



**2015-2016 Program Year**

**AmeriCorps\*State Grant  
Concept Paper Guidelines**  
For All New Applicants, Re-compete Applicants,  
& Planning Grant Applicants

**Issued: August 19, 2014**

**Due: September 12, 2014**



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# Introduction

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Thank you for your interest in an AmeriCorps\*State grant. All *New, Re-compete, and Planning Grant* applicants must submit a Concept Paper. The Concept Paper is meant as a first step in drafting your full application, and as a way to give a brief overview of the program you will be proposing for funding. Applicants **must** submit a Concept Paper in order to be eligible to compete for 2015-16 Program Year funding (*except continuation applicants*).

If you have any questions about the application process please contact Elizabeth Higgins at (317) 233-0901, [ehiggins@serveindiana.gov](mailto:ehiggins@serveindiana.gov)

## Background Information

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### **AmeriCorps**

AmeriCorps is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (called the Corporation or CNCS), an independent federal agency. The mission of the Corporation is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic participation through service and volunteering.

In order to maximize the impact of the investment in national service, the Corporation is focused on funding programs that can demonstrate an evidence-based approach to creating community impact and solving community problems. Applicants for AmeriCorps funding must demonstrate a well-researched need within the community, a sound plan to engage AmeriCorps members in meeting the community need, and the ability to design and implement effective evaluation systems to capture the outcomes of the AmeriCorps program and members' service.

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations to recruit, train, and manage AmeriCorps members during a defined term of service. The Corporation administers AmeriCorps funding through a network of State Service Commissions. These commissions review grant applications, select grant recipients for state funding or national competition, and monitor grant activities. The information in this document addresses AmeriCorps State funding in Indiana. The Serve Indiana Commission is the State Service Commission in Indiana.

### **Serve Indiana Commission and Serve Indiana**

The Serve Indiana Commission is the governor-appointed administrative agent of the AmeriCorps\*State programs in Indiana for the Corporation for National and Community Service, supported by Serve Indiana. For more information about the Commission and Serve Indiana, please visit our website at <http://www.serveindiana.gov>

# Timeline

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Release Concept Paper Instructions:	August 19, 2014
Concept Paper due:	September 12, 2014
Full Application Instructions/RFP Posted:*	September 30, 2014 (tentative)
Grant applications due via eGrants:*	November 1, 2014 (tentative)
Funding Notification Letters Sent:*	June 2015 (tentative)
Grant award period begins:	August (or Sept.) 2015
Grant award period ends:	August (or Sept.) 2016

*\*TENTATIVE, pending release of CNCS timeline*

## Eligible Organizations

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Eligible applicants include: nonprofit organizations in compliance with IRS Section 501(c)(3) regulations (including religious organizations); schools; institutions of higher education; state agencies; subdivisions of the state including cities, counties, and municipalities; or a partnership or collaboration of any of the above entities.

## National Priority Funding Areas

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CNCS seek to build a diversified portfolio across the focus areas. Applicants proposing programs that receive priority consideration are not guaranteed funding. Furthermore, programs must demonstrate significant program focus, design, and outcomes to receive priority consideration. CNCS gives priority consideration to applicants in the Tiers. The tiers will be announced in the PY2015-2016 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). To see previous tiers please see the PY 2014-2015 NOFO here: [http://www.in.gov/serveindiana/files/2014\\_AmeriCorps\\_Notice\\_-\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.in.gov/serveindiana/files/2014_AmeriCorps_Notice_-_FINAL.pdf). *2015-2016 AmeriCorps Funding Priorities may be changed. Final tiers will appear in the Final NOFO.*

- **Disaster Services:** Grants will help individuals and communities prepare, respond, recover, and mitigate disasters and increase community resiliency. Grant activities will:
  - Increase the preparedness of individuals
  - Increase individuals' readiness to respond
  - Help individuals recover from disasters
  - Help mitigate disasters
- **Economic Opportunity:** Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people. Grant activities will help economically disadvantaged people to:

- Have improved access to services and benefits aimed at contributing to their enhanced financial literacy
- Transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing
- Have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed
- **Education:** Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged people, especially children. Grant activities will improve:
  - School readiness for economically disadvantaged young children
  - Educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools
  - The preparation for and prospects of success in post-secondary education institutions for economically disadvantaged students
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Grants will provide direct services that contribute to increased energy and water efficiency, renewable energy use, or improving at-risk ecosystems, and support increased citizen behavioral change leading to increased efficiency, renewable energy use, and ecosystem improvements particularly for economically disadvantaged households and economically disadvantaged communities. Grant activities will:
  - Decrease energy and water consumption
  - Improve at-risk ecosystems
  - Increase behavioral changes that lead directly to decreased energy and water consumption or improve at-risk ecosystems
  - Increase green training opportunities that may lead to decreased energy and water consumption or improve at-risk ecosystems
- **Healthy Futures:** Grants will meet health needs within communities including access to care, aging in place, addressing childhood obesity. Grant activities will:
  - Increase seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible
  - Increase physical activity and improve nutrition in youth with the purpose of reducing childhood obesity
  - Improve access to primary and preventative health care for communities served by CNCS-supported programs (access to health care)
- **Veterans & Military Families:** Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength. Grant activities will increase:
  - The number of veterans and military service members and their families served by CNCS-supported programs
  - The number of veterans and military family members engaged in service provision through CNCS-supported programs
- **Capacity Building:** Grants will provide support for capacity building activities provided by national service participants. Examples of capacity building activities include:
  - Recruiting and/or managing community volunteers
  - Implementing effective volunteer management practices
  - Completing community assessments that identify goals and recommendations
  - Developing new systems and business processes (technology, performance management, training, etc) or enhancing existing systems and business processes

In addition to the national priority funding areas outlined by CNCS above, Serve Indiana has determined state-wide focus areas: Health, Hunger, Housing, and Education. Programs focused on one or more of these four areas will be given priority in the formula funding decision process.

