Using eGrants to enter and submit a grant application to CNCS

This document explains how to use eGrants to enter and submit a grant application to CNCS over the web. The following topics are covered:

A. Submitting a Continuation or Amending a Grant

Before reading these instructions, read the eGrants Interface Operation Instructions and the application guidelines for the program you are applying to. You will also need to refer to the helps and hints on the screen and the material for the Application for Federal Assistance Form.

1. Before you begin…

Make sure that you have created an account for yourself by selecting the "Create an Account" option from the eGrants web page and entering the required information. In addition, verify that the people who will be electronically signing the certifications and assurances have created their accounts and know their usernames and passwords.

Ensure that you have obtained the grant number of the grant you are continuing, amending, or renewing. If necessary, you can amend an amendment. You should always select the most current version of the grant.

Access eGrants by selecting the "Log In" option from the eGrants web page. Enter your username and password in the login window. When the eGrants menu opens, click on the + next to the Applications node. Double-click "Application for Federal Assistance" in the menu to access the application form.

2. Select the Notice of Funds Available (NOFA) you need for your submission

Click the list of values button (with the triangle label) to the right of the "NOFA" field. A popup window will open which lists all of the Corporation's open NOFAs. Find the name of the NOFA you are applying for, select that name, and click the OK button. The NOFA name will now appear in the field. If you selected the wrong NOFA name, click the button again and select the correct NOFA name from the list. You may now begin entering your application information.

3. Select the submission type

Select the type of submission from the Application Type pop-up list:

- A continuation is an application for the second or third year of a three-year grant
- An amendment is an application for a change to an existing grant
- A renewal only applies to Senior Corps and is an application for the initial year of a new three-year grant after completing a three-year grant

4. If the selected application type is an amendment, select the type of amendment

Select the type of amendment from the Amendment Type poplist.

5. If the selected amendment type is a no-cost extension, enter the reason for the extension

If you are requesting a no-cost extension to your grant, enter the reason you are requesting the extension.

6. Enter the grant number of the grant you are continuing or amending

Enter the grant number of the grant you are continuing, amending, or renewing in the Grant Number field. Press the Enter key. A dialog box will open that will tell you that eGrants will make a copy of the most recent application for this grant. If you click OK, the new application will be created. The applicant and application information and narrative text will be copied from the existing grant, as well as the budget, if applicable.

7. Finish entering your application
Follow the instructions for Entering a New Application, beginning with step 3. You must enter a new budget, but you can modify the workplan and other information from the grant that was copied.

B. Applying for a New Grant (either for the first time or at the end of a 3-year cycle.)

Before reading these instructions, make sure that you have read the application guidelines for the program you are applying to, the eGrants Interface Operation Instructions. As you complete the application you will also refer to the eGrants materials for the Application for Federal Assistance form.

1. Before you begin…
Make sure that you have created an account for yourself by selecting the "Create an Account" option from the eGrants web page and entering the required information. In addition, verify that the people who will be electronically signing the certifications and assurances have created their accounts and know their usernames and passwords.

Access eGrants by selecting the "Log In" option from the eGrants web page. Enter your username and password (emailed to you after you created an account) in the login window. When the eGrants menu opens, click on the + next to the Applications node. Double-click the "Application for Federal Assistance" entry in the menu to access the application form.

2. Select the Notice of Funds Available (NOFA) you are applying for
Click the list of values button (with the triangle label) to the right of the "NOFA" field. A popup window will open which lists all of the Corporation's open NOFAs. Find the name of the NOFA you are applying for, select that name, and click the OK button. The NOFA name and due date will display on the screen. If you selected the wrong NOFA name, click the button again and select the correct NOFA name from the list. You may now begin entering your application information.

3. Check your organization information
Your organization's name and address will be displayed in the Applicant section. If any corrections are needed, click the "Edit Organization" button. An organization pop-up window will appear, allowing you to make changes. When you are done, click Save to commit your changes. This will close the pop-up window and the changes will appear in the Applicant section.

