

Corporation for National and Community Service
FY 2015 Budget in Brief

March 2014

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 

Overview

Service is fundamental to who we are and how we meet our challenges in America. As citizens, we recognize that we have responsibilities as well as rights; that our destinies are bound together. As President Obama said in his 2014 State of the Union address, “Citizenship demands a sense of common cause; participation in the hard work of self-government; an obligation to serve to our communities.”

The President’s Budget request of \$1.05 billion for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a strong investment in national service programs which lead the nation’s efforts to tap the energy of citizens to solve problems in their communities.

Since its creation 20 years ago, CNCS has worked hand in hand with thousands of local partners to improve lives, expand economic opportunity, bolster civic and faith-based organizations, and involve millions of Americans in service to address our nation’s most pressing challenges. CNCS engages more than five million Americans in service each year at more than 60,000 locations across the country, from large cities to rural communities.

CNCS’s programs educate students for jobs of the 21st century; support individuals, families, and neighborhoods on the road to economic recovery; address the needs of military families and a new generation of veterans returning from war; help communities rebuild after natural disasters; promote health and well-being; and preserve the nation’s parks and public lands. High-quality national service opportunities can provide immediate benefits to the community and significant long-term benefits to service recipients and those who serve.

Expanding Opportunity through Partnerships

As the nation’s largest grant-maker for service and volunteering, CNCS supports tens of thousands of organizations, including through the important network of State Service Commissions. The modest federal investment by CNCS leverages hundreds of millions of additional resources from non-federal sources to strengthen community impact and increase return on taxpayer dollars.

On the federal level, CNCS has developed several innovative partnerships with other agencies to meet critical challenges and expand opportunities for all Americans to serve. These partnerships include the creation of the FEMA Corps unit of AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and School Turnaround AmeriCorps with the Department of Education. Building on the success of these partnerships, President Obama created the President’s Task Force on Expanding National Service, co-chaired by the White House Domestic Policy Council and CNCS. The Task Force is working to strengthen citizen problem-solving by developing strategies to expand national service to meet national needs through partnerships with other federal agencies and the private sector.

Ensuring Impact through Evaluation and Accountability

CNCS has made it a priority to develop a knowledge and evidence base to support the agency’s mission, programs, and strategic goals through program evaluation and research initiatives. CNCS’s emphasis on evaluation is aligned with the Administration’s commitment to using evidence and rigorous evaluation in budget, management, and policy decisions. CNCS believes that implementing a robust research and evaluation agenda is a critical underpinning of the agency and its ability to achieve and communicate the value that national service and social innovation bring to communities across the country.

In line with President Obama's Management Agenda, CNCS is committed to efficient operations. CNCS has a deep and ongoing commitment to ensuring the highest levels of accountability in the agency's financial and program operations. CNCS has worked to build a culture of integrity, accountability, and transparency by fortifying its internal controls, oversight, and monitoring. CNCS established a new Office of Accountability and Oversight and implemented an Integrity Framework as a set of disciplined practices to help ensure CNCS's organizational effectiveness, cohesion, and longevity.

Highlights

This Budget request will enable CNCS to develop partnerships, strengthen competition, align resources, and leverage investments to achieve greater outcomes. Under this Budget CNCS would:

- Support a record **114,000 AmeriCorps members** engaged in high-impact service addressing the critical challenges identified in the Serve America Act: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families. AmeriCorps expands economic opportunity for all Americans who serve by providing valuable skills, experiences, and support for pursuing higher education. To enhance impact and efficiency the Budget proposes to transition the existing **Foster Grandparent Program** and **Senior Companion Program** models into AmeriCorps. In 2015, this transition will preserve existing program goals and infrastructure within the competitive framework of AmeriCorps and make participants eligible to receive a new type of Segal AmeriCorps Education Award. This will result in the largest number of AmeriCorps members in the program's 20-year history.
- Continue to work with federal agencies and the private sector, in coordination with the President's Task Force on Expanding National Service, to tackle national priorities through the expansion of national service opportunities. Building on the success of the FEMA Corps unit of AmeriCorps NCCC, School Turnaround AmeriCorps, and other initiatives, CNCS will develop partnerships to create new service corps that meet critical challenges and create pathways to opportunity for those who serve. As part of this work, CNCS will collaborate with other departments as well as State Service Commissions, higher education institutions, and the nonprofit sector. CNCS also will seek support from other federal agencies as well as investment from both the corporate and philanthropic communities to maximize the size and scope of these new initiatives.
- Invest in the validation and growth of evidence-based programs that improve the lives of low-income individuals through the **Social Innovation Fund (SIF)**. The SIF mobilizes public and private resources to grow innovative, community-driven solutions that have evidence of impact. Through rigorous evaluation, the SIF will contribute to the knowledge base of proven program models that can be replicated in communities across the country, including by other CNCS-funded programs.

