

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Challenge Grants FY 2005

Notice of Funds Availability

CFDA No. 94.007

Deadline for Application: November 8, 2005

Award Announcement: December 2005

Overview Information

Available Grants: The Corporation for National and Community Service (hereinafter "the Corporation") announces the availability of approximately \$4,000,000 in fiscal year 2005 funds for eligible non-profit organizations for Challenge Grants. The funds are available for these Challenge Grants under Public Law 108-447, the Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2005. The Corporation anticipates making up to eight one-year Challenge Grants under this announcement, with the projected minimum grant level of approximately \$500,000 and projected maximum grant level of approximately \$4,000,000.

Purpose of Challenge Grant Program: The purpose of the 2005 Challenge Grant competition is to engage volunteers in disaster relief and recovery for the population affected by the recent hurricanes in the Gulf Coast region.

- Applicants must propose strategies that engage volunteers in full-time, part-time, or episodic service designed to meet the needs in the Gulf Coast region and other regions of the country managing the large influx of evacuees.
- Applicants must propose to either significantly expand existing services or implement new services that serve the population impacted by the hurricanes.
- Applicants must provide at least two dollars in private funding for every federal dollar. This match must be in cash and must be raised within the grant period. There will be a preference for proposals that exceed the required two to one match ratio.
- Applicants must include strategies that engage baby boomers [those born between 1946 and 1964] in full-time, part-time, or episodic service designed to meet community needs identified above.
- The proposed program must operate in a minimum of three states. The Corporation will consider applications proposing programs that would be located in one or two states, but only if the scope of the proposed program is statewide in nature and must include one of the following states: Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas or Alabama.

Eligible Applicants: The Corporation wants to ensure that all eligible organizations are able to compete on an equal basis for federal financial assistance. The Corporation encourages all eligible non-profit organizations, including faith-based and other community-based organizations, to apply. Previous CNCS Challenge Grant recipients are eligible to apply for a 2005 Challenge Grant.

Application Deadline: The deadline for applications is 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on November 8, 2005. We strongly encourage applicants to submit applications electronically using our eGrants system. You are advised to carefully read the detailed submission instructions

set out below in Part IV “Applications and Submission Information,” before preparing your application.

For Further Information: This Notice, with the complete application, guidelines and other relevant material, is available on the Corporation’s website at: http://www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp. The TDD number is 202–606-3471. 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 one year. These funds are available under authority of section 198 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, codified in 42 U.S.C. 12653, and the Consolidated Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2005. We anticipate announcing selections under this Notice no later than December 31, 2005.

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 Challenge Grant program.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1. Background

The Corporation is an independent Federal government 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, health and other human needs to achieve direct and demonstrable results. The Corporation works to support volunteer community service 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.

Within days of the recent hurricanes, the Corporation for National and Community Service engaged our extensive network of state offices, state service commissions, non-profit partners, local grantee organizations, and trained AmeriCorps alumni to support the response to the disaster. In President Bush's speech on September 15, 2005 from Jackson Square in New Orleans he stated, "There is important work that can be done by everyone, and everyone should find their role and do their part." This Notice of Funding Availability will support that effort by providing grants to organizations designed to engage volunteers in disaster relief and recovery for the population affected by the recent hurricanes in the Gulf Coast region.

Corporation-sponsored programs and projects focus on the mobilization of community resources and volunteers, 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.

There are approximately 77 million Americans born between 1946 and 1964, known as the baby boom generation, or "baby boomers". In 2005, baby boomers are between the ages of 41 and 59, and the first of this generation will turn 60 next year. Baby boomers currently volunteer at the highest rate of all Americans – with more than one in every three baby boomers engaged in volunteer activities. Yet half of non-volunteering boomers cite a lack of time as the main reason for not getting engaged in their communities. As baby boomers complete the obligations of child-rearing or fulltime work and move to new stages in life, they may be drawn to volunteering and service to address community needs in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, homeland security, and health and other human needs.

While older adults are often viewed as consumers of services and overlooked as a valuable resource, the first wave of the baby boomer cohort includes a mix of retired, semi-retired, and still-working individuals from diverse groups with various levels and types of education, experiences and talents. This group of 77 million Americans has the capacity to tackle important community problems and great potential to meet critical community needs. The

Corporation is committed to identifying and demonstrating strategies to effectively engage baby boomers in community service to this end.

