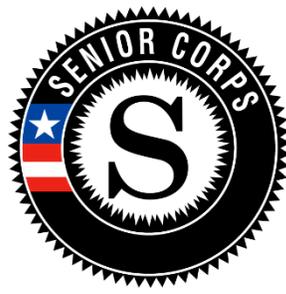


Public Engagement, Outreach, and Education Plan 2016

**Guidance for the National Service and
Social Innovation Communities**



January 6, 2016

Dear National Service Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that I share with you our 2016 Public Engagement and Education Calendar. This plan builds on the accomplishments we achieved together last year and provides a roadmap for another year of successes and impact.

As a community we achieved a major milestone with an increase in our budget that will enable us to continue to improve lives and transform communities. This happened in large part because we all worked together to share the important contributions AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Social Innovation Fund are making in communities. In exchange for the faith bipartisan lawmakers and the President placed in our agency, we must continue to highlight the impact of our members and volunteers who serve at 60,000 locations across our great country.

We have a lot of momentum on which to build. Last year, we honored veterans serving in our programs and those members and volunteers in our programs who are serving veterans and their families as part of the National Service Veterans Corps. We celebrated the 50th anniversaries of AmeriCorps VISTA and the Senior Corps Foster Grandparent programs and achieved the largest Mayor and County Recognition Day for National Service. We announced the Operation AmeriCorps communities and welcomed more than 300 organizations and corporations that joined our Employers of National Service initiative. We announced new public-private partnerships to expand national service and thus create more opportunities for Americans to serve their country through AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. We also held our first-ever research summit that focused on evidence-based solutions that inform the work of the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) and all of our programs.

In 2016, we will continue to organize our outreach around theme months that are tied to our focus areas. This is an important opportunity to continue to show evidence of how we are making a difference. Our plan to focus on these themes is dynamic and will guide us in communicating the achievements of the national service and social innovation communities.

Together, we will continue to announce new opportunities for Americans to serve. From the Governor-Appointed State Service Commissions to private-sector partners, we will mark the expansion of national service programs throughout the year. SIF and other programs will release evaluation reports and other research-related materials that will give us even more information with which to tell our story.

Whether you are part of AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, SIF, or the Volunteer Generation Fund, you will see many opportunities to share your examples of impact over the coming year.

Please share how you are participating in this engagement calendar with your key stakeholders: staff, members/volunteers, elected officials at all levels, boards of directors, corporate supporters, and nonprofit partners. We have a powerful story to tell.

If you have questions, please contact our Office of External Affairs at engagement@cns.gov and share your stories of impact with them, too.

Warmest Regards,



Wendy Spencer, CEO
Corporation for National and Community Service

Section I: Objectives and Outcomes

Introduction

This document is a guide regarding public education and engagement for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) grantees, programs, projects, partners, governor-appointed State Service Commissions, CNCS federal offices in states, program members and alumni, and champions. Our goal is to maximize and coordinate awareness of the important contributions we make to individuals and communities across the country.

Outreach and engagement is organized into focus months with key activities or milestones as noted in Section III. Although every focus month may not be aligned with your work, we hope you will participate in the months that do and that you will always follow and amplify all our social media channels to help us reach as many people as possible. Additionally, attached you will also find a *draft* calendar of events (that will always be an evolving tool) so you know what announcements, activities, or engagements will originate from CNCS.

We hope that using this guide will help all of us increase our shared knowledge, visibility, and support and therefore, our ability to implement and grow evidence-based programming leading to improved communities.

Goal

Inspire Americans to increase their knowledge, awareness, and support of national service and social innovation as the country's best examples of civic engagement, collaboration, and problem solving.

Objectives

- Amplify AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, the Social Innovation Fund, and the Volunteer Generation Fund as innovative ways to improve communities and provide additional opportunities for Americans to serve.
- Strengthen ties with established supporters of national service, social innovation and performance-based outcomes to reinforce and expand the tradition of bipartisan support for national service.
- Encourage more Americans to learn about AmeriCorps and Senior Corps, and other initiatives and programs funded by CNCS and actively share what they learn about our impact.
- Use AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Social Innovation Fund weeks as opportunities to educate the public about program impact.
- Increase visibility of governor-appointed State Service Commissions and state funded programs.
- Partner with Senior Corps on promoting the evaluations of the Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP programs.
- Partner with the SIF on promoting its projects, evaluation reports, and impact via SIF and Pay For Success grantees.
- Partner with AmeriCorps grantees on promoting evaluations of their evidence based practices and program impact.
- Leverage additional partnerships and resources to expand national service and social innovation.

