

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

National Providers of Training and Technical Assistance to the Corporation for National and Community Service Programs for Training and Conference Management Notice of Funding Opportunity

CFDA No.: 94.009

Deadline for Application: January 30, 2006

Award Announcements: March 2006

Overview

Available Grants: The Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) announces the opportunity for approximately \$500,000 annually to fund one or more three-year cooperative agreements. Depending on the opportunity for future appropriations, the funding level for this agreement may increase significantly over the course of the award period to as high as approximately \$3,000,000 annually. The award will be made to one or more entities depending on the expertise required.

Purpose of Grants: The purpose of this grant is to fund training and technical assistance (“TTA”) in Training and Conference Management. The selected TTA provider(s) will support the Corporation in building the capacity of local programs and organizations that use service and volunteering to meet community needs, including service-learning. The Corporation sponsors conferences, meetings, workshops, pre-service orientations and training institutes for members, sponsoring agencies and grantees, and convenes practitioners on certain topics during the course of a year. The successful applicant will provide training and support for conferencing to the Corporation, its grantees and sub-grantees that operate programs funded by the Corporation through national service laws.

This is a Notice for the selection of an organization(s) to provide training and technical assistance on behalf of the Corporation. This is not a Notice for program grant proposals.

Eligible Applicants: State and local government entities, non-profit organizations including faith-based and other community based organizations, institutions of higher education, Indian tribes, and commercial entities are eligible to apply. Commercial, for-profit, entities are eligible, however, they are not allowed to earn a fee, i.e., no profit or management fee is allowed from this award or subaward. A fee or profit may be paid to a contractor providing goods or services under a contract with a recipient or subrecipient. Organizations that operate or intend to operate Corporation supported programs are also eligible. The Corporation wants to ensure that all eligible organizations are able to compete on an equal basis for federal financial assistance.

Dates: The deadline for eGrants submissions is 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, January 30, 2006. If you are unable to submit your application using eGrants, a paper application along with a diskette or CD Rom with an exact duplicate of your application must be received at the Corporation for National and Community Service, 1201 New York Avenue, NW, Attn: TTA NOFA, Washington, DC 20525 by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, January 30, 2006. Applications submitted by fax or email will not be accepted.

For Further Information: This Notice, with the complete application, instructions and other relevant material, is available on the Corporation's website at: <http://www.nationalservice.gov> under "**New Funding Opportunities.**" In addition to the web site, you may contact the Corporation for National and Community Service at TTANOFA@cns.gov. Upon request, this information will be made available in alternative formats for persons with disabilities.

The Corporation will make awards covering a period not to exceed three years with continued funding beyond year one contingent upon satisfactory performance and other criteria established in the award agreement. These funds are available under authority of Sections 118 and 198 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, (42 U.S.C. 12653), which authorizes the Corporation to provide, directly or through grants, contracts or cooperative agreements, training and technical assistance in support of activities under the national service laws. Section 125 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 and titles I and II of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (42 USC 4951-4995; 42 USC 5000-5028a) provide additional authority.

NOTE: 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 the National Providers of Training and Technical Assistance competition.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Corporation is an independent Federal grant-making agency that encourages Americans of all ages and backgrounds to engage in community service. This service addresses the nation's educational, public safety, environmental, homeland security and other human needs to achieve direct and demonstrable results. In addressing those needs, we strive to foster civic responsibility, strengthen the ties that bind us together as Americans, and provide educational opportunities for those who make a substantial commitment to service. We support a range of volunteer service programs, including AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and Senior Corps.

The Corporation works to support volunteer community service and service-learning at the local level and to support public and private non-profit organizations, including faith-based and other community-based organizations, that use volunteer service as a strategy for addressing national and community needs. Corporation-sponsored programs and projects focus on the mobilization of community resources and volunteers, support for faith-based and other community-based organizations, citizenship development, capacity building and organizational sustainability and foster an ethic of civic responsibility. The Corporation's service programs tap into and further develop the skills, talents, and experience of Americans to address a wide range of community challenges. Service participants and volunteers, working side-by-side, conduct safety patrols for local police departments, participate in environmental projects, provide intensive educational services to children and adults, serve one-on-one as tutors and mentors to young people, help homebound seniors and other adults maintain independence in their own homes, and respond to natural disasters, among other activities.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