2. Purpose

The Corporation's Challenge Grant program was established in 2003 to assist nonprofit organizations to use federal grant funds to secure previously untapped sources of private funds to build sustainable service and volunteer programs in the United States. The Corporation defines sustainable service and volunteer activities as those that will continue beyond the period of the Challenge Grant.

Without question, the recent hurricanes in the Gulf Coast region and their aftermath present an enormous challenge for the nation's social services network. National emergencies have been declared in more than 30 states and the District of Columbia as a result of the storms. Hundreds of thousands of evacuees are living in shelters, many of them children; hundreds of thousands more have dispersed around the country to stay with friends and family members.

The national service family is at the forefront of meeting this national challenge. Corporation for National and Community Service staff, programs, participants, and partners are on the ground in the Gulf Coast region assisting with relief efforts and across the country helping evacuees get the care and attention they need and deserve. The Corporation is interested in making Challenge Grant awards to strong, sustainable organizations that leverage private resources designed to meet the needs in the Gulf Coast region and other regions of the country managing the large influx of evacuees.

An applicant must propose a program model to build sustainable service and volunteer programs in nonprofit organization(s) that engages or serves individuals and communities affected by the recent hurricanes in the Gulf Coast region. The proposed program must operate in a minimum of three states. The Corporation will consider applications proposing programs that would be located in one or two states, but only if the scope of the proposed program is statewide in nature and must include one of the following states: Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas or Alabama.

The applicant must provide a clear explanation for the use of the funds, including a description of the nature of new, improved or expanded citizen service that will result in meeting community needs and provide a demonstrable impact. Applicants must demonstrate how the funds will result in significantly expanding existing services, or launch new services, to meet those needs through this grant. These efforts may result in a menu of volunteer options ranging from episodic to intensive involvement to meet a range of individual needs and preferences.

Applicants must include strategies that engage baby boomers in full-time, part-time, or episodic service designed to meet community needs identified above. Given the growing number of Baby Boomers, we are particularly interested in funding programs that propose to engage Baby Boomers as fifty percent or more of their volunteers. While applicants are encouraged to propose programs designed to attract the engagement of baby boomers in service

activities, as a matter of federal law grantees may not restrict participation in the program activities on the basis of age.

Service activities especially appropriate for volunteers in the impacted areas that may be supported with this grant include, but are not limited to:

- a. Helping youth in disadvantaged circumstances succeed in school and/or successfully transition into a new community;
- b. Recruiting volunteers to assist in meeting the needs of displaced individuals and families;
- c. Recruiting education, health or social service professionals serving in high need areas;
- d. Helping to expand independent living support services for frail older adults and respite for their caregivers;
- e. Recruiting volunteers to serve in a computer lab where evacuees can search for jobs, housing and community resources.
- f. Assisting community organizations with marketing, resource development or planning;
- g. Recruiting additional baby boomer [or other] volunteers; and
- h. Assisting in the development of long term housing and employment strategies for evacuees.

Possible program design strategies appropriate for programs to meet the identified needs for individuals, families and communities impacted by the recent hurricanes include, but are not limited to:

- a. Offering flexible levels of commitment, including full-time, part-time and episodic service, and a range of schedule options [i.e., mornings, evenings, weekends, etc.]
- b. Providing incentives for service, including stipends, meals, gift certificates, recognition, etc.
- c. Expanding current service programs to new markets or new audiences;
- d. Helping companies to find creative ways for their employees and alumni to become involved in volunteering.
- e. Assisting affiliated networks develop volunteer programs;
- f. Serving as intermediary for smaller organizations.
- g. Assisting community organizations with resource development and/or volunteer mobilization.

3. Program Authority

The funds are available for these Challenge Grants under Section 198 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 and Public Law 108-447, the Consolidated Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2005.

4. Applicable Regulations

Applicable regulations include but are not limited to, uniform administrative requirements for grants and agreements with institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other nonprofit organizations, 45 CFR 2543.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

The Corporation anticipates making up to eight Challenge Grants under this announcement, with the projected minimum grant level of \$500,000 and the projected maximum grant level of approximately \$4,000,000.

