2005 STATE COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDANCE AND PRIME APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

TECHNICAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE 2005 STATE COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDANCE AND PRIME APPLICATION INSTURCTIONS

1. <u>Table of Contents</u> – Added a table of contents.

2. <u>Editorial Changes</u> – We made small editorial changes to the text in several places to clarify the instructions and make the document more readable.

3. <u>Statewide Initiatives</u> – Copy expanded in this section to clarify who can apply and who can operate a Statewide Initiative.

4. <u>Formula Fund Policy</u> – The formula fund policy has been restated to reflect our current practices. The policy has not been revised from previous years.

5. <u>Competitive Funds</u> – Since we expect limited funding in 2005, we updated the language to reflect this.

6. <u>Education Award Program Deadlines</u> – We reduced the number of EAP competitions from three times per year to two times per year.

7. <u>Promise Fellows</u> – References differentiating the Promise Fellow program from the general AmeriCorps*State and *National programs were deleted.

8. <u>eGrants</u> – References to eGrants have been updated to reflect enhancements to the on-line application and grants management system.

9. <u>Childhood Literacy and Homeless Veterans</u> – Added childhood literacy and homeless veterans due to the Congressional Reports we are required to provide on these two areas as well as digital divide. Digital divide has been included for the last couple of years.

10. <u>Continuation Application Requests</u> – Added language that we are anticipate streamlining the continuation request process.

11. <u>eGrants Application Instructions</u> – Expanded the eGrants Prime application instructions to provide detailed instructions on how to complete project information.

12. <u>Peer Review</u> – Added language to clarify that applicants should not assume that peer reviewers have knowledge about applicants' programs.

I. Background and Overview

Each state is responsible for developing an application process that includes the review and selection of AmeriCorps proposals to put forward to the Corporation for funding. We provide this guidance to assist you with the development of your application process and with your AmeriCorps*State and Education Awards Program submissions. In 2005, State commissions will submit Competitive, Formula, and Education Award applications in eGrants. The following pages outline application and statutory requirements, and describe how to create and submit your Prime Application in eGrants.

Key policies and elements for program applications are laid out in the 2005 AmeriCorps Guidelines. Please read the Guidelines carefully as they contain important and helpful information that is not included in the Administrative Guidance. 2005 AmeriCorps Guidelines can be found on the Internet at www.americorps.gov.

A. eGrants

AmeriCorps*State Competitive, Formula, and Education Awards Program application packages must be submitted through eGrants. With the implementation of eGrants, you can track the progress of your applications through the review and award processes and will receive grant award notifications by email. AmeriCorps programs will continue to use the WBRS system for member-related procedures and for financial and program reporting.

> **Technical Assistance:** The Corporation provides an eGrants manual, technical assistance resources, and Help Desk support. You can locate these resources at www.cns.gov or contact the eGrants help desk at egrantshelp@cns.gov or 1-888-677-7849.

You should contact the eGrants Help Desk immediately if a problem arises while you are creating your account, preparing, or submitting your application. In the event you are prevented from completing and submitting your application by the deadline because the eGrants system is unavailable or you are having technical eGrants submission issues, you must contact the eGrants Helpdesk at 888-677-7849 or 202-6060-5000 x533 or email at egrantshelp@cns.gov prior to the 5:00 p.m. EST deadline to explain your technical issue and get a ticket number.

Note: Paper applications will be accepted if it is documented at the Corporation that an applicant is unable to submit via eGrants. **Contact your program officer for guidance on how to submit in hard copy.** All requirements, restrictions and deadlines will remain the same whether an applicant submits in eGrants or submits a paper application.

B. Application Package Deadlines

New Competitive Application and Continuation Request Deadline
eGrants Deadline: 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on February 8, 2005.