1. Purpose of Program

The primary purpose of the Training and Conference Management award is to provide services and training for the benefit of the Corporation's grantees and subgrantees. This will be accomplished by assisting the Corporation in designing and implementing an infrastructure for the delivery of training and technical assistance services and expertise in conferencing strategies and methodologies and in the delivery of conference services to specific Corporation audiences. This provider will complement and extend the internal capacity of the Corporation to provide comprehensive information, tools, and training to support the success of any organization using service and volunteering, but in particular, current and potential Corporation grantees. The funding amount listed here is the projected amount for supporting the initial phase of the agreement (generally the first year's budget), with additional funding contingent upon need, quality of service, the nature and scope of activities to be supported, and availability of funds for this purpose. A full description of the requirements for the provider and learning outcomes for this category are found in section 2.A. Requirements.

2. Requirements

While all Corporation-funded programs and projects address the agency's mission to strengthen communities through service, there are statutory differences in the programmatic and administrative requirements for each program (e.g. AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Learn and Serve America.). The Corporation expects providers to first highlight and build upon the common aspects among programs, and to consider and reflect upon the differences in the design and delivery of training and technical assistance services depending on the target audience. All selected providers will need to work collaboratively with Office of Leadership Development and Training staff, program staff, and program offices as applicable. They will be required to come to the Corporation for National and Community Service in Washington, D.C. to learn our systems, prioritizing needs, and share and receive information. This is to ensure the accuracy and applicability of the materials that the provider plans to use in providing training and technical assistance support to Corporation grantees.

In developing a proposal, applicants should review information on the Corporation's main website at www.nationalservice.gov and other Corporation websites including www.americorps.org; www.learnandserve.org; and www.seniorcorps.org; www.seniortechcenter.org; and www.servicelearning.org.

All providers selected for award will be expected to comply with the performance measurement and reporting requirements discussed in section C.

A. Training and Conference Support, \$500,000.

The provider(s) selected under this Notice will provide training and technical assistance services and develop and disseminate conference and meeting management training curricula and materials in support of the Corporation's programs and projects.

Specific Training/Workshop Support

The Corporation requires, as part of conferencing, training and workshop planning services to support the various CNCS missions and objectives, government initiatives, grantee programs, and other areas of interest. Tasks under these services provide direct training, lecture or instruction, professional development, which involves the direct coordination and planning necessary to obtain services for the purpose of professional/technical interchange, direct training, lecture or instruction.

The Provider shall provide customized training packages under this agreement to meet specific Agency needs.

Training and Conference Support Services

The Corporation also requires conference and event support, execution, planning and coordination services to support various Corporation sponsored institutes, workshops, conferences and training programs.

The Corporation sponsors conferences, meetings, workshops, pre-service orientations and training institutes for members, sponsoring agencies and grantees, and convenes practitioners on certain topics during the course of a year. Likewise, Corporation grantees and organizations sponsoring members (eg VISTA members), either individually or in

collaboration with other grantees, State Commissions, and Corporation State Offices develop and implement conferences, meetings, or training events that require support from the Corporation. This provider will work closely with the Corporation's Conference Manager, offering a wide range of meeting planning services to support the Corporation's National Service programs' mission, objectives, and special initiatives including national service event coordination, direct training, research and analysis where appropriate to conferencing, and travel and logistical support.

The successful applicant will provide conference and event execution, planning and coordination services including destination management to support various Corporation sponsored institutes, workshops, conferences and training programs.

1. In addition to the general duties noted above, the Conference Provider will specifically support the conference needs of:

a. The AmeriCorps*VISTA program which sponsors a high volume of training events nationally.

AmeriCorps*VISTA will conduct a minimum of 50 regional events this fiscal year, in addition to a number of state-based workshops, often run concurrently, and needs travel and logistical support for approximately 7,000 VISTA participants and VISTA sponsors. The provider will contract with hotels or other training sites and arrange travel for VISTA participants and sponsors to attend Pre-Service Orientations, Sponsor Orientations and other designated training events (eg state-based in-service workshops). The provider will handle the travel costs of some of the attendees (generally VISTA sponsors). As such, in addition to the costs of providing this support (included in the estimated funds for the agreement, above), the provider may administer several million dollars or more in travel funds to support direct traveler and attendee costs. Successful applicants can operate using both Federal and private systems, as appropriate, and can work in conjunction with Corporation staff across the country for each event.

