NOTICE OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
OVERVIEW

Federal Agency Name: Corporation for National and Community Service

Funding Opportunity Title: Learn and Serve America Higher Education FY 2009

Announcement Type: Initial announcement

CFDA Number: 94.005

Date: Applications are due on Thursday, March 26, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. EDT. Awards are expected to be announced by the end of August 2009.

Funding Opportunity Description: Subject to the availability of appropriations for fiscal year 2009, the Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) announces the anticipated availability of approximately $9.27 million to support higher education service-learning and community service programs that address community needs through local service projects. These funds will be awarded to both individual institutions and consortia. An estimated six to eight individual institution applicants will receive awards ranging from approximately $85,000 to $195,000 annually for a project period of up to three years. An estimated seven to nine consortia applicants will receive awards ranging from approximately $200,000 to $500,000 annually for a project period of up to three years.

The Corporation's mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. The purpose of ***Learn and Serve America Higher Education*** grants is to expand participation in community service and service-learning programs in colleges and universities serving as civic institutions to meet the human, educational, environmental or public safety needs of their local communities.

America's communities are being drastically affected by the economic downturn. Institutions of higher education are an important part of their local communities, with many resources, including students, faculty, and staff, research and expertise. Effective partnerships with other local organizations can help communities come together to provide needed services and build capacity in the nonprofit sector. Learn and Serve America encourages applicants to propose programs that will leverage these resources to assist in economic recovery through service and service-learning.

Key agency priorities for the 2009 Higher Education grant competition include:

- Creating and/or expanding initiatives engaging campuses and the communities they serve. Activities should focus on assisting with economic recovery and strengthening the vitality of the nonprofit and social service sectors

- Promoting student leadership through program models incorporating student-initiated and student-led service and service-learning activities addressing critical social needs, particularly those resulting from the economic downturn.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Program Description

For more than a decade, the Corporation for National and Community Service—through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs—has mobilized a new generation of engaged citizens. This year, more than 1.8 million individuals of all ages and backgrounds will serve through these programs. They will help thousands of national and community non-profit organizations, faith-based groups, schools, and local agencies meet local needs in environment, education, public safety, and other human needs.

The purpose of ***Learn and Serve America Higher Education*** grants is to expand participation in community service and service-learning programs in colleges and universities serving as civic institutions to meet the human, educational, environmental or public safety needs of their local communities. In awarding these grants, the Corporation supports partnerships among institutions of higher education and the surrounding communities. Participation enhances students' academic learning, their sense of social responsibility, and their civic skills through service and service-learning activities that address critical community needs.

For the 2009 Learn and Serve America Higher Education grant competition, the Corporation's key priority is to support programs that leverage the resources of higher education institutions or higher education partnerships to address local community needs resulting from the economic downturn. Working together in partnership with local K-12 public schools, community-based organizations, public agencies and businesses, college students hold great potential for developing solutions to pressing community problems. Specifically, Learn and Serve America is seeking proposals that describe how the proposed program will:

1. Create and/or expand initiatives that engage campuses and the communities they serve. Activities should focus on assisting with economic recovery and strengthening the vitality of the nonprofit and social service sectors

   Examples:

   - Building on an existing social entrepreneurship service-learning program that pairs students with local non-profits to provide pro-bono management consulting services.

   - Pairing student service organizations and service-learning classes with a local food bank to greatly expand capacity and better meet community hunger issues resulting from the economic downturn.

2. Promote student leadership through program models that incorporate student-initiated and student-led service and service-learning activities that address critical social needs, particularly those resulting from the current economic downturn.

   Examples:

   - Offering mini-grants, training, and technical assistance to student organizations to implement service projects that address an identified community need.

   - Establishing service-learning internships that allow students to design and implement sustainable strategies to address community needs.

In addition, new technology tools (e.g. social media tools, mobile technologies, etc.) have been shown to facilitate more efficient communication and knowledge sharing, especially as a part of service programming. It is expected that applicants will find ways to incorporate these innovative tools, whenever possible, as they coordinate community problem solving.

B. Authority

The Learn and Serve America Higher-Education programs are authorized by Title I subtitle B, Part II of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 12561.

C. Applicable Regulations

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

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Number of Awards and Award Amount

Funds will be awarded to both individual institutions and consortia. An estimated six to eight individual institution applicants will receive awards ranging from approximately $85,000 to $195,000 annually for a project period of up to three years. An estimated seven to nine consortia applicants will receive awards ranging from approximately $200,000 to $500,000 annually for a project period of up to three years.

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.

B. Project/Award Period

The project period for Learn and Serve America Higher Education grants is up to three years. Proposals should include a detailed three-year project overview, as well as proposed activities and a budget for the first year of operation. If the application is approved, the Corporation will award a multi-year grant award agreement and provide funding for one or more years.

