



National Service:

Cost-effectively Delivering Critical Services to Americans in Need

A Report by
Voices for National Service

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voicesforservice.org

national service – five fast facts

National service has a strong history of bipartisan support.

Presidents George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama have all made important contributions to build, strengthen and expand support for national service programs.

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) makes national service possible.

CNCS, the largest provider of federal grants to support national service programs, distributes federal funds to more than 70,000 national and local nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, schools, and municipal agencies. Together, grantees engage more than 5 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service to their communities each year. Grantees also match each federal dollar with private sector, philanthropic, or foundation funds.

National service guarantees a high return on taxpayer investment.

For every federal dollar invested, national service members, on average, deliver as much as \$3.00 worth of services. Between the \$3.00 worth of services and the \$1.00 in private sector, philanthropic or foundation funds, national service programs yield \$4.00 for each federal dollar invested.

Historic numbers of Americans want to serve their country.

Young Americans are lining up to serve their country in record numbers. AmeriCorps applications jump from approximately 360,000 in 2009 to more than 582,000 in 2011, a 62 percent increase over the past two program years. Only 82,500 AmeriCorps slots are currently available, denying hundreds of thousands of Americans the opportunity to serve their country and build essential workplace skills.

National service members address critical local and national need.

The future of our nation and the American labor force depends on our ability to provide all Americans with a good education, affordable housing, and jobs.^[1] National service programs address each of these areas. Organizations that rely upon funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service help to keep students on-track to high school graduation, work with low-income families to secure affordable housing and prevent foreclosure, fuel disaster relief efforts, and are among the largest employers of young Americans.

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about CNCS

The Corporation for National and Community Service

The Corporation for National and Community Service is the nation's largest federal grant maker in support of service and volunteering. **CNCS provides grants to more than 70,000 national and local nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, schools, and municipal agencies**, which leverage the federal dollars to meet the goals of CNCS's five programs. These programs include:

- **AmeriCorps:** AmeriCorps provides opportunities for more than 80,000 Americans each year to give intensive service to their communities and country through three programs: AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps).
- **Senior Corps:** Each year Senior Corps taps the skills, talents, and experience of more than 330,000 Americans age 55 and older to meet a wide range of community challenges through three programs: RSVP, the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program.
- **Social Innovation Fund:** The Social Innovation Fund mobilizes public and private resources to grow the impact of promising, innovative community-based solutions that have evidence of compelling results in three areas of priority need: economic opportunity, healthy futures and youth development.
- **The Volunteer Generation Fund:** The Volunteer Generation Fund strengthens the nation's civic infrastructure by helping nonprofits recruit, manage, and support more volunteers.

Together, **these programs empower 5 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve in their communities each year**, and leverage **nearly \$1 billion in philanthropic, corporate and foundation dollars** to deliver locally determined solutions to pressing community challenges.^[ii]

presidential support for national service

In times of economic uncertainty, Presidents from both parties have expanded national service programs to ensure citizens' needs are met in a cost-effective, efficient way.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to provide jobs and needed services to communities nationwide. Following the creation of the CCC, unemployment fell sharply, from 24.8 percent in 1933 to 14.2 percent in 1937.

President George H.W. Bush created the first office of national service in the White House, signed the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1990, which created the Commission on National and Community Service, and founded the Points of Light Foundation to foster volunteering. Bush approved grants to schools to support service-learning through Serve America.

With the signing of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, **President Bill Clinton** created AmeriCorps. Clinton said, "Service is a spark to rekindle the spirit of democracy in an age of uncertainty."

President George W. Bush urged Americans to devote 4,000 hours to volunteer service in their lifetimes. Bush created the USA Freedom Corps and expanded AmeriCorps.

In the wake of the financial crisis, **President Barack Obama** signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which marked the largest expansion of service since the formation of AmeriCorps, and created the Social Innovation Fund. At the bill signing, President Obama shared that national service "supports innovation and strengthens the nonprofit sector. And it is just the beginning of a sustained, collaborative and focused effort to involve our greatest resource – our citizens – in the work of remaking this nation."

executive summary

In the current fiscal downturn, states, local governments and communities nationwide are being forced to cut critical services. At the same time, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of citizens unable to acquire the educational services their children need, maintain their homes, and, for many Americans, rebuild their lives following natural disasters. There is a growing gap between the services citizens struggling in the current economy require and the supports local governments can provide.