Formula Deadline
Commissions can request funds anytime after the Corporation announces formula amounts. You can report the grantees you select for formula funds anytime between January 15 and August 1, 2005, subject to change based on the Corporation's appropriations. You must submit your formula application to the Corporation no later than August 1, 2005, and it should identify specifically each program you plan to fund. If you are conducting a competitive RFP or have some other issue that impacts identification of specific 2005 formula programs for award by August 1, please provide a full explanation of the process or issue including the amount of formula funds involved, estimated FTEs and the expected submission date to the Corporation. If you will not be fully using your allocated 2005 formula funds and FTEs, you must inform us immediately.

Education Award Deadlines
eGrants Deadlines: 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on March 8, 2005
                            5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on November 8, 2005
Please note that there will only be two competitions in 2005.

C. Compliance Requirements

For AmeriCorps*State program applications: Follow the compliance requirements outlined in the AmeriCorps*State Application Instructions.

For State Commissions:
The following information must be submitted to the Corporation in your Competitive and Education Award Program application package.

1. Applicant information for the commission (Prime Application)
2. Assurances and Certifications signed by the appropriate official
3. The AmeriCorps*State applications recommended by the state commission
4. The commission's rationale for recommending each program
5. A funding chart (in eGrants, this is created automatically)
6. Program Summaries: 3-5 Sentence descriptions of each recommended program

II. Available Resources

Each year the allocation of resources available for competitive grants and formula to states depends on a number of factors, including: the total amount of funds available nationally, the size of the portfolios of programs in each category, projected carry-over, unexpended funds, and proposed new programs.

A. Competitive Funds

Select the following NOFA: Commission AmeriCorps* State FY 2005

We are not limiting the number of competitive applications that a commission may submit. However, because the Corporation anticipates level funding in 2005 and most funds will be allocated to continuation grants, we have limited funds for new competitive programs.

In the interest of funding new programs, we anticipate that there will be limited funds available for expansions of continuing programs. However, we recognize that programs may need an increase in funding from the Corporation to meet the increased member living allowance. If you submit a continuation request with a request for funds beyond what is needed to meet the increased living allowance, please provide a rationale for why the program should receive such an increase. You may include your rationale in the text box on the Narrative Section of your continuation Prime Application in eGrants.

B. Formula Funds

Select the following NOFA: Commission AmeriCorps* State FY 2005

The Corporation will announce 2005 formula funds and available FTEs for each state as soon as we have received our appropriation. Each state commission is responsible for selecting its AmeriCorps formula grantees. You may request funds anytime after we have announced state allocations. However, once you have selected all of your formula grantees, you must report these selections by submitting a funding chart to the Corporation, through eGrants. You may submit your funding chart beginning on January 15, 2005, subject to change based on the Corporation's appropriations, but no later than August 1, 2005. You must identify all of the programs and planning grants you want to support by August 1, 2005. If you do not request your full allocation for 2005, the Corporation will reserve the unrequested amount for your use in 2006.

The amount of your grant award will be the total amount you request for the programs on your funding chart, up to your 2005 allocation. If you did not request all of your 2004 formula allocation, the remainder is available to you for 2005. Contact your grants officer to get a confirmation of the amount. Unrequested funds from years prior to 2004 will not be available to you.

III. 2005 AmeriCorps Guidelines

The Guidelines describe key elements for 2005 AmeriCorps programs. These elements apply to all new applicants, recompeting programs (programs that are currently in their third year of operation) and continuing programs (those entering the second or third year of a three-year grant). The Corporation is committed to working in partnership with state commissions, nonprofit organizations, and others to assure the effective implementation of these elements over the next several years. If an applicant, submitting a request to the Corporation through the state commission, is unable to include any element listed in the Guidelines as part of its program, either because of the program model, or for any other reason, the applicant should include an explanation in its application. This is very important. We will consider this explanation during the grant application review process.

When you submit your state's competitive applications you may describe the relationship of the portfolio of programs in your state to the key elements in the Guidelines. You may choose to describe unique circumstances or characteristics of your portfolio of programs that may be relevant to our consideration of your competitive grant submission. This would include situations where an individual program may be unable to include an element in these Guidelines, but other programs in the state address the element. Peer reviewers will not review your comments about programs within your state because they are reviewing individual applications from all states against each other. However, staff will consider your comments during its review. If you choose to include comments with your competitive applications, submit a 4,000 to 6,000 character narrative in the Program Narrative text box on the Narrative Section of your Prime Application in eGrants.

