



TO: Area Managers
State Program Directors
Service Center Directors

FROM: Tess Scannell, Director, Senior Corps

DATE: February 9, 2006

SUBJECT: RSVP Fiscal Year 2006 Programs of National Significance (PNS)
Augmentations

This memo provides guidance on implementing Section 225 of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA), as amended, “Programs of National Significance (PNS)” for Fiscal Year 2006.

Please immediately notify all RSVP grantees by e-mail that, based on Fiscal Year 2006 appropriations, the Corporation for National and Community Service is making available on a competitive basis approximately \$385,280 to augment existing RSVP projects in the applicable PNS categories established in the law.

While applications may be submitted for any of the 18 critical areas of need identified in the Domestic Volunteer Service Act, **this year, the Corporation is particularly interested in receiving proposals that contribute to the following Corporation-wide initiatives in the Corporation’s 2006-2010 Strategic Plan:**

- **Providing more opportunities for citizens to serve and volunteer**, especially opportunities for RSVP volunteers to:
 - assist in the response to the longer term recovery of communities impacted by the 2005 Gulf Coast Hurricanes and help communities prepare for future disasters; and
 - help recruit and manage other community volunteers.
- **Ensuring a brighter future for children and youth**, particularly children of prisoners, through mentoring and other programs that support these children and their families.
- **Engaging students in their communities** by assigning RSVP volunteers in support of K-12 and/or college student service-learning activities.

- **Harnessing experience to meet 21st century challenges** by engaging members of the baby boom generation in service and creating opportunities for Boomers to deliver independent living services to seniors in need.

The aim of PNS augmentations is to support high impact programming with measurable intermediate and end outcomes for an estimated 1,280 new RSVP volunteers. PNS funding may only be used to expand existing projects; it may not be used to establish new RSVP projects.

For FY 2006, the PNS competition will follow a **3-stage process**, as follows.

Stage 1 – Eligibility Determination: Any sponsor that intends to compete for a PNS award must e-mail the State Office by February 24, 2006, to express its intent to apply and to request confirmation that it meets all the eligibility criteria established in this guidance. This e-mail *does not* commit the grantee to apply.

Stage 2 – PNS Concept Paper: Grantees who receive confirmation that they are eligible to apply and wish to continue the application process must submit a PNS Concept Paper by March 28, 2006, briefly describing their proposal for expanding volunteer service, following instructions provided in the accompanying Detailed Guidance. Panels of CNCS staff will review all PNS Concept Papers submitted by eligible grantees and, on the basis of their review, recommend which grantees should be invited to participate in Stage 3 of the application process.

Stage 3 – Full PNS Application: Only grantees who are invited to participate in Stage 3 may submit full applications for PNS funding. Full applications are due May 15, 2006.

Please review the full information and instructions, including eligibility requirements and responsibilities of State Offices, contained in the accompanying “Detailed Guidance.” An attachment provides tips for writing a successful application.

Corporation State Office staff who have questions should direct them to Area Managers. Area Managers and Service Center Directors can direct questions to Peter Boynton at ext. 6825, or Suzanne Fahy at ext. 6826.

cc: Elizabeth Seale
Amy Mack
Bob Grimm
Frank Trinity
Marlene Zakai
Tom Bryant
Mike Berning
Senior Corps

**RSVP PROGRAMS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE (PNS)
FY 2006 DETAILED GUIDANCE**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1: ABOUT PNS 2

I. BACKGROUND 2

II. CORE ELEMENTS FOR FY 2006 3

III. ELIGIBILITY 5

IV. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS 5

V. BUDGETING 5

PART 2: APPLYING FOR PNS 6

VI. PNS APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS 6

A. OVERVIEW OF APPLICATION PROCESS 6

B. STAGE 1 – DETERMINING GRANTEE ELIGIBILITY..... 6

C. STAGE 2 – PNS CONCEPT PAPER..... 7

D. STAGE 3 – FULL PNS APPLICATION 9

VII. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS AND SELECTION CRITERIA 13

VIII. TIMETABLE 16

IX. REPORTING GUIDELINES 16

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. PNS Categories as Listed in the Domestic Volunteer Service Act, as Amended**
- 2. PNS Categories Grouped by Corporation Priorities**
- 3. SF 424 Facesheet**
- 4. SF 424A Budget**
- 5. Work Plan Template**
- 6. Tips for Writing a High Quality PNS Application**