The Challenge:

There is a gap between the services citizens need and the supports local and state governments can provide.

This gap has severe economic consequences for our nation. For example, as educational services are eliminated due to budget cuts, fewer students receive the direct support they need to succeed, causing some students to decide to leave school. The Alliance for Excellent Education has calculated that a single class of high school dropouts will cost our nation **\$154 billion** in lost tax revenues and increased social service costs over the course of their lifetimes.

As Americans are struggling to make ends meet with fewer public services available, more families are at risk of losing their homes. A total of 3.6 million homes have been lost to foreclosure since the start of the recession in December 2007.^[iii] According to the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, each foreclosure costs a community an average of **\$80,000**. Homelessness is particularly high among our nation's veterans. On a given night, it is estimated that 154,000 of 650,000 people experiencing homelessness are veterans.^[iv]

Communities recovering from natural and manmade disasters are perhaps the hardest hit as budget restrictions have cut critical services. These victims of disaster are struggling to rebuild their lives and overcome the economic and emotional toll that disasters take.

The nonprofit sector has been working hard to fill this gap. However, the 2012 survey released by the Nonprofit Finance Fund reveals that 85 percent of the organizations surveyed expect an increase in the demand for their services, yet only 40 percent will be able to meet this demand due to a lack of person power and resources.^[v]

The Solution:

National Service is filling the gap in a cost-effective way.

For decades, national service has played a critical role in fueling the community solutions that address pressing local problems. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is the largest federal funder of these essential national service efforts.

Through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, the Social Innovation Fund, and the Volunteer Generation Fund, CNCS provides nonprofit, faith-based, and community-based organizations with grants to address pressing community needs. The grant recipient organizations leverage the additional human capital and resources the grants provide to meet the increasing demand for services as communities continue to recover from the recent recession. Organizations meet community needs in a cost-effective way, delivering as much as \$3.00 worth of services.^[vi] In addition, grantees leverage nearly 1 billion dollars in private sector, philanthropic, or foundation funds. **For each federal dollar invested in CNCS, struggling communities receive up to \$4.00 worth of benefits.**

Recognizing that CNCS programs are a cost-effective way to address pressing local issues, governors and mayors have chosen to invest in national service programs:

Iowa's Governor, Terry Branstad: *Through his key policy initiative "A Call to Service", the Governor is deploying national service members to address Iowa's pressing educational and health challenges.*

Philadelphia Mayor, Michael Nutter: *Sees national service as a*

“ powerful strategy to solve problems and address many challenges. ”

He asserts,

“ Philadelphia depends on the cost-effective problem solving that comes from the diverse range of national service programs within our great city. I couldn't do my job without them...service is not something that is nice to have, it is something we must have. ”

New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu: *As he continues to rely upon the national service network to revitalize the City of New Orleans, he shares,*

“ we have begun to believe that the City of New Orleans will go from being one of the worst to one of the best. And it is because of the whole idea of service that we are able to do that. ”

The remainder of this paper explains how Corporation for National and Community Service programs are filling the gap between the education, housing, and disaster relief services citizens need and the supports local governments are able to provide. These are just a few of the critical areas that CNCS programs address. CNCS-supported organizations across the country also provide critical support to veterans and military families, and meet Americans' health, safety, and environmental needs.



providing vital educational supports to students from cradle to career

“Overall, national service programs tutor, mentor, and educate more than 3 million at risk youth each year, helping the most vulnerable students learn, engage, and achieve...CNCS is placing a greater emphasis on identifying strategies and programs that work, funding them and driving innovation in education to build a Grad Nation.”

the 2012 Building a Grad Nation Report

The Challenge:

America is falling behind other countries in educational attainment, threatening our global competitiveness.

