants to consortia of higher education institutions, which may include other public or private nonprofit organizations; and
- 2) grants to individual colleges or universities that implement programs directly.

Contingent on the availability of appropriations, the Corporation expects to award approximately twenty consortia grants and approximately fifteen individual institution grants for FY 2006. Consortia awards will range from approximately \$350,000 to \$500,000 for each of three consecutive years. Awards for individual grants will range from approximately \$125,000 to \$200,000 for each of three consecutive years. The second and third years of funding are contingent upon satisfactory performance, the availability of funds, and other criteria established in the award agreement.

All funding estimates are projections for the guidance of potential applicants and publication of this announcement does not obligate the Corporation to award any specific number of grants or to obligate the entire amount of funds available, or any part thereof, for grants under Learn and Serve America.

Learn and Serve America anticipates making funding announcements by June 2006 and making grant awards by the end of August 2006. Requests from successful applicants for pre-award spending authority will be considered after the funding announcements are made.

Grants to Consortia Applicants

Under this competition, Learn and Serve America funds innovative proposals that strengthen the foundations of service-learning in institutions of higher education. Proposals in this category should have a broad impact on the growth of service-learning at state, regional, or national levels.

Consortia will play a critical role in achieving Learn and Serve America's goal of supporting programs that expand the number of students involved in service and increase the number of institutions that utilize service-learning. High-quality consortia proposals will demonstrate the following elements:

- A focus on strategic initiatives and Learn and Serve America priorities discussed in Section I;
- Consortia applicants should ideally select their subgrantees prior to submission of the application. Alternatively, applicants may provide a plan describing how the subgrantees and their partners will be identified and selected.
- Regardless of when subgrantees are selected, programs should document their selection strategy and indicate how it will achieve maximum impact on community needs and the expansion of service-learning to new and diverse colleges and communities;
- Funding sufficient for subgrants to support substantial program activities in each local college-community partnership;
- Emphasis on high-quality partnerships and program institutionalization in each local partnership;
- A subgrantee management strategy that maintains regular program monitoring for quality and compliance;
- Technical assistance and training to support programs and build sustainability at partner campuses;
- Support for a peer network among subgrantees;

- Program evaluation to measure programmatic outcomes, including instruments and training for subgrantees;
- Innovation and leadership in service-learning on a network, regional, or national scale.

In addition to those items listed above, consortia proposals should indicate how the grantee will assure that program elements as listed above are carried out at the subgrantee level.

A more extensive list of program elements entitled “Hallmarks of High-Quality Service-Learning Programs” can be found at: http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/index.asp.

Grants to Individual Institutions

Under this competition, Learn and Serve America funds innovative and high-quality programs that significantly advance community service, civic engagement, and service-learning programs in which individual institutions of higher education partner with local communities to meet community needs. Applicants must describe how they plan to integrate service-learning into their institution – across an entire department, a school, in the core curriculum, throughout co-curricular activities, or throughout the entire institution. In addition, applicants are expected to describe the community partnerships currently in place and describe the process by which community representatives were engaged in the development of the grant proposal. Successful applicants must focus on strategic initiatives and Learn and Serve America priorities discussed in Section I, emphasize institutionalization, demonstrate program models that can be brought to scale across the campus or replicated nationwide as appropriate, increase the quality of service-learning, and provide more students with opportunities to serve. In this 15th year of Learn and Serve America programs, applicants are expected to describe how their proposed program is innovative or advances the field of service-learning and civic engagement.

Successful proposals in this category will demonstrate their institution’s commitment to supporting service-learning programs. Evidence of that commitment can include, but is not limited to:

- infrastructure such as college-funded staff positions and a service-learning center;
- an active advisory committee with campus and community representation;
- FWS community service salaries exceeding 20 percent of the institution’s total FWS allocation, as well as other campus resources devoted to service and civic engagement.

Program Examples

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the program examples at http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/index.asp which illustrate the partnerships, activities, and program features that characterize high-quality Learn and Serve America grantees.