**RSVP
PROGRAMS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE (PNS)
FY 2006 DETAILED GUIDANCE**

PART 1: ABOUT PNS

I. Background

- A. Goal.** The goal of Programs of National Significance (PNS) is to create a greater presence and visibility for RSVP through high impact results-based programming for new volunteers in existing projects and to expand service in selected programming areas established by Congress in the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (DVSA), as amended.
- B. Anticipated Available Funding.** Approximately \$385,280 will be made available to augment existing RSVP projects for PNS. Nationwide, PNS funding is expected to support an estimated 1,280 new RSVP volunteers.
- C. PNS Categories.** **Attachment 1** contains the complete list of the 18 PNS categories and **Attachment 2** groups these by Corporation priorities. In accordance with the legislation, these funds must be used to expand the number of volunteers in these critical areas of need.
- D. Programmatic Areas of Particular Interest.** While applications may be submitted for any of the 18 critical areas of need identified in the Domestic Volunteer Service Act, **this year, the Corporation is particularly interested in receiving proposals that contribute to the following Corporation-wide initiatives in the Corporation's 2006-2010 Strategic Plan:**
- **Providing more opportunities for citizens to serve and volunteer**, especially opportunities for RSVP volunteers to:
 - assist in the response to the longer term recovery of communities impacted by the 2005 Gulf Coast Hurricanes and help communities prepare for future disasters; and
 - help recruit and manage other community volunteers.
 - **Ensuring a brighter future for children and youth**, particularly children of prisoners, through mentoring and other programs that support these children and their families.
 - **Engaging students in their communities** by assigning RSVP volunteers in support of K-12 and/or college student service-learning activities.
 - **Harnessing experience to meet 21st century challenges** by engaging members of the baby boom generation in service and creating opportunities for Boomers to deliver independent living services to seniors in need.

E. Other Information.

- 1) Corporation State Offices must distribute this application guidance to all RSVP sponsors. Funds will be available to Corporation- and non-Corporation funded projects for expansion of existing projects either within currently approved or into new geographic service areas.
- 2) There is no minimum or maximum funding amount for PNS grant augmentations.
- 3) PNS funding is the only vehicle for Corporation-funded sponsors to expand services within currently approved geographic service areas or into new service areas with Corporation funding.
- 4) PNS awards must be used to supplement and not supplant the number of existing federally supported volunteers.
- 5) The FY 2005 end-of-year level of budgeted federally funded volunteers shall be the base upon which additional volunteers are funded through PNS.
- 6) PNS funding may not be used to establish new RSVP projects.

II. Core Elements for FY 2006

All applicants **must** address the following core elements in their full PNS applications. The narrative outline in Section VI.D shows where to address these core elements in the application. In addition, note that volunteer recruitment (II.B) and baby boomers (II.F) must also be briefly addressed at the Concept Paper stage, as indicated in Section VI.C.1.b.

- A. Collaboration, including Community Organizations, both Faith-Based and Secular**
Successful applications will show innovative collaborations and partnerships with community initiatives, including Learn and Serve America, AmeriCorps programs, including AmeriCorps*VISTA, where these exist, and/or others, such as faith-based and other community organizations. Applicants should use PNS funding to expand the involvement of faith-based and other community organizations, including at least one such organization as a volunteer station, wherever possible. **Applicants that are unable to collaborate with Learn and Serve America and/or AmeriCorps, including AmeriCorps*VISTA, and that are unable to expand their collaboration with faith-based and other community organizations should explain in their narrative why such collaboration is not possible.**
- B. Capacity Building/Volunteer Recruitment**
Applicants should describe how the RSVP volunteers will assist and participate in the recruitment of additional volunteers to serve in community-based organizations through RSVP or other community-based programs.

C. Critical Mass/Teams

Volunteers engaged in direct service, as opposed to capacity building, must be placed at volunteer stations in sufficient numbers to make substantial contributions to meeting the high priority needs identified in the PNS application. Ideally, no fewer than three volunteers should be placed at each station. Applicants must show that they will provide opportunities for these volunteers to work in teams and what they will do to develop cohesive teams through training and support activities.

Volunteers who perform capacity-building or volunteer recruitment activities may be assigned to volunteer stations in individual placements; they do not need to be assigned in teams.

D. Volunteer Roles

PNS applicants should develop a broad range of volunteer roles, including leadership roles, so that volunteers have the opportunity to contribute their skills in the most meaningful ways. **Volunteer leaders may not receive monetary incentives.**

E. High Quality Volunteer Experience

Applicants must demonstrate that the assignments enhance and enrich the lives of the volunteers. High quality projects value their RSVP volunteers, acknowledge their contributions, and ensure that they find their assignments to be personally meaningful. Program excellence is associated with the project's ability to provide RSVP volunteers with opportunities to make significant contributions to their communities and through those opportunities maximize their satisfaction and performance.

F. Baby Boomers and Diversity

Applicants must describe:

- a) how they will reach out to recruit age-eligible baby boomers as volunteers; and
- b) how they will develop a volunteer pool that reflects the demographics of the geographic communities to be served, including individuals of all races, ethnicities, and degrees of English language proficiency; and men.

G. Programming for Impact (PFI) and Performance Measures

Proposed PNS initiatives must be designed using the Programming for Impact (PFI) approach and must be focused on achieving measurable intermediate and end impacts (outcomes) through volunteer activities. PFI is an approach to programming based on the logical relationships among the following elements: Community Need; Service Activities; Anticipated Inputs; Anticipated Accomplishments (outputs); and Anticipated Impacts (intermediate and end outcomes). Applicants must also specify how their results will be measured. Submission of work plans as described in Section VI.D will satisfy this requirement.