The United States once led the world in educational attainment. Today, American's level of education has stagnated, while greater numbers of citizens in other nations are obtaining post-secondary degrees. As a result, the United States has fallen to 15th in educational attainment among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. An analysis by McKinsey & Company concluded that if the United States closed the gap between the educational attainment of our citizens and those of higher-performing nations, America's GDP would be \$1.3 trillion to \$2.3 trillion higher.^[vii]

Two major barriers to America's educational excellence are the astoundingly high American high school dropout rate and the college completion crisis, which are draining local, state, and federal resources. Students who drop out of high school are three times more likely to be unemployed than are college graduates and eight times more likely to be in prison than are high school graduates.^[viii] The dropout and college completion crises can, in part, be attributed to the inability of our current school structure to meet the intensity of many students' needs. The American educational system was designed to provide intensive supports to only 15 percent of students. Yet, as many as three-quarters of students in high-poverty schools need individualized attention, creating a gap between the time and resources school staff members' have and the resources required to meet the intensity of student need.

The Solution:

National service members are providing the critical additional support at-risk students need, from cradle to career, to achieve the level of education required to compete globally.

The cradle to career continuum of support provided by national service members is improving outcomes for low-income, minority students, helping to close achievement gaps, and providing the personalized attention at-risk students need to stay on track to high school graduation. National service members are accomplishing these outcomes by: infusing early learning programs with additional people power; supporting elementary and secondary school reform efforts; and helping families and schools to prepare students for postsecondary entry and completion. A testament to the impact that CNCS programs are having on our nation's schools, national service is highlighted as a cross cutting solution to our nation's educational challenges in the 2012 Building a Grad Nation report by leading researcher Robert Balfanz and former senior advisor to President George W. Bush, John Bridgeland.

Infusing early learning programs with additional people power to ensure school readiness

This cradle to career continuum of support begins with early learning programs. These programs have a demonstrated record of successfully enhancing early childhood development and increasing school readiness.

Jumpstart ensures all children have equitable access to high quality early learning programs by deploying AmeriCorps members to Head Start Centers. These AmeriCorps members collaborate with Head Start staff to help young children develop the language and literacy skills needed to be successful in Kindergarten and beyond. A randomized, controlled trial of Jumpstart's model revealed that young children working with Jumpstart outperformed same-classroom comparison students in literacy, school readiness and socio-emotional skills. Jumpstart students' post-test literacy and school-readiness scores reached expected levels for Kindergarten entry, closing the achievement gap between low-income Jumpstart children and their wealthier peers.^[ix]

Similarly, the Minnesota Reading Corps leverages AmeriCorps members to provide needed tutoring and literacy interventions to children as young as three years old and works with them through third grade to ensure that these students are able to read at grade level. This continual support from AmeriCorps members has yielded positive outcomes for participating children: 80 percent of program participants make more than a year's worth of progress, outperforming similarly at-risk peers.^[x]

Both Jumpstart and the Minnesota Reading Corps are critical to communities' efforts to make early learning programs available to all low-income youth.

Supporting elementary and secondary school reform efforts

National service members' support of students continues into elementary, middle and high school. Innovation in education data collection and analysis has allowed researchers to determine that **attendance, behavior, and course performance** are the factors most closely associated with students' elementary and secondary school success.^[xi] In order to keep students in school and on track to on-time high school graduation, it is critical that schools be infused with the additional person power required to monitor this critical data and deliver the requisite interventions. Programs supported by the Corporation for National and Community Service are ensuring that schools across the country have the highly trained individuals needed to support student attendance, address students' behavioral challenges, and improve students' course performance.

Supporting Attendance

Students who attend school less than 90 percent of the time, meaning they miss a month or more of school, are more likely to dropout than are their peers who have higher attendance rates.^[xii] As a result, districts and schools are successfully leveraging high-performing national service organizations, such as Citizen Schools, to address chronic absenteeism. Citizen Schools partners with low-performing middle schools to provide students with the customized supports they need to be successful. Full-time AmeriCorps members supervise and coordinate community volunteers who teach unique, inspiring courses in their fields, helping students to make the connection between classroom lessons and future professional opportunities. An external evaluation of the Citizen Schools' program revealed that program participants had, on average, significantly higher attendance rates in high school than did matched nonparticipants.^[xiii]

Addressing Behavioral Challenges

States', districts', and schools' partnerships with proven national service organizations have successfully decreased the number of behavioral infractions among students. City Year, a national education-focused, nonprofit organization, deploys 17 – 24 year old full-time AmeriCorps members to partner schools to address students' attendance, behavioral, and course performance challenges. City Year AmeriCorps members are able to leverage their near-peer

“City Year has directly intervened when noticing students getting prepared to fight. They have deescalated major incidents and have brought critical information to the school's administration to prevent and reduce incidents of violence and other disruptive behaviors.”