Performance Measures

High-quality performance measures are a core element of all successful applications. Learn and Serve America will review and consider performance measures as they relate to the overall program design of the application. All applicants must provide a complete performance measure for each of the three program categories: 1) Needs and Service Activities, 2) Strengthening Communities to Support Service-Learning, and 3) Participant Development. A complete performance measure includes at least one output, one intermediate outcome, and one end outcome.

Using a logic model is an effective way to connect performance measures to program design and evaluation instruments. Applicants are strongly encouraged to develop logic models for their programs, though the actual logic model is *not* a required part of the submission.

For more information about performance measures, including a toolkit to assist in the development and implementation of performance measures, visit the Corporation's technical assistance provider's website at http://www.projectstar.org/star/Learn%20and%20Serve/ls_pmtoolkit.htm.

Previously Funded Grantees

Previous Learn and Serve America Higher Education grantees are eligible to apply for an additional cycle of funding. The most competitive applicants will demonstrate how: 1) the program has built sustainable institutional support for service-learning activities; 2) the current proposal builds upon accomplishments of the previously funded activities; 3) the proposed activities are substantially different from those previously supported by Learn and Serve America; and 4) the program has significantly increased direct financial support from the lead applicant and/or other non-Corporation sources for proposed activities.

Individual institution grantees that have previously received two or more three-year grants are expected to be largely sustained by sources other than Learn and Serve America funds. Activities proposed in a new application must be wholly new or focused on dissemination and replication.

Grant Period

Learn and Serve America grants have a three year programmatic approval with funding for the first year. Applicants must include proposed activities and a detailed proposed budget for the first year of operation as well as estimated funds for the second and third years of operation.

Approved applicants will enter into a multi-year award agreement and receive funding from the Corporation initially for the first year of the program. The Corporation has no obligation to provide additional funding in connection with the award in subsequent years. Funding for the second and third years of an approved program is contingent upon satisfactory progress towards meeting the performance measure targets, timely and accurate reporting, the availability of funds, and any other criteria established in the award agreement.

Program Authority

The Learn and Serve America Higher Education programs are authorized by Title I subtitle B of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, 42U.S.C. 12521, et seq. Funds for this grant competition are available under authority provided by Pub.L 108-447.

Applicable Regulations

Applicable regulations include the Learn and Serve America Higher Education regulations, 45CFR Part 2515-2519 and the uniform administrative requirements for grants and agreements with institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other nonprofit organizations, 45 CFR part 2543.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Institutions of higher education as defined in the Higher Education Act are eligible for both the individual and consortia grants available under this competition. Eligible applicants for consortia grants also include partnerships composed of higher education institutions and other public or private non-profit organizations. Examples of consortia applicants include national academic disciplinary associations, affinity groups, state or regional associations, etc.

All potential applicants should read this entire document well in advance of completing an application as some application requirements may necessitate action or planning prior to the application due date. In addition, in order to successfully complete an application for Learn and Serve America funding, applicants must also read and follow the application instructions available on at: http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/index.asp. Application instructions can also be obtained by contacting Learn and Serve America at 202-606-7510 or LSAHigherEd@cns.gov.

2. Matching Funds

All applicants are required to provide matching funds on a 1:1 basis. Cash and in-kind match in the form of direct and indirect costs are allowed. Applicants must provide their share of the program cost through payment in cash or in kind, which may include facilities, equipment or services. However, the most competitive applicants will demonstrate institutional commitment for service and service-learning that involves direct support of activities and staff positions proposed in the application.

The grantee's share may come from private, state, or federal sources. In the case of federal sources, the funds of another agency may only be used as match if the other agency permits such use.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application

Applications must be submitted using eGrants, the Corporation's integrated, secure, web-based system for application and management. To both obtain and submit an application via eGrants, please visit http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/index.asp. Application instructions are available at this website as well or can be obtained by contacting Learn and Serve America at (202)-606-7510 or at LSAHigherEd@cns.gov.

2. Content and Form of the Application

To be considered for funding, applications must meet all of the criteria and requirements contained in this Notice. Applicants must also follow the general application and budget instructions. These documents, as well as the application itself, are available at the Corporation's website under funding and initiatives at http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/index.asp. The documents can also be obtained by contacting Learn and Serve America at 202-606-7510 or LSAHigherEd@cns.gov.

3. Submission Date and Time

The application deadline for eGrants and paper submissions is 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on February 28, 2006. All Applicants must attempt to submit applications via eGrants.

All applicants must attempt to submit applications via eGrants. In the event of any prolonged unavailability of the eGrants system on the date of submission, the Corporation reserves the right to extend the eGrants submission deadline. A notice will be placed in eGrants and on http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/index.asp notifying all users of the extended deadline.

Please note: Applications submitted by fax or email will not be accepted.

Notice of Intent to Submit

To help Learn and Serve America gauge the number of applications that are likely to be received, applicants should send an email with the subject header “Notification: HE” to LSAHigherEd@cns.gov, at least 60 days prior to the application deadline. This notification is not mandatory, but will help Learn and Serve America more efficiently plan for the review of the applications. Include the name of the applicant organization, contact person, phone number, and appropriate email address in the email.

Training and Technical Assistance Calls

Teleconference calls to clarify program guidance and assist with eGrants application procedures for applicants will be posted at http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/index.asp. Participation on these calls is NOT mandatory. Please register for a scheduled call by sending an email with the applicant contact information to LSAinfo@cns.gov.

4. Funding Restrictions

Grants under this program are subject to the applicable Cost Principles under OMB Circulars A-21, A-110, and A-122 for non-profits, and/or FAR 31.2. Applicants should consult the appropriate OMB Cost Principles and/or FAR in preparing their applications. Links to these documents can be found: www.omb.gov.

5. Additional Submission Information

Tips for the eGrants application process:

- Prepare and save the application as a word processing document prior to putting it into eGrants, then copy and paste the document into the appropriate narrative sections in eGrants.
- **Applicants should create an eGrants account and begin their applications at least three weeks prior to the final submission deadline.** Applicants must allow time for the appropriate official to complete all certifications and assurances in eGrants prior to submission. Beginning early in eGrants will also allow applicants time to address technical issues prior to the deadline.
- Applicants who encounter difficulties using eGrants should contact the eGrants Help Desk at 888-677-7849 or 202-606-7506, or by email at egrantshelp@cns.gov. The eGrants Help Desk will provide a ticket number to track the eGrants application process/submission issue.
- Use only UPPERCASE letters for all section headings and other information that should be highlighted in the narrative. Bold face, bullets, underlines, or other types of formatting, charts, diagrams, and tables will not copy into eGrants. Do not use any of these in an application.

- Adhere to all the character limits indicated in the application instructions. Characters include all the letters, punctuation, and spaces in an application. Word processing software can provide a character count.

Paper Applications

Applicants unable to submit applications using eGrants may submit a paper application following these instructions:

- Type and double-space the application in Times New Roman, 12-point font size with one-inch margins.
- Adhere to the character limits listed in the application instructions and number the pages.
- Submit one unbound, single-sided original paper application. Also submit an electronic version of your application on diskette or CD-ROM in order to expedite processing. The diskette version must be an exact duplicate of the paper original and will be used to copy and paste the application information into eGrants. If there are any differences between the paper application and the diskette or CD-ROM, we will use the diskette or CD-ROM version. Faxed or emailed versions of your application will not be accepted.
- Include in hard copy, a brief paragraph which describes the technical issue that prevented an eGrants submission.

Paper applications and explanations for why the application could not be submitted in eGrants must arrive at the Corporation by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard/Daylight Time on Tuesday, February 28, 2006. Applicants should use a courier service as USPS service to government agencies often are delayed and sometimes damaged due to security measures. Submit paper applications to the following address:

The Corporation for National and Community Service
 Box LSA
 1201 New York Avenue, NW
 Washington, DC 20525

Higher Education application items must be received at the Corporation by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on February 28, 2006.