The VISTA program currently uses a registration system that is integrated with its program systems. In future years, the VISTA program intends to separate these systems and will want a robust on-line registration system that the provider will be required to facilitate.

b. The National Conference on Volunteering and Service

This is an important annual conference event. Constituents from the national service and volunteering communities come together for information sharing and skill building. The Conference Provider will be required to give logistical, administrative and programmatic support.

c. The AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and Senior Corps grantee meetings, cross-stream meetings, and conferences at the national, cluster, multi-state or state levels. These meetings bring together program specific constituents for updates on

program changes and, in some cases, skill building. The Conference Provider will make available logistical, administrative and programmatic support for the meetings.

2. A successful applicant must demonstrate the capacity to handle all tasks with or without contracting for needed services. Specific capacities include (but are not limited to):
 - a. Provide conference/event support, planning, and production as required (from small to large meetings, domestic only). The conferences/events may have a variety of purposes and objectives, and could take on a variety of forms (example: Orientations, Symposiums, Institutes, Workshops, Banquets, Networking Meetings, Special Events, etc).
 - b. Develop conference planning, design and implementation resources and materials for the national service community. This body of work will then be the foundation for tailoring as appropriate for specific Corporation audiences.
 - c. Demonstrate the capacity to design conference and meeting management training curricula, lesson or session plans, resource manuals, tip sheets, and toolkits as appropriate and make them available to national and community service organizations through various training venues or through a knowledge management strategy in collaboration with The Resource Center and the National Service-learning Clearinghouse provider. Conference training and technical assistance resources and materials will be collected, catalogued, and disseminated through the Corporation's knowledge management provider, "The Resource Center," primarily online at www.nationalservice.gov/resources and www.servicelearning.org . The Corporation expects, to the extent practicable, that materials developed by providers will be web-based and posted on The Resource Center and the National Service-learning Clearinghouse web-sites.
 - d. Organize, perform and manage tasks necessary to support Corporation programs, and its personnel, to meet conference/event requirements and objectives.
 - e. Support communication and community outreach activities to encourage participation and support from academia, industry, and Federal, state and local governments at Corporation sponsored events.
 - f. Demonstrate expertise in the use of state of the art online conference management tools as well as other meeting technologies.
 - g. Demonstrate an understanding of the rules and regulations that apply to conferencing activities for the federal government.
 - h. Provide adjunct services as required. Adjunct Services include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Management of Computerized or Non-Electronic Registration & Fee Collection (including on-line Electronic Registration & Fee Collection)
2. Preparation of Event Materials and Information Packets
3. Mailings and Invitations
4. Production/Graphic Design
5. Exhibit Management
6. Budget Development and Financial Management
7. Conference/Event Site Selection, Reservation, Negotiation and Subcontract
8. On-site Supervision and/or Support
9. Conference Coordination
10. Communications Support
11. Collection, Coordination, and Preparation of Abstracts for Publication
12. Marketing, Publicity and Promotion
13. Photography
14. Event related Data Base Development, Management and Maintenance
15. Event related Web Page Design and Maintenance
16. Selection of Speaker, Exhibitors, or Lecturer
17. Pre-Conference Liaison
18. Conference Wrap-up and Evaluation
19. Project Meetings
20. Post-Conference Activities
21. Travel
22. Lodging Accommodations
23. Proceeding recording (audio or video)
24. Materials production (Including Signage, Nametags, Conference Badges, Special Event Tickets, Marketing documents and Conference and Event media)
25. Desktop Publishing
26. Transcription and/or Translation services
27. Video or computer conferencing
28. Workshop Session Tracking
29. Data entry and reports generation for events
30. Conference attendee evaluation and analysis

B. What You Should Include in Your Application

The Corporation expects applications to address the above capacities using the most creative and cost-effective strategies. An applicant that proposes to work in conjunction with others should disclose the names of those organizations and describe their expertise, experience and accomplishments. Key personnel for the applicant and any subrecipient or subcontracting organization should be named and biographical information should be included. Further, applicants should pre-select those other organizations and outline a plan to monitor and manage those organizations.