To be eligible for a PNS grant augmentation, applicants must be effectively implementing PFI in their on-going grant activities. Where applicants have prior experience in the programming area for which they are applying, PNS applications must describe the impacts (outcomes) they have obtained.

In addition, applicants must propose at least one performance measure at the impact (outcome) level for inclusion in their Notice of Grant Award. (See Section VI.D for further details.)

III. Eligibility

A. Eligibility Requirements

All Corporation-funded and non-Corporation-funded RSVP grantees **that have met all programmatic and fiscal requirements, including on-time submission of required reports, and are demonstrating that they are successfully implementing PFI, including reporting of results**, are eligible to apply for PNS awards.

B. Determination of Eligibility

Eligibility to apply for PNS awards will be determined by the Corporation State Office in consultation with the Grants Office. See Section VI.B of this guidance for details on how grantees submit a request to State Offices to determine their eligibility for this competition.

IV. Allocation of Funds

- A. All funds will be awarded through a national competitive process based on high quality applications.
- B. No state or project is automatically entitled to funds.
- C. State Offices must ensure that all eligible Corporation-funded and non-Corporation-funded RSVP grantees are aware of the opportunity to submit applications for PNS awards.

V. Budgeting

- A. Applicants may apply for as many volunteers as appropriate to meet the stated community need(s). As directed by Congress, there are no minimum or maximum amounts for PNS augmentations.
- B. An appropriate and reasonable amount may be budgeted for Volunteer Support Expenses that directly support the PNS volunteer activity, including staff and other costs related to incorporating performance measurement into their ongoing operations. The total federal cost per volunteer should average \$300. Applicants are encouraged to budget at the full \$300 per volunteer and to assure that performance measurement systems are strengthened.
- C. Non-federal share requirements apply. The applicant should develop the budget for the PNS application so that if the proposed PNS budget is added to their base funding level, the resulting combined budget will continue to meet the non-federal share requirement.
- D. PNS awards increase the annualized base funding level of projects, contingent on their continued satisfactory performance.

PART 2: APPLYING FOR PNS

VI. PNS Application Process and Requirements

A. Overview of Application Process

For FY 2006, the PNS competition will follow a **3-stage process**.

Stage 1 – Determining Grantee Eligibility

Stage 2 – PNS Concept Paper

Stage 3 – Full PNS Application

These stages are described in the following sections.

B. Stage 1 – Determining Grantee Eligibility

1. Requesting Determination of Eligibility

Grantees that intend to compete for a PNS award must e-mail the Program Officer in the State Office by 5:00 PM local time, **February 24, 2006** to request a determination as to whether or not they meet all the eligibility criteria established in this guidance. The submission of this e-mail *does not* commit grantees to proceed to the next stage.

- The subject line of the the-mail should state “RSVP PNS Eligibility Determination” and provide the current grant number.
- The main body should request eligibility determination and provide the grantee’s legal applicant name used in eGrants.

Example:

Subject: RSVP PNS Eligibility Determination-03SRWAR012

Message: Older Americans for Civic Engagement, Inc., requests the Corporation State Office to determine our eligibility to compete for a 2006 RSVP PNS award.

2. State Office Action

- a. State Office Eligibility Review:** On receiving an eligibility determination request e-mail, the State Office will take the following actions **within 5 working days**:

- (1) Complete, in consultation with the Grants Office, an Eligibility Assessment Form provided by Senior Corps headquarters. Eligibility is based on the status of the grantee’s performance as of the date the sponsor submits eligibility determination e-mail.

- (2) If the applicant is eligible, the Program Officer in the State Office replies to the grantee confirming eligibility.
- (3) If it is determined that the applicant is not eligible to apply, the Program Officer in the State Office must obtain the concurrence of the State Program Director and the Area Manager prior to responding to the grantee. After obtaining necessary concurrence, the Program Officer must reply to the grantee's e-mail citing the specific reason(s) why the grantee is not eligible for this competition.
- (4) A copy of the reply e-mail must be sent to Senior Corps headquarters at the following address: pns@cns.gov. State Office staff should ensure that the reply contains the grantee's legal applicant name and the grant number.
- (5) The completed Eligibility Assessment Form is placed in the grantee's project file.

C. Stage 2 – PNS Concept Paper

Eligible grantees seeking a PNS award must submit by e-mail a PNS Concept Paper that briefly describes their proposal for expanding volunteer service.