In the event of any prolonged unavailability of eGrants on the date of submission, the Corporation reserves the right to extend the eGrants submissions deadline. A notice will be placed in eGrants notifying all users of the extended deadline. In this case applicants would need to submit applications via eGrants by the new deadline. The Corporation reserves the right to permit the filing of late applications upon a finding of good cause.

V. Application Review Information

1. Review Criteria

Program Design-- 60%

A. Needs and Service Activities

- Documented and compelling community need(s)
- Extent proposed activities have an impact on community needs
- Performance measures link activities to community needs
- Outcomes/impact of activities are demonstrable
- Innovation and replicability of program model/activities

B. Strengthening Communities to Support Service-Learning

Internal communities:

- Sustainability plans for grantee and subgrantees
- Strategies for assessing grantee/subgrantee sustainability needs and directing resources appropriately
- Planned activities associated with building institutional support for service-learning

External Communities:

- Community partnerships at grantee and subgrantee levels
- Mobilization of adult volunteers and other community participants
- Collaboration with community partners on development, management, and implementation of project and activities

C. Participant Development

- Plans for recruiting, training, supervising, and recognizing participants
- Activities that promote lifelong service, civic knowledge, and skill development of participants
- Plans to track and evaluate student academic success and civic engagement
- Plans for active student participation and reflection in service-learning activities
- Roles for participants that lead to measurable outputs and outcomes

Organizational Capacity--25%

- Programmatic and fiscal oversight/monitoring experience
- Three-year plan with milestones to implement proposed program
- Plans and systems for self-assessments, evaluations, and continuous improvement
- Plans to provide effective technical assistance to program sites and subgrantees
- Appropriate and clearly delineated roles for staff and administrators
- Applicant or key personnel track record in service-learning

Budget/Cost Effectiveness--15%

- Budget supports program design and proposed activities
- Potential for replicability of project model/activities
- Costs are reasonable and necessary
- Type and amount of matching support for program
- Institutional support for key staff positions

2. Review and Selection Process

Learn and Serve America receives far more high-quality applications than can be funded. The multi-stage review process to determine which proposals should be funded includes reviews and recommendations by peer review panels and Corporation staff. Grant approvals are made by the Corporation's Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Directors.

Peer reviewers will evaluate all proposals using the selection criteria in Section V. The peer review process uses outside experts, including representatives from educational and youth service organizations, community service practitioners, administrators, and former national service participants, to evaluate the quality of applications.

Corporation staff members review the most highly rated peer-reviewed proposals according to selection criteria in Section V and statutory priorities listed below. After evaluating the overall

quality of each proposal, and its responsiveness to the priority areas, Learn and Serve America staff will take into consideration whether applicants are: (1) geographically diverse, including projects in both urban and rural areas, and (2) in areas of high concentration of low-income residents. The staff may conduct interviews in person or through conference calls prior to recommending a program for approval. This process determines which applications Learn and Serve America staff will recommend for funding to the Corporation's Chief Executive Officer and Board of Directors.

During the staff review stage, staff will give priority to applications that:

- demonstrate institutional commitment, other than by demonstrating the commitment of the students, to supporting the service-learning activities carried out under the program;
- demonstrate community involvement in the development of the proposal;
- specify the manner in which the institution will promote faculty, administration, and staff participation in the community service-learning projects;
- specify the manner in which the institution will provide service to the community through organized programs, including, where appropriate, clinical programs for students in professional schools;
- specify that the institution will use their grant funds to strengthen the service infrastructure in institutions of higher education;
- describe any partnership that will participate in the community service projects, such as a partnership comprised of the institution of higher education, a student organization, and a community-based agency, a local government agency, or a nonprofit entity that serves or involves school-age youth or older adults; or
- specify projects that involve leadership development of school-age youth.

Other Funding Considerations

Staff will attempt to ensure that the selected applicant pool will:

- include Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribally controlled colleges;
- reflect geographic diversity; and
- represent a balance between former and new grantees.