Principal Outcomes

- Energized and engaged validators within each target audience
- Higher awareness of the contributions that AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Social Innovation Fund make to our country
- Increased interest from a diversity of applicants for grant funding
- More diversity in members and volunteers participating in our programs
- The Social Innovation Fund and its work are recognized as part of a larger administration priority for evidence and impact
- Additional public-private partnerships
- More sources of funding for our programs

Key Audiences

Internal

- CNCS Board of Directors (Senate-Confirmed)
- State Commission members (current and past)
- Project sponsors and grantees of all programs (current and past)
- AmeriCorps NCCC Advisory Board
- Current AmeriCorps members
- Current Senior Corps volunteers
- CNCS Staff including state-based Federal Offices of CNCS

External

- Affiliated groups (i.e. AmeriCorps Alums, Voices for National Service, Service Nation)
- Senior Corps Associations
- Elected officials at all levels including: members of Congress, Governors, Mayors, and State Legislators
- Aging organizations, particularly their Leadership Councils
- Corporate supporters
- Entertainment community
- Foundations
- Financial institutions
- Higher Education
- Potential grantees
- Other volunteer organizations

About the Office of External Affairs

The Office of External Affairs (OEA) plays a key role in guiding and maintaining communication with multiple audiences for CNCS.

Our principal responsibility is to focus on what the outside world sees or hears about the impact of our programs and initiatives. Effective external engagement also requires internal communication. This process involves coordination and collaboration among our team, program staff, and our partners, including grantees and outside organizations.

If you have questions regarding this document, please send them to engagement@cns.gov.

Section II: Engagement Opportunities

Core Actions

The following is an outline of how the national service community (project sponsors, grantees, members and private- and public-sector partners) can tell the national service and social innovation story in ways that create the strongest impact and deliver on our goals. The three core activities below, along with the focus month themes (Section III), will guide us through the year to ensure that the national service and social innovation community has a common definition of what success will look like.

Core Activity 1: Participate in your program's week (Social Innovation Week, AmeriCorps Week and/or Senior Corps Week)

Programs and grantees/subgrantees will have a menu of options from which to choose how to engage in the programmatic weeks. The following includes a set of expectations that serve as the core activities.

The vision for these weeks is to connect your program brand with community impact and importance. Use your program's dedicated week to talk about your impact, your partners, and thank all those that make it possible for you to do your work.

If you are an AmeriCorps grantee, we will continue to include a national swearing-in day in October 2016 (*exact date TBD*). Even though some programs chose to do an alternate swearing-in date in 2015, the activities were highly successful in helping to create a national esprit de corps and to draw attention to the important service of AmeriCorps members. We will also highlight Employers for National Service during AmeriCorps Week, March 5 – 12, and we encourage you to recruit new employers into the initiative as well as highlight them as part of your planned activities.

Core Activity 2: Compliant Public Education and Outreach that Meets Branding Requirements

The year-long plan provides ideal opportunities to ensure that every audience with which we connect knows that their community is benefiting from national service. This also is the moment to ensure all grantees are following the branding requirements.

By January 2014, all grantees were required to verify that all digital properties, media materials, and other relevant items reflect their association with AmeriCorps, Senior Corps or the Social Innovation Fund. At the beginning of each year is a great time to do an **annual inventory** to make sure your properties and materials appropriately reflect your national service affiliation. Here are prime examples of how to execute the branding association:

- The standard AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, or Social Innovation Fund logos are prominently displayed on websites, most notably on the home page and "about us" sections.
- The standardized language used to describe the program in press releases and other public documents will identify the organization's AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, or Social Innovation Fund affiliation.

- All gear for AmeriCorps-funded and Senior Corps-funded programs will include their appropriate AmeriCorps or Senior Corps logo. All uniforms will include the AmeriCorps or Senior Corps brand. If your members or volunteers do not wear uniforms, you will provide them alternative methods (like a pin or name plate) that includes the AmeriCorps or Senior Corp brand that they should always wear.
- All sites where AmeriCorps members or Senior Corps volunteers are serving, especially those to which elected officials or private-sector partners are invited to visit, should have signs or posters that feature the grantee and their AmeriCorps or Senior Corps logos.

Core Activity 3: Outreach and Engagement

The outreach and engagement actions are ideal ways to energize those who already are part of the AmeriCorps, Senior Corps and Social Innovation Fund family and bring more individuals to our community. Here are two core ways to achieve this objective:

First, as referenced above in the outline of the overall plan, the yearly engagement plan gives us multiple opportunities to engage key constituencies. CNCS will provide an online resource that will include a number of ideas on ways to engage the following groups:

- Elected officials at all levels of government
- AmeriCorps members and alums
- Senior Corps volunteers
- Grantees/sponsors
- Corporate supporters
- Potential grantees or project sponsors
- Other funders
- Other Stakeholders

As a reminder, what ties these groups together is that we are asking them to share their experiences with the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Social Innovation Fund programs. Current and former members and volunteers better understand the role of AmeriCorps and Senior Corps in their communities (elected allies/corporate supporters), and strengthen their brand identity with CNCS, AmeriCorps (including formula grant recipients in states) and Senior Corps.

Second, CNCS will provide at least one monthly opportunity for State Service Commissions, project sponsors, grantees, members and partners to amplify their national service association via social media and other channels. This cross-section involvement enables us to use our platforms to engage our members, alums, volunteers and others in elevating the profile of AmeriCorps and Senior Corps.