The Corporation will make awards covering a period not to exceed one year. Access to awarded grant funds will be contingent on a grantee's having secured matching funds. The Corporation cannot commit to making additional funds available for Challenge Grants in subsequent years, and has no obligation to provide additional funding beyond the period of the grant.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for this funding are non-profit organizations. 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 activities, is not eligible. Organizations that are previous recipients of Challenge Grants are eligible to apply.

Given the purpose of Challenge Grants, applicants must have deep connections to their communities and experience in promoting or administering volunteer opportunities. Applicants must be well-established organizations with a successful track record of raising funds from private organizations or individuals.

Applicants may include pass-through organizations or intermediary organizations. For example, a pass-through or intermediary organization may raise funds from the private sector and distribute those monies to smaller community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations, in support of specific service and volunteer activities.

In authorizing this program, the Congress intends that eligible applicants specifically include: (a) nonprofit organizations currently operating an AmeriCorps or other Corporation program; (b) nonprofit organizations that promote service and volunteer opportunities similar to AmeriCorps but do not use AmeriCorps members; and (c) nonprofit organizations that are not themselves direct service providers but provide support to such organizations. Previous Challenge Grant recipients are eligible to apply for a 2005 Challenge Grant.

Applicants that currently operate programs with Corporation funds, or that are applying for other Corporation funds, must differentiate between the proposed objectives and activities under the Challenge Grant and those of its currently-funded program or pending application. An applicant must also identify any other grant received from the Corporation since 1994, including the program under which the grant was provided.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

At a minimum, applicants are required to provide a match of two dollars in private funding for every federal dollar. A Challenge Grant has characteristics and matching fund provisions that are distinct from other grant programs sponsored by the Corporation. Under Challenge Grants, the Corporation's funds must serve as an incentive for nonprofit organizations to raise additional funds from the private sector to build sustainable service and volunteer programs that will meet community needs. We will give a preference to applicants who propose to exceed the required match of two dollars in private funding for every federal dollar. Additionally:

- a. Applicants must provide at least two dollars in private funding for every federal dollar. Matching funds must be cash.
- b. Applicants must demonstrate previous success in having raised funds from the private sector.
- c. The matching funds must be expended on the successful applicant's approved program.
- d. Applicants must demonstrate that federal funds are generating additional private sector funding.
- e. Access to awarded grant funds will be contingent on a grantee's having secured matching funds.

3. Other

Under a Challenge Grant, an applicant may not propose to fund the equivalent of an operational grant under AmeriCorps or any of the Corporation funded programs. Such operational grants typically include funds to support AmeriCorps members' living allowances and related costs, as well as an allocation of education awards from the National Service Trust. Challenge Grant funds may not be used to provide funds for living allowances for AmeriCorps members, nor include any education awards from the National Service Trust. Applications for such operational grants must be submitted through one of the other available sources of funding for AmeriCorps. For more information concerning AmeriCorps operational grants, see the Corporation's website at <http://www.nationalservice.gov>.

In all other cases stipends or living allowances, while not required, are allowable as long as the funds are included in the grantee share of the budget. Thus Corporation funds may not be used to support the stipend or living allowance of program participants. For this competition, stipends or living allowances are defined as monetary incentives.

Challenge Grant funds may not be used to support the same program activities previously supported by other Corporation funds. In addition, Challenge Grant funds, including matching funds, may not be used for fundraising, capital campaigns, building construction, endowments, or investments.

The Corporation will not consider applications that do not propose to engage volunteers to serve the population impacted by the Hurricane Katrina or that fail to propose the minimum cash match.

Applications must include a proposed budget and proposed activities for the one-year grant period.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Addresses

Applications are to be submitted electronically using eGrants, the Corporation's integrated, secure, web-based system for applications. You may access eGrants at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/egrants/index.html>.

If you cannot submit an application electronically due to technical difficulties or limitations, submit a paper application, together with an electronic version of the application on a 3.5" diskette or CD Rom by the application deadline to facilitate data entry into the eGrants system, to the following address: Corporation for National and Community Service, 1201 New York Avenue, N.W., Box C.G., Washington, D.C., 20525.