A School Leader at one of City Year's partner schools in Detroit, MI

relationships with struggling students to identify the cause of and address students' behavioral challenges.

Recognizing the impact that student behavior has on a child's ability to learn, Geoffrey Canada deployed AmeriCorps members to serve as Harlem Peacemakers in Harlem Children's Zone. These young adults served as positive role models, maintaining order so that behavioral infractions did not disrupt classroom learning.^[xiv] Similarly,

70 percent of principals who partner with Playworks AmeriCorps members have seen a reduction in the number of fights and 75 percent of teachers report increased cooperation among students in the classroom.

through Playworks, AmeriCorps members facilitate play at recess, providing students at inner-city schools with an opportunity to exercise. As a result, principals have noticed a marked improvement in student behavior.

Finally, Bay Area Community Resources (BACR) utilizes AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps VISTA members to deliver and sustain afterschool programs designed to address struggling students' academic and developmental needs. According to external evaluators, seventy-five percent of the participating students demonstrate improvement in their relationships with peers and their ability to effectively manage their behavior.^[xv]

Improving Students' Course Performance:

City Year, Experience Corps, Foster Grandparents, and Reading Partners collaborate with districts and schools to strategically deploy national service members to our nation's low-performing schools. These organizations train national service members to deliver the individualized literacy tutoring at-risk students need to read at grade level, but many high-poverty schools have neither the resources nor the person power to provide. All four organizations have demonstrated strong results:

- A 2009 comparison of students' literacy scores at three comparable Miami-Dade County public schools revealed that students receiving City Year's interventions outperformed peers on standardized, interim assessments.^[xvi]
- Experience Corps deploys individuals of 55 years or older to serve as tutors and mentors in public schools across the country. An evaluation of Experience Corps in 2009 showed that students benefiting from the Experience Corps program made 60 percent more progress in vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension, and 40 percent more progress in grade-specific reading skill development than did the control group. Researchers concluded that Experience Corps has a "statistically significant, substantively important impact on students' reading outcomes."^[xvii]
- Foster Grandparents, a Senior Corps program, empowers older Americans to serve as tutors and mentors to struggling students. In 2010 alone, Foster Grandparents served 250,000 children. Research shows that 81 percent of children served demonstrated improved academic performance; 90 percent demonstrated increased self-image; 56 percent improved school attendance and 59 percent were reported to have a reduction in risky behavior.^[xviii]
- Research indicates that after 26 hours of one-on-one tutoring from a Reading Partners volunteer, the average student advanced an entire grade level in reading skills. On average, participating students advanced their reading skills by 1.6 months for each month they spent working with Reading Partners.^[xix]

The proliferation of technology has ignited a focus on math achievement in our nation's schools. Like other national

service organizations, Citizen Schools and Teach for America have developed proven models to enhance students' math achievement. An analysis of Citizen Schools' youth outcomes in Boston revealed that participation in Citizen Schools' programming was associated with higher math performance on classroom and standardized tests.^[xx] Teach for America (TFA) deploys thousands of the highest performing college graduates to teach in urban and rural schools where students are performing far below the national average at the start of the school year.^[xxi] Serving in schools from the Mississippi Delta to New York City, TFA AmeriCorps members spend two years working to improve student achievement. Principals recognize the impact TFA teachers have on student achievement. A 2004 experimental study on the effectiveness of TFA teachers showed that students taught by AmeriCorps members serving through TFA scored 15 percentage points higher than did peers taught by other teachers, including more experienced educators, and 26 percentage points higher than students taught by other novice teachers.^[xxii] TFA is highly competitive. With nearly 50,000 eager citizens applying, TFA is only able to enroll 11 percent of applicants.