3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Please see announcement dates in Table 1, above. Selected applicants are approved to negotiate with the Corporation for a grant award. During the negotiation period, any issues or questions identified during the review of the application must be satisfactorily resolved before a grant can be awarded. The grant negotiation period may range from three to six weeks. Upon successful conclusion of grant negotiations, a Notice of Grant Award (NGA) will be issued.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

The Corporation will notify the U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators of successful applicants. A Learn and Serve America program officer will also contact successful applicants via telephone or email.

If an application is not evaluated because it did not meet basic eligibility requirements or was not selected for funding after careful review, the Corporation will notify the applicant.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Additional administrative and national policy requirements are noted under Section I of this notice and are otherwise identified in the OMB-approved application and budget instructions. The applicable regulations and other specific conditions are incorporated in the Notice of Grant Award (NGA). The NGA also incorporates the approved application as part of the binding commitments under this grant.

Equal Opportunity Survey: Applicants are asked to complete the survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants. Applicants may complete the survey in eGrants while preparing an application for submission or contact the Corporation (Section VII. below) to obtain a copy.

Universal Identifier: Applications must include a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. 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 the Employer Identification Number.

DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at 866-705-5711 or online at <http://www.dnb.com>. The website indicates a 24-hour email turnaround time on requests for DUNS numbers; however, **Applicants should register at least 30 days in advance of the application due date.** Expedited DUNS numbers may be obtained by telephone at a cost of \$99 (as of April 2005) by calling the DUNS number request line. Applications without DUNS numbers or with invalid DUNS numbers may be subject to rejection.

Administrative Costs. For any fiscal year, grantees and subgrantees collectively may spend no more than 5 percent of the total grant funds on *administrative* costs (see definition of administrative cost in the budget instructions).

Payments to Participants. Grantees may not use Learn and Serve America funds to pay participant stipends. However, Participants stipend provided by Federal Work Study or other institutional funds that complement your service-learning program may be used for matching funds. Participants who receive academic credit for their service may not also receive stipends unless the total service activities involve a substantial time commitment beyond that required for credit.

MLK Day of Service. The Corporation is charged by Congress to promote service on Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, the third Monday in January, helping to make it “A Day on, Not a Day Off.” All Learn and Serve America grantees/subgrantees are expected to lead or take part in an MLK Day of Service project. MLK Day provides a great opportunity to reach out and engage different populations and potential new partners and introduce them to service. Grantees and/or subgrantees should email mlkday@cns.gov with their plans for their events and to share results and media coverage. A toolkit and other resources are available at www.mlkday.gov.

Program Information for Participants. Grantees must provide information to all Learn and Serve America participants concerning: (1) their participation in Learn and Serve America and its

purposes, (2) other Corporation programs, (3) local volunteer centers, and (4) Presidential Freedom Scholarships and Presidential volunteer Service Awards.

Annual Grantee Training. Grantees must attend the Annual Learn and Serve America Grantee Training Meeting. The program budget must cover costs associated with attendance (The budget form provides a fixed amount for meeting attendance).

Federal Financial Management and Grant Administration Requirements.

It is the responsibility of all programs funded by Learn and Serve America to ensure appropriate stewardship of federal funds entrusted to them. Under Corporation regulations, all programs must maintain financial management systems that provide accurate, complete, and current disclosure of financial information. To meet this requirement, programs must have adequate accounting practices and procedures, internal controls, audit trails, and cost allocation procedures.

A grantee organization that expends \$500,000 or more of total federal awards in a fiscal year is required to obtain a single audit for that year conducted by an independent auditor in accordance with the Single Audit Act, as amended, 31 U.S.C. sec. 7501, et seq., and OMB Circular A-133. If the grantee expends federal awards under only one federal program, it may elect to have a program specific audit, if it is otherwise eligible. A grantee that does not expend \$500,000 in federal awards is exempt from the single audit requirements of OMB Circular A-133 for that year. However, it must continue to conduct financial management reviews of its programs, and records must be available for review and audit.