Social Innovation Fund grantees/sub grantees will also be able to amplify their work in many of the focus months and elevate their connection to the Social Innovation Fund.

In addition, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service and the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance are good opportunities to engage and introduce existing and new partners to your work. For

example, we engage cabinet secretaries and other federal officials in service projects that are tied to their missions. This model may be replicated at the state and local levels.

Finally, we encourage you to work with the Corporation State Office in your state to make sure that all the mayors and county executives where you serve are part of the annual Mayor and County Recognition Day for National Service on April 5, 2016.

Section III: Monthly Focus Options

Amplification of Monthly Themes

Throughout the year, CNCS will continue monthly focus areas that we hope programs, grantees, and partners will choose to highlight if that focus area aligns with their programmatic emphasis. One source for the monthly menu will be the CNCS focus areas (see chart below). In 2015, we found that we were most successful when we selected specific days during the month to increase our focus. Watch for more of that in 2016.

Even if the monthly focus area doesn't align with your work, we hope you'll still help amplify the breadth of the impact of AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, the Volunteer Generation Fund, and the Social Innovation Fund.

These theme months are one way to think about when to identify and announce new private- sector support or program impact in the focus area. Having all national service grantees and partners highlighting their accomplishments is a powerful way to draw attention to our work. The considerations include:

- Announcing a new partnership in a key focus area
- Organizing a service project run by AmeriCorps members or Senior Corps volunteers that engages other volunteers, thus providing the opportunity for more community members to see national service in action
- Coordinating with CNCS to announce a grant with elected leaders and others
- Arranging a gathering for program alumni, former staff and supporters
- Amplifying CNCS or your program research that ties to a specific focus area
- Announcing key results of Social Innovation Fund grants or expanded work in a focus area

While a public event for each theme may not make sense for every program, you will be able to use social media content to quickly and easily share with followers and supporters. This still accomplishes the overall goal of ongoing communication regarding the program's association with AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, the Volunteer Generation Fund, and/or the Social Innovation Fund. These themes are also great opportunities to highlight alumni of your programs whose work may align with the focus month.

The following page lists suggested themes to give you a sense of how to amplify your work in these areas.

MONTH	THEME	KEY CONNECTION(S)
January	Economic Opportunity #MLKDay #Opportunity	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State of the Union (January 12) Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service (January 18) Mentoring Month (Success Mentors) <p>Economic Opportunity examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting college access (Federal Application For Student Aid completion) Tax Preparation/Earned Income Tax Credit Job readiness Tutoring/mentoring Housing Hunger Relief
February	Social Innovation #SocialInnovation	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Innovation Week for grantees and sub grantees of SIF (February 22 - 26) SIF Summit (February 24) Anniversary of Let's Move! Teach For America 25th Anniversary Summit <p>Social Innovation examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All CNCS grantees highlight innovative evidence-based models yielding results (across all streams of service)
March	Public-Private Partnerships #Together4Service #AmeriCorpsWorks	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AmeriCorps Week (March 5 - 12) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amplify and recruit Employers of National Service Great time to highlight veterans serving in your program or your service supporting veterans again AmeriCorps Cesar Chavez Day (March 31) National Youth Leadership Council Conference (March 30 – April 2) <p>Public-Private Partnerships examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spotlight partnerships that make your programs possible Thank your partners and connect them to your national service program <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Corps Radio PSA launch
April	Environmental Stewardship #ServeTheEarth	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor and County Recognition Day for National Service (April 5) Global Youth Service Day (April 15 - 17) National Volunteer Week (April 10 - 16) Regional Convening, Nevada (April 19 – 21) Earth Day (April 22) Regional Convening, Alabama (April 26 – 28) Presidents Higher Education Honor Roll Applications due (2016) <p>Environmental Stewardship examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight projects and members that are supporting environment integrity and promoting others to engage in environmental stewardship
May	Senior Service #SeniorsInService	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older Americans Month Regional Convening, Massachusetts (May 2 – 4) GradNation (May 10) Senior Corps Week (May 16 - 20) 9/11 Grantee Meeting (TBD)

		<p>Senior Service examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also spotlight seniors in AmeriCorps • Great time to spotlight senior veterans in your program or your service to veterans again
June	<p>Healthy Futures #HealthyFutures</p>	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of summer hunger-relief programs • <i>Let's Read. Let's Move!</i> summer initiative • Great Outdoors Month (100th Anniversary of the National Park Service) • Regional Convening, Indiana (June 7 – 10) • National Convening on Volunteering and Service in Detroit (June 27 – 29) <p>Healthy Futures examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feature community gardening • Promote summer meal program awareness • Feature healthy lifestyles and outdoor fitness
July	<p>Inclusion #Service4All</p>	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congressional Recess begins (July 18) • Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (July 26- September 5) <p>Inclusion examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight examples of members/volunteers with disabilities serving • Highlight programs that promote inclusion
August	<p>Education #EdSuccess</p>	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD <p