COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

April 7, 2015

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

NACo National Association of Counties
The Voice of America's Counties

Dear County Executive,

Thank you for participating in the 2015 County Day of Recognition for National Service!

On April 7, 2015, county executives and mayors across the country will highlight the impact of AmeriCorps and Senior Corps and thank those who serve.

Your participation will spotlight the importance of citizen engagement, recognize the dedication of national service members, and inspire more residents to get involved in their communities.

Communication and media outreach are key to the success of this effort. We have put together this Communications Toolkit to make it easy to plan an event and reach out to the media. In this toolkit, you will find:

- Event and Media Suggestions
- Key Messages and Talking Points
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Social Media Guide
- Sample Media Advisory
- Sample Press Release
- Sample Proclamation with County Data
- Sample Proclamation
- Sample Op-Ed
- Sample Thank You Letter

Additional resources including logos, web banners, and customizable event materials are available on our County Day of Recognition for National Service resources webpage at www.nationalservice.gov/countiesforservice. Also, we can provide a County Profile showing data on national service programs, participants, and funding in your county. To receive your County Profile, please contact the CNCS State Director in your state. A list can be found here.

We hope these materials are helpful. If you have questions or would like help with communications, please email pressoffice@cns.gov.

Thank you for joining with us. We look forward to working with you to make this day a big success!

Office of External Affairs
Corporation for National and Community Service

EVENT AND MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

The County Day of Recognition for National Service is a nationwide bipartisan effort to recognize the positive impact of national service in our counties, to thank those who serve, and to encourage citizens to give back to their communities.

There are many ways you can participate. Below are suggested activities in three categories: Public Events, Recognition, and Media. After you have figured out your plans, please take a few minutes to share them with us by filling out the online event form here. This information will not be displayed publicly on our site or any other media.

Public Events

- **Become an Employer of National Service**: AmeriCorps and Peace Corps alumni are strong leaders who are motivated, flexible, innovative, and outcome-oriented. By becoming an Employer of National Service, county governments have new access to this dedicated, highly qualified, and mission-oriented pool of potential employees. More than 150 companies, nonprofits, and state and local governments have already signed on to this initiative since last fall. CNCS is encouraging County Executives and Mayors to sign up and announce their participation on April 7.

- **Host an Event:** Invite AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers and their organization's staff and board to a recognition ceremony during your county council meeting. Ask a member to tell their impact story, or to bring along a beneficiary of their service. At the end, read your county proclamation and take a photo.

- **Visit a Program:** See a national service project in action by visiting a school, homeless shelter, community center, or other service location. Hear from the members and beneficiaries about how national service is working. Become an AmeriCorps or Senior Corps member for the day and serve alongside to highlight their important work.

- **Host a Thank-You Event**: Show your appreciation for the commitment of national service members by inviting them to a thank-you event. Team up with another organization to offer some kind of an award, such as a bus pass or gift card. Present awards for outstanding service members.

Recognition

- **Take A Photo:** Take a group photo with national service members in your county. We encourage you to hold a sign that reads "National Service Works in [*Your County*]." A downloadable sign is available at nationalservice.gov/countiesforservice. Tweet the photo

using the #counties4service hashtag, post it on your website and Facebook page, and email it to us at pressoffice@cns.gov.

- **Issue a Proclamation**: Issue a proclamation naming April 7, 2015, as National Service Recognition Day. Sample proclamations are available in this toolkit. Customize the proclamation using data from your County Profile available from your CNCS State Office.

- **Put Out A Report:** Highlight the scope and impact of national service in your county by working with local programs to put together a short report. Use data from your County Profile.

Media

- **Use Social Media:** Use Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms to thank national service members serving in your community. Check out our Social Media Guide for suggestions, sample messages, and hashtags. Use the web banners and badges found on our County Day of Recognition for National Service resources webpage.

- **Pitch the Media:** Talk about national service in your weekly press conference or other media venue. Issue a press release on the scope and impact of national service in your county. Write an op-ed about the unique contributions of national service your county. Our toolkit has sample a media advisory, press release, and op-ed to get you started. Send your press release to pressoffice@cns.gov so we can highlight activities across the country in our national press outreach.