IV. New, Recompeting, and Continuation Submissions

A. New Applicants and Recompeting Programs

Any program that is applying for AmeriCorps funds for the first time must complete the application described in the 2005 AmeriCorps*State Application Instructions. By law any program in its third year of a three-year grant cycle must submit a new application to be considered for further funding. In addition to the executive summary, previously funded AmeriCorps programs must include the Summary of Accomplishments and Outcomes. Some programs have not included this summary in the past. You may have an applicant that has received some other type of Corporation program funds during the past three years. These applicants must also complete the Summary of Accomplishments and Outcomes but will only provide a list of Corporation program funds they receive. **Please make sure that you or your applicants complete this in eGrants, if it applies.**

For AmeriCorps programs that are recompeting, in addition to the new application, we will review and consider previous grant performance information and information from our management information systems. This includes enrollment and retention rates, accomplishments and greater reliance on non-federal support. You should do the same and make sure that all recompeting programs you recommend for funding are high quality programs that have

successfully demonstrated outcomes and accomplishments. In addition, all reporting from previous grant years must be up-to-date. Our staff will consider the program's record regarding timely receipt of reports and forms when making final funding recommendations. Please note that recompeting applications are first reviewed by outside experts who only review what is included in the proposal. You should not assume readers know the details of your program.

The 2005 application instructions ask applicants to submit an evaluation to the commission if they have one. We will consider any evaluations we receive as part of our review. **Commissions should submit this information to the Corporation for competitive applications. Make sure that you include the printed subapplicant SF 424 facesheet so that we know the specific subapplication that corresponds to these documents.** Since this information cannot be submitted in eGrants, send the compiled printed information for your state to:

> AmeriCorps*State Box ACS
> Corporation for National and Community Service
> 1201 New York Avenue, N.W.
> Box ACS
> Washington, D.C. 20525

If you are submitting evaluations electronically, please send them to acapplications@cns.gov. We must receive all evaluation information at the Corporation by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on February 8, 2005 for new and continuing competitive applications.

Do not submit any other supplementary materials such as annual reports, videos, brochures, letters of support, or any supplementary material not requested in the application. The Corporation will not review them.

B. Planning Grants

The Corporation will not accept planning grant applications under competitive funds in 2005. As in previous years, state commissions are free to consider and fund planning grants in the formula portfolio. Please include the title "Planning Grant" in the Project Name on the Applicant Section of the subapplication. The following is meant to provide additional clarification and guidance on the ways in which you may use formula dollars for planning grants that support the development and improvement of national service programs in your state.

- The purpose of planning grants is to support the development or improvement of a program so that it may compete successfully for operating assistance in the following grant cycle. Successful planning grants applicants must identify a sound concept for a national service program that require resources in order to plan, develop, improve, and prepare the program for implementation.

- In anticipation of supporting programs that will operate within one year of receiving a planning grant, states should use planning grants to support the development or improvement of programs in ways that are consistent with the AmeriCorps Guidelines. In addition to planning for a new operating program, some examples of how a planning grant may be used are: to develop a new component to an existing program such as building the capacity to effectively recruit and manage volunteers; to establish new community partnerships that will broaden the overall community involvement in and support for a national service program; or to plan for the expansion of an existing program into new communities.
- Planning grants may not support program operating expenses such as costs related to participants, supervision of participants, training of participants, and other such operating costs.
- Planning grants are included in a state's overall cost per FTE calculation.
- All planning grants are subject to a minimum 33% grantee share.
- Planning grants may not exceed one year in duration.

State commissions have the authority to establish planning grant guidance within these parameters and are responsible for oversight of the resulting awards. States must ensure that recipients of planning grants demonstrate significant development or improvement before being considered for funding to support the resulting operating program. States must also ensure that the budget is reasonable to support the planned activities and that the level of effort for development and improvement justifies the funds requested.

