



To create a just and equitable society and the diverse leadership to sustain it

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Public Allies, Inc. is seeking proposals from external qualified firms or individuals for a grant evaluator to assist in the implementation, refinement and reporting of an evaluation of the impact of the Public Allies AmeriCorps apprenticeship.

The deadline for receipt is September 21 at 5:00 p.m. (Central Standard Time); proposals must be submitted via email to [@publicallies.org](mailto:@publicallies.org). Applicants will be notified by email by October 5, 2018.

Questions should be submitted by email to: Erin Guest ([ering@publicallies.org](mailto:ering@publicallies.org)); please allow up to two business days for a response.

## **Introduction**

Public Allies' social change theory focuses on providing opportunities for organizations to build their capacity to deliver poverty-alleviating direct services by leveraging existing under-utilized human assets -- the young adults within their communities who are from an economically disadvantaged background and who may be disconnected from pathways to higher education and meaningful careers. During the ten-month apprenticeship, our Members are placed at nonprofit organizations to build capacity in targeted areas. Providing increased capacity through assistance is a proven way to increase nonprofit effectiveness. A 2014 study, "The Impact of Capacity-Building Program on Nonprofits: A Random Assignment Evaluation," found five critical areas that were improved through various types of capacity building interventions (Mitzner, Klerman, Markovitz, Fink, 2014). Public Allies works in four of those areas: organizational development, program development, leadership development and community engagement. The Public Allies AmeriCorps apprenticeship is designed to increase capacity through the engagement of a highly diverse cohort of full-time AmeriCorps members that reflect the demographic makeup of the communities being served.

## **Program Background**

During the ten-month apprenticeship, Members are placed at nonprofit organizations and government agencies in capacity-building positions. The specific service delivered by Members can include: engaging volunteers; developing the support systems to better recruit and manage volunteers; developing a plan and materials to support outreach efforts to potential clients; designing or improving the way an organization promotes programming; conducting a community assets and needs assessment and supporting the development of programming in response to the assessment; developing partnerships to expand or improve programming; and developing ways to measure performance or improve programming based upon performance data.

Public Allies provides a powerful Member experience that interweaves the hands-on service experience at placement with rigorous training, opportunity for reflection, and a supportive learning cohort. Public Allies training curriculum focuses on skills needed for their capacity building positions and our 10+1 Leadership Actions that all Allies learn and practice during their term of service. The curriculum is delivered during half- or full-day trainings delivered on a weekly basis throughout the service term, and pushes each Member to engage with theoretical frameworks, peer problem-solve, and learn new skills essential to their work in communities. Individuals from all backgrounds learn new ways of responding to problems and initiating solutions that encourage shared responsibility, alliance-building, and using existing resources. In addition, the apprenticeship includes programmatic elements that focus on our Members' future plans: participation in a mentorship program; using coaching and an individual development plan to identify steps towards post-service employment; participating in workshops on how to design resumes, leverage social networking platforms, and interview; and participating in key networking and job search opportunities.

## Evaluation Plan

The findings from this evaluation will be presented to the apprenticeship's primary funder, the Corporation for Community and National Service (CNCS) in January 2021, in fulfillment of grant requirements. The goal of this evaluation is to build evidence of the program's impact.

A base evaluation plan using quasi-experimental design (design required by CNCS) has been submitted and approved by federal administrators. We seek an external evaluator to implement the base plan, make refinements and adjustments to the approved plan as needed, conduct the analyses, and report on the findings in accordance with CNCS reporting requirements. In addition, we are interested in supplementary analyses, via open ended questions, focus groups or other methods to explore the broader impact of Public Allies on partner organizations and of diverse leadership in the communities we serve.

As of August, 2018, program and control groups have been established and program staff are in the process of collecting pre-assessment data using an organizational capacity assessment tool. We expect that approximately 450 organizations will be in the treatment group and 150 will be in the control group.

The evaluation is focused on the short-term outcome of whether organizations experience capacity gains, as compared to organizations included in a control group. Prior to the term of service, each Partner Organization completes a capacity self-assessment. This assessment benchmarks an organization's level of capacity prior to engaging a Public Allies AmeriCorps Member in the following areas: Program Development, Delivery and Evaluation; Outreach; Technology Use; and Volunteer Management. Organizations in the control group will be given the same pre- and post-assessment. While the main pre- / post- instrument has already been determined, there will be opportunities for collecting additional data in the post- survey.

In addition, the evaluation plan includes a mid-term outcome focused on whether participating organizations sustain and leverage their capacity gains after the Member's term of service is complete. Three months after the term of service ends, participating partner organizations that indicated capacity gains at the end of the Member's term of service will be asked if those changes continue to benefit the organization as intended.

The evaluation will address the following evaluation questions:

1. Did the Public Allies program increase the capacity of partner organizations as compared to a group of similar non-profit organizations that did not host a Member? (impact)
2. Do organizations that report capacity gains sustain and leverage those gains three months after the Member's term of service is complete? (outcome)

**Timeline: September, 2018 to October, 2018**

**Project timeline key milestones include:**

June-July 2018	Establish control group (program staff)
August - September 2018	Administer pre-assessment to control group and treatment group (program staff)
June - July 2019	Administer post-assessment to control group and treatment group
September- October 2019	Administer three-month post-assessment to treatment group
November 2019 – March 2020	Data cleaning, data analyses and formal reporting
January 2021	Submit evaluation report to CNCS

**Main Evaluation Tasks:**

- Review approved evaluation plan and make refinements and adjustments as needed
- Develop (in collaboration with Public Allies) additional items for the post-program and 3-month post-program surveys
- Prepare raw data for analyses
- Implement propensity score matching for control and treatment groups
- Conduct analyses
- [Potential] Supplementary qualitative evaluation on impact of Public Allies on partner organizations and on broader community
- Report on findings

**Main Evaluation Products:**

- Post-program survey and 3-month post-program survey
- Cleaned data set in statistical software
- Final evaluation report for CNCS
- Evaluation findings in additional formats for dissemination to other audiences (e.g. slides, evaluation summaries)

**Evaluator Requirements:**

Evaluators must have at least three years of evaluation experience; a demonstrated track record in quantitative evaluation; education and training in evaluation; and a demonstrated capacity to accomplish the external evaluation. In addition, an ideal evaluator will have awareness of promising practices in community economic development and capacity building. In addition, understanding of policies and guidelines that affect the evaluation of federally-funded programs is desirable.

**Budget:** Up to \$50,000

**RFP Completion Checklist:**

This checklist is a summary of the required components of the proposal submission.

- Cover letter
- Organizational capacity/researcher qualifications
- Related project experience
- Cost proposal