C. Continuation Funding

Funding for the second and third years of an approved program is contingent upon: 1) satisfactory progress; 2) the availability of funds via Congressional appropriation; 3) the timely submission of continuation applications; 4) consistent, timely compliance with all reporting requirements; and, 5) any other criteria established in the award agreement.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

The following entities may apply for a Learn and Serve America Higher Education grant from the Corporation:

1. An institution of higher education.

2. A consortium of institutions of higher education.

3. A higher education partnership, as defined in 45 CFR § 2510.20 – One or more public or private nonprofit organizations, or public agencies, including States, and one or more institutions of higher education that have entered into a written agreement specifying the responsibilities of each partner.

B. 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 previous program 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 and innovative or focused on dissemination and replication of proven program models.

C. 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 ideas in a 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 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.

D. 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.

E. Match Requirements

Higher Education grantees must provide 50 percent of the *total cost (Corporation Share + Grantee Share)* of carrying out the program.

The grantee's share of the program cost can be in cash or in-kind, which may include facilities, equipment, or services. The grantee's share may come from private, state, or non-Corporation federal sources. **Note:** The Corporation's legislation permits the use of non-Corporation federal funds as match for the grantee share of the budget. However, it may be advisable to discuss with the other federal agency your intention to report expenditures as costs on both grants (matching on the Corporation grant and direct on the other agency's grant).

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. How to Request Application Information

This *Notice* and the Application Instructions are available at:
www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/index.asp.
These documents can also be obtained by contacting Learn and Serve America at 202-606-7570 or lsahighered@cns.gov.

B. Contents of the Grant Application

Your completed application consists of the following required components:

1. Standard Form 424 Facesheet
2. Applicant Info
3. Application Info
4. Narrative
5. Performance Measures
6. Documents
7. Budget
8. Funding/Demographics
9. Review and Submit
10. Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants (Optional)

C. Submission Deadline

The deadline for eGrants application submissions is **Thursday, March 26, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time**. We anticipate making award decisions by the end of August 2009.

D. Funding Restrictions

Grants under this program are subject to the applicable OMB Cost Principles under OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A-122, codified respectively at 2 CFR Parts 220, 225, and 230; and FAR 31.2. Applicants are advised to consult the appropriate Cost Principles in preparing their applications. Links to these referenced cost principle documents are available at www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html. The applicable FAR provisions are codified at 48 CFR Subpart 31.2.

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

2. **Payments to Participants**. A program may provide a stipend for service activities for a participant who is a student if the provision of stipends in reasonable in the context of a program's design and objectives. A program may not provide a stipend to a student who is receiving academic credit for service activities unless the service activities require a substantial time commitment beyond that expected for the credit earned.

3. **Domestic Programming.** Grant funds may not be used for international travel or projects where the primary beneficiaries of an activity are outside the United States.

E. Other Submission Information

1. **Notice of Intent to Apply**. If you intend to apply, please send an email 60 days prior to the deadline to lsahighered@cns.gov.

   Although submission of the notice of intent to apply is not mandatory, your email will help the Corporation to plan more efficiently for review. In your email please, include the name of your organization, address, contact person, and phone number.

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

3. **Universal Identifier:** Applications must include a Dun & 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 your Employer Identification Number.

   DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online at www.dnb.com. The website indicates a 24-hour email turnaround time on requests for DUNS numbers; however, we suggest registering at least 30 days in advance of the application due date. Expedited DUNS numbers may be obtained by telephone at a cost of $99 by calling the DUNS number request line. **Applications with invalid DUNS numbers are subject to potential rejection.**

F. How to Apply

   Applying Online using the eGrants System

The Corporation requires that applicants make every effort to submit their applications electronically using eGrants, the Corporation's integrated, secure, web-based system for grants application and management. Go to http://www.learnandserve.gov/egrants/ and create an eGrants account (if you do not already have one) to begin the process of submitting your application online. Instructions on how to create an account are available at this website.

Using eGrants:

- We suggest you first prepare and save your application as a word processing document, then copy and paste the document into eGrants.

- **We strongly encourage you to create your eGrants account and begin your application at least three weeks prior to the final submission deadline and begin pasting your application into eGrants no later than ten days before the deadline.** This will allow you time to address technical issues prior to the deadline. Technical issues are more likely to be considered as a factor in allowing a late submission if you begin entering your application within this time frame.

- Use only UPPERCASE letters for all section headings and other information you would like to highlight in your narrative. Bold face, bullets, underlines, or other types of formatting, charts, diagrams, and tables will not copy into eGrants.

- Adhere to all the character limits indicated in the application instructions. Characters include all the letters, punctuation, and spaces in your document.

- Do not submit any other supplementary materials such as videos, brochures, letters of support, or any other item not requested in the application instructions. We will not review or return them.