C. Statewide Initiatives
State commissions may submit a statewide initiative (a program that operates throughout the state and may or may not have a single issue focus) as a subapplication. If you choose to do so, you must select another eligible entity to operate the program – a state commission may not directly operate a statewide initiative. Commissions or other eligible subapplicants must follow the new or continuation instructions in the AmeriCorps*State application instructions. They need to clearly state that a particular application is a statewide initiative. See Appendix A, applicant information #11 in the application instructions. The name to include is "Statewide Initiative." In eGrants, complete the program design box in the Applicant section.

D. Continuation Programs
Programs originally funded in 2003 and 2004 are the only programs eligible to submit continuation requests in fiscal year 2005. However, the Corporation is in the process of streamlining the application process for continuation requests.

The public input we received in advance of rulemaking overwhelmingly indicated that we should streamline our current process for applying for continuation funding in years two and three of a three-year grant period. We agree and intend to change our continuation application requirements to minimize the burden on

grantees, while ensuring that the Corporation receives the information it needs to make fiscally responsible continuation awards. Please refer to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking at *www.americorps.org/rulemaking* for more information.

Therefore, at this time, we are not including continuation request application instructions in this packet. Our intent is to streamline the application, reporting requirements, and the review process for continuations, as well as to give grantees more predictability over the three-year grant cycle. We will release the 2005 application instructions for continuation applications in sufficient time for grantees to submit their continuation applications to the Corporation.

E. Education Awards Program

Select the following NOFA: Commission Education Awards Program FY 2005 (for March or November)

There are two deadlines for the Education Awards Programs in 2005: March 8 and November 8. You may submit Education Awards Program applications on either or both of these dates. Programs that require summer starts should submit applications on November 9, 2004 (using 2004 application instructions) or can submit on March 8, 2005.

Continuation EAP Programs: When you create your Continuation application in eGrants, the system will ask you to choose the Grant number for the continuing grant. Only select the correct grant number. If your grant number does not appear, contact the eGrants Help Desk (egrantshelp@cns.gov or 1-888-667-7849). eGrants will automatically copy last year's application. The applicant will need to revise the narrative, budget, and performance measures as necessary.

F. Childhood Literacy, Homeless Veterans, and Digital Divide Programs

We need to be able to identify the competitive and formula applications or continuation requests that address childhood literacy, homeless veterans, or the development of computer information and technology skills for students and teachers in low-income communities (digital divide), . **For new/recompeting applications and continuation requests, please make sure that your subapplicants select "Childhood Literacy," "Homeless Veterans," or "Digital Divide" in the Program Focus field in the application section and select the appropriate service categories in the performance measurement section in their eGrants application.**

V. Statutory Requirements and Restrictions

A. Limitations on State-Run Programs
You must use at least 60 percent of the funds we provide to support programs that are not carried out by the state or by a state agency. However, we may waive this

requirement if you can demonstrate that you did not receive an adequate number of acceptable applications from applicants other than the state or state agencies during the competitive selection process.

B. Program Selection

You must use at least 50 percent of the funds we provide for programs that operate in the legislated areas of greatest need or on federal or other public lands and that place a priority on recruiting members who are residents in high need areas. These include:

- areas of high concentrations of low-income people;
- areas that are environmentally distressed;
- areas adversely affected by federal actions related to the management of federal lands that result in significant regional job losses and economic dislocation;
- areas adversely affected by reductions in defense spending or the closure or realignment of military installations; and
- areas that have an unemployment rate greater than the national average for the most recent 12 months for which satisfactory data are available.

We may waive this requirement for any particular state if at least 50 percent of the total amount of assistance to all states will be used for such programs. When applicable, applicants should include this information in the Executive Summary.

C. Restrictions

We may reject an application that requests funding for a project already included in another application pending before the Corporation. For example, if a national non-profit organization includes a local affiliate in its AmeriCorps*National application, the local affiliate may not seek additional funds for the same project through your state application process.

VI. Grant Requirements

A. State Average Cost Per Member and Maximum Cost Per Program

The average cost per member will likely remain at the 2004 amount of $12,400 for 2005. Once the Corporation has received an appropriation, we will provide final guidance concerning the average cost per member and maximum cost per program.

B. Subgrant Administrative Cost Allocation

Since we provide states with direct administrative funding and program development assistance and training funds to support your operations, we strongly encourage you to provide the full 5% allowed for administrative funds to your operating programs. However, if you do opt to retain a portion of administrative funds for the commission, you may not retain more than 1%. Any administrative funds retained by you must be used solely in support of the AmeriCorps programs from which you have retained a portion of the administrative funds. Your

accounting system must track and allocate these administrative funds separately. The instructions for both the prime and the subapplicant applications will tell you how to reflect this allocation in eGrants.

C. Commission Grant and Subgrant Project Periods

The Corporation generally awards AmeriCorps grants to commissions for three-year project periods. Competitive grants made in 2005, will have end dates in 2007 or 2008, depending on the end date of a commission's latest starting subgrant program. Programs (subgrants) should begin in the first year of the commission's project period (2005) and complete three years of operation under the commission's three-year grant. Commissions may add new programs in the second or third year of their three-year grant. Those programs are still awarded under the 2005 grant and will be closed out at the same time as the programs that actually began in year one of the commission's three-year project period. The commissions have the option of considering these second and third-year starting programs as continuations, but they will get a new 2006 grant number from the Corporation with the new Commission grant.

The Corporation recognizes that the three-year commission project period does not coincide with the program year's end dates of its various grantees. Therefore, as you approach the end of the three-year period, contact your grants officer to establish a revised end date for the grant, and request a no-cost extension on the grant. The extension should not extend more than 12 months beyond the original end date. You must request this no-cost extension from the Corporation before the expiration of the current project period.

The revised end date should be long enough to cover the service of the latest starting member in the latest starting program. Commissions should not allow programs to enroll new members in the last three months of the final year of the three-year project period.

The Commission has 90 days after the end of the project period to submit the final Financial Status Report and other required closeout documents.

D. Approval of Pre-Award Costs

A grantee may be reimbursed for pre-award costs only if they are incurred with the written approval of the Corporation's Office of Grants Management. To request such approval, please send a request to your Corporation grants officer, with a copy to your program officer that includes a brief justification for the costs to be incurred and indicates the desired effective date. If your request is approved, the Office of Grants Management will issue a letter authorizing the pre-award costs within three business days.

The Corporation is prepared to approve, where appropriate, the following types of pre-award costs: personnel expense and benefits, travel for staff and prospective

members, equipment, supplies, contractual and consultant service, training for staff and prospective members, evaluation, and other program operating costs. Because the Strengthen AmeriCorps Program Act specifically indicates that a national service position is approved when the Corporation issues a grant award, we cannot approve member living allowances and support costs, including FICA, workers' compensation, health care, and child care, as pre-award costs. Approval of pre-award costs does not authorize a grantee or subgrantee to enroll AmeriCorps members or have them begin serving. AmeriCorps members may only begin service after a grant award has been issued and may not count any hours served prior to the award being issued as part of their term of service.

All pre-award costs are incurred at your own risk. The Corporation is under no obligation to reimburse you or your subgrantee for these costs if you or your subgrantee does not receive an award or if the award is less than anticipated and inadequate to cover such costs.

E. Enrollment Procedures
On January 22, 2003, the Corporation issued new enrollment procedures for AmeriCorps*State and National programs. These procedures included the requirement that state commissions consider a subgrantees' compliance with AmeriCorps enrollment procedures and timeframes in their funding decisions. Therefore, as you plan for and undertake your grant review processes for 2005, you must consider subgrantees' compliance with these enrollment procedures and timeframes as a factor in the decision making process. The enrollment procedures are available on our web site at http://www.americorps.org/enrollmentupdate/statement012203rm.html, and have also been incorporated into the 2004 grant provisions (see 2004 AmeriCorps Grant Provisions § 8 (d, f, g, h).

The Web-Based Reporting System (WBRS) includes a feature that will help you monitor your sub-grantees' performance in enrolling members within the required 30-day timeframe. Under the Members tab, select Extra Views. There is a view called, "Member Enrollment Approval Cycle Time," that shows by grant year and program name, the average number of days between member start date and approval of the member enrollment form in WBRS. The online WBRS tutorial— Grantee Tools--addresses this view.

F. Compliance with Federal Legal Requirements
Programs must comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and OMB circulars for grant management, allowable costs, and audits. You should already have copies of the applicable OMB Circulars and should give them to any applicants needing them. You may also check the web site for OMB circulars at <www.whitehouse.gov\OMB\circulars>.

VII. State Commission Guidelines and Review

A. State Commission Guidelines

We provide the following guidance for creating your application guidelines and review process. You should also follow state law requirements regarding requests for proposals and the selection of programs by a state commission. Your application guidelines should provide information on the following topics:

- Funding availability
- Competitive/formula funds guidance and application instructions
- State cost per member and budget guidelines
- State application deadlines/submission requirements
- State preferences/priorities
- Selection criteria
- Continuation instructions
- Other information and guidelines you or your state require

The guidance that follows provides the necessary information to develop your new and continuing AmeriCorps application guidelines.

B. State Responsibilities for Review and Recommendation

State commissions must review new applications and continuation requests, prepare recommendations for programs to fund under the competitive pool and select formula programs. You are also responsible for thoroughly reviewing the detailed budget and budget narrative and correcting all compliance issues before submitting competitive applications to the Corporation in eGrants. This includes making sure that applicants complete the Summary of Accomplishments and Outcomes, if applicable. You should set a due date for applications that allows you adequate time to review the requests, analyze the budgets, and work with programs on revisions of budgets, proposed activities, and performance measurement objectives, as necessary.

For all competitive application cycles that come under the 2005 AmeriCorps Guidelines, we will not require state commissions to peer review new applications. This includes AmeriCorps*State Competitive and Education Award Program applications. In developing a review process to determine what to submit to the Corporation, you should follow state laws and regulations concerning reviews of new applications.

While we do not require a peer review, we do expect that commissions will perform some type of rigorous review and send forward only those applications considered to be high quality. The applications you submit under the AmeriCorps*State competitive and Education Award Program competitions should be a subset of the applications you receive. Commissioners must vote to approve the applications you are submitting. **In order for the Corporation to**

plan its peer review process, we need to have a clear idea of the number of applications each commission intends to submit. You should email grantsapplications@cns.gov with your estimated number of applications by close of business on January 8, 2005.

Because the Corporation does not review formula applications, state commissions are required to peer review all new formula applications. It is up to you to design your application guidelines and review processes. In December, 1999 we issued a document entitled *Developing a Peer Review Process for Grant Applications*. You should continue to follow this guidance as you develop and implement your review and selection processes. When you submit your formula portfolio, you will submit a certification on eGrants indicating that in conducting your grant review process, you ensured compliance with the National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended, the Corporation's peer review requirements, and all state laws and conflict of interest rules. We do not limit the number of commissioners on peer review panels. Instead, we rely on states' processes and procedures, many of which are established in law, to assure a fair and effective peer review and decision-making process.

You should publish the criteria you will use to evaluate and select applications. The AmeriCorps Guidelines provide a detailed description of our selection criteria.

At a minimum, we require your criteria to include the following:

Program Design -- 60%
- Needs and Service Activities
- Participant Development
- Strengthening Communities

Organizational Capacity -- 25%
Budget/Cost-Effectiveness -- 15%

The information we request in the program narrative section of the application instructions relates directly to the AmeriCorps Guidelines and to the bullets found in the detailed selection criteria on pages 41-42 of the 2005 AmeriCorps Guidelines. In 2005 we will give equal importance to Needs and Service Categories, Participant Development and Strengthening Communities when judging applications.

C. Recommendation Summaries
Provide the following information for each competitive application that you are submitting to the Corporation. Enter the information in the text box in the Subapplicant section of your Prime Application. There is a 4,000 character maximum for each recommendation summary.

1. New
   a. Provide a summary of the program's service activities.

b. Describe this program's strengths and how it will complement your existing portfolio.
c. Describe its potential challenges and your strategy for training and technical assistance.

   2. Continuation
a. Provide a summary of the program's service activities.
b. Provide a clear analysis of this program's strengths and accomplishments that supports the commission's decision to request 2004-05 funding. The analysis should include an assessment of the program's performance measurements for the coming year and an assessment of an evaluation, if it has one.
c. Do you believe that the program is meeting its annual performance measures? Explain why or why not, and how you have made this determination.

VIII. Corporation Review Processes

A. Review of Applications
We will convene peer review panels to evaluate the quality of new AmeriCorps*State competitive and Education Awards Program applications using the same selection criteria we include in the AmeriCorps Guidelines and require commissions to use. Staff will analyze the panel results and then make recommendations for funding, taking into consideration the key elements in the 2005 AmeriCorps Guidelines, the children and youth priority, statutory requirements, and your recommendation summaries.

We will review continuation requests considering the program's progress to date, progress against the objectives, and responsiveness to the key elements in the 2005 AmeriCorps Guidelines. Staff will also consider commission recommendation summaries and information from our management information systems, including retention and enrollment rates and greater reliance on non-federal support. Additionally, we will consider any evaluation studies we receive. We do not use peer review panels to assess continuation applications.

B. Timeline for Decisions

We expect to notify you of our competitive program funding decisions by June 1, 2005. This is not the date on which we issue grant award letters – approval approval and offical notification of the grant award are contingent upon negotiations and resolution of any budget and compliance issues.

IX. Reporting Requirements for Existing Programs
Reporting from previous grant years and any expired grants must be up-to-date or your grant award will not be issued. We will make final decisions on all programs previously funded by AmeriCorps contingent upon compliance with reporting requirements. You

must ensure that programs submit all reports and forms on time. You should consider the program's record regarding submission of forms and reports as a quality factor when reviewing programs for inclusion in your competitive or formula application package.

A. Grantee Progress Report (GPR)

Once a year, state commissions must submit an aggregate report for each grant they administer (Formula, Competitive, Education Award). The Grantee Progress Reports ("GPR") are due in WBRS on December 5, 2005 for the period October 1, 2004 through September 30, 2005.

Since 2000, programs have been required to use the Automated Progress Report module (APR) in WBRS. Programs enter their objectives, activity data, and evaluation results into the APR module throughout the year. The APR aggregates the member information and accomplishment data, and displays the outcome data. Programs analyze this information, and submit a progress report using WBRS. State commissions review the progress reports of their programs.

The state commission's GPR then aggregates all the member information and accomplishment data entered by the programs and organizes the outcome information by issue area. State commissions will submit a GPR for each grant type (e.g., ASF, ASC, etc.) and will be expected to use this information to include an analysis and description the impact of AmeriCorps in each of the five priority areas (Education, the Environment, Public Safety, Human Needs and Homeland Security), member development and strengthening communities in your state.

Note: Subgrantee Progress Reports

The Corporation expects each grantee to establish and communicate its own subgrantee reporting requirements. Grantees are responsible for monitoring subgrantee activities and training needs, tracking progress toward objectives, and identifying challenges. Subgrantees must adhere to the reporting requirements outlined and communicated by its grantee for the program year (AC Provisions, 2003.)

X. State Commission Prime Application Instructions

Select the following NOFA: Commission AmeriCorps*State FY 2005

Preparing & Submitting Your Application Package

In order to submit your application packages to the Corporation on eGrants you must set up a Prime Application for your Competitive and your Formula applications, and distribute your Prime ID numbers. Once you receive, review, select and recommend applications, you will then complete each Prime Application and submit it to the Corporation. By completing each of these steps you will automatically meet the compliance requirements.

