



Corporation for National and Community Service Backgrounder

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is an independent federal agency, and its largest programs are AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. CNCS acts much like a foundation and is the nation's largest grantmaker investing in locally driven service and volunteering efforts focused on several high-priority areas including education, disaster relief, veterans and military families, housing, and more. CNCS funds more than 3,000 organizations including Habitat for Humanity, Teach For America, United Ways, Boys and Girls Clubs, City Year, and Catholic Charities, expanding their reach and impact. The result of this investment: more engaged citizens, greater economic opportunity, less dependence on government, safer neighborhoods, stronger communities, and a more unified nation.

Congress created CNCS to be a public-private partnership designed to lessen the dependency on government, particularly in rural and urban areas where the social safety net is strained. CNCS strengthens civil society by deploying national and community service members through its nonprofit affiliates. For every ten dollars invested in CNCS by the federal government, another fifteen dollars is raised from private sources to fund the agency's important programs that address community challenges. Investments from companies like Walmart, Home Depot, Target, Cisco, CSX and Citigroup increase the return on taxpayer dollars.

National service has a strong, bipartisan history.

- National service is a historically bipartisan, politically popular, and cost-effective strategy for engaging citizens, strengthening communities, creating jobs, and uniting the nation.
- Over the past eight decades, presidents from both political parties have proposed, and created with Congress, programs that have enabled Americans to serve local communities for a significant period of time.

Voters overwhelmingly support national service.

- A poll conducted by TargetPoint Consulting found that 83 percent of voters across nine presidential battleground states want Congress to maintain or increase the federal investment in national service. This includes 78 percent of Republicans, 84 percent of Independents, and 90 percent of Democrats surveyed.
- Voters overwhelmingly agree that national service helps prepare young people for the workforce; helps build stronger neighborhoods and communities; helps restore important values of patriotism and civic duty to our young people; helps replace “government

handouts” with local, volunteer-based, community work; and empowers people to be more self-sufficient and less dependent on the government.

National service is a model for decentralized control and community problem-solving.

- Two-thirds of AmeriCorps funding is directly controlled by governor-appointed state service commissions that determine which organizations receive investment based on the needs of their communities. Funding is distributed to nonprofit and faith-based organizations on a competitive basis.
- Through participation in AmeriCorps and Senior Corps, national service members tutor and mentor struggling students, provide job training and other services to returning veterans, help communities recover after natural disasters, support independent living for seniors and Americans with disabilities, and more.
- National service is also a force multiplier for community impact. In 2015, the 75,000 women and men who served across AmeriCorps’ 21,000 partner locations recruited, trained and supervised in excess of 4 million unpaid community volunteers.

National service is a model for public private partnerships.

- In 2015, CNCS generated \$1.26 billion in outside resources from private businesses, foundations, and other sources — an amount exceeding the federal appropriation.¹
- Every federal dollar invested in AmeriCorps is matched by more than two dollars from donations and in-kind support from non-CNCS sources, including business and philanthropy.
- For every one dollar the federal government invests in national service, there is a nearly four dollar return on investment.²
- Federal agencies can utilize national service corps members to perform duties that align with agency missions at a low cost, like FEMA Corps, which is estimated to save \$60 million annually.

National service leads to careers.

- Participation in national service programs helps unemployed Americans find jobs. A study by CNCS shows that unemployed individuals who volunteer are 27 percent more likely to secure employment than those who do not volunteer. This relationship is even more significant for unemployed individuals without high school diplomas and those who live in rural communities.
- National service helps put opportunity youth — the nearly 5 million young people who are neither in school nor working — on a path toward education or a career. Some national service programs enable opportunity youth to earn their diploma or GED while serving simultaneously, and others act as workforce development tool for opportunity youth by giving them valuable on-the-job training in skills that are connected with career pathways.

¹ https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/CNCS_Solving_Problems_and_Expanding_Opportunity_0.pdf

² Source: “The Economic Value of National Service,” Clive Belfield. Center for Benefit-Cost Studies in Education Teachers College, Columbia University, September 2013.

- National service helps young people better define their career pathways and assists them in moving to the next step. Forty-three percent of AmeriCorps alumni state that their service was aligned with their career path, and 79 percent say that their service was a defining professional experience.³
- National service helps young people develop into leaders, problem solvers, and more active citizens. Nine out of ten AmeriCorps alumni reported that their service experience improved their ability to solve problems. Additionally, eight out of ten alums say that if they were confronted with a community issue, they could confidently develop a plan to address it and get others to care.
- National service is a powerful workforce development tool that has the power to lead to careers by providing young people with tangible skills — especially career-specific skills for self-management and interacting with others.⁴

Employers value and hire people who participate in national service.

- National service members are a diverse group of individuals across the country who span all backgrounds and income levels.
- National service is backed by over 450 “Employers of National Service” who highly value the skills individuals gain during their service and bring to the workplace.
- On average, nine out of ten AmeriCorps alumni agreed or strongly agreed that they could solve difficult problems, persist when opposed, accomplish goals, handle unexpected events and unforeseen situations, remain calm, cope with difficulties, and identify multiple solutions. Alumni rated their current skills as higher than at pre-service, with the greatest gains being in their abilities to deal with unexpected events and unforeseen situations.⁵
- A recent LinkedIn survey of hiring managers revealed that 59 percent believe that these highly valued soft skills are difficult to find.⁶

National service has a positive impact on higher education and civic engagement.

- AmeriCorps helps pay for higher education by providing access to education awards that can be used to pay for college tuition or to pay down student loan debt. To date, AmeriCorps alums have earned more than \$3.3 billion to help with college costs.⁷ More than \$1 billion of scholarship funds have gone to repay students loans.⁸
- Individuals who served in AmeriCorps reported high levels of civic engagement and civic self-efficacy, and indicated that their AmeriCorps experience influenced their civic engagement.⁹

³ http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/FR_CNCS_Alumni%20Outcomes%20Survey%20Report.pdf

⁴ http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/FR_CNCS_Alumni%20Outcomes%20Survey%20Report.pdf

⁵ http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/FR_CNCS_Alumni%20Outcomes%20Survey%20Report.pdf

⁶ <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/trends-and-research/2016/most-in-demand-soft-skills>

⁷ https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/CNCS_Solving_Problems_and_Expanding_Opportunity_0.pdf

⁸ https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/CNCS_Solving_Problems_and_Expanding_Opportunity_0.pdf

⁹ http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/FR_CNCS_Alumni%20Outcomes%20Survey%20Report.pdf