Programs and Activities

The FY 2015 Budget request makes critical investments in programs and activities that will continue to address the social and economic challenges facing our communities. These investments are also aimed at building the capacity of CNCS and grantees to achieve greater accountability and effectiveness. Specifically, this Budget request allocates the following for CNCS programs:

AmeriCorps State and National

The request of \$335.4 million for AmeriCorps State and National will support nearly 75,000 AmeriCorps members. This represents an increase of nearly 4,000 AmeriCorps members above the projected member level for FY 2014. In FY 2015, AmeriCorps State and National plans to expand the number of professional corps members. As a result, these grants will provide only the education awards and loan forbearance benefits to professional corps members except in unique instances where programs can demonstrate limited resources and require additional program dollars to operate. With this funding, AmeriCorps State and National will continue to invest in evidence-informed and evidence-based community solutions. AmeriCorps provides a critical source of human capital to meet pressing needs across the country and a pathway to economic and educational opportunity for Americans who serve.

AmeriCorps Foster Grandparent Program

The request of \$92.8 million will transition the Foster Grandparent Program model to AmeriCorps. This funding will support approximately 21,200 AmeriCorps Foster Grandparent members who will continue to provide one-on-one mentoring, nurturing, and support to children with special or exceptional needs, or who are at an academic, social, or financial disadvantage. In 2015, the transition will preserve existing program infrastructure in the competitive framework of AmeriCorps. Foster Grandparents will become AmeriCorps members and be eligible for a new type of \$250 Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, which will have expanded uses, including covering the cost of educational or enrichment activities for a family member or child they are serving through the program.

In FY 2015, AmeriCorps Foster Grandparents will serve as quarter-time AmeriCorps members, receive a living allowance of \$2,771, and may be provided with funds to help offset the cost of service, including mileage reimbursements. This living allowance will be slightly greater than the average stipend that Foster Grandparents currently receive for serving 20 hours a week. In future years, the AmeriCorps Foster Grandparent grantees will have the opportunity to compete for funding under the broader AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps Foster Grandparents serving with grantees that are successful in the AmeriCorps competition will receive the quarter-time Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, which is equivalent to approximately \$1,530 in FY 2015.

AmeriCorps Senior Companion Program

The request of \$38.3 million will transition the Senior Companion Program model to AmeriCorps. This funding will support approximately 8,800 AmeriCorps Senior Companion Program members. These AmeriCorps members will continue to provide a cost-effective option in the continuum of care available to the nation's aging population by providing companionship, transportation, help with light chores, and respite to help older and frail adults live independently in their own homes. In 2015, AmeriCorps Senior Companions will be eligible for a new type of \$250 Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, which will have expanded uses including covering the cost of educational or enrichment activities for a family member.

In FY 2015, AmeriCorps Senior Companions will serve as quarter-time AmeriCorps members, receive a living allowance of \$2,771, and may be provided with funds to help offset the cost of service, including mileage reimbursements. This living allowance will be slightly greater than the average stipend that Senior Companions currently receive for serving 20 hours a week. In future years, the AmeriCorps Senior Companion grantees will have the opportunity to compete for funding under the broader AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps Senior Companions serving with grantees that are successful in that AmeriCorps competition will receive the quarter-time Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, which is equivalent to approximately \$1,530 in FY 2015.

AmeriCorps VISTA

The request of \$92.4 million will support an estimated 7,800 full-time and summer AmeriCorps VISTA members focused on anti-poverty projects. AmeriCorps VISTA will continue to direct resources to projects that demonstrate promise in pre-K readiness and K-12 success, safe and affordable housing, improving access to food and health care, and support to veterans and their families.

AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps

The request of \$30 million for AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) will support approximately 1,200 members. AmeriCorps NCCC members gain skills, opportunity, and leadership abilities while meeting pressing community needs in the areas of disaster response, infrastructure improvement, environmental stewardship and conservation, urban and rural development, and energy conservation.

National Service Trust

The request of \$253.9 million, along with anticipated carryover, will fund Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards for approximately 114,000 eligible AmeriCorps members, including the AmeriCorps Foster Grandparents and AmeriCorps Senior Companion members who complete their terms of service. The FY 2015 maximum award for full-time service is \$5,785.