4. Select the project or program that will be supported by the grant
Click the list of values button next to the "Project Title" field. This is the title by which you call your project or program. Select the appropriate project name from the list. If no project appear, click the "Enter/Edit Program" button. Enter the project information in the Project window and click the Save button. The project name and address will be displayed in the Project/Project Director Information section. If you selected your project and note that information needs to be updated, click the "Enter/Edit Program" button. The selected program will be displayed. Make the needed changes, and click the Save button. If you already selected a program and have decided that you need to enter a new program, click the "Enter/Edit Program" button. The previously selected project will be displayed. Click the green + on the toolbar. The Program window will clear. Enter the information for the new program and click the Save button. The new program information will now be displayed in the application.

5. Select the project director for the grant

Click the list of values button next to the “Name” field. Select the project director from the list. If the project director’s name is not listed, click the” Enter/Edit Contact” button and enter the project director’s information. Ensure that the project director’s phone number and email address are correct.

6. Select the authorized representative for the grant
Click the list of values button next to the “Name of Authorized Representative” field. Select the name of the person who will be the authorized representative from the list. That person must be the one that submits the application and “signs” the authorization and certification. If the person’s name does not show in the list, notify him or her that he or she must create an eGrants account.

7. Enter program initiative information
Based on the grant application guidelines, enter a description of the program initiative under which the application is being submitted. (A program initiative is optional.)

8. Save
It’s a good idea to save your application on a regular basis. We recommend saving as you complete each tab. This ensures you won’t lose information if your Internet connection is dropped.

9. Click the Application tab at the top of the screen.

10. Enter a list of the geographic areas affected by the project.

11. Enter the proposed start and end dates for the project.
The dates must be entered in the format MM/DD/YYYY (e.g., 01/25/2002). You can also click the Calendar icon on the toolbar and select a date from the calendar. The end date is typically 3 years after the start date for new applications; check the application guidelines for further information.

12. Indicate whether the application is subject to review by the State Executive Order 12372 process
If the Application is subject to review by the State Executive Order 12372 process, click the checkbox indicating this, and enter the date your organization submitted your application to the state point of contact for review.

13. Indicate whether your organization is delinquent on any Federal debt
If your organization is delinquent on any Federal debt, click the checkbox indicating this, and enter an explanation in the “If yes, explain” box.

14. Enter your program’s website address
If your program does not have a website, leave this field blank.

15. Select one or more organization characteristics
Your organization type (state government, nonprofit, ect.) should already appear on the screen. In the “Organization Characteristics” section, select all of the characteristics that also apply to your organization. Some characteristics may already be displayed based on previous applications. Add a characteristic by clicking on an empty field, clicking on the list of values button next to the field, and selecting a characteristic from the list of values. If no blank lines are left, click on any line in the field, then click the green + icon on the toolbar (Insert New Record). A new line will open in the list for you to enter. To remove an erroneously entered characteristic, click the line to delete, then click the red X icon on the toolbar (Delete Record).

16. Estimated funding
This section is filled out after the application budget has been entered. Refer to Entering a Budget for instructions on entering a budget in eGrants. The amounts being requested by the applicant, the applicant’s share, and the total budget as entered in the budget will then be displayed.

If you are applying for a Senior Corps program, the amounts must be entered here. You must enter the amounts of local, state, income, and other sources for the applicant share. Enter these amounts after you have completed the budget, since the total amounts entered must be equal to the total applicant share.

17. Save
Just a reminder – save after every tab.

18. Click the Assurances and Certifications Tab
This is the tab on which a specified person for your organization agrees to specific federal assistance requirements. You can select the name of the official who will agree to the certifications, but that person must be the user who clicks on the button when agreeing. If someone other than you is designated to agree to the certifications, his or her name will be entered when the "I Agree" is clicked.

19. Agree to the assurances
To agree to the assurances, first click the "View/Print Assurances" button. Print and read the document. Click the "I Agree" button to agree. Your name, title, and the date will be displayed. If the person is responsible for agreeing to the assurances changes before the application is submitted, that person must log on and repeat the agreement process.

20. Agree to the certifications
To agree to the certifications, first click the "View/Print Certifications" button. Print and read the document. Click the "I Agree" button to agree. Your name, title, and the date will be displayed. If the person is responsible for agreeing to the certifications changes before the application is submitted, that person must log on and repeat the agreement process.