Technical Difficulties with eGrants

Contact the eGrants Help Desk at 888-677-7849 or email egrantshelp@cns.gov immediately if a problem arises while you are creating your account, preparing, or submitting your application. If you think you may be unable to submit your application by the deadline due to technical issues, contact the eGrants Help Desk prior to the 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time deadline to explain your technical issue and get a ticket number.

If your issue is not resolved within the next 24 hours, you will be asked to submit a hard copy application according to the directions below. You will be required to provide the ticket number in the event that technical problems prevent you from accessing the system or submitting your application in eGrants by the deadline.

If you are unable to access eGrants at all, please submit a hard copy application and a copy of your application on disk or CD. Submit these items via overnight carrier (non-U.S. Postal Service because of security–related delays in receiving mail from the U.S. Postal Service) or hand delivery to the address below.

Your hard copy application must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the deadline - March 26, 2009. Please make sure your overnight carrier stamps the package with the date and time it was sent.

Submit required information to:

Corporation for National and Community Service
Learn and Serve America Grants
1201 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, 20525.

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 http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp with the extended deadline.

Applications submitted by fax or email will not be accepted.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW

A. Criteria for Evaluating Applications

1. By regulation 45 CFR § 2519.500, in reviewing the merits of an application, the Corporation will give priority to applicants submitting applications containing proposals that:

   a) Demonstrate the commitment of the institution of higher education, other than by demonstrating the commitment of its students, to supporting the community service projects carried out under the program;

   b) Specify how the institution will promote faculty, administration, and staff participation in the community service projects;

   c) 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;

   d) Describe any higher education partnership that will participate in the community service projects, such as a higher education partnership comprised of the institution, a student organization, a community-based agency, a local government agency, or a nonprofit entity that serves or involves school-age youth or older adults;

   e) Demonstrate community involvement in the development of the proposal;

   f) Specify that the institution will use funds under this part to strengthen the infrastructure in institutions of higher education; or

   g) With respect to projects involving delivery of service, specify projects that involve leadership development of school-age youth.

2. In addition, successful applicants will be selected based on the degree to which they submit an application that addresses the higher education economic recovery initiative described in this *Notice* and the associated Application Instructions found on the Learn and Serve website: http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp.

   The sections of the application are weighted as follows:
   - Program Design – 70%
   - Organizational Capacity – 20%
   - Budget/Cost Effectiveness – 10%.

Additional guidance for completing these sections is provided in the Application Instructions.

B. Review and Selection Process

Learn and Serve America will use a multi-stage review process which includes outside experts and Corporation staff to determine which proposals should be funded. Grant approvals are made by the Corporation's Chief Executive Officer.

All proposals will be evaluated using the selection criteria as indicated above to determine which applicants best responded to the 2009 economic recovery initiative described in this *Notice* and the associated Application Instructions. In addition, the statutory and current agency priorities, as well as geographic diversity, including whether programs will be operating in both urban and rural areas, will be considered in the review and selection process.

Corporation program officers may call applicants to seek clarification, resolve questions and issues, negotiate performance measures, and request revised budgets as part of the pre-award review process. Failure to respond to requests for information in a timely fashion could result in the removal of applications from consideration.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices

We anticipate making awards by the end of August 2009. Applicants may be asked for clarification as part of the review process. Applicants must satisfactorily resolve any questions or issues identified during the review within the time period specified before the application will be approved for award.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The Learn and Serve America regulations and other specific conditions are incorporated in the Notice of Grant Award (NGA). The NGA incorporates the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant.

C. Monitoring Responsibilities

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

D. Reporting

Grantees must submit annual performance reports and semi-annual financial reports. A final report is required at the end of the three-year program cycle. All grantees must also complete, and ensure that their subgrantees complete, the annual Learn and Serve System Information Exchange (LASSIE) Survey, which captures site-level performance data.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions about Higher Education grant applications please contact Learn and Serve America at 202-606-7510 or lsahighered@cns.gov

VIII. Additional Information

A. **Annual Grantee Training.** Grantees must attend the annual Learn and Serve America Grantee training. The program budget must cover costs associated with attendance (either grant funds or matching funds).

B. **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 include information about Dr. King as part of their projects and to take part in an MLK Day of Service project. A toolkit and other resources are available at www.mlkday.gov.

C. **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, and (2) other Corporation programs.

D. **Materials provided to the Corporation.** The Grantee is responsible for assuring that a copy of any materials created through the grant is sent to the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse.

E. **Training and Technical Assistance Calls.** Learn and Serve America will provide a series of teleconferences to answer questions and clarify program guidance. Details will be posted at http://www.learnandserve.gov/for_organizations/funding/index.asp when they are available. Participation on these calls is NOT mandatory.