Innovation, Demonstration, and Assistance

The request of \$92.1 million provides key resources aimed at developing new ideas while expanding proven initiatives that address specific community needs:

- Of this \$92.1 million, \$70 million is for the **Social Innovation Fund**. The Social Innovation Fund request of \$70 million will help to identify, scale up, and rigorously evaluate promising programs across the nation. The FY 2015 Budget continues to request that up to 20 percent of funds be available for Pay for Success projects. Pay for Success models leverage philanthropic and private dollars to fund services up-front, with government support only after they generate results.
- \$19 million is for the **Volunteer Generation Fund**. The Volunteer Generation Fund request of \$19 million will focus on strengthening the ability of organizations to recruit, retain, and manage volunteers. In FY 2015, as part of a transition, the Volunteer Generation Fund will incorporate the most competitive **RSVP** projects. This integration of RSVP into the Volunteer Generation Fund will improve efficiency and strengthen volunteer recruitment and retention work.

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- \$3.1 million will support important field-building activities including the **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service**, and the ongoing **United We Serve** initiative (the President's Call to Service initiative).

State Service Commissions

The request of \$16 million for State Service Commissions, an increase of \$1 million above the FY 2014 level, will enhance the Commissions' ability to develop partnerships, monitor programs, provide training, and cultivate high-performing grantees focused on accountability and impact. State Commissions administer approximately two-thirds of AmeriCorps grant funds and play a key role in identifying local needs, monitoring subgrantees, and leading citizen service efforts in their states.

Training and Technical Assistance

The request of \$1 million supports a strategic approach for providing training and technical assistance to CNCS grantees and sponsors. Among other uses, this funding will facilitate the reorganization of the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companion Program, and RSVP.

Evaluation

The request of \$5 million supports the design and execution of research and evaluation studies and will facilitate the use of evidence and evaluation by CNCS and national service organizations. This funding level supports research to increase the evidence and knowledge base for CNCS programs, including programs launched in coordination with the President's Task Force on Expanding National Service. These efforts will allow CNCS to promote a culture of evaluation and evidence within the agency and among grantees by facilitating evidence-based and evidence-informed grant-making, and by providing relevant technical assistance.

Salaries and Expenses

The request of \$87.3 million supports Information Technology operations, modernization, and staffing levels needed to ensure efficient agency operations and program delivery.

Office of Inspector General

The request of \$6 million will support Office of Inspector General activities to conduct audits, evaluations, and investigations to enhance the management and overall performance of CNCS and its grantees and promote economy and efficiency.

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CNCS FY 2015 Budget Request Summary Table

Budget Account	FY13 Enacted Level	FY14 Enacted Level	FY15 President's Budget	Difference \$	Difference %
Operating Expenses	\$711,009	\$756,849	\$703,093	-\$53,756	-7%
AmeriCorps					
AmeriCorps State and National	326,336	335,430	335,430	-	0%
AmeriCorps Foster Grandparent Program*			92,806	92,806	100%
AmeriCorps Senior Companion Program*			38,330	38,330	100%
AmeriCorps NCCC	30,214	30,000	30,000	-	0%
AmeriCorps VISTA	89,861	92,364	92,364	-	0%
State Service Commission Support Grants	12,738	15,038	16,038	1,000	7%
Senior Corps**	196,637	202,117	-	-202,117	-100%
Subtitle H	50,493	76,900	92,125	15,225	20%
Innovation, Demonstration and Other	4,246	3,100	3,100	-	0%
Social Innovation Fund	42,471	70,000	70,000	-	0%
Volunteer Generation Fund***	3,776	3,800	19,025	15,225	401%
Evaluation	2,838	5,000	5,000	-	0%
Subtitle J, Training and Technical Assistance	1,892	-	1,000	1,000	100%
Disability Inclusion Grants	-	-	-	-	-
National Service Trust	200,719	207,368	253,885	46,517	22%
Salaries and Expenses	78,510	80,737	87,257	6,520	8%
Office of the Inspector General	3,784	5,000	6,000	1,000	20%
Total****	\$994,021	\$1,049,954	\$1,050,235	\$281	0.03%

* Proposed reorganization of Foster Grandparent Program and Senior Companion Program into AmeriCorps in FY 2015.

** CNCS proposes to reorganize Senior Corps in FY 2015 by integrating the Foster Grandparent Program and Senior Companion Program models into AmeriCorps and integrating the most-competitive RSVP grantees into the Volunteer Generation Fund.

*** Includes \$15.225 million for the integration of RSVP into VGF in FY 2015.

**** May not equal the sum of individual budget accounts due to rounding.