Due to delays in delivery of regular U.S. Postal Service (U.S.P.S.) mail to government offices, there is no guarantee that your application will arrive in time to be considered. We therefore suggest that if you are submitting a paper application, you use U.S.P.S. priority mail or a commercial overnight delivery service to ensure that you meet the deadline. Also, submit an explanation as to why you could not submit electronically. We will accept applications that are hand delivered to the Corporation by the application deadline. We will not review applications submitted by facsimile or email.

2. Application Content and Form

To be considered for funding, applications must meet all of the criteria and requirements contained in this Notice. Eligible applicants should use the application and accompanying instructions available on the Corporation's website under funding and initiatives at http://www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp. For a printed copy of any of these materials, please contact Marci Hunn at ChallengeGrants@cns.gov or 202-606-7507. Applicants are urged to pay close attention to these application materials.

In addition to completing an on-line application, applicants must submit a Financial Statement or Audit as specified in the Application Instructions to the address listed above by the application deadline (see ADDRESSES). 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. They will not be reviewed.

Performance Measures

The Corporation generally requires all programs to submit at least three performance measures as part of their application. For Challenge Grants, we are requiring a minimum of **one performance measure**. That measure must relate to advancing sustainable service and volunteer programs. You are encouraged, but not required, to submit additional measures, as appropriate to your program, that relate to the citizen service that will be carried out with the grant. For successful applicants, following a period of negotiation, the Corporation will make the performance measure(s) a requirement of the grant. You are accountable for achieving the measure(s) during the period of the grant.

For more information about performance measures under Corporation grants, including a toolkit to assist in the development and implementation of performance measures, visit the Corporation's website at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/> or <http://www.projectstar.org/star/AmeriCorps/pmtoolkit.htm>.

Support for Faith-Based and Other Community-Based Organizations

The Corporation encourages applicants to demonstrate support for faith-based and other community-based organizations through the Challenge Grant program. Applicants should identify plans for carrying out this objective in the application.

3. Submission Date and Time

The application deadline for eGrants and paper submissions is 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on November 8, 2005.

The Corporation requires that all applicants make every effort to submit their application electronically utilizing the Corporation's web-based application system, eGrants. Please go to www.nationalservice.gov/egrants/index.html and create an eGrants account to begin the process of submitting your application online. Instructions on how to create an account are available at this website.

The Corporation strongly encourages you to create an eGrants account and begin your application at least 3 weeks prior to the application deadline. This will allow you time to address technical issues prior to the deadline.

EGRANTS APPLICATIONS

- ❑ We suggest you first prepare and save your application as a word processing document prior to inputting it into eGrants, then copy and paste the document into eGrants.
- ❑ 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. Do not use any of these in your application.
- ❑ Remember to follow the character limits listed in the narrative section below. We use character limits rather than page limits because of the structure of eGrants. Characters

are letters, punctuation, and spaces included in your document. Your word processing software can provide a character count.

- ❑ Grant applications 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. There is a DUNS number field in the Organization section in eGrants.
- ❑ Submit via hard copy (see Addresses) the Financial Statement or Audit.

PAPER APPLICATIONS

The Corporation strongly encourages applicants to use eGrants to submit their application, because we will use eGrants to manage all awarded grants. In the event that you are unable to submit in eGrants, you may submit a paper application, following these instructions.

Submit one unbound, single-sided original paper application. We also ask that you submit a diskette or CD Rom in order to expedite processing. The diskette or CD Rom version must be an exact duplicate of the paper original and will be used to copy and paste your application information into eGrants. (Facsimiles or email versions of your application will not be accepted.) Paper applications must arrive at the Corporation by the application deadline (see Addresses).

- ❑ Type and double-space the application in Times New Roman, 12-point font size with one-inch margins.
- ❑ Adhere to the character limits listed in the narrative section below and number the pages.
- ❑ Include a cover memo explaining why you are unable to submit in eGrants.
- ❑ Submit via hard copy (see Addresses) the Financial Statement or Audit.

ADDITIONAL SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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 (see Addresses) **by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on November 8, 2005**. 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. In the event you are prevented from completing and submitting your application by the deadline **because the eGrants system is unavailable** you must contact the eGrants Helpdesk.