Our nation's high-poverty schools rely upon nonprofit organizations supported by CNCS to deliver the direct student supports schools recognize at-risk students need to succeed. Bay Area Community Resources, Citizen Schools, City Year, Experience Corps, Foster Grandparents, Harlem Children's Zone, Playworks, Reading Partners and Teach for America are integral to communities' efforts to support student achievement in elementary and secondary schools.

National service members host college fairs in low-income schools, hold test-prep sessions, help students complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and tutor students who are struggling to complete the credits required for high school graduation.^[xxiii]

Preparing students for postsecondary success

Preparing for, applying to, and succeeding in postsecondary education is an intensive process during which most students need support. College counselors provide critical help to students throughout the application process. However, in many high-poverty schools, one college counselor is responsible for advising nearly 300 students, making it difficult for the counselor to meet each student's unique needs.^[xxiv] National service members are filling the gap between student demand for application help and schools' limited ability to meet that demand. By partnering with families, schools, districts, and institutions of higher education, national service members help to ensure that students of all backgrounds are able to enter and complete post-secondary education. Three organizations providing support during this critical part of the cradle to career continuum are College Possible (formerly Admission Possible), College Summit, and the AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides program.

College Possible harnesses the power of AmeriCorps members to provide critical post-secondary preparation services at no cost to families and partner schools. These AmeriCorps members give essential assistance to students by offering academic support through ACT/SAT test preparation; college application assistance; financial aid consulting; guidance in the college transition; and support toward college degree completion. Since its founding in 2000, 98 percent of students have earned college admission and nearly 80 percent of college enrollees have graduated or are working on their degrees today. By comparison, 8 percent of low-income young people earn a college degree by age 24.

A 2011 Harvard study demonstrated that AmeriCorps members' efforts are yielding positive outcomes for students: the College Possible program more than doubles a low-income student's chance of college enrollment.

College Summit leverages AmeriCorps VISTA members to train student influencers to build a college-going culture. Since college counseling resources are often limited in public schools, College Summit prepares teachers and counselors to use a managed curriculum and technology tools to help all students create postsecondary plans and apply to college. As a result of these efforts, 79 percent of participating students enroll in college and 80 percent stay in college, far exceeding non-participating peers' performance.

The AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides program recruits and trains recent college graduates to serve as advisors to high school students struggling to navigate the complex college admissions process. College Guides are placed in high schools with low graduation and college going rates, targeting both urban and rural communities. During the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years, more than 11,000 students worked with AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides to complete important milestones leading to postsecondary education, including completing the financial aid process, taking a college entrance exam, or completing the requirements to enroll in college. The additional support provided by the College Guides has helped students achieve seemingly unattainable success. For example, a student working with an AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide thought college was not for him. Then, he fell in love with Hiram College, a small, private school in Ohio. Together the student and guide completed all the required forms and paper work. After months of anticipation, their efforts paid off when the student received an acceptance letter and a generous financial aid package to Hiram College.

At a time when America is falling behind other OECD nations in educational attainment and college completion rates, College Possible, College Summit, and the AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides are critical to families, schools, and districts' efforts to prepare students for the transition to post-secondary education.

If America is going to return to having the most educated citizenry in the world, we must ensure that the Corporation for National and Community Service-supported organizations providing students with needed support from cradle to career have the funds required to continue their critical work.



ensuring families have a place to call home

There are two factors that affect a family's ability to maintain their housing: the cost of housing and a family's income.

The Challenge:

The economic downturn has caused increases in rates of foreclosure and homelessness.

The economic downturn has affected the cost of housing and families' income, leading to increased rates of homelessness and rising foreclosure rates. From 2009 to 2010, the number of households that spent more than 50 percent of their income on housing increased by 6 percent. During the same period, the number of unemployed people rose 4 percent.^[xxv] As a result, a total of 3.6 million homes have been lost to foreclosure since the start of the recession in December 2007.^[xxvi] With the cost of a single foreclosure estimated at \$80,000, according to the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, the foreclosure crisis has severe implications for our national economy. Returning veterans are also struggling to find suitable housing. Due in part to post traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury, the crisis of homelessness is most acute among veterans.^[xxvii] It is estimated that 154,000 of 650,000 people experiencing homelessness on a given night are veterans.^[xxviii] The nation must take action to address this housing crisis.