- **Shoot a Video:** Many county executives have access to video services or county cable channels. Put together a short video that shows what national service is doing in your county, including interviews and B-roll with national service participants, soundbites from county executives, and shots from your County Day Service activities. Post it on your YouTube channel, play it through local cable stations, and send us a link at pressoffice@cns.gov.

COUNTY DAY of Recognition for National Service

KEY MESSAGES

- **GETTING THINGS DONE:** Every day in communities across America, AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers address the most pressing challenges facing our counties and nation, from educating students for the jobs of the 21st century and supporting veterans and military families to preserving the environment and helping communities recover from natural disasters.

- **SERVICE AS A SOLUTION:** Given the many social needs facing our communities – and the fiscal constraints facing government at all levels – county executives are increasingly turning to national service as a cost-effective solution to meet county needs.

- **COUNTY DAY:** The County Day of Recognition for National Service is a nationwide bipartisan effort to recognize the positive impact of national service in our counties, to thank those who serve, and to encourage citizens to give back to their communities.

- **GET INVOLVED:** National service shows the best of the American spirit – people turning toward problems instead of away, working together to find community solutions. Today, as we thank national service members for their commitment, let us all pledge to do our part to strengthen our county through service and volunteering.

TALKING POINTS

Background: How National Service Gets Things Done

- Service to others is a hallmark of the American character, and central to how we meet our challenges.

- Given the many social needs facing our communities – and the fiscal constraints facing government at all levels – county executives are increasingly turning to national service and volunteerism to help meet local needs. County executives know that engaging citizens and nonprofit partners is a smart strategy to address on county challenges.

- A key partner in our efforts is the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). CNCS is the federal agency that oversees AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and other programs that engage more than five million citizens in service each year.

- This agency works hand-in-hand with counties, nonprofits, and other local partners to support high-impact national service at more than 60,000 sites across the country.

- AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers address the most pressing challenges facing our counties and nation. Whether supporting food banks and homeless shelters, restoring parks, providing health services, strengthening public safety and juvenile justice services, tutoring and mentoring students, and managing community volunteers, national service members help county executives tackle tough problems.

- National service participants increase the impact of the organizations they serve with, both through their direct service and by recruiting and managing millions of additional volunteers.

County Day of Recognition for National Service

- That's why I am pleased to join my fellow county executives today in the County Day of Recognition for National Service. County executives across the country are taking time to recognize the impact of national service in their counties and thank those who serve.

- This effort is being led by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the National Association of Counties and is part of National County Government Month. Hundreds of Mayors are also taking part in this day.

- Across the country, county executives are participating in a variety of activities, including visiting national service programs, hosting roundtable discussions, issuing proclamations, and communicating about national service through social media.

- I am proud to join in this nationwide salute that will highlight the importance of citizen engagement, recognize the dedication of national service members, and inspire more residents to get involved in their communities.

Localize Impact of National Service in Our County:

- More than *[NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS]* AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers serve in our county, providing vital support to county residents and improving the quality of life in our county.

- You don't hear their stories on the nightly news, but every day they head out, quietly and without fanfare, to improve lives and strengthen communities.

- *[GIVE EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL SERVICE ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT]*

- As a county executive, I am grateful for the dedication and sacrifice of these citizens, who are helping make our great county stronger, safer, and healthier. I have seen their impact first-hand, and know that national service is a cost-effective strategy to meet critical county needs.

Get Involved!

- National service shows the best of the American spirit – people turning toward problems instead of away, working together to find community solutions.

- Strengthening that spirit is one of my goals as a county executive. Today, as we thank national service members for their commitment, let us all pledge to do our part to strengthen our county through service and volunteering.

- Go to *[COUNTY WEBSITE FOR VOLUNTEERING]* or Serve.gov to find a volunteer opportunity that matches your skills and interests.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the County Day of Recognition for National Service?
The County Day of Recognition for National Service is a nationwide bipartisan effort to recognize the positive impact of national service, to thank those who serve, and to encourage citizens to give back to their communities.

Why a County Day of Recognition for National Service?
County governments have a broad range of responsibilities to their residents, which matches CNCS's mission to improve lives, strengthen communities and foster civic engagement. A coordinated day of recognition presents a unique opportunity to spotlight the key role that national service plays in helping counties solve problems. Participating in the day will highlight the impact of citizen service, show support for nonprofit and national service groups, and inspire more residents to serve in their communities.