21. Narratives Tab
The narrative information to be entered on this tab depends on the Corporation program you are applying under. Refer to the application guidelines for instructions regarding the information to be entered. The narrative types are listed on the left. Select the narrative you are entering, then enter the corresponding text in the large box on the right. We recommend you create your program narrative a word processing document and copy it into the narrative field in eGrants. For example, if you have entered your Executive Summary narrative into a word processing document, keep the eGrants application open and open the word processing document. Select the text in the document, and then select "Copy" from the "Edit" menu. Click the eGrants application screen, select the "Project Management" narrative type, and then select "Paste" from the "Edit" menu. The text will appear in the Executive Summary field.

22. Enter your Objectives Worksheet, Workplan, or Project Plan
Depending on the Corporation program you are applying under, the next tab will either be called Objectives Worksheet, Workplan, or Project Plan. You will enter your project's objectives on this tab. If you receive a grant, these objectives will appear on your progress reports, and you will need to report your progress against them. Refer to the application guidelines for instructions regarding the information to be entered. Click the appropriate tab and follow the instructions below. Remember to save on a regular basis!

22a. Learn and Serve America/AmeriCorps Program – Objectives Worksheet

> **22.a.1. Select one or more service categories that correspond to your proposed project's objectives**
> Click in the first line of the Service Categories list. Click the list of values button next to the line and select a service category from the list. If you want to select other service categories, click the next blank line and select the service category. After all visible lines are filled, select any line, then click the green + on the toolbar. A new line will open in the list. Select the service category for this new line. Continue until you have selected all service categories for your objectives worksheet. To remove an erroneously entered service category, click the line to delete, then click the red X icon on the toolbar (Delete Record).
>
> **22.a.2. Select one or more objective types**

Enter the number 1 in the # field. Select an objective type for the list (e.g., Getting Things Done, Participant Development, or Strengthening Communities). If you have more than one objective of this type, move to the next line, enter the number 2, and select the same objective type. If you have a third objective of this type, move to the next line, enter the number 3, and select the same objective type. Repeat for the other objective types, if applicable. After you have filled all of the visible lines, click the green + on the toolbar to open a new line. To remove an erroneously entered objective type, click the line to delete, then click the red X icon on the toolbar (Delete Record).

22.a.3. Describe the project objectives for each objective type

For each of the objective types selected in step 22.a.2, enter your objective description for each of the objectives listed. First, click on one of the objective type lines. Click the first objective line and enter the text in the box to the right. Click the next objective line and enter that text. Continue until all objective text has been entered for that objective type. Select the next objective type and repeat. If you have typed this objective text into a word processing document, you can “cut and paste” the text into the appropriate boxes. You can also enter some of this text, save, and return to this application later. See “Making Changes to a Partially Complete Application” later in these instructions.

22.b. Senior Corps – Workplan

22.b.1 Select one or more service categories that correspond to your proposed project’s objectives

Click in the first line of the Service Categories list. Click the list of values button next to the line and select a service category from the list. Enter the total number of volunteer stations serving as placement sites for volunteers involved in the selected service category. If you want to select other service categories, click the next blank line, select the service category, and enter the total number of stations contributing to that service category. After all visible lines are filled, select any line, then click the green + on the toolbar. A new line will open in the list. Select the service category for this new line. Continue until you have selected all service categories for your project objectives and entered the number of stations contributing. To remove an erroneously entered service category, click the line to delete, then click the red X icon on the toolbar (Delete Record).

22.b.2. Enter the workplan elements and period of accomplishment for each selected service category

For each of the service categories selected in step 22.b.1, enter your workplan for each of the elements listed. First, click on one of the service category lines. Click the first element line and enter the text in the box to the right. Using federal fiscal quarters (Oct-Dec is 1st Quarter, Jan-March is 2nd Quarter, etc.), enter when each element is expected to be accomplished. Multiple quarters are acceptable for ongoing activities. Click the next element line and enter that text and period of accomplishment. Continue until all element text and periods of accomplishment been entered for that service category. Select the next service category and repeat. If you have typed this element workplan text into a word processing document, you can “cut and paste” the text into the appropriate boxes. You can also enter some of this text, save, and return to this application later. See “Making Changes to a Partially Complete Application” later in these instructions.