The Solution:

National service members help thousands of Americans move into new homes, improve their housing, and avoid homelessness.

Building new homes

Since Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) first partnered with the Corporation for National and Community Service in 1994, over 7,000 AmeriCorps members have served with local affiliates to fulfill HFHI's mission of providing affordable housing for families in need. HFHI uses a blended model in which AmeriCorps members mobilize and manage community volunteers to increase the capacity of local affiliates and to build more homes. According to a HFHI survey, ninety-five percent of program managers believe the AmeriCorps members provide critically important services that enable their host site to meet its annual goals. Moreover, the "energy, new ideas, and enthusiasm" that members bring to the host site helps "remind staff of their mission and the importance of their work."

During the 2009 – 2010 program year, 686 HFHI AmeriCorps members at 206 host sites located in 40 states helped to build 2,986 houses and generated \$4.7 million in cash and in-kind resources.

The impact of HFHI members goes beyond housing construction. HFHI's survey results show that partner families, who become new homeowners, experience positive quality of life outcomes:

- 88 percent of families agree that their HFHI homes are safer and cleaner than where they used to live.
- 69 percent report that their children now attend a better school.
- Families also agree that their new home allowed them to feel more hopeful and reduced their worry about moving or financial problems because over 97 percent of families surveyed report an increased understanding of budgeting.

Repairing homes

Many low-income Americans are housed in units that are substandard, unsafe, and financially burdensome. Residents of substandard homes face risks to their health and safety because of insufficient heat, uneven floors, unsafe kitchens and bathrooms, and leaky plumbing and roofs.

The need for home maintenance and rehabilitation assistance is particularly acute for low-income seniors. Nearly 5 million senior households in the United States, representing 20 percent of all senior households, live on less than \$15,000 per year. While more than 60 percent of senior households living below the poverty threshold own their home, many live in older homes.

Rebuilding Together is a national nonprofit that aims to preserve affordable housing for low-income American homeowners by providing free home rehabilitation and critical home repair services. As of the 2010-2011 program year, Rebuilding Together has placed 65 AmeriCorps VISTA members in 32 Rebuilding Together affiliate organizations across the country. Members placed at affiliate sites generally design and implement capacity building strategies.

From 2009-2011, Rebuilding Together's AmeriCorps members:

- generated over \$1.6 million in cash and in-kind resources;
- managed 37,839 community volunteers; and
- repaired or rebuilt 3,445 homes.

Helping people secure housing

Beyond building and improving housing, many national service programs help people find places to live, and help them secure the income needed to stay housed. Two programs in Los Angeles demonstrate the breadth of services AmeriCorps members provide to people who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless.

- 90 percent of the AmeriCorps members in the Hope for the Homeless program are graduates of local shelter or treatment programs. Members serve with the Weingart Center Association to conduct street outreach in Skid Row to identify the most vulnerable and chronically homeless. Street to Home team members help clients to access medical and mental health services, secure identification, apply for Social Security Insurance and Social Security Disability Insurance and look for permanent housing. In 2008-2009, members were successful in referring 7,590 homeless individuals and families to services.^[xxix]
- AmeriCorps Legal Fellows with Public Counsel help homeless veterans secure housing and service related benefits. In 2010-2011, seven members recruited and supervised 756 law students and 73 lawyer volunteers. Members and their volunteers served 5,133 clients, including 459 veterans. Together, they helped veterans secure \$1.1 million in Veterans Affairs benefits they were entitled to due to injuries suffered in combat.^[xxx]

Far from creating bureaucracy, national service is an ideal and efficient mechanism to navigate and overcome it. Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) AmeriCorps members exemplify the many ways AmeriCorps members build partnerships and eliminate roadblocks to help people get the services they need. LISC members work to address a lack of affordable housing opportunities for low and moderate income families. During the 2009-2010 program year, members researched community resources, coordinated housing development workshops and organized town meetings with housing experts. As a result of these efforts, 269 affordable housing units were created or rehabilitated, 77 people purchased homes and 120 renters avoided eviction.^[xxxi]

Foreclosure prevention

Equal Justice Works deploys lawyers to help homeowners facing foreclosure. These AmeriCorps members protect low-income individuals from mortgage fraud and real estate scams by reviewing loan files and negotiating with lenders. According to an analysis done by Equal Justice Works, through the American Recovery and Reinvestment

Act, 30 Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps members helped 2,834 clients in danger of losing their homes to foreclosure. Members and their volunteers prevented 39 percent of these foreclosures. Through a \$1.2 million grant, AmeriCorps members saved 1,086 homes, a return of \$137 for every taxpayer dollar invested.