What is CNCS and how does it help counties?
As the federal agency for service and volunteering, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) annually engages more than five million citizens in service at more than 60,000 locations across the country through AmeriCorps (including VISTA and NCCC), Senior Corps (including Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP), and other programs. CNCS also supports innovative community-based solutions improving the lives of low-income people through the Social Innovation Fund.

CNCS leverages federal and private funds to support organizations that achieve measurable results where the need is greatest. National service helps county executives tackle problems in the following areas:

- tutoring and mentoring students
- supporting food banks and homeless shelters
- strengthening public safety and juvenile justice services
- restoring parks and public lands
- removing blight and creating safer neighborhoods
- supporting veterans and military families
- responding to disasters and emergencies
- providing health services
- managing community volunteers

What happened last year?
On April 1, 2014, the second annual Mayors Day of Recognition for National Service united mayors across the country to spotlight the impact of national service and honor those who serve. Altogether, 1,760 mayors in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico officially recognized the work that AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers are doing to make cities better and stronger. Together, these elected officials represent more than

110 million citizens, or one-third of all Americans. You can learn more about what happened last year in our 2014 Mayors Day on Storify and you can view photos from events around the country on our 2014 Mayors Day photo gallery.

In 2015, CNCS is expanding this initiative so that county executives and tribal leaders also have the opportunity to highlight the contributions of national service members in their communities.

Where did the idea come from?
Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter, former president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, is a strong supporter of national service, having seen first-hand the key role service plays in tackling local problems. In 2012, he came up with the idea of setting aside a day when mayors across the country could recognize and thank those who make a difference through national service. He shared the idea with Wendy Spencer, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service. Together, they began planning the first Mayors Day of Recognition for National Service, which took place on April 7, 2013, and engaged 832 Mayors across the country.

In both 2013 and 2014, a number of county officials also participated in Mayors Day. As CNCS began planning the 2015 effort, representatives of CNCS met with the National Association of Counties (NACo) to expand the 2015 initiative to formally include county executives. NACo is partnering with CNCS on County Day of Recognition for National Service, and has included it as a suggested activity in National County Government Month. Click here to learn more about National County Government Month.

Who is participating?
County executives, county board chairs, mayors, tribal leaders, or other chief executives of counties and cities of any size.

What are county executives doing on the day?
Here are several ways county executives can participate:

- Announce your county is becoming an Employer of National Service
- Issue a proclamation naming April 7 as National Service Recognition Day
- Visit national service programs or projects in order to highlight their value to the county
- Invite national service programs to a public roundtable to discuss how they address county problems
- Issue a press release or report on the scope and impact of national service in your county
- Serve with a national service program as a "member" for a day to highlight their vital work
- Use Twitter, Facebook, and other social media to thank national service members in your community
- Write an op-ed about the unique contributions of national service your county
- Take a group photo with all national service members in your county

Is it a day of service?
There are multiple service days throughout the year, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service and the September 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance. While some county executives are participating in service activities on April 7, most are using County Day as an opportunity to recognize the impact of national service and thank those who serve.

What are the goals of the day?
- Highlight how county executives use national service to solve their local challenges
- Thank national service members for their commitment and impact
- Build public awareness about the value and impact of national service
- Highlight the role that national service plays in managing volunteers to focus and amplify their impact
- Provide opportunities for county executives to communicate about the impact of national service to national policymakers
- Generate press coverage and online discussion about county executives supporting service

Where can I learn more about national service and volunteering in my county?
CNCS offers a variety of resources that can help county executives learn about national service and volunteering in their counties and expand the impact of volunteering by their residents:
- Each year, CNCS produces State Profiles that list all national service funding, projects, and participants in every state. CNCS also will produce county profiles on demand for counties participating in County Day. To receive your county profile, contact the CNCS Director in your state. A list is here: http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact/stateoffices.asp.
- CNCS also produces the annual Volunteering and Civic Life in America report, the most comprehensive data on volunteering ever assembled. Visit: www.volunteeringinamerica.gov

Who can I contact for more information?
- For information on County Day or CNCS programs, contact CNCS State Director in your state. A list is available at www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact/stateoffices.asp.
- For government relations questions, contact PJ Andrews, Office of Government Relations, 202-606-6613 or pandrews@cns.gov.
- For communications questions, contact the Office of External Affairs at pressoffice@cns.gov.