22.c. All other programs, including AmeriCorps VISTA, Innovative and Demonstration Programs, state commission Administrative grants, PDAT Grants – Project Plan

22.c.1 Select one or more service categories that correspond to your proposed project’s objectives

Click in the first line of the Service Categories list. Click the list of values button next to the line and select a service category from the list. If you want to select other service categories, click the next blank line and select the service category. After all visible lines are filled, select any line, then click the green + on the toolbar. A new line will open in the list. Select the service category for this new line. Continue until you have selected all service categories for your project plan. To remove an erroneously entered service category, click the line to delete, then click the red X icon on the toolbar (Delete Record).

22.c.2. Enter the goals and objectives and period of accomplishment for each selected service category

For each of the service categories selected in step 22.c.1, enter one or more goals and objectives for your project. "Goals" are ends toward which project activities are directed. They are broad in scope, up to 12 months in duration and respond to the needs of the community described on the Program Narrative screen. "Objectives" are definable results leading to the achievement of each goal, and are stated in quantifiable and measurable terms. They are narrower in scope and short-term (e.g., quarterly) in duration. Using federal fiscal quarters (Oct-Dec is 1st Quarter, Jan-March is 2nd Quarter, etc.), enter when each element is expected to be accomplished. Multiple quarters are acceptable for ongoing activities. To enter additional goals and objective, click the next line and enter the text and period of accomplishment. After all visible lines are filled, select any line, then click the green + on the toolbar. A new line will open in the list. Select the next service category and repeat. If you have typed this project plan text into a word processing document, you can "cut and paste" the text into the appropriate boxes. You can also enter some of this text, save, and return to this application later. See "Making Changes to a Partially Complete Application" later in these instructions. To remove an erroneously entered objective, click the line to delete, then click the red X icon on the toolbar (Delete Record).

23. Click the Required Documents tab

Each program has a different set of required documents, which also vary by application type (new, continuation, or amendment). Review the application guidelines for further information about the specific information that is required. For each required document, indicate whether the document has been sent to CNCS, is already on file at CNCS, (in the case of continuations) or is not applicable to your project by selecting the appropriate item from the list next to each document. You will not be able to submit your application if any required documents still have "Not sent" selected. (Make sure that you respond to all documents by scrolling through the entire list.) You must submit any required documents not on file at CNCS by mail.

24. AmeriCorps programs only – Subapplications

The Subapplications tab appears for prime applicants to manage subapplications. Refer to the subapplication management instructions later in this document.

25. Enter your project budget

Enter and validate your project budget. Refer to the budget entry instructions and application guidelines for information on how to enter your budget.

26. If this is a Senior Corps project, return to the Estimated Funding section on the Application tab

This section is filled out after the application budget has been entered. The amounts being requested by the applicant, the applicant's share, and the total budget as entered in the budget will then be displayed. If you are applying for a Senior Corps program, you must then enter the amounts of local, state, income, and other sources for the applicant share. Enter these amounts after you have completed the budget, since the total amounts entered must be equal to the total applicant share.

27. View your completed application

After you have entered and saved all information, click the Print SF-424 button on the Applicant tab. You must have Adobe Acrobat 4.0 or higher installed on your machine to view eGrants forms or reports. To download a copy of Adobe Acrobat, see the main eGrants web page. You can review the application on the screen or print it. You can save a copy of the application on your local drive if you have Adobe Acrobat 5.0. Review the application for correctness and completeness. If you want to make any changes, go to the appropriate tabs and fields and enter the changes.

28. Verify your application

Click the Verify button to verify that all required information has been entered in your application and that your budget is valid. If any errors are detected, a window will open that displays a description of each error found. Note the errors. Make the necessary corrections to your application. Verify the application again until no errors are found.