A recipient of a federal grant award (pass-through entity) is required in accordance with paragraph 400(d) of OMB Circular A-133 to do the following with regard to its subrecipients: 1) identify the federal award and funding source; 2) advise subrecipients of all requirements imposed on them; 3) monitor subgrantee activities and compliance; 4) ensure that subrecipients have A-133 audits when required; 5) issue decisions and ensure follow-up on audit findings in a timely manner; 6) where necessary, adjust its own records and financial statements based on audits; and 7) require subrecipients to permit access by the pass-through entity and auditors to records and financial statements as necessary for the pass-through entity to comply with A-133.

Learn and Serve America grantees must assure that your programs or activities, including those of any subgrantees, will be conducted, and facilities operated, in compliance with the applicable civil rights statutes and their implementing regulations. Grantees must assure that they will obtain assurances of such compliance prior to extending federal financial assistance to subgrantees. For civil rights purposes, all programs and projects funded or receiving service members under the National and Community Service Act, as amended, are programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

Monitoring Responsibilities. Grantees are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of grant and subgrant-supported activities to ensure compliance with applicable federal requirements and achievement of performance goals.

Multiple Submissions. An eligible applicant may submit more than one application under Learn and Serve America Higher Education, as long as the activities described in each application are distinct. Nevertheless, whenever possible, an applicant should try to synthesize collaborative effort, instead of submitting multiple applications that compete with each other.

In cases where a consortium submits an application under Learn and Serve America Higher Education, the members of the consortium remain eligible to apply separately, as long as the activities described in each application are distinct. Since funding is limited, and since the Corporation will strive to achieve geographic diversity among its funded programs, the Corporation encourages coordination within a consortium to determine the application strategy that best serves both the consortium and its individual members.

Other Restrictions. The Corporation will reject any application that requests funding for a project already included in another application pending before the Corporation.

In addition, Learn and Serve America will not fund organizations or groups to:

- provide religious instruction, conduct worship services or engage in any form of proselytizing;
- assist, promote, or deter union organizing;
- finance, directly or indirectly, any activity designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office; or
- impair existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements.

Intergovernmental Review. This program is NOT subject to Executive Order 12372.

3. Reporting

Progress and Performance Reports. Grantees must submit financial and programmatic progress reports twice during each program year. A final report is required at the end of the three-year program cycle. All grantees must also complete, or ensure that their subgrantees complete, the annual Learn and Serve America Program and Performance Report, which captures site-level performance data.

VII. Agency Contacts

For additional information contact Learn and Serve America at 202-606-7510, or by e-mail at LSAHigherEd@cns.gov. The TDD number is 202-606-3471. Upon request, this information will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities.

This Notice, with the complete application instructions included, is available on the Corporation's website at: http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/index.asp. For a printed copy of this announcement and the application instructions, contact LSAHigherEd@cns.gov.

Teleconference calls to clarify program guidance and assist with eGrants application procedures for applicants will be posted at http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/index.asp. Participation on these calls is NOT required. Please register for a scheduled call by emailing LSAinfo@cns.gov.

VIII. Other Information

Application Narrative Guidance

In addition to the information above, please use this program guidance to complete the narrative questions found on the Learn and Serve America application (OMB Control #: 3045-0046) available at http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/index.asp.

A. Three-Year Plan

Provide a three-year workplan outlining major milestones, key tasks, and corresponding dates for the development and management of the proposed program. Include dates related to the subgranting process if applicable, training and technical assistance, program monitoring, conferences, etc. The plan should be detailed for the first year and provide only major milestones for years two and three.

The three-year project plan should include a timeline for professional development that describes the roles of faculty and staff, community partners, and students. Multi-year training plans should include topics such as linking service to multi-discipline and discipline specific curriculum, promoting student reflection, working with community partners, assessing student project work, and publicizing and celebrating projects.