Who are the sponsors of County Day?
- The **Corporation for National and Community Service** (CNCS) engages more than five million Americans in service through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and other programs, and leads President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit NationalService.gov.
- **National Association of Counties (NACo)** promotes sound public policies, foster county solutions and innovation, promotes intergovernmental and public-private collaboration and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. For more information, visit www.naco.org.
- CNCS also partners the **National League of Cities** and **Cities of Service** on Mayors Day.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE

Social media is a powerful tool for county executives to highlight the impact of national service, thank those who serve, and draw more people into service. We strongly encourage county executives to use social media to build buzz and engagement in the days leading up to and on April 7. Included below are a few ideas and suggestions to get you started. Please direct any questions to DigitalMedia@cns.gov - we're happy to connect with you!

Hashtags and Accounts

CNCS will use the #counties4service hashtag. Be sure to use it too, so we can retweet all the great messages you're sharing and start a national conversation. Our official accounts include @AmeriCorps, @SeniorCorps, and @NationalService. And if you're using social media networks not listed below (Instagram, Pinterest, or Flickr) please use the #counties4service hashtag too. We'd hate to miss any of the good content you're sharing.

Twitter

Here are some sample tweets to get you started. More information on national service in your state can be found here or in your county profile. Make sure to take and share photos.

- Excited to join the 2015 County Day of Recognition for @NationalService on April 7, 2015. I'm a #counties4service
- #NationalServiceWorks/#AmeriCorpsWorks/#SeniorCorpsWorks for [COUNTY] because _____. #counties4service
- RT to thank the [#] @AmeriCorps & [#] @SeniorCorps members serving in [COUNTY] this #counties4service day.
- #NationalServiceWorks/#AmeriCorpsWorks/#SeniorCorpsWorks for [#EDUCATION/ #VETERANS/#HUNGER, etc.] in [County] through [ORGANIZATION]. #counities4service
- Has @nationalservice touched your life? To celebrate #counties4service, share your favorite moment.
- The @AmeriCorps A travels far & wide. It's even here in [COUNTY]. #counties4service
- .@nationalservice is getting things done for America. @AmeriCorps & @SeniorCorps members are doing so much for [COUNTY]. #counties4service
- Did you know [NUMBER] @AmeriCorps & @SeniorCorps members are helping make {COUNTY} stronger, safer, and healthier. #counties4service

Facebook

Badges and graphics are available on our Resources page and we've included a few additional ideas for engagement below. Please tag the official Corporation for National and Community Service or AmeriCorps or Senior Corps pages so we can see your great posts.

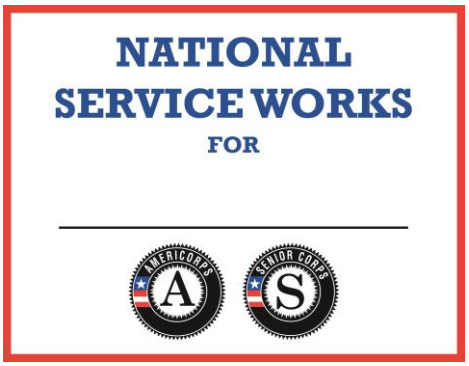
- Consider posting a thank you message and photo or graphic and ask the members, volunteers, alumni to tag themselves in it.
- Facebook users love fill-in-the-blank questions, so post something like: "National Service works for [COUNTY] because _____."

Photos

We encourage county officials to take and share photos of county executives surrounded by national service members, whether at the county building or on a service site. Participants in the photo should be holding the "National Service Works for (County Name)" sign that can be found on the Resource page. Here are steps to submit your photo(s):

Photo Requirements:

- Visit the "Photo Guidance and Event Signs" section of our Resource page to find a customizable sign.
- Add **YOUR** County name to the sign and print.
- Take a photo of your county executive holding the sign with national service members from your community.
- 3 photos allowed (max).
- Photos should be no larger than 2MB each.
- Photos must be named by respective County and State (Montgomery County-MD-1.jpg)



Sending:

- First, share your photos on your county Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or other accounts.
- Second, send them to us so we can share them on our national accounts and galleries.
- Go to "**We Transfer**" (www.wetransfer.com) to send photos.
- Upload photo(s) to We Transfer (www.wetransfer.com).
- Insert pressoffice@cns.gov as "Friends email".
- In "Message" of email include county officials name, county and state, and "County Day 2015 Photo". If you have other relevant caption info, please include.
- Click TRANSFER!