The technical and management portion of the proposal (that part of the proposal that outlines the program design and organizational capacity) should contain the following elements, which are discussed more fully in subsequent paragraphs:

1. Understanding of Corporation Request
2. Staff Qualifications
3. Organizational Past Performance
4. Corporate Facilities

1. Understanding of Request

This section provides a narrative of the Applicant's understanding of the provider requirements outlined in this NOFO. The Applicant must discuss their capabilities to accomplish the needed services/support outlined in **Section 2A** above entitled "Training and Conference Support, \$500,000" of this Notice.

In this section, the Applicant shall:

- (a) Describe how specific task requirements are to be performed, analyzed, resourced, and managed to ensure quality performance in a timely and efficient manner.
- (b) Describe the availability and the approach to the management of personnel and organizational resources required to meet the task requirements.
- (c) Describe the management approach to be utilized to ensure appropriate interface with the Corporations' Conference Manager to facilitate task progress, communication and understanding between parties.
- (d) Describe understanding of task requirements through relevant knowledge of the Corporation Programs, Initiatives, as well as Federal Government Conferencing and Contracting rules/regulations, etc.). It is important that the Applicant's proposal provide evidence of detailed knowledge and/or experience in performing the identified tasks in the same or similar environment(s).

2. Staff Qualifications

- (a) **Resumes:** Include a resume of the education and recent experience (i.e. within the last five years) for the key personnel* proposed to provide the services/support requested. Resumes submitted in this Section should indicate the Applicant's breadth and depth of knowledge and experience in performing the tasks outlined. Indicate whether the particular person is an employee of the Applicant or will be utilized under a consulting agreement or subcontract.

* **Minimum Qualification for Project Manager/Director:** Must have the industry designation of Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) and have ten or more years experience in planning conferences and managing special events. Must have direct recent experience in managing government conferences of over 300 attendees including planning conference center accommodations, catering, audio visual arrangement, automated registration, on-site registration, mailings, and transportation arrangement.

- (b) Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: The Applicant should address how the professional and/or technical personnel proposed have a working knowledge of the work requested under this cooperative agreement. Applicants should highlight capabilities of staff performing tasks for similar and relevant government projects and programs. Professional and technical personnel should have skill in communicating both orally and in written form.
- (c) Types of Proposed Staff: The variety and completeness of the proposed staff is of particular importance for this Notice. The Corporation is not only interested in receiving proposals that identify upper level management and technical personnel (key personnel) but also lower level technical and operational personnel.

3. Organizational Past Performance

- (a) Each Applicant must demonstrate recent (i.e., within the last five years) organizational experience with the tasks outlined **in Section 2A** (with a preference for work with the Federal Government).
- (b) The Applicant should submit information for all Government cooperative agreements and or contracts performed in the last three years that exhibited similar task performance requirements to those described in this Notice. The information should include the grant award or contract number, type, total value, period of performance, technical point of contact within the awarding organization, and telephone number and email address for the same contact. Include a short narrative description of the work performed, the challenges addressed and the accomplishments.
- (c) The Applicant should submit relevant past performance information about any proposed key personnel who were involved with relevant work performed by other firms in the recent past. The Corporation will evaluate the Applicant's past performance using the provided information. The Corporation reserves the right to contact the listed points of contact and/or other sources to gain information on the scope, quality, and relevance of the Applicant's past performance. The Applicant should submit similar data for all subcontractors who will perform major or critical aspects of the support work if an award is made to the Applicant.

4. Corporate Facilities

- (a) The Applicant should describe its physical facilities, its in-house support staff and any other features of its operation that might enhance or otherwise affect contract performance. The Applicant shall describe its ability to provide meeting spaces at its facilities and (b) other facilities that can be made available on an as-needed basis.

- (b) As part of this section, the Applicant should address to what extent they could support the geographical requirements of conferencing throughout the United States and its territories.

C. Training and Technical Assistance Reporting and Other Requirements

1. Performance Measurement and Accountability

The Corporation is committed to accountability and to measuring the performance of all of its grantees, including training and technical assistance providers. Providers must identify the critical outcomes of their work, indicators of success in this work, and how progress can be judged or measured. Providers will be required to report semi-annually on two standardized intermediate outcome measures. Specific guidance on the collection of data against these standardized measures will be provided upon award negotiation with the selected providers. The Corporation may also require an independent assessment of provider performance.