1. Preparing the Concept Paper

- a. **Applicants with multiple Senior Corps grants:** Applicants with more than one Senior Corps grant may submit concept papers for each project their organization sponsors. A separate concept paper must be submitted for each PNS award for which the grantee is applying.
- b. **PNS Concept Paper Content and Outline:** The Concept Paper must be organized using the following section headings. Under each heading are key questions to answer (The questions are provided as a guide to the content of each section and **should not be retyped** in the Concept Paper.) **The concept paper should not exceed 350 words.**

(1) Legal Applicant's Name

(2) Grant Number

(3) Project Name

(4) Community Need(s)

- (a) What community need(s) will the PNS project address?
- (b) How is this need documented?
- (c) Why was this need selected?

(5) Service Description:

- (a) What services will the volunteers provide?
- (b) How will the services address the stated need?
- (c) How will RSVP volunteers assist and participate in recruitment of additional volunteers to serve through RSVP or other community-based programs.

(6) Beneficiaries:

- (a) Who, in general, will benefit from the service provided, other than the volunteers? (If possible, include an estimate of how many will benefit.)
- (b) How will they benefit?

(7) Expected Results

- (a) What will be the expected results?
- (b) How will the results be measured?

(8) PNS Category(ies)

What PNS Category(ies) apply to the proposed project? (Use the numbers corresponding to the categories listed in Attachments 1 and 2 of this guidance. Do not write out the description.)

(9) New Volunteers

- (a) How will the project reach out to recruit age-eligible baby boomers as volunteers?
- (b) How many new volunteers will be added? (This number can be estimated and may change in the full application.)

2. Submitting the PNS Concept Paper by E-mail

a. Submission Deadline. Concept Papers must be submitted by e-mail by 5 PM Eastern Standard Time on **March 28, 2006**, following the process described below.

b. Preparing the Concept Paper E-mail.

- Copy and paste the text of the concept paper into the main body (message section) of an e-mail.

Note: Do not attach the concept paper as a separate attachment. Having one e-mail for each concept paper with **no attachments** will expedite review of the concept papers.

- Write “RSVP PNS Concept Paper” and the corresponding grant number in the subject line of the e-mail.
- Make any formatting or other adjustments necessary so that the section headings are clear.

- c. **Sending the Concept Paper E-mail.** After pasting the text of the concept paper into the main body of the e-mail and writing “RSVP PNS Concept Paper” and the grant number in the subject line, send the e-mail to the following address: pns@cns.gov. Applicants should keep a copy of the e-mail for their files.

Concept Papers received after the deadline specified in VI.C.2.a will not be accepted.

3. Concept Paper Review

Concept Papers will be reviewed by CNCS staff to identify grantees who will be invited to submit a full application. The review will be based on:

- a. How well the concept paper ties together a compelling, documented community need, activities, and involvement of volunteers in a program that is likely to have a significant impact on the community; and
- b. Whether the Concept Paper includes all requested information.

D. Stage 3 – Full PNS Application

Grantees whose concept papers are accepted will be invited to participate in Stage 3 of the application process.

Note: Only applicants who are invited to participate in Stage 3 of the application process, may submit a full PNS application. Invitations to apply will be e-mailed from Senior Corps Headquarters after review of the Concept Papers.

1. **Contents of the Full Application.** The elements of the Senior Corps Grant Application to be completed and submitted in eGrants are listed below:

- a. **SF 424 Facesheet.**
- b. **Budget (SF 424A) and Budget Narrative.** Include the amounts **for the PNS activity only.**
- c. **Narratives.** Please note that the following instructions for narratives are **completely new for FY 2006.**

Applicants should organize their narratives according to the following the outline. Enter narratives in the corresponding Narrative Sections in eGrants. These sections will be blank when beginning to enter text. Refer to Section II for details concerning the respective Core Elements cited below. **Applicants should not assume that the reviewers have any prior knowledge of their capacity or track record.**

“Strengthening Communities” Section

Use this section to discuss:

Core Element A, Collaboration, Including Community Organizations

“Recruitment and Development of Volunteers” Section

Use this section to discuss:

Core Element B, Capacity Building/Volunteer Recruitment

Core Element C, Critical Mass/Teams

Core Element D, Volunteer Roles

Core Element E, High Quality Volunteer Experience

Core Element F, Baby Boomers and Diversity

“Program Management” Section

Use this section to describe plans for:

- (1) Developing and managing existing or new volunteer stations and volunteer assignments to address the community needs identified for the PNS work plan(s) and providing meaningful placements for the volunteers.
- (2) Assessing performance against the PNS work plan(s)
- (3) Securing any additional resources that may be required to implement the PNS work plan(s)

“Organizational Capacity” Section

Use this section to describe:

- (1) The applicant organization’s experience and past results obtained in the proposed program area or, if initiating a new program area, how they will ensure they will have access to the experience needed to ensure the success of the proposed program.
- (2) Plans for additional staffing, if any, for the proposed program or for redistributing work among existing staff to be able to handle the additional volunteers.

“Other” Section

Use this section to address any aspects of the proposal not discussed in the preceding sections, including any additional explanation of your proposed work plan.