The Corporation must acknowledge and confirm these periods of unavailability before granting you an extension. To request this extension you must contact either (1) the person listed

elsewhere in this notice under Other Information, VII; or (2) the eGrants help desk at 888-677-7849 extension 533 or by email at **egrantshelp@cns.gov**.

The eGrants Help Desk associates will work with you to overcome other technical issues. If the issue is a technical problem with eGrants and cannot be resolved before the deadline the help desk associate will provide you with a ticket number. **If the reason that you have contacted the help desk is a technical issue on the applicant's end, you are expected to submit your application by the deadline.**

If you are granted an extension, you must submit the following items to the Corporation:

- A brief paragraph including your eGrants ticket number and your explanation of the technical issues that prevented you from submitting in eGrants by the deadline;
- An unbound, single-sided paper application;
- A diskette or CD Rom with an exact duplicate of your application; and
- A Financial Statement or Audit.

Submit these items via overnight carrier (non-US Postal Service because of security-related delays in receiving mail from USPS) or by hand delivery to the Corporation (see Addresses). These items must be **postmarked no later than noon on November 9, 2005** and received at the Corporation no later than **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on November 10, 2005**.

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

Notice of intent to apply: In order to gauge the number of applications we are likely to receive, we request that applicants send an email by October 31, 2005, to **ChallengeGrants@cns.gov**. The email notice of intent should state that you plan to submit an application for the Challenge Grant competition. Although submission of the notice of intent to apply is not mandatory, we encourage you to submit one to help the Corporation to plan more efficiently for our review. The notice should include the name of your organization, address, contact person, and phone number.

4. Intergovernmental Review

These programs are not subject to Executive Order 12372.

5. Funding Restrictions

Grants under these programs are subject to the applicable Cost Principles under OMB Circulars A-21, A-122, A-87, or the Federal Acquisition Regulations (48 CFR Subpart 31.2).

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Selection Criteria

The Corporation will initially determine: (1) whether the organization is eligible; and (2) whether the application contains all the required information. After this initial screening, the Corporation will select and evaluate applications based on the following criteria: program design (35%); organizational capacity (50%); and budget/cost effectiveness (15%). Within organizational capacity, key factors are the organization's demonstrated ability to raise the matching funds and to carry out the greatly expanded or new service efforts. 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. Applicants that do not propose to address the strategy listed above or meet the required minimum match will not be reviewed.

2. Review and Selection Process

Subject to the availability of funds and scheduling requirements, peer reviewers will review all new proposals using the selection criteria stated above. Corporation staff will then review those proposals most highly rated from peer review. 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.

Applicants who are approved to negotiate an award are required to collaborate with the State Service Commissions and Corporation State Offices in each state they plan to operate the approved program. Copies of each approved application will be provided by the Corporation to the State Service Commissions and Corporation State Offices during the grant negotiation process.

3. Anticipated Announcements and Award Dates

We anticipate announcing selections under this Notice in December, 2005 with award dates in January.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Award Notices.

If your application is successful, we will notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Notice of Grant Award (NGA).

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

We identify administrative and national policy requirements in this notice and in the application package and include these and other specific conditions in the Notice of Grant Award

(NGA). The NGA also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

Equal Opportunity Survey

Applicants are also asked to complete the Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants. You may download this survey with the complete application and instructions (see IV.2 above for internet address) or complete the survey in eGrants while readying your application for submission.

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 Employer Identification Number (EIN). DUNS numbers may be obtained at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or online at <http://www.dnb.com>. It may take up to 30 days to receive a DUNS number after applying. You must have this number to complete your eGrants application.

3. Reporting Requirements

Project Progress Reports and Financial Status Reports are submitted on a semi-annual basis via our on-line eGrants system. The NGA will include detailed information regarding reporting requirements.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

For further information, contact: Marci Hunn at ChallengeGrants@cns.gov or 202-606-7507. The TDD number is 202-606-3471. This Notice, with the complete application instructions included, is available on the Corporation's website at: http://www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp. For a printed copy of this announcement and the application instructions, contact ChallengeGrants@cns.gov. Upon request, this information will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities.

Marlene Zakai, Director
Office of Grants Policy and Operations

Date