2. Planning and Progress Reports

a) Planning documents

Providers are required to submit a form that indicates the funding source (e.g. Senior Corps, Learn and Serve, AmeriCorps), projected training and technical assistance activities, numbers of participants, costs, and cost factors for each budget period.

b) Progress reports

A semi-annual progress report is due thirty days after completion of the six-month period.

The report will include:

- i. Budget report for the completed budget period, by funding source (e.g. Senior Corps, AmeriCorps), showing actual training and technical assistance activities accomplished, numbers of participants, costs, cost factors and supporting budget information.
- ii. Narrative analysis of the budget report, explaining differences between budgeted and actual activities and costs by funding source.
- iii. Status of output and outcome performance measurements.
- iv. Analysis of client feedback with aggregations of training-participant evaluations by funding source.
- v. Analysis of issues related to grantee performance and recommendations regarding the need for TTA.
- vi. Discussion of any problems observed or experienced and recommended solutions.
- vii. List of upcoming activities and events with dates and locations.

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.

4. Final Reports

In addition to their last semi-annual report, providers 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 also due 90 days after the end of the agreement.

5. Other data-collection requirements

The provider must:

- a) Develop materials in collaboration with Corporation staff.
- b) Submit copies of all curricula, handouts, and other materials developed to The Resource Center and the National Service-learning Clearinghouse, the Corporation's knowledge management providers.
- c) Identify and document effective practices in their topical area of expertise and submit them to The Resource Center and the National Service-learning Clearinghouse.
- d) Submit such special reports as may be reasonably requested by the Corporation.

6. Other Requirements

The provider must:

- a) Ensure that provider staff and consultants know the background, mission, objectives, key policies, and programs of the Corporation.
- b) Participate in the planning and implementation of national provider meetings and national training events (e.g., the National Conference on Volunteering and Service and Corporation grantee meetings) as requested by the Corporation.
- c) Collaborate on materials development and training events of other national training and technical assistance providers or the Corporation, as requested.
- d) Share effective T/TA practices with other providers through the training and technical assistance listserv.
- e) As directed, use the Corporation's training brand for all Corporation supported training and technical assistance activities and use provided graphic templates for materials production.
- f) Keep current the listing of upcoming activities with dates and locations for posting onto the Corporation's Master Training Calendar.
- g) Meet as necessary with the Corporation Conference Manager (cognizant training officer), program or other staff or consultants designated by the cognizant training officer, to review work plans and budgets, monitor progress, and exchange ideas and information concerning training and technical assistance.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

State and local government entities, non-profit organizations including faith-based and other community based organizations, institutions of higher education, Indian tribes, and commercial entities are eligible to apply. Commercial, for-profit, entities are eligible, however, they are not allowed to earn a fee, i.e., no profit or management fee is allowed from this award or subaward.

A fee or profit may be paid to a contractor providing goods or services under a contract with a recipient or subrecipient. Organizations that operate or intend to operate Corporation supported programs are also eligible. The Corporation wants to ensure that all eligible organizations are able to compete on an equal basis for federal financial assistance. However, applicants must differentiate between this grant's proposed activities and those of the currently-funded program or pending application. Applicants that have never received funding from the Corporation are eligible and encouraged to apply for funding under this Notice. However, pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(4), which engages in lobbying is not eligible to apply.

IV. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

1. Address

Applications are to be submitted using eGrants, the Corporation's web-based grants management system. To obtain and/or submit your application, please visit http://www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/funding/apply.asp to access eGrants. The Notice of Funding Opportunity and Application Instructions can be obtained through our website at <http://www.nationalservice.gov> under "New Funding Opportunities

2. Content and Form of Application Submissions

To develop your application, read this NOFO, the National Providers of Training and Technical Assistance Application Instructions and any additional guidance given by the Corporation for National and Community Service regarding the National Providers of Training and Technical Assistance. You may access this information at our website, http://www.nationalservice.org/funding_initiatives/index.html. In addition to completing an on-line application, applicants must submit, in hardcopy form, all attachments specified in this NOFO and the Application Instructions.