29. Submit your application
After you have reviewed and verified your application, have the authorized representative for the grant log into eGrants, pull up the application, and click the Submit button. This will submit the application to CNCS. Ensure that you submit the application before midnight, Eastern Time on the due date noted on your application screen. If you submit the application after this time, it will be rejected for non-compliance unless extenuating circumstances can be demonstrated. After you submit the application, you will be able to view it but will not be able to make any changes unless CNCS opens the application for changes during the award process. When you view the application, you will also be able to check its status as it moves through the CNCS review process.

C. Accessing an Existing Grant Application

At any time after you start entering a grant application you can save your work, exit the eGrants system and return later to complete your application. When you return to eGrants to continue your application, access eGrants by selecting the "Log In" option from the eGrants web page. Enter your username and password in the login window. When the eGrants menu opens, click the + next to the Applications node. Double-click the "Application for Federal Assistance" in the menu to access the application form.

You need to "enter a query" to retrieve your application. You can do this by:

- Click the Enter Query icon on the toolbar
- Press the F7 function key, or
- Select Enter Query from the commands menu.

This changes the mode of the application so that you can enter search criteria. Enter your application ID in the Application ID field. If you have forgotten your application ID, select the NOFA that you applied by using the NOFA list of values. Click the Execute Query icon or press the F8 function key.

This retrieves all applications that match your search criteria. If you entered an application ID, only that application will be retrieved. If you entered a NOFA, all applications entered by your organization under that NOFA will be retrieved. You can use the Previous and Next buttons to view each application.

D. Entering a Prime Grant Application

Before reading these instructions, make sure that you have read the application guidelines for the program you are applying to, the eGrants Interface Operation Instructions. As you complete the application you will also refer to the eGrants materials for the Application for Federal Assistance form.

1. Before you begin…
Make sure that you have created an account for yourself by selecting the "Create an Account" option from the eGrants web page and entering the required information. In addition, verify that the people who will be electronically signing the certifications and assurances have created their accounts and know their usernames and passwords.

Access eGrants by selecting the "Log In" option from the eGrants web page. Enter your username and password (this will be emailed to you after you have created an account) in the login window. When the eGrants menu opens, click the + next to the Applications node. Double-click the "Application for Federal Assistance" entry in the menu to access the application form.

2. Select the Notice of Funds Available (NOFA) you are applying for

Click the list of values button (with the triangle label) to the right of the “NOFA” field. A popup window will open which lists all of the Corporation’s open NOFAs. Find the name of the NOFA you are applying for, select that name, and click the OK button. The NOFA name and due date will display on the screen. If you selected the wrong NOFA name, click the button again and select the correct NOFA name from the list. You may now begin entering your application information.

3. Check your organization information
Your organization’s name and address will be displayed in the Applicant section. If any corrections are needed, click the “Edit Organization” button. An organization pop-up window will appear, allowing you to make changes. When you are done, click Save to commit your changes. This will close the pop-up window and the changes will appear in the Applicant section.

4. Enter the subapplication due date
You need to enter the Subapplication Due Date in the Prime Application section on the SF424. This date will be displayed for all subapplicants who apply under your application.

5. Pass your application id to subapplicants
Enter all the appropriate information on the Applicant and Application tabs of the SF424. You can then save your application and get the application id. You will notice that the Status of the application now says ‘Prime Applicant Initial Entry’. At this point you can ‘Open’ the application to subapplicants by clicking the ‘Open Application’ button. You know have all the information (NOFA, application id, subapplication due date) needed for potential subapplicants to apply under your prime application.

E. Applying for a Subapplication

1. Before you begin…
Make sure that you have created an account for yourself by selecting the “Create an Account” option from the eGrants web page and entering the required information. In addition, verify that the people who will be electronically signing the certifications and assurances have created their accounts and know their usernames and passwords.

Ensure that you have obtained the application ID of the prime grant applicant. Contact the organization or state commission to obtain this ID.

Access eGrants by selecting the “Log In” option from the eGrants web page. Enter your username and password in the login window. When the eGrants menu opens, click the + next to the Applications node. Double-click the “Application for Federal Assistance” entry in the menu to access the application form.

2. Select the Notice of Funds Available (NOFA) you are applying for
Click the list of values button (with the triangle label) to the right of the “NOFA” field. A popup window will open which lists all of the Corporation’s open NOFAs. Find the name of the NOFA you are applying for, select that name, and click the OK button. The NOFA name will now appear in the field. If you selected the wrong NOFA name, click on the button again and select the correct NOFA name from the list. You may now begin entering your application information.