Ensuring that all American families have access to affordable, safe housing is essential to our nation's economic recovery and future prosperity. Equal Justice Works, Hope for the Homeless, Habitat for Humanity International, Public Counsel, the Local Initiative Support Corporation and Rebuilding Together are among the many organizations depending upon Corporation for National and Community Service dollars to meet citizens' fundamental housing needs.



fueling disaster relief efforts

Every year, millions of citizens across the country experience the tragedy of manmade or natural disasters. Disasters lead to loss of human life, social problems, economic harm, and environmental damage.

The Challenge: Natural and manmade disasters

Americans nationwide have struggled with the human and economic loss sustained after each disastrous event. Entire communities are left in despair with broken or stressed support networks unable to assist with response, recovery and rebuilding.

The Solution: National service members accelerate disaster relief efforts

In the wake of natural and manmade tragedies, communities, cities, states, and the federal government harness the power of highly trained AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members to:

- operate emergency call centers;
- coordinate volunteers;
- provide food for disaster victims;
- help to rebuild homes; and
- ensure that affected families receive the services they need.

The CNCS programs work in close partnership with the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and state and local emergency responders. In recognition of the critical role that national service members play in disaster recovery and rebuilding efforts, FEMA has partnered with CNCS to create FEMA Corps. This Corps will build upon the best practices learned from recovery efforts over the past decade, like those outlined below, by effectively leveraging national service members to strengthen the nation's disaster response capacity.

“ [FEMA Corps] underscores our commitment to shared responsibility and strong partnerships to help communities across the United States more effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters of all kinds...This new partnership will help us respond to disasters in a way that is cost-effective, and that draws on the strengths of our communities and our people. ”

Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano

Hurricanes Katrina, Wilma, and Rita

According to CNCS, following the hurricanes that ravaged the Gulf Coast in 2005, national service members leveraged 648,000 community volunteers to assist 3 million people, rebuild 2,000 new homes, serve 1.6 million meals, and distribute more than 6,000 tons of food to disaster victims. Overall, CNCS has poured \$200 million worth of resources into Gulf Coast recovery efforts.

“ The reason that New Orleans was able to recover from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina was because of the unbelievable service that we have received from all of you across the country...AmeriCorps is one of the great examples of that support. ”

Mayor Mitch Landrieu of New Orleans, Louisiana

The 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

In the wake of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, CNCS immediately began working with state service commissions to engage national service members in communities' recovery efforts. AmeriCorps NCCC members staffed volunteer reception centers, Senior Corps RSVP members recruited and engaged volunteers in coastal clean-up efforts, and 500 Learn and Serve Summer of Service participants helped with environmental restoration efforts. In February 2011, Governor Haley Barbour (R-MS) shared his gratitude for the help AmeriCorps members provided following the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in 2010. He stated:

“ much of the work in the wake of last year’s Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill fell on the shoulders of volunteers and AmeriCorps members from Mississippi and across the country...These volunteers have helped rebuild a stronger and better Mississippi...You give states and local communities the chance to determine what their needs and priorities are... Well, this about as good an equation as you can [have] to make a federal program work. ”

Iowa Flood of 2008

In June 2008, Iowa’s rivers rose and flooding persisted for days. Homes, municipal buildings, crops, and educational institutions suffered extensive damage. Crop damage alone was estimated to be roughly \$3 billion dollars. Recovery efforts continued for several years, requiring efforts from AmeriCorps members and community volunteers. AmeriCorps NCCC members conducted damage assessments, mucked out homes, and connected citizens with critical social services. In addition, with support from the CNCS’s Volunteer Generation Fund—a program designed to increase the number of people who serve in meaningful volunteer roles – Iowa was able to build a volunteer infrastructure through organizations like volunteer centers. According to Pattie Fields of the United Way in Iowa, these centers played a critical role in “harnessing and focusing the power of spontaneous volunteers during and after [the] community’s recovery from the Flood of 2008... The mobilization efforts of identifying needs and coordinating volunteers to respond helped our community recover faster and brought a level of comfort and support that highlighted the community’s resiliency.”