Should there be any inconsistency between the NOFO and Application Instructions, the order of precedence is as follows:

1. NOFO
2. Application Instructions.

The Corporation requires all applicants to attempt to utilize the Corporation's web-based application system, eGrants, to submit applications electronically. Please go to <http://www.nationalservice.org/egrants/index.html> and establish an eGrants account to begin the process of submitting your application online. Using the same link, you may click on "Help/Assistance" to access a practice system on the eGrants system and other resources to facilitate your use of the system. See section IV.3 below for additional eGrants guidance.

Equal Opportunity Survey: Applicants are also asked to complete the Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants. You may complete the survey in eGrants while readying your application for submission or contact the Corporation (see VII below) to obtain a copy.

Universal Identifier: Applications submitted for this competition must provide a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. The DUNS number is known as the universal identifier and helps the federal government improve statistical reports on federal grants and cooperative agreements. The DUNS number will not replace the EIN. DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or applying online at <http://www.dnb.com>. It may take up to 30 days to receive a DUNS number after applying for one. You must have this number to compete your eGrants application.

3. Submission Date and Time

The deadline for eGrants submissions is 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, January 30, 2006. If you are unable to submit your application using eGrants, a paper application along with a diskette or CD Rom with an exact duplicate of your application must be received at the Corporation for National and Community Service, 1201 New York Avenue, NW, Attn: TTA NOFO, Washington, DC 20525 **by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, January 30, 2006.** If there are differences between the paper application and the diskette/CD Rom, we will use the diskette/CD Rom version.

You should contact the eGrants Help Desk immediately if a problem arises while you are creating your account, preparing, or submitting your application. The eGrants helpdesk can be reached at 888-677-7849 or email at egrantshelp@cns.gov.

In the event of prolonged unavailability of the eGrants system on the date of submission, the Corporation reserves the right to extend the eGrants submissions deadline. A notice will be placed in eGrants and on our website, notifying all users of the extended deadline. In this case, applicants would need to submit applications via eGrants by the new deadline.

4. Intergovernmental Review

This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372.

5. Funding Restrictions

This is a not for profit award. Grants under this program are subject to the applicable Cost Principles under OMB Circulars **A-21, A-122, A-87 or FAR 31.2**. Commercial, for-profit, entities are eligible, however, they are not allowed to earn a fee, i.e., no profit or management fee is allowed from this award or subaward. A fee or profit may be paid to a contractor providing goods or services under a contract with a recipient or subrecipient.

6. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants must submit all attachments specified in this Notice and application instructions.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Selection Criteria

In awarding these grants, the Corporation will consider: **Technical Factors** - program design (35%); **Organizational Capacity** – staff qualifications, organizational past performance, and corporate facilities (45%); and **Price/Cost Factors** - budget/cost effectiveness (20%). 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.

2. Evaluation Criteria

The Corporation will make a determination of the overall value of each proposal in terms of its potential to best satisfy the needs of the Government, proposed cost/price, and other factors considered. The Applicant's technical capability as measured by the program design and organizational capacity are substantially more important than the Proposed Costs/Price factor.

A. Technical Factors

1) Understanding of Requirement

Understanding of Requirements will be evaluated based on the following:

- a) The Applicant's depth of understanding of the required functional tasks to be provided and the breadth of tasks that an Applicant can perform
- b) The soundness of the Applicant's plan to organize, staff, and manage the various tasks.
- c) Extent to which the Applicant provides unique or specialized capabilities and/or understanding in one or more tasks outlined in the Notice.

B. Organizational Capacity

1) Staff Qualifications:

Assess the ability of the contractor to provide quality personnel to accomplish the required tasks. The evaluation will be based on recent and relevant experience, knowledge, and education of personnel proposed. The evaluation will note and give favorable consideration to applicants who can provide specialized or unique qualifications and/or expertise that shall benefit the Corporation.

2) Organizational Past Performance:

Organizational Past Performance will be evaluated based on:

- 1) The extent, depth, and quality of recent corporate experience in performing the same or similar work in an environment similar to the Corporation.
- 2) Assess Applicant's performance in prior projects that are both similar and relevant to the tasks required under this Notice by evaluating the extent to which the Applicant performed satisfactorily regarding schedules, turnover rates, cost control, and success in performing the work.
- 3) Corporate Facilities

Consideration will also be given to an Applicant's corporate facilities and its capability to provide support services to programs throughout the continental United States.