Photo submissions will be collected until Friday, April 10th.

If you have question, please contact CNCS Photographer, Matthew Guinan (mguinan@cns.gov). Please include County *Day 2015 Photo Question* in subject line to ensure prompt response.

SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release
March XX, 2015

Contact Name
Phone and Email

County Executive *[Name]* to Join Nationwide Effort to Recognize Impact of National Service

[CITY, STATE]– On April 7, County Executive *[NAME]* will join more than *[TBD – UPDATED NUMBER ON WEBSITE]* city and county leaders across the country in a day of recognition to highlight the impact of AmeriCorps and Senior Corps on county challenges.

[COUNTY EXECUTIVE NAME] will participate in the County Day of Recognition for National Service by *[INSERT SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES COUNTY EXECUTIVE WILL ENGAGE IN].*

The nation's counties are increasingly turning to national service and volunteerism as a cost-effective strategy to address county challenges at a time of fiscal constraint. More than *[NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS]* AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members serve in *[COUNTY]*, proving vital support to county residents by *[NUMBERS FROM COUNTY PROFILE – ALSO CAN INCLUDE IMPACTS FROM LOCAL PROGRAMS].*

The activities in *[COUNTY]* are part of a national bipartisan effort to recognize the positive impact of national service, thank those who serve, and to encourage citizens to give back.

WHAT:

WHO:

WHERE:

WHEN:

The effort is sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, and Cities of Service. For more information, visit NationalService.gov/countiesforservice.

[INSERT COUNTY BOILERPLATE DESCRIPTION]

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, the Social Innovation Fund and other programs. For more information, visit NationalService.gov.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
April 7, 2015

Contact:
Phone and Email:

County Executive *[NAME]* Joins Nationwide Effort to Recognize Impact of National Service

[COUNTY, STATE]– County Executive *[NAME]* joined more than *[CHECK WEBSITE FOR LATEST TOTAL]* county executives and mayors across the country in a nationwide bipartisan initiative to highlight the impact of national service in tackling local problems.

"National service is a vital resource for our county," said County Executive *[NAME]*. "AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers make our counties better places to live. As County Executive, I am grateful for the dedication and sacrifice of these citizens, who are helping make our great county stronger, safer, and healthier."

County Executive *[NAME]* participated in *[INSERT SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES COUNTY EXECUTIVE ENGAGED IN].*

Given the many social needs facing communities, county and city leaders are increasingly turning to national service as a cost-effective strategy to meet local needs. More than *[NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM COUNTY PROFILE]* AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers serve in *[COUNTY]*, providing vital support by *[LIST SERVICE ACTIVITIES].*

[ADD PARAGRAPH ABOUT EXAMPLE OF NATIONAL SERVICE IMPACT OR HOW NATIONAL SERVICE HAS HELPED CARRY OUT COUNTY PRIORITIES].

The Mayors and County Day of Recognition for National Service is a nationwide bipartisan effort to recognize the positive impact of national service in counties, to thank those who serve, and to encourage citizens to give back to their communities. The day is sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, and Cities of Service.

"I am proud to be working with *[COUNTY NAME]* as we continue to strengthen communities through national service," said Wendy Spencer, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service. "County executives and mayors are leaders who get things done. They know first-hand the value of national service in tackling local problems. I commend County Executive *[NAME]* for working with us to improve lives and strengthen communities through national service."

As the federal agency for service and volunteering, CNCS annually engages more than five million citizens in service at more than 60,000 locations through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and other programs. National service participants address the most pressing challenges facing our counties and nation, from educating students for the jobs of the 21st century and supporting veterans and military families to preserving the environment and helping communities recover from natural disasters.

Across the nation, county executives and mayors are participating in a variety of activities, including visiting national service programs, hosting roundtables, issuing proclamations, and communicating about national service through social media. By shining the spotlight on the impact of service and thanking those who serve, local officials hope to inspire more residents to get involved in their communities.