“PNS Amendment” Section

Use this section only to identify by number and description the PNS category(ies) corresponding to each PNS work plan. (For the numbers and descriptions, see Attachments 1 and 2)

d. Work Plans and Performance Measure

- (1) In eGrants, applicants must prepare a separate work plan for each service category identified for their PNS application. They must:
 - select the appropriate Service Category;
 - state the number of volunteer stations contributing; and

- state the total number of volunteers providing services related to the selected Service Category.
- (2) Applicants must complete all six work plan elements by providing a narrative in the appropriate boxes:
- Community Need
 - Service Activity
 - Anticipated Input
 - Anticipated Accomplishment/Output
 - Anticipated Intermediate Impact/Outcome
 - Anticipated End Impact/Outcome

For explanations of these elements see the *Senior Corps Toolkit: Performance Measurement Toolkit* at:
http://www.projectstar.org/star/SeniorCorps/sc_pmtoolkit.pdf

For the Anticipated Accomplishment/Output; Anticipated Intermediate Impact/Outcome and Anticipated End Impact/Outcome, applicants must indicate the projected timeframe to achieve the anticipated results using month and year (e.g. 12/2006; 6/2007).

As required in the approved Senior Corps Grant Application (Part IV, Section A) and further discussed in the Performance Measurement Toolkit, all impact-based work plans should state the outputs, intermediate outcomes, and end outcomes in measurable terms.

- (3) Each PNS applicant is also required to identify at least one outcome level Performance Measure in a PNS work plan for which they will be held accountable for their actual performance against specified targets. This Performance Measure may be either an Intermediate Impact/Outcome or End Impact/Outcome.

The Performance Measure must include the following:

- (a) indicator,
- (b) target, and
- (c) how measured.

- (4) Applicants may provide a **brief** additional narrative in the “Other” narrative section, if needed to clarify the community need or other elements of the work plan.

2. Submitting the Full Application

- a. **Submission Date and Time.** The deadline for all applications is **5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on May 15, 2006**. Applications submitted by fax or email will not be accepted.
- b. **Submission in eGrants.** Applicants invited to submit full proposals will receive complete instructions for submitting PNS applications in eGrants.
 - **Step by Step eGrants Help.** Applicants invited to submit full proposals will receive complete instructions for submitting PNS applications in eGrants.

c. Exception:

In the event that an applicant is *unable* to submit in eGrants, they may submit a paper application, following these instructions:

- Submit one unbound, single-sided original paper application.
- Also, submit an electronic version of the application on 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 the application information into eGrants. (Facsimiles or e-mail versions of your application will not be accepted.)
- Paper applications must arrive at the Corporation by the deadline specified in Section VI.D.2.a, above. If there are differences between the paper application and the diskette or CD-ROM, the diskette or CD-ROM version will be used. Faxed or e-mailed versions of the application will not be accepted.
- Type and double-space the narrative sections of the application in Times New Roman, 12-point font size with one-inch margins.
- Adhere to the character limits listed in the application instructions and number the pages. (The Senior Corps Grant Application instructions are available at http://www.seniorcorps.org/forms/sc_grant_app.pdf)
- Use only uppercase letters for all section headings and other information you would like to highlight in the narrative. Bold face, bullets, underlines, or other types of formatting, charts, diagrams, and tables will not copy correctly into eGrants. None of these should be used in the application.
- Include a cover memo explaining why applicant is unable to submit in eGrants.

All paper applications, accompanied by explanations of why the application could not be submitted in eGrants, must *arrive* at the Corporation by the deadline cited in Section VI.D.2.a, above. Applications received after this date, regardless of post mark date, will not be accepted) Applicants should use a courier service because USPS (United State Postal Service) deliveries to government agencies often are delayed and sometimes damaged due to security measures.

Paper applications should be submitted to:

Corporation for National and Community Service
Attention: Senior Corps PNS Competition
1201 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20525

d. eGrants Unavailability or Technical Difficulties:

Applicants should contact the eGrants Helpdesk immediately if a problem arises while preparing or submitting the application. In the event an applicant is prevented from completing and submitting the application by the deadline because the eGrants system is unavailable or the applicant is having technical difficulty, the applicant must contact the eGrants Helpdesk at 888-677-7849 or 202-606-7506, or by e-mail at egrantshelp@cns.gov, prior to the application deadline to explain the technical issue and receive an eGrants ticket number

The applicant must then submit the following items in hard copy to the Corporation:

- A brief paragraph including the eGrants ticket number and an explanation of the technical issues that prevented the applicant from submitting in eGrants by the deadline.
- A paper application; and
- A diskette or CD-ROM with an exact duplicate of the application.

These items must be submitted via overnight carrier (non-U.S. Postal Service because of security-related delays in receiving mail from the USPS) or by hand delivery to the address provided above for paper applications. **These items must be “postmarked” no later than one day after the original submission deadline in Section VI.D.2.a, above, and received at the Corporation no later than 5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time two days after the original deadline. Applications by fax and e-mail will not be accepted.**

In the event of prolonged unavailability of the eGrants system on the date of submission, the Corporation reserves the right to extend the eGrants submission deadline. A notice will be placed in eGrants and on www.nationalservice.gov, 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.