C. Budget Cost Factors

The realism of the proposed costs will be evaluated based on reasonableness and realism of the proposed Cost Model and Cost Rate structure. This will include the review of the proposed labor categories, the hourly labor rates, other direct costs, indirect rates and costs, and travel.

3. Reviews and Scheduling Process

Subject to the availability of funds and scheduling requirements, peer reviewers will review all new proposals using the selection criteria stated above. If the Corporation determines that peer review is not feasible for any reason, Corporation staff will review all proposals using the selection criteria. During the staff review process, Corporation staff may request supporting documentation from the applicant.

4. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

We anticipate announcing selections under this Notice in March 2006.

VI. Glossary of Terms

eGrants – an on-line, web-based grant processing system used by Corporation staff, the State Commissions and non-profit organizations to manage all aspects of the Corporation's grant process from initial application, peer and staff review, through to grant award. Upon grant award, eGrants is also used for grant management including financial status reporting and project progress reporting.

eSPAN - the Corporation's web-based system for managing its primary business functions. It is made up of 4 major areas (not all are visible to the public):

- 1) eGrants The Corporation's, web-based grant management system used by Corporation staff, the State Commissions and non-profit organizations, applicants and grantees to manage all aspects of the Corporation's grant process from initial application, peer and staff review, grant award, grant operation and reporting.

- 2) SPAN is used to manage awarded Member slots for AmeriCorps programs.
- 3) VISTA Management System is used to manage VISTA Members, including their assignments, period of service, and is used to produce living allowance checks, and generates eligibility listings for the Corporations VISTA Member/Alumni Health care provider.
- 4) The Trust System: Used to track education award eligibility and generate education awards vouchers for AmeriCorps Members.
- 5) WBRS (web based reporting system) is a system that was built to allow the Grantees to track member enrollment and hours. In addition, the Grantees use it to produce Financial and Progress reports for the Corporation. It is also used by sub-grantees to provide the same information to the grantees for consolidation to the Corporation.

Grantee – Entities funded directly by the Corporation. These include but are not limited to: state commission, state education agencies, Tribes and U.S. Territories; national non-profits (known as national direct parent organizations); institutions, consortia and organizations of higher education; local governments and non-profit organizations. Many grantees also subgrant a significant portion of their funds to others (i.e. state commission conduct a competition and review process and fund AmeriCorps programs throughout their state; a state education agency (SEA) conducts a competition and review process and funds school systems throughout a state). None of the Senior Corps grantees are permitted by regulation to subgrant. Most organizations receiving funding from the Corporation are grantees. However, the vast majority of AmeriCorps*VISTA sponsors are not grantees. While the grantee term may not technically apply to VISTA sponsors, you should consider them included as an audience whenever the term “grantee” is used throughout this NOFO.

Leveraged Volunteer - refers to a member of the community who volunteers but is not an official participant in a Corporation funded program or project (although they may be recruited and/or trained by a national service participant).

Participant – this term refers to an individual serving with any program or project funded by the Corporation within their respective national service program or project. These individuals may be referred to as an AmeriCorps member, a Senior Corps volunteer or a Learn and Serve participant. In this NOFO the term “participant” is used to describe any of the above mentioned.

Service-Learning - The Corporation uses the definition provided in the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (§ 101 (23); 42 U.S.C. 12511 (23)), which defines service-learning as an educational method:

- under which students or participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community;
- that is coordinated within an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program, and with the community;
- that helps foster civic responsibility;
- that is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the educational components of the community service program in which the participant is

- enrolled; and
- that provides structured time for the students or participants to reflect on the service experience.

State Education Agency – the officer or agency primarily responsible for the state supervision of public, elementary and secondary schools. As such, they are most often the entity that receives funds from the Corporation to manage the Learn and Serve program for levels kindergarten through twelfth grade.

State Service Commission – an entity appointed by the state governor to foster a bi-partisan state-level commitment to advancing service initiatives in the state. By statute, these entities distribute the majority of the overall AmeriCorps*State and National funding to local programs or subgrantees.

Streams of Service - Refers to the Corporation's three main programs: AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America and Senior Corps.