"National service shows the best of the American spirit – people turning toward problems instead of away, working together to find community solutions," said County Executive *[NAME]*. "Today, as we thank national service members for their commitment, let us all pledge to do our part to strengthen our county through service and volunteering."

For more information including background and a list of participating county executives and mayors, visit www.nationalservice.gov/countiesforservice.

###

[INSERT COUNTY BOILERPLATE DESCRIPTION]

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, the Social Innovation Fund, and the Volunteer Generation Fund, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit NationalService.gov.

###

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, service to others is a hallmark of the American character, and central to how we meet our challenges; and

WHEREAS, the nation's counties are increasingly turning to national service and volunteerism as a cost-effective strategy to meet county needs; and

WHEREAS, AmeriCorps and Senor Corps participants address the most pressing challenges facing our communities, from educating students for the jobs of the 21st century and supporting veterans and military families to providing health services and helping communities recover from natural disasters; and

WHEREAS, national service expands economic opportunity by creating more sustainable, resilient communities and providing education, career skills, and leadership abilities for those who serve; and

WHEREAS, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps participants serve in more than 60,000 locations across the country, bolstering the civic, neighborhood, and faith-based organizations that are so vital to our economic and social well-being; and

WHEREAS, national service participants increase the impact of the organizations they serve, both through their direct service and by managing millions of additional volunteers; and

WHEREAS, national service represents a unique public-private partnership that invests in community solutions and leverages non-federal resources to strengthen community impact and increase the return on taxpayer dollars; and

WHEREAS, national service participants demonstrate commitment, dedication, and patriotism by making an intensive commitment to service, a commitment that remains with them in their future endeavors; and

WHEREAS, the Corporation for National and Community Service shares a priority with county executives nationwide to engage citizens, improve lives, and strengthen communities; and is joining with the National Association of Counties and county executives across the country for the County Day of Recognition for National Service on April 7, 2015.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, *[COUNTY EXECUTIVE NAME]*, County Executive of *[COUNTY]*, do hereby proclaim April 7, 2015, as National Service Recognition Day, and encourage residents to recognize the positive impact of national service in our county; to thank those who serve; and to find ways to give back to their communities.

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION – WITH COUNTY DATA

[NOTE: The county-specific data to fill out this proclamation is available in your National Service County Profile. To receive your County Profile, please contact the CNCS Director in your state. A list of CNCS state offices can be found here.]

WHEREAS, service to others is a hallmark of the American character, and central to how we meet our challenges; and

WHEREAS, the nation's counties are increasingly turning to national service and volunteerism as a cost-effective strategy to meet county needs; and

WHEREAS, participants in AmeriCorps and Senior Corps address the most pressing challenges facing our cities and nation, from educating students for jobs of the 21st century and supporting veterans and military families to providing health services and helping communities recover from natural disasters; and

WHEREAS, national service expands economic opportunity by creating more sustainable, resilient communities and providing education, career skills, and leadership abilities for those who serve; and

WHEREAS AmeriCorps and Senior Corps participants serve in more than 60,000 locations across the country, including *[NUMBER OF SERVICE LOCATIONS]* in *[COUNTY]*, bolstering the civic, neighborhood, and faith-based organizations that are so vital to our county's economic and social well-being; and

WHEREAS, more than *[ROUNDED NUMBER OF CNCS PARTICIPANTS]* national service participants of all ages and backgrounds serve in *[COUNTY NAME]*, providing vital support to county residents and improving the quality of life in our county; and

WHEREAS, national service participants increase the impact of the organizations they serve, both through their direct service and by managing millions of additional volunteers; and

WHEREAS, national service represents a unique public-private partnership that invests in community solutions and leverages non-federal resources to strengthen community impact and increase the return on taxpayer dollars; including more than *[DOLLAR AMOUNT OF LEVERAGED RESOURCES]* in *[COUNTY NAME]*; and

WHEREAS, national service participants demonstrate commitment, dedication, and patriotism by making an intensive commitment to service, a commitment that remains with them in their future endeavors; and

WHEREAS, the Corporation for National and Community Service shares a priority with county executives nationwide to engage citizens, improve lives, and strengthen communities; and is joining with the National Association of Counties and county executives across the country for the County Day of Recognition for National Service on April 7, 2015.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, *[COUNTY EXECUTIVE NAME]*, County Executive of *[COUNTY]*, do hereby proclaim April 7, 2015, as National Service Recognition Day, and encourage residents to recognize the positive impact of national service in our county and thank those who serve; and to find ways to give back to their communities.