Step 1: Setting Up Your Prime Applications (Formula & Competitive)

a. On the eGrants menu, click on start new application (for continuations, click on start a continuation and select the grant number you want to continue).

b. How are you Applying to the Corporation?
- For a Competitive Prime application, select "Directly to the Corporation."
- For a Formula Prime application, select "as a state commission creating a formula grant."

c. Select the Program: AmeriCorps

d. Select NOFA "Commission AmeriCorps*State FY 2005"

e. Select Type of Grant: New or Continuation

f. Select the Name of Authorized Representative for your organization.

g. Click "Proceed."

h. Write down the Application ID number that is shown in the pop up box.

i. Complete Applicant section, and click on "Save." Notice that the Prime ID number appears in the top left corner. In completing the applicant section please ensure that the following fields are completed correctly:

   i. For "New" applications:
   - In the project title field, enter "Formula" for the Formula Prime and enter "Competitive" for the Competitive Prime.
   - In the project address and contact information, enter the address and contact information of the commission.

   ii. For "Continuation" applications:
   - Verify that the project title is the same as in previous grant years.

j. For New Primes, enter the Subapplication Due Date, and then go to the Application section and fill-in the proposed start and end dates for the grant. Click on the "Open for Submissions" button.

k. For Continuation Primes, enter the Subapplication Due Date and then click the "Open for Submissions" button.

l. **Your Prime Applications are now ready to accept subapplications, because the Prime application status is "Open for Subapplications."**

Complete this process once for your Competitive Prime and once for your Formula Prime application.

Step 2: Distribute your Prime ID Numbers

By setting up your Prime Applications, you generate unique Prime ID numbers for your Competitive and Formula applications that are created by your state commission. Give out your unique Prime Competitive ID number to potential Competitive applicants, and give out your Formula ID to Formula applicants who are submitting Continuation applications.

They will input the number in the "Prime ID" box of the "Create Application" pop-up window when creating their subapplication.

When subapplicants complete their applications and click submit, the subapplications will be "sent" to your appropriate prime application and will appear on the Subapplicant chart in the status of "Submitted to Prime."

Step 3: Receive, Review, and Recommend Applications

Receive: Subapplications submitted in eGrants will appear in the subapplicant chart of your state commission's prime application.

Review: You can view a subapplication on the Subapplications section by highlighting the application and then clicking on the View/Print button to view the SF424 application, and the View/Print Budget button to view the budget narrative and budget.

Recommend: Enter the Approved Funding Amount for each application. Select the appropriate application status for each submitted application: Submit as Competitive, Submit as Formula, Returned to Subapplication for rework, or Reject.

If the subapplicant must make changes to their application before it is submitted to the Corporation, select the status "Returned to Subapplicant for Rework." This action will allow the subapplicant to make the necessary changes directly in eGrants and once complete, resubmit the application to you for further review or approval.

Use the Recommendation text box on the Subapplicant section to describe why you are recommending each application for funding. Refer to recommendation summary questions on pages 14-15.

Competitive Application Package: New and Continuation applications that are designated as "Submitted as Competitive" should be included in your Competitive Prime application.

Formula Application Package: You may set up your Formula Prime application at any time. (It no longer copies the Competitive Prime Application.) Competitive

applications that are not approved by the Corporation can be moved by the state commission to the Formula Prime application once the status of the subapplication has been changed to "Not Approved." New and Continuation Formula subapplications should be designated as "Submitted as Formula" and included in your Formula Prime application.

Step 4: Complete Application Package and Submit to the Corporation

Complete the Application, Documents, and Assurances and Certifications Sections.

Funding Chart: eGrants will generate a funding chart report.

Submit Application Package: To submit the application, click the Submit button to send it to the Corporation. Note the change in the Status of your application and that the date appears in "Date and time Submitted to CNCS."