“ Only a fraction of the work that gets done would happen if it wasn’t for the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps. ”

Jeff Peck a ranger with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who is overseeing some of the continuing efforts to recover from the devastating 2008 flood in Iowa.

The 2011 Tornadoes

On April 27, 2011 Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, Kentucky, and Virginia were hit with the deadliest tornadoes in 37 years. National service members immediately responded by operating volunteer reception centers, helping to remove debris and distribute food. In November 2011, the Mayor of Tuscaloosa, AL, Walter Maddox, submitted a letter to Corporation for National and Community Service leadership to express his gratitude for the invaluable services AmeriCorps NCCC members provided in the wake of the tornado that ravaged the city. Mayor Maddox wrote:

“ I thank the National Community Civilian Corps from the bottom of my heart for remembering Tuscaloosa in our time of tragedy. Our city is truly grateful for the individuals who are aiding in our rebuilding efforts as we would not be able to move ahead without the support of organizations like yours. Again, thank you for assisting us in our effort to rebuild Tuscaloosa in a way that honors all those who lost so much. ” ^[xxxiv]

When a similarly deadly tornado devastated Joplin, MO in May 2011, national service members were among the first to respond. The AmeriCorps St. Louis Emergency Response Team (ERT) drove through the night to arrive in Joplin just a few hours after disaster struck. Within three hours of arrival, the AmeriCorps St. Louis ERT had established a call center for missing persons. ^[xxxv] In a remarkable demonstration of Missouri citizens’

AmeriCorps at Work in Joplin, MO

Since May 2011, 300 AmeriCorps members from across the country have recruited and managed more than 60,000 Americans to perform over 579,000 hours of debris removal, police assistance, and donation distribution. Joplin City Officials estimate that AmeriCorps members contributed \$17.7 million to recovery efforts.

gratitude for AmeriCorps members' service, State Representatives Bill White (R-Joplin) and Charlie Davis (R-Duquesne), led the Missouri House of Representatives to issue a resolution applauding AmeriCorps members for their efforts. The resolution states:

“The members of the Missouri House of Representatives join unanimously to applaud the history, goals, and accomplishments associated with the AmeriCorps program and to convey to all of those involved this legislative body's most heartfelt commendation of their efforts in Joplin and Duquesne following the devastating EF-5 tornado.” ^[xxxvi]

Helping reopen state and national parks

The Corps Network has a long history of quickly deploying well-trained teams of AmeriCorps members, or Corps, to help when disaster strikes. In addition to working in all major phases of disaster relief - preparation, mitigation, response and recovery - several Corps have played a crucial role in reopening national parks decimated by natural disasters. For example, following 2011's Las Conchas Fire and subsequent flooding at Bandelier National Monument in New Mexico, an AmeriCorps crew from Rocky Mountain Youth Corps tirelessly worked to reopen the park quickly so that the surrounding community could once again benefit from the tourism and commerce that the Monument attracts. Similarly, following fires and floods that ravaged Bastrop State Park in Texas, AmeriCorps crews from American Youthworks helped to rebuild roads and refurbish habitats. Their efforts ensured that the park re-opened quickly, which was critical for the citizens of Bastrop County. The park draws over 150,000 visitors a year. These visitors infuse more than \$1.5 million into the local economy. ^[xxxvii]

conclusion

In times of fiscal austerity and limited government, it is critical that citizens step up to serve. The nonprofit organizations that rely upon support from the Corporation for National and Community Service are giving citizens the opportunity to help address our nation's most pressing education, housing, and disaster relief needs. Without the Corporation for National and Community Service, millions of Americans will be denied the opportunity to serve, and critically needed education, housing and disaster relief services will not be delivered. Now is the time to empower more citizens to serve through CNCS programs.

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