SAMPLE OP-ED

National Service Strengthens *[COUNTY NAME]*

[LEAD OFF WITH ONE OR TWO EXAMPLES OF AMERICORPS OR SENIOR CORPS MEMBERS IN YOUR COUNTY

[As one of the only members of his family to graduate from college, John Smith always wanted to do something to help children from disadvantaged backgrounds make the most of their education. Through AmeriCorps, John now serves as a full-time mentor and tutor at a [COUNTY] high school, giving extra attention to help students stay on track to graduate.]

[At age XX, Mary Smith could be expected to live a quiet life of retirement. Instead, she volunteers 20 hours a week as a Foster Grandparent, helping kids develop early literacy skills. Mary is using her lifetime of experience to put young people on a path to success.]

John and Mary are just two examples of how *[COUNTY]* citizens making a difference through national service. Altogether, more than *[NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS]* AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers are serving in *[COUNTY]*, tackling tough challenges including adult literacy, disaster preparedness, neighborhood revitalization, and bridging the education gap.

You don't hear their stories on the nightly news, but every day they head out, quietly and without fanfare, to improve lives and strengthen communities.

As County Executive of *[COUNTY NAME]*, I am grateful for the dedication and sacrifice of these citizens, who are helping make our great county stronger, safer, and healthier. I have seen their impact first-hand, and know that national service is a cost-effective strategy to meet critical county needs.

That's why I am pleased to join county executives and mayors across the country today in the Mayors and County Day of Recognition for National Service. We are taking time to recognize the impact of national service and thank those who serve.

Given the many social needs facing our communities – and the fiscal constraints facing government at all levels – local leaders are increasingly turning to national service and volunteerism to help meet local needs. We know that engaging citizens is a smart strategy to make progress on county challenges.

A key partner in our efforts is the Corporation for National and Service, a federal agency that oversees AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and other programs that engage more than five million citizens in service each year. This agency works hand-in-hand with counties, cities, nonprofits, and other local partners to support high-impact national service at more than 60,000 locations across the country.

Here in *[COUNTY NAME]*, more than [*NUMBER]* AmeriCorps members *[INSERT SERVICE ACTIVITIES - TUTOR, RESPOND TO DISASTERS, ETC].* More than *[NUMBER]* Senior Corps volunteers *[INSERT SERVICE ACTIVITIES - MENTOR, PROVIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES, ETC]*.

[ADD PARAGRAPH ABOUT EXAMPLE OF NATIONAL SERVICE IMPACT OR HOW NATIONAL SERVICE HAS HELPED CARRY OUT COUNTY-WIDE SERVICE PLAN OR OTHER COUNTY EXECUTIVE PRIORITY].

National service shows the best of the American spirit – people turning toward problems instead of away, working together to find community solutions. Strengthening that spirit is one of my goals as county executive. Today, as we thank national service members for their commitment, let us all pledge to do our part to strengthen *[COUNTY NAME]* through service and volunteering.

[COUNTY EXECUTIVE NAME] is County Executive of [COUNTY NAME]. To find a volunteer opportunity, visit [WEBSITE WITH LOCAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES] or serve.gov. To learn more about AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and other national service programs, visit NationalService.gov

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

DATE

Dear [INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP NAME]

As County Executive of [COUNTY}, I want to thank you for making a difference in our county through national service.

Every day, AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers are helping make our county stronger, safer, and healthier. Dedicated citizens like you are tackling tough challenges – helping kids graduate, making neighborhoods safer, caring for seniors, supporting veterans and military families, preserving our environment, and much more.

I have seen your impact first-hand, and am grateful for your dedication and sacrifice.

Today, county executives and mayors across the country are recognizing the value of national service and thanking those who serve. I am proud to be part of this nationwide bipartisan effort.

National service and volunteerism shows the best of the American spirit – people turning toward problems instead of away, working together to find community solutions.

Strengthening that spirit is one of my goals as County Executive. Thank you for being a shining example for others to follow.

Sincerely,

[COUNTY EXECUTIVE NAME]
County Executive of *[COUNTY]*

Attachment: County Proclamation