VII. Application Review Process and Selection Criteria

A. Application Review Process Overview

Applications will be reviewed by panels of CNCS staff and external reviewers based on the review criteria in Sections VII.B and C, below.

B. Evaluation Criteria for Scoring Applications

Reviewers will evaluate applications using the following criteria established by the Board of Directors for all Corporation programs:

Program Design (60%)

Needs and Service Activities (20%)

- Well-documented compelling community need(s)
- Well-designed activities with measurable goals and objectives that meet community needs
- Well-defined roles for participants that lead to measurable outcomes/impact
- Effective involvement of target community in planning/implementation
- Ability to provide or secure effective technical assistance

Strengthening Communities (20%)

- Strong community partnerships, including well-defined roles for community partners
- Potential for sustainability, innovation, and/or replicability of project activities
- Enhanced capacity of organizations and institutions
- Mobilization of community resources, including volunteers
- Bringing together people of diverse backgrounds

Participant Development (20%)

- Effective plans for recruiting, developing, training, supervising, and recognizing participants
- Well-designed plan to engage participants in high-quality service-learning as defined by the Corporation¹
- Well-designed plan for participants to learn to serve together with people of diverse backgrounds

Organizational Capacity (25%)

- Ability to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight
- Sound track record in the issue areas(s) to be addressed by the project
- Well-defined roles for staff and administrators
- Well-designed plans or systems for self-assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement based on programming for impact.

¹ The Corporation encourages all applicants to include service-learning activities in their program design. However, this is only an evaluation criterion for Learn and Serve America

Budget/Cost-Effectiveness (15%)

- Adequate budget to support program design
- Commitment of applicant organization/host agency to securing resources for program implementation and/or sustainability
- Cost-effectiveness within program guidance

C. Other Selection Criteria

In addition to the **Application Requirements** and **Application Evaluation Criteria**, to distinguish among high quality competitive proposals the Corporation will ensure that funded proposals include projects in both urban and rural areas.

VIII. Timetable

February 9, 2006	PNS Guidance issued
February 24, 2006	Grantees that intend to apply submit e-mail by 5:00 PM local time requesting the Corporation State Office to determine their eligibility for PNS.
March 3, 2006	Deadline for State Office to reply to grantee either confirming grantee eligibility to apply or citing specific reason(s) for non-eligibility.
March 28, 2006	Concept Papers must be e-mailed to pns@cns.gov by 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time.
March 31, 2006	Concept Paper review begins
April 10, 2006	Concept Paper review completed
April 13, 2006	Invitations e-mailed to grantees invited to submit full applications.
May 15, 2006	Full applications due in eGrants by 5 PM Eastern Daylight Time.
May 18, 2006	Review of applications begins.
July 21, 2006	State Offices notify award recipients
August 9, 2006	Successful applicants submit grant amendment requests.
August 17, 2006	All PNS augmentations awarded in eGrants

IX. Reporting Guidelines

Applicants will add the work plan(s) submitted for PNS funds to the grantee's pre-existing eGrants work plans. Through the ongoing and established progress report cycles, PNS recipients will continue to update in eGrants progress toward meeting the outcomes specified in PNS work plans, including performance measures.

**PROGRAMS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE CATEGORIES
AS LISTED IN THE DVSA AS AMENDED OCTOBER 1, 1993**

1. Programs that assist individuals with chronic and debilitating illnesses, such as acquired immune deficiency syndrome.
2. Programs designed to decrease drug and alcohol abuse.
3. Programs that work with teenage parents.
4. Programs that match volunteer mentors with youth who need guidance.
5. Programs that provide adult and school-based literacy assistance.
6. Programs that provide respite care, including care for frail elderly individuals and for disabled or chronically ill children living at home.
7. Programs that provide before- and after-school activities that are sponsored by organizations, such as libraries, that serve children of working parents.
8. Programs that work with boarder babies.
9. Programs that serve children who are enrolled in child care programs, giving priority to such programs that serve children with special needs.
10. Programs that provide care to developmentally disabled adults who reside at home in community-based settings, including programs that, when appropriate, involve older developmentally disabled individuals as volunteers under this title.
11. Programs that provide volunteer tutors to assist educationally disadvantaged children, on a one-to-one basis, to improve the basic skills of such children.
12. Programs that address environmental needs.
13. Programs that reach out to organizations (such as labor unions and profit-making organizations) not previously involved in addressing national problems of local concern.
14. Programs that provide for outreach to increase participation of members of ethnic groups who have limited English proficiency.
15. Programs that support criminal justice activities and juvenile justice activities.

ATTACHMENT 1

16. Programs that involve older volunteers working with young people in apprenticeship programs.
17. Programs that support the community integration of individuals with disabilities.
18. Programs that provide health, education, and welfare services that augment the activities of State and local agencies, to be carried out in the fiscal year for which the aggregate amount of funds available for such agencies is not less than the annual average aggregate amount of funds available for the period of three fiscal years preceding such fiscal year.