B. Needs and Service Activities

The *Needs and Service Activities* narrative section of the application narrative must answer questions in the application instructions and be responsive to the guidance below. Please include the following subheadings in this narrative section of the eGrants application: 1) Needs Statement, and 2) Activities.

Needs Statement. The needs statement in the proposal should reflect the compelling needs of the community(ies) and be supported by evidence, such as census data, crime statistics, or community needs assessments. Community assets are also important and should be noted as they relate to the area of need. In addition, the proposal should describe how students and faculty will work together with the community to identify and develop plans to address those needs.

The needs statement may identify issues within the student population in addition to, but not instead of, community needs, such as recruitment, retention, or civic knowledge/participation, which will be affected by student participation in service-learning. The absence of service-learning should not be cited as a need, since it is the method by which to address the needs.

Service Activities. The activities undertaken by service-learning participants should correspond directly to the identified community needs.

Performance Measure Note: The eGrants online application system includes dropdown boxes to help construct quality performance measures. Applicants must develop a complete performance measure for at least one Needs and Service Activity goal identified in the application narrative. A complete performance measure includes at least one output, intermediate outcome, and end outcome.

C. Strengthening Communities

The *Strengthening Communities* section of the narrative must answer questions in the application instructions and be responsive to the guidance below. Please use the following subheadings in this section of the narrative: 1) Community Partnerships, 2) Sustainability, and 3) Volunteer Generation.

Community Partnerships. High-quality service-learning programs invariably feature a reciprocal partnership between the higher education institution and the community. Applicants should identify local, state, and national partnerships in place and describe how additional

partners will be contacted or existing partnerships will be improved. Applicants should also include community partners in training activities and events as experts or participants.

Applicants and their subgrantees should develop well-defined roles for both internal campus partners and external community partners. Applicants should detail the ways that the partnerships will add value both to the community partners and the applicant's institution.

Sustainability. In order to make service-learning an integral part of the institution, applicants should describe how they will work with faculty and administrators to influence policy decisions around support for service-learning. The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse provides tools to help identify and promote policies that support the institutionalization of service-learning. The broader aim is to institutionalize service-learning as an element of the core work of each institution. Evidence of successful institutionalization includes:

1. Support for service-learning in policy documents at the departmental and institutional levels;
2. Staff funded and dedicated to carrying out these service-learning policies;
3. Community partnerships that grow every year;
4. Outside funding sources in place and under development;
5. Projects that feature public displays or community education elements, with media coverage for such events;
6. Training and professional development programs for educators that involve orientation and routine follow-up sessions, and that use service-learning practices where appropriate (e.g., experiential learning, reflection, community resource people);
7. Evaluation plans that involve a strategy for providing evidence of impact on students, community partners, faculty and staff, and the institution as a whole;
8. Efforts to collect and publicize compelling project stories from programs.

Making service-learning an integral part of the applicant's institutional mission and policies, and building support for service-learning at the regional, state, or national level is an important and proven strategy for increasing program sustainability.

Performance Measure Note: The eGrants online application system includes dropdown boxes to help construct quality performance measures. Applicants must develop a complete performance measure for at least one Strengthening Community goal identified in the application narrative. A complete performance measure includes at least one output, intermediate outcome, and end outcome.

D. Participant Development

The *Participant Development* section of the narrative must answer questions in the application instructions and be responsive to the guidance below.

All applicants are expected to create at least one participant development performance measure that clearly spell out how taking part in service-learning leads to benefits for participants. Learn and Serve America expects all grantees to achieve a positive impact on participants in at least one of three areas: 1) civic engagement, 2) academic engagement, and 3) reduction of risky behaviors. The Corporation is providing evaluation instruments to measure progress in

these three areas. All applicants must propose to use at least one of the instruments (or components of the instrument) in their evaluation strategy. Ultimately, the instruments will allow grantees and subgrantees to improve service-learning and document positive program impacts.