3. Enter the application ID of the prime applicant
Before you can enter a subgrant application, the prime applicant organization must enter a prime application and provide the application ID to all potential subapplicants. Enter the ID you were provided by the prime applicant in the “Application ID” box in the “Prime Application” section on the Applicant tab, and then press the Enter key. The program name of the prime applicant will appear in the “Program Description” box. If this is not the name of the program you are applying for, stop and contact the prime applicant to ensure that you have the correct Application ID. Note the subapplication due date. You will have to submit your application to the prime applicant by this date to be considered for a subgrant.

4. Finish entering your application
Follow the instructions for entering a new application, beginning with step 3.

F. Creating a Subapplication as a Prime Applicant

1. Subapplications Tab
On the Subapplications tab, click the 'Create' button to begin entering the subapplication record. A window will pop-up for the prime to enter the organization and program name for the subapplicant. If the organization or program does not exist, create one using the appropriate buttons.

2. Create the subapplication
After entering the organization and program names, click the 'Save/Create Subapplication' button. A validation screen will appear to confirm the creation of the subapplication. You will notice that record that you just entered now appears on the Subapplication tab.

3. Create the subapplication budget
Notice the Amount Requested and #FTE's Requested fields both have a value of 0. Be sure to enter the budget information for the subapplicant by clicking the 'Enter/Edit Budget' button. Once you have entered the budget information through the budget form, you can enter the Amount Approved and the #FTE's Approved for the subapplication. You can change the status of the subapplication to the appropriate status.

G. Entering a Budget

1. Open the budget form
You can access the budget screens from the Application for Federal Assistance screens or from the eGrants menu. From the menu, select the "Enter/Review 424 Budget" option under the Applications node. Enter your application and retrieve the budget record as described in the previous paragraph. If you have the Application for Federal Assistance form open and your grant application is displayed, click the Enter/Edit budget button to open the budget for that application.

2. Select a budget category
Note the list of budget categories on the left side of the form. If you click the main heading and/or section titles, you'll see that nothing is displayed in the project details section. Click the Project Personnel Expenses node, and note the project details section includes fields for positions, the number of people in each position, the annual salary for each position, and the percentage of time that people will be performing that position. The information to be entered here will vary by budget category. Some categories will only require an item and description.

On the right is listed the total amount, CNCS share, Grantee Share, and for some programs, Excess amount. The CNCS share is the amount of funds for the item requested from CNCS. The grantee share is the amount of funds for the item expected to be covered by grantee funds or funds the grantee expects to receive from other sources. The CNCS share plus the grantee share must equal the total amount (except for Senior Corps grants, which may also include an "Excess Amount"). These total columns are shown for all budget categories. In some cases, the total amount will be calculated for you; in others, you must calculate and enter the amount.

The set of budget categories is different for each Corporation program. Check your application guidelines and the budget reference materials for details regarding the budget categories for the Corporation program you are applying for and the budget information that must be entered.

3. Enter budget information

For each budget category applicable to your program, enter the budget details, following the application guidelines for the Corporation program you are applying to. You must enter a value for the CNCS share and the Grantee share. If this is a Senior Corps application, you may also enter an excess amount. The total of CNCS share, grantee share, and excess amount must equal the Total Amount.

4. Save
Before you can validate the budget, you must save.

5. Validate the budget
Before you can submit your application to CNCS, you must have a valid budget that follows the guidelines for the Corporation program you are applying to. For example, the grantee share may need to be a minimum percentage of the total amount. To verify that your budget is valid, click the Validate button. If there are any problems with the budget, a window listing the problems will be displayed. Note all of the corrections that are needed. Make the adjustments to the budget and attempt to validate again. If your budget is valid, a message will confirm this, and the “Validated” checkbox will be checked. If you make any changes to the budget after validating, you will need to validate again.

6. Return to the Application for Federal Assistance form
After your budget is complete, return to the Application for Federal Assistance to complete your application and submit it to CNCS.