



AMERICA'S
SERVICE
COMMISSIONS

CNCS Transformation and Sustainability Plan

Maine Commission for Community Service Meeting

May 17, 2019



CNCS Transformation Plan: Background

- March 2017 – President Trump issues Executive Order directing OMB to submit a **comprehensive plan to reorganize** executive branch agencies and departments
- April 2017 – OMB issues guidance to agencies regarding the process and timeline
- Fall 2017 – all agencies submit preliminary plans to OMB for feedback
- **Draft CNCS plan was released in early-June 2018** with public input opportunities over the course of the summer
- The plan will be finalized and **begin implementation in FY19**



CNCS Transformation Plan: Goals

- Strengthen Core Business Functions
- Strengthen and Align Grants Management and Monitoring
- Prioritize Evidence-Based Interventions
- Simplify and Streamline the Application Process
- Simplify the CNCS Brand
- Align Workforces and Workplaces



Goal #1 – Strengthen Core Business Functions

- Improving mission-critical **information technology**
- Improving accounting, financial, and budgetary practices and systems
- Increase compliance among grantees for critical grant requirements, such as adhering to the **Criminal History Check protocol**
- Significantly decreasing the agency's **improper payment rate** through proactive technical support to grantees through the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act Improvement Act process
- Exploring the use of shared services for transactional accounting, human capital, and procurement functions



Goal #2 – Grants Management and Monitoring

- Develop **new combined portfolio manager role** responsible for program and financial management
- Establish a **central monitoring and compliance office** to strengthen grantee oversight



Goal #3 – Prioritize Evidence-Based Interventions

- Further refine intervention models based on **evidence and demonstrated success**
- Maintain the flexibility to support **statutory and Administration priorities**
- Continue to support innovative interventions and approaches based on preliminary evidence – build grantee capacity, foster innovation, meet evolving community needs
- **Evaluate** these interventions to learn if they are effective



Goal #4 – Simplify and Streamline the Application Process

- Simplify the existing **application process**
- Work towards the development and deployment of a **common application** for all programs
- Provide applicants and grantees with a **single point of entry**
- Increase **efficiency of the review and award processes** to reduce administrative costs and burden



Goal #5 – Simplify the CNCS Brand

- CNCS will **analyze its multiple brands** in order to simplify messaging and increase public awareness
- CNCS status as a legal corporation is confusing



Goal #6 – Align Workforces and Workplaces

- **Reorganize current field structure** to more effectively manage grant awards and external partnerships
- Separate monitoring function
- Ensure that the realigned regional structure can build and sustain strong stakeholder relationships
- **Develop career ladders** for staff to maximize experience, institutional history, and reduce attrition
- Centralize **policy development, data collection, and evidence**



CNCS Transformation Plan: Guiding Principles

- ASC staff participated in three in-person and two virtual input sessions in addition to submitting written testimony (20 pages) and meeting with Barbara Stewart
- **State commissions play a critical role** in the national service delivery system
- The **impact of changes** in CNCS policies and practices should also be determined for state commissions and programs (state and national direct)
- Changes should **simplify and streamline efforts** and **not create additional burden** for commissions and programs
- As statutory partners with an advisory role to the CNCS CEO, state commissions should be included in **policy and program development**
- **Do no harm** – given the current political climate, ensure that changes strengthen CNCS and national service and do not put the agency and its programs in a more precarious position
- State commissions should **serve as the point of entry** for national service in their respective states – outreach, program development