Subgrantee – Many Corporation grantees competitively award a significant portion of their funds to other entities know as subgrantees. State commissions, for example, subgrant to local non-profit organizations. Senior Corps programs do not subgrant.

Volunteer - refers to a member of the community who volunteers and is an official participant in a Senior Corps program or project.

VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Award Notices

The category described above will be the subject of a separate or multiple cooperative agreement(s). The Corporation anticipates making a single award in this category, but may make more than one award if deemed the best approach to addressing all of the desired learning outcomes or specific capacities.

The Corporation will also consider proposals submitted by a single applicant **and** proposals submitted by two or more organizations that apply as a consortium. All proposed arrangements with other organizations are subject to Corporation review and approval.

Selected applicants are approved to negotiate with a Corporation training and grants officer for a grant award. During the negotiation period, any issues or questions identified during the review of your application must be satisfactorily resolved before a grant can be awarded. Upon successful conclusion of grant negotiations, a Notice of Grant Award (NGA) will be issued.

Awards made under this Notice will be in the form of a cooperative agreement. Administration of cooperative agreements is controlled by two Corporation regulations: 45 CFR Part 2541 (for agreements with state and local government agencies) and 45 CFR Part 2543 (for agreements with institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, and commercial entities).

Cooperative agreements require substantial involvement on the part of the government. Substantial involvement includes frequent and regular communication with and monitoring by the Corporation's Cognizant Training Officer (CTO). The cognizant training officer will confer with the provider on a regular basis to review service delivery and project status, including work plans, budgets, periodic reports, materials developed, preparation for and implementation of training events, targeting of provider services, and provider effectiveness.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative requirements are identified in the application package. National policy requirements are noted under Part II. Funding Opportunity Description of this Notice and are otherwise identified in the application package.

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.

Organizations selected as grantees must comply with the following requirements:

- A. **Reports.** All grant recipients will be required to report to the Corporation on a semi-annual basis as detailed in the application instructions.

- B. 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.
1. Notify potential participants that reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request;
 2. Provide sign language interpreters, special assistance, and documents in alternate formats;
 3. Use accessible locations for training events;
 4. 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.
 5. 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,
- C. Salary Limitation for Consultants.** Funds may not be used to pay or to provide reimbursements for payment of the salary of a consultant at more than the daily equivalent rate of \$540.00.
- D. Code of Conduct.** Entities that are subject to 45 CFR parts 2541 and 2543 (including most nonprofit organizations and state, local, and tribal governments or government agencies or instrumentalities that receive federal awards of financial assistance) are required to develop and maintain a written code of conduct. (See Sections 2541.360(b)(3) and 2543.42. The code of conduct must prohibit real and apparent conflicts of interest that may arise among employees. Officers, or agents; prohibits the solicitation and acceptance of gifts or gratuities by your officers, employers and agents for personal benefit in excess of minimal value; and outlines 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.
- E. Financial Management Systems.** Applicants selected for funding must provide documentation demonstrating that the applicant's financial management system satisfies the requirements in the applicable regulation at 45 CFR 2541.200 and 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.

- F. **Use of Materials.** To ensure that materials generated with Corporation funding for training and technical assistance purposes are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and sub-grantees, the Corporation reserves a royalty-free, non-exclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the agreement, including data, and to authorize others to do so. The provider must agree to make such publications and materials available to the national service field, as identified by the Corporation, at no cost or at the cost of reproduction through the Corporation's Resource Center. All materials developed for the Corporation must be consistent with Corporation editorial and publication guidelines and must be accessible to individuals with disabilities to the extent required by law

VIII. CORPORATION CONTACT (S)

This Notice, with the complete application, guidelines and other relevant material, is available on the Corporation's website at: <http://www.nationalservice.org/> under "Funding and Initiatives". The TDD number is 202-565-2799. For further information or for a printed copy of this NOFO send an e-mail to TTANOFA@cns.gov.

IX. NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY

In order to gauge the number of applications we are likely to receive, please send an email by Friday, December 30, 2005, to TTANOFA@cns.gov, stating that you plan to submit an application for this grant competition. Although submission of the notice of intent to apply is not mandatory, your email will help the Corporation to plan more efficiently for our review. In your email, include the name of your organization, address, contact person, and phone number.

Gretchen Van der Veer
Director, Office of Leadership Development
and Training

Date