Slide One: Welcome to the webinar on AmeriCorps program management and design for grant applicants. This the final webinar in a series designed to help organizations that are considering applying for AmeriCorps funding.

Slide Two: **AmeriCorps Grants** provide funding to high-quality programs that are developed by an applicant who designs a set of activities that demonstrate an evidence-based approach to creating community impact and solving community problems by engaging individuals in service as AmeriCorps members.

Grants are awarded to nonprofits, Indian tribes, colleges and universities, and public agencies to address unmet needs in education, economic opportunity, veterans services, disaster services, health, the environment, and more.

A grantee might use AmeriCorps resources to make an existing program more effective, to reach previously underserved communities or to expand their activities beyond what they were able to do without AmeriCorps.

However, it is important to understand that AmeriCorps funds do not duplicate, displace or supplant resources that currently exist in a community. AmeriCorps members cannot be used to take the place of staff, current volunteers or existing funding.

Slide Three: AmeriCorps State and National grants are awarded on a competitive basis to eligible applicants.

AmeriCorps grants include an allotment of AmeriCorps member positions and the funds awarded by CNCS are directly tied to a specific number of members awarded.

AmeriCorps grants are solely for program expenses and cannot be used for general organizational operating expenses.

All AmeriCorps Grants provide *partial* funding to support AmeriCorps projects and programs. Grant recipients must contribute match funding to support the project.

Slide Four: As your organization considers applying for an AmeriCorps grant and begins designing your program, there are many important factors to consider.

Being successful is more than just having a good idea for a program; if you become an AmeriCorps grantee, your organization will have many responsibilities.

Does your organization have the capability to manage federal funds?

Do you have the capacity to manage and oversee the grant and all of its components?

Do you have the ability to ensure all the AmeriCorps members are well trained and supervised?

Most programs actively engage other organizations as community partners to function as host sites for AmeriCorps members. Do you have strong partners in the community and in your focus area or can you develop them?

Slide Five: An AmeriCorps grantee must fulfill some core roles and responsibilities for the program and meet the requirements of the grant.

So while you determine the best management structure for your program, keep in mind your overall responsibilities. You must:

- employ strong fiscal and program management systems;

- monitor financial management, program performance and member activities at operating sites and service locations;

- train and provide technical assistance to staff at parent organization and at sites;

- ensure the recruitment, orientation and training of members;

- track, and ensure the accuracy of member hours and activities, and track progress toward meeting approved performance measures; and

- act as liaison between CNCS or the Commission and other components of your program

Slide Six: As we described the grantee responsibilities, you may have heard the terms operating site and service location. It is important to understand the difference between the Parent Organization, Operating Sites and Service Locations and how they fit into the program management structure. The Key Terms webinar explained these already, but we will review briefly here, too.

The **Parent Organization** is the grantee, which has the ultimate legal responsibility for the grant.

An **operating site** is the organizational entity that administers the AmeriCorps program in that state. For multi-state grantees, there will be at least one operating site in each state where they are placing members. Operating Sites can be affiliates, chapters or unaffiliated organizations.

A **service location** is the organization where a member provides most of his/her service in the community. Typical service locations are schools, food banks, health clinics, community parks, etc. Service locations can be operating sites if the member actually serves at the operating site most of the time.

Slide Seven: AmeriCorps members can be placed at service locations individually or in teams; they can be based out of one organization or be distributed across the community.

As you are thinking about your organization, your partners and the role service can play in addressing needs in your community, keep the following questions in mind:

Where will the service activities take place? In one community, in one state or in multiple communities across many states?

Will services be based out of a partner organization or in scattered sites?

Where will your organization acquire match funds? Do you partner with other organizations who can provide the living allowance or other benefits (like housing, meals, or work study) to members during their term of service?

What is the capacity of your partner organizations to provide programmatic or financial support for the AmeriCorps program?

Your answer to these questions will help define your program design.

Slide Eight: **There are 3 basic management structures used by AmeriCorps programs:**

In the **centralized** model, the grantee takes care of all the administrative functions and assigns members to operating sites and/or service locations. For example, a grantee might have operating sites that are small CBO's with limited capacity or they might be state offices of the grantee.   The grantee chooses to centrally manage the grant. Operating sites and/or service locations may be involved in recruiting and selecting members, but the grantee handles the eligibility screening and the member files. The grantee provides a high level orientation and training for the AmeriCorps members, but the operating sites are expected to provide a local orientation. The grantee manages member stipend payments and other administrative functions and provides members to the sites, but no funds go to the operating sites.