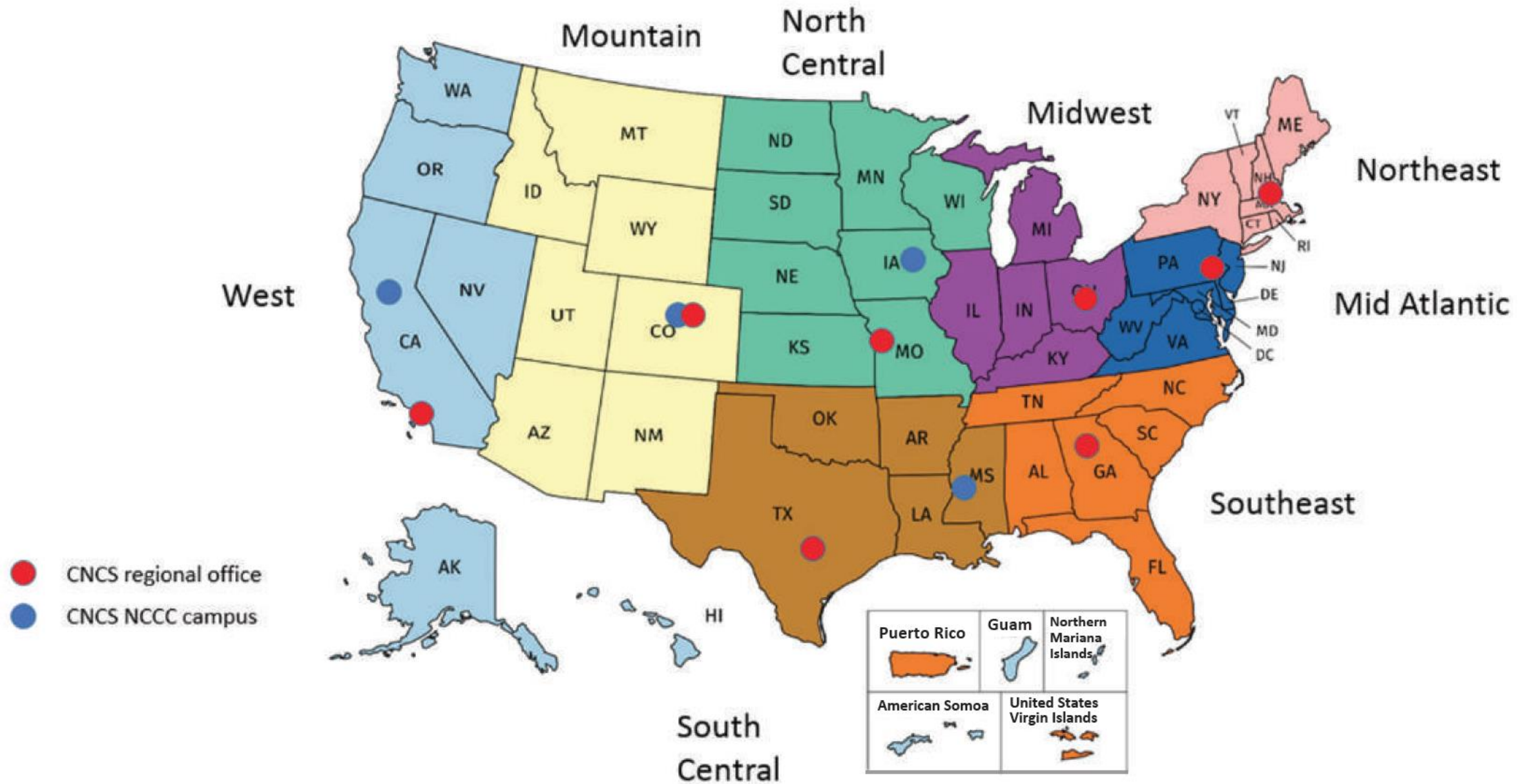


CNCS Transformation Plan: Implementation Update

- CNCS announced its implementation plans for **Goals #2 and #6** on November 29th
- State offices will be closed and regional approach will roll-out in three phases starting in 2019 (to be completed by summer 2020) – **role of state service commissions will remain the same**
- **Eight regional offices** will be created: **New Hampshire, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Columbus, Kansas City, Austin, Denver, and Los Angeles.**
- **Portfolio Managers** (combined program officer and grants officer) will be placed in regional offices and will service ALL national streams of national service
- A **central compliance office** will be established in Washington DC
- CNCS **branding** review underway
- All current program and grants officers and state office staff will need to “apply” for positions within CNCS; Portfolio Manager positions will be open to internal candidates first



CNCS Transformation Plan: New Regional Map





ASC Primary Recommendations/Requests

- Commissions should serve as the **single point of entry** for national service in their states
- **No new major policy/system changes or roll-outs** should occur during the time of transition (through summer of 2020) until new CNCS staffing structure is in place to give consistent training, guidance, and support
- Commission and program representatives (state and national directs) should be **immediately and genuinely engaged** in CNCS implementation working groups



Since Leadership Convening


- ASC leadership has had several conversations with CNCS leadership regarding next steps
- ASC staff has been in communication with the three Senior Corps associations as well as other national organizations
- **CNCS Reduction in Force letters** (February 28) – all CNCS POs and GOs and CNCS State Office staff received letters
- **Hiring has begun** for leadership positions in the new regional structure; **first wave of state office closures occurred May 1**
- Moving forward with **monthly calls** focused on operational questions (began in March)
- Still exploring opportunities to have more strategic conversations about the future of the plan and its impact on the field, such as the commission role in supporting national service in each state




CNCS Transformation & Sustainability Plan (TSP) Status

- This implementation timeline was provided by CNCS to commission leaders in February:

Implementation timeline





- Hire for and establish regional offices in three phases:

Region	Hiring Process Begins	Region Opens
Mountain, Northeast, North Central:	~February 2019	~September 2019
Southeast, Midwest, West:	~July 2019	~February 2020
Mid Atlantic, South Central:	~November 2019	~June 2020

- Grantees/sponsors continue to work with existing Program Officer(s) and Grant Officer(s) through the time regional offices are established



CNCS Transformation Plan: Implementation Update (April and May)

- **National Service Criminal History Check** exemption period/vendor
- **Grants management system** development proceeding
- **Staff hiring proceeding** – Senior Portfolio Managers and Portfolio Managers (assigned by state)
- **Physical state offices closing** and staff transitioning to telework arrangements

Branding survey to field – responses were due May 15



Implications for Commissions

- Transition from **Program Officer and Grants Officer structure to Portfolio Manager**
- Portfolio Managers will be **positioned in regional offices** rather than D.C.-based
- Role of **ex-officio member** on commission unclear
- Will likely need to **refer interested parties** for VISTA and Senior Corps resources (already occurs in many cases)
- **Compliance** efforts will be based in DC
- Anticipated **staff transitions** may have an impact on support to commissions – institutional knowledge and training for new staff/roles
- **Technology upgrades** will be valuable to state commissions and their programs, but are likely 18-24 months out

At this time, unclear how **congressional concerns** expressed about the plan will impact its progress moving forward