## Concept Paper Tips

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Below are ideas to help you present your project in the best way possible:

- *Assess your fit with AmeriCorps:* Be sure that you are familiar with AmeriCorps program requirements. Demonstrate this knowledge in your paper. Utilize our Fit Finder Tool here: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/new-national-service/fit-finder>
- *Paint a vivid picture of your need:* Help reviewers understand who you are, what the needs of your community are, and how AmeriCorps can help better serve Indiana citizens, etc. Back up your need with evidence and avoid generalities and boilerplate language. There is not room in the Concept Paper for filler language.
- *Follow the rules:* Provide the information in the order and format that it is requested. Do not attach any information that is not explicitly required; do not refer to web links for further information.
- *Do your research:* Be sure to make use of the resources available to develop a strong proposal. Find these at <http://www.in.gov/serveindiana/2686.htm> and <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps> and [www.nationalserviceresources.org](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org).

## Concept Paper Instructions

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The Concept Paper Cover Page *and* a Concept Paper Narrative should be submitted electronically to Elizabeth Higgins ([ehiggins@serveindiana.gov](mailto:ehiggins@serveindiana.gov)) by 11:59pm (EST) on September 12, 2014. Do not include any other cover letters or attachments other than what is specifically requested in these guidelines.

- The email subject line should read:  
“AmeriCorps Concept Paper, *Name of Legal Applicant*”
- The electronic file should be named:  
“*Name of legal applicant*\_ Concept Paper\_PY15-16.”

Planning Grant Applicants are only required to submit the Concept Paper Cover Page, they are not required to submit the Concept Paper Narrative.

# Concept Paper Cover Page

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- New Applicant** (Applying for an operational grant for the first time)
- Previous Applicant** (Not a current grantee, but have operated an AmeriCorps\*State grant in past 5 years)
- Re-compete Applicant** (A current grantee – not including current planning grantees)
- Planning Grant Applicant**

Proposed Program Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Contact Person/Title: [Click here to enter text.](#)

E-mail Address: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Telephone: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Name of Legal Applicant (Organization): [Click here to enter text.](#)

Address: [Click here to enter text.](#)

City/State/Zip: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Type of organization: [Click here to enter text.](#)

DUNS number : [Click here to enter text.](#)

DUNS Expiration Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

SAM number: [Click here to enter text.](#)

SAM Expiration Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Issue area(s) to be addressed, as defined on pgs. 3-4 of these guidelines (select all that apply to your proposed program):

- Education
- Healthy Futures
- Environment Stewardship
- Veterans and Military Families
- Economic Opportunity
- Disaster Services
- Capacity Building

Geographic area(s) to be served, by county:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Approximate amount of funding that will be requested in formal application: \$ [Click here to enter text.](#)

How many Members will be recruited under the proposed program?  
(New, Previous, or Recompete Applicants only)

Full Time (1700 hrs)	Half Time (900 hrs)	Reduced Half Time (675 hrs)
Quarter Time (450 hrs)	Minimum Time (300 hours)	Total MSY

- a) **Erroneous certification** – The eligibility criteria are material representations of fact upon which we rely in determining whether to enter into this transaction. If Serve Indiana determines that the applicant knowingly submitted an erroneous certification Serve Indiana may terminate the transaction for cause or default.
- b) **Notice of error in certification** – The applicant must provide immediate written notice to Serve Indiana at any time it learns that certification of the eligibility criteria was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous because of changed circumstances.

By signing and submitting this application, as the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I certify that the applicant is eligible to submit a Concept Paper based on the eligibility criteria outlined in the 2015-2016 Program Year AmeriCorps\*State Grant Concept Paper Guidelines. I understand that submission of a Concept Paper Cover Page and Concept Paper Narrative is not a guarantee to receive any funding and that the applicant must submit a full application by the due date communicated by Serve Indiana if invited to compete for funding in order to be considered.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

## Concept Paper Narrative

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In a typed (Word or PDF) document no more than **two pages**, single sided, double-spaced, with the Name of Legal Applicant at the top of each page, provide the following:

- A. **Need:** What community need will your program strive to address? What is the target community you will service? Provide a brief summary of specific evidence to support the need for your proposed AmeriCorps program.
- B. **Solution:** Describe the structure of the proposed AmeriCorps program. Explain how this program will offer a new or expanded solution to the identified community problem. Include details on the type of direct services to be performed by members. Be sure to explain the connection between the community need identified in the section above and the members' direct service.