In a **decentralized** model, the grantee sub-grants the funds, and the sub-grantee is responsible for member training, payroll and other administrative functions. For example, if you have operating sites with a history of successfully managing federal grants and they have the capacity to manage the AmeriCorps program, the grantee might choose to sub-grant the funds to each of their operating sites. Each site provides its own orientation and training for the AmeriCorps members. Each site manages member stipend payments and other administrative functions.

 You can also have a **combination** of these structures with more shared responsibilities.

Remember, regardless of the management structure employed, the grantee organization is still ultimately responsible to the Corporation for all funds and activities, so you will need to put into place a process for oversight and monitoring of any operating sites and service locations to ensure their compliance.

Slide Nine: Now that you have learned a little about what your organization should have in place to manage an AmeriCorps program, we want to share the starting point for developing a program. A program design starts with your theory of change. A theory of change defines a cause and effect relationship between a specific intervention, or service activity, and an intended outcome.

It is essential to the program design that you be able to show how the problem you plan to address, the service activities (or intervention) the program will provide, and the anticipated outcomes relate to one another. Your theory of change is a method of explaining what needs to change, how you plan to create that change, why you think these particular activities will create the desired change, and the specific change you expect to see as a result.

Slide Ten: There are two places where you need to use evidence to support your program design. The first is to document the need in the community or describing the problem your program will address.

Data should be used identity the scope of problem: Who is affected by the problem? How many are directly affected? How severe is the problem? It is important that the need is documented at the local level where members will serve, if at all possible.

In addition, data should identify the relevance of the problem, in other words, what makes this a compelling problem? Is it likely to become worse?

You also need to identify the causes of the problem so you can tackle it as close to the root cause as possible. Ask yourself repeatedly, "why does the problem exist?" How is the problem perpetuated?

Slide Eleven: The other place where evidence is important is to support the basis for the proposed intervention. As a grant applicant, you need to design activities for AmeriCorps members that demonstrate an evidence-based approach to creating community impact and solving community problems.

Data is used to demonstrate that the proposed intervention is likely to solve the identified problem and to support a particular design, frequency, intensity and duration of the intervention that is optimal.

Slide Twelve: The evidence basis for an intervention, or member service activities, may come from:

- Case studies that demonstrates a successful program;
- Research studies that document the outcomes of similar programs
- Past performance measurement data; or
- Describing the results from a program evaluation that documents outcomes of a similar program

Slide Thirteen: Evidence for your need and your intervention should be:

- Relevant
- Compelling
- Up-to-date, and
- From a reliable source

Slide Fourteen: Not only do you need to define the problem you want to address and identify the intervention to be carried out by the AmeriCorps members, you also need to identify your outcomes.

Your outcome is the change in attitude, knowledge, behavior, or condition that results from the intervention.

Whatever outcomes you identify, they must be measurable.

Slide Fifteen: You have just learned how to connect the components together that address the theory of change for a program, however, having an identified problem, an intervention to address that problem, and measurable outcomes that result from the intervention, does not complete your AmeriCorps program design.

You will need to further develop components that will give your program its AmeriCorps identity, allow members to have a powerful service experience, and engage community volunteers to expand your impact.

Slide Sixteen: The AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity and the Application Instructions will outline the specific criteria that you should address (and program components you should develop) as you complete your AmeriCorps application.

You can find much more information about how to describe:

Why AmeriCorps Members are a highly effective means to solving your identified community problem,

How you plan to recruit, train and supervise your AmeriCorps members,

What your program will provide for a powerful service experience for members,

How community volunteers will be engaged in your service activities,

And your organizations commitment to AmeriCorps identification.

You will need to review the Notice and the application instructions together to fully address this and all of the application selection criteria and the required narrative, budget, and performance measurement information.

Slide Seventeen: This concludes the AmeriCorps Program Management and Design presentation. This is the final webinar to assist grant applicants in understanding how to apply for AmeriCorps funding. Please review each webinar.

In addition to the webinars, please review the resource sheet. It will point you to helpful tools available on our resource center and web site.

In addition to the various online resources, the AmeriCorps Outreach team will host calls to assist applicants as you complete the application process.

Slide Eighteen: Thank you for your participation, please complete the session evaluation online at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ACwebinarEval

Slide Nineteen: If you have any questions, please contact CNCS via internet or phone at AmeriCorpsGrants@cns.gov or 202.606.7508