**PROGRAMS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE CATEGORIES
GROUPED BY
THE CORPORATION'S NATIONAL PRIORITIES**

The Domestic Volunteer Service Act, as Amended, contains 18 categories of Programs of National Significance. The following list groups these categories in terms of the Corporation's National Priorities.

Education

5. Programs that provide adult and school-based literacy assistance.
11. Programs that provide volunteer tutors to assist educationally disadvantaged children, on a one-to-one basis, to improve the basic skills of such children.

Human Needs

1. Programs that assist individuals with chronic and debilitating illnesses, such as acquired immune deficiency syndrome.
2. Programs designed to decrease drug and alcohol abuse.
3. Programs that work with teenage parents.
4. Programs that match volunteer mentors with youth who need guidance.
6. Programs that provide respite care, including care for frail elderly individuals and for disabled or chronically ill children living at home.
7. Programs that provide before- and after-school activities that are sponsored by organizations, such as libraries, that serve children of working parents.
8. Programs that work with boarder babies.
9. Programs that serve children who are enrolled in child care programs, giving priority to such programs that serve children with special needs.
10. Programs that provide care to developmentally disabled adults who reside at home in community-based settings, including programs that, when appropriate, involve older developmentally disabled individuals as volunteers under this title.
16. Programs that involve older volunteers working with young people in apprenticeship programs.
17. Programs that support the community integration of individuals with disabilities.

18. Programs that provide health, education, and welfare services that augment the activities of State and local agencies, to be carried out in the fiscal year for which the aggregate amount of funds available for such agencies is not less than the annual average aggregate amount of funds available for the period of three fiscal years preceding such fiscal year.

Public Safety

15. Programs that support criminal justice activities and juvenile justice activities.

Environment

12. Programs that address environmental needs.

Cross Cut All Priorities

13. Programs that reach out to organizations (such as labor unions and profit-making organizations) not previously involved in addressing national problems of local concern.
14. Programs that provide for outreach to increase participation of members of ethnic groups who have limited English proficiency.

*Numbers relate to the PNS areas listed in the Domestic Volunteer Service Act

PART II— BUDGET WORKSHEET AND NARRATIVE— SENIOR CORPS

SECTION 1: VOLUNTEER SUPPORT EXPENSES							
NARRATIVE			WORKSHEET				
A. PROJECT PERSONNEL EXPENSES			Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	
Position Title	Annualized Salary	% Time Spent on Project	Total Project Cost	Corporation Funds Requested	Non-Federal Resources	Excess Resources	
TOTAL PERSONNEL EXPENSES			\$	\$	\$	\$	
B. PERSONNEL FRINGE BENEFITS							
TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS							
C. PROJECT STAFF TRAVEL							
Local Travel (Detail)							
Sub-Total Local Travel							
Long Distance Travel (Detail)							
Sub-Total Long Distance Travel							
TOTAL TRAVEL COSTS							
D. EQUIPMENT (List)							
TOTAL EQUIPMENT							
E. SUPPLIES (Describe)							
TOTAL SUPPLIES							
F. CONTRACTUAL AND CONSULTANT SERVICES (Detail)							
TOTAL CONTRACTUAL AND CONSULTANT SERVICES							
G. TRAINING							
H. EVALUATION							
I. OTHER VOLUNTEER SUPPORT COSTS (Detail)							
TOTAL OTHER VOLUNTEER SUPPORT COSTS							
J. INDIRECT COSTS							
TOTAL SECTION I			\$	\$	\$	\$	

SECTION II: VOLUNTEER EXPENSES				
NARRATIVE	WORKSHEET			
	Column 1 Total Project Cost	Column 2 Corporation Funds Requested	Column 3 Non-Federal Resources	Column 4 Excess Resources
A. STIPENDS -Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion applicants only Number of Volunteer Service Years (VSY)s: 1) CNCS-funded ____ x Annual Stipend = \$_____ 2) Non-CNCS-funded ____ x Annual Stipend = \$_____ 3) Non-Stipended: ____				
	\$	\$	\$	\$
B. OTHER VOLUNTEER COSTS				
1. Meals				
2. Uniforms				
3. Insurance				
4. Recognition				
5. Volunteer Travel				
6. Physical Examinations				
7. Other Allowable Expenses				
TOTAL OTHER VOLUNTEER COSTS	\$	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL SECTION 2	\$	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS: Section 1 + Section 2	\$	\$	\$	\$
FUNDING PERCENTAGES (percent distribution between Columns 4 and 5)		%	%	

Work Plan [Conformed to eGrants and OMB Approved Grant Application]

OMB No. 3045-0035 Expiration date 04/30/2008]