Performance Measure Note: The eGrants online application system includes dropdown boxes to help construct quality performance measures. Applicants must develop a complete performance measure for at least *one* of the key participant development areas (civic engagement, reduction of risky behaviors, and academic engagement). A complete performance measure includes at least one output, intermediate outcome, and end outcome. A complete performance measure includes at least one output, intermediate outcome, and end outcome.

Applicants should indicate how they will support the development of service-learning opportunities that positively affect students. Service activities must be of sufficient duration, engage students in effective reflection, and be available many times throughout a student's education in order to have significant impact.

Applicants should address who will coordinate service activities, whether they are faculty, students, adult volunteers, or community agency representatives, and how the coordinators will be trained and supported.

Applicants should discuss how they will promote respect and tolerance by providing students with the opportunity to serve with others from diverse backgrounds (e.g. differences in age, ability level, ethnicity, English proficiency, religion, economic status and disability).

Applicants should ensure that they include opportunities for youth voice and leadership. Students should have a decision-making role in all aspects of the project, from conception through evaluation.

E. Organizational Capacity

The *Organizational Capacity* section of the narrative must answer questions in the application instructions and be responsive to the guidance below. Include the following subheadings in this section of the application: 1) Program/Fiscal Oversight, 2) Federal Grant Experience/ Track Record, 3) Staff Roles and Experience, 4) Evaluation Plan, and 5) Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA).

Program/Fiscal Oversight. Applicants must be capable of providing sound fiscal management and oversight. Fiscal and program oversight plans should include the type and frequency of monitoring. Consortia grantees have the responsibility for monitoring subgrantees to assess their progress towards meeting performance measures and provide on-site technical assistance.

Federal Grant Experience/Track Record. Applicants must provide evidence that they have had the experience and/or the capacity to manage federal grants. Applicants should also be capable of assessing the capacity of subgrantees, where appropriate, and the proposal should detail the plan for this.

Staff Roles and Experience. Applicants should list the key personnel who will oversee and implement their service-learning programs and describe their experience administering federal grants. Applicants must ensure that qualified personnel who have appropriate experience in service-learning and program and fiscal management are responsible for program operations.

Evaluation Plan. The evaluation plan should contain the strategies grantees will use to track progress toward meeting the performance measures. Applicants are strongly encouraged to allocate ample resources for program evaluation. Grantees and subgrantees may consider working with colleges and universities or private consulting firms to help design data collection and evaluation system.

Training and Technical Assistance. It is the grantee's responsibility to provide program participants with the training/support needed to develop strong higher education-community partnerships, build the capacity of community partners to meet community needs through service-learning, and sustain support for institutionalization.

For consortia applicants, the training and technical assistance narrative section should outline a strategy and intended outcomes for the training and support that will be provided to subgrantees. This section should include plans to build and support a network for subgrantees to share ideas, solve program issues, etc.

Applicants should describe how they will provide high-quality professional development for service-learning faculty and staff. Professional development plans should reflect established best practices in course development and service-learning. Professional development in service-learning should include orientation sessions for educators with little or no experience, advanced training for experienced educators, and follow-up events where educators at all levels can share learning and interact with community members.

F. Budget/Cost Effectiveness

The *Budget/Cost effectiveness* section of the narrative must answer questions in the application instructions and be responsive to the guidance below:

- Applicants must demonstrate a record of sound fiscal management, an adequate staffing level, and a sound record of handling federal grants. The program budget should reflect and support the priorities and plans outlined in the other narrative portions of the application.
- Previous grantees must build on the successes, challenges, and infrastructure of past program(s). Both new and previous grantees must demonstrate replicability of project models and activities.
- Applicants should articulate how they are leveraging other federal, state, or local funds to support the program, regardless of whether or not these funds will be cited as matching funds.
- Applicants should clearly describe where the program is situated in relation to other federal and state or privately supported initiatives within the institution. Note the potential for collaborative or complementary opportunities.
- Applicants must discuss in detail any organizational or outside financial support for key staff position(s) and how they relate to long term institutional support for service-learning.
- Applicants must budget and plan for support of Learn and Serve America national identity and publicizing of their programs.