Applicant Organization:			<input type="checkbox"/> Check this box, if this Work Plan contains performance measure(s).	
Period Covered: Starting: _____ Ending: _____			Applicable Service Category/Categories:	
Part 1. Community Need to Be Addressed:			Total Number of Senior Corps volunteers contributing to meeting the need: _____	
			Total Number of Volunteer Stations: _____	
			Total Number of People to be served: _____	
Part 2: Action Plan, Tasks and Timeline				
PROJECT PLANNING			PROJECT REPORTING	
Column A Plans, Tasks, and Activities	Column B Check if Performance Measure	Col. C Date	C. Column D Actual Performance	Col. E Date
Service Activity:			Actual Service Activity:	
Anticipated Inputs:			Actual Inputs:	
Anticipated Accomplishments (Outputs):			Actual Accomplishments (Outputs):	
How Measured?			How Measured?	
Anticipated Impact Intermediate Outcome:	*See footnote		Actual Impact Intermediate Outcome:	
How Measured? Indicator? Target?			How Measured? Indicator? Target?	
End Outcome:	*See footnote		End Outcome:	
How Measured? Indicator? Target?			How Measured? Indicator? Target?	

* Each PNS applicant is required to identify at least one outcome level Performance Measure in a PNS work plan for which they will be held accountable for their actual performance against specified targets. This Performance Measure may be either an Intermediate Impact/Outcome or End Impact/Outcome.

Note: Please reproduce or duplicate this template as needed to include all Community Needs and work plans. An MS Word version is available on request from the Corporation State Office.

Tips for Writing a High Quality Programs of National Significance (PNS) Application (Revised for FY 2006)

Produce a High Quality, Outcome-Based Workplan

The work plan contains your program design and your program design accounts for 60% of the evaluation score. You may submit a **brief**, additional narrative if needed to clarify the work plan. Reviewers appreciate **clear and concise writing**.

Tips:


1) Keep the **needs statement** in the work plan **brief and to the point**. Put information or data used to develop your needs statement in your narrative, in the “Other” section.

2) Remember that Congress has already declared that the PNS categories represent "national problems of local concern." Your needs statement should concentrate on describing how your project can help meet the need(s) you select in **your local community**, based on local data, quotes from authoritative local sources, etc.



Select one or just few of its many needs!

3) Try to **combine** all the **volunteer stations** that address a particular community need in one work plan. You don't need to submit separate work plans for each volunteer station.



Be sure that your proposed activities, inputs, accomplishments (outputs), and impacts (outcomes) all **relate back to the community need(s)** you have described. Ask yourself, "what does this have to do with the need I have described"?

4) Use **short paragraphs** for each input, accomplishment (output), and impact (outcome) in the work plan. Don't write long blocks of narrative text. This will help you plan and assign a date or date range for each item. It will also make your work plan clearer to reviewers.

5) **Don't submit attachments** or any other information. Your application will be reviewed based on what you submit in eGrants.

6) Describe the **specific steps** you will take to achieve objectives. For example, don't simply say you will “create opportunities for volunteers of diverse backgrounds.” Describe what you will do to accomplish this.

7) **Seek out innovative local collaborations and partnerships** among AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and other Senior Corps programs. Check the State Profiles at the Corporation's website for detailed information on the grantees of all programs in your state. Your State Office may also be helpful in identifying opportunities for collaboration. **If you can't identify any such opportunities, be sure to state that you made the effort.**

8) **Be specific** about the roles and responsibilities of partnering organizations in your work plan.



Don't use your PNS application to report on your last PNS project or your core grant!

Budget Accurately and Correctly

(15% of your application's evaluation score comes from the budget)

Tips:

- 1) Pay special attention to the **budget instructions**.
- 2) Document your organization's **commitment to secure non-federal funds** for the PNS project grant period and to make the PNS project **sustainable as part of your core grant activities**.
- 3) For FGP and SCP, be sure to correctly **calculate your VSYS correctly**. One VSYS equals 1044 service hours delivered in one year.

Be Sure that Your Discussion of Organizational Capacity is Focused and Clear

(Organizational capacity is worth 25% of your total score)

Tips:

- 1) Identify and describe clearly the **roles of each staff member and administrator** and how they relate to each other.
- 2) Describe your **plans or systems for self-assessment of the PNS project proposed, evaluation and continuous improvement**. Ask yourself: "How will we know, as we carry out this project, whether we need to make mid-course corrections"? "How will we know at the end of the year whether we have achieved the targets we describe in the work plan"?



Document relationships and roles



Be sure to present any past experience and results obtained in the programming area of your PNS application in your Organizational Capabilities narrative. If you are proposing activities in a new programming area, explain how you will ensure your proposed program will have access to the expertise needed.

The Important Details

- 1) **Read and follow the Guidance** provided by the Corporation. Don't assume this year's Guidance is the same as prior years. **It's not!**
- 2) After completing your PNS application, **reread it carefully**. Ask a colleague to proofread and comment for value-added input.
- 3) **Submit your application on-time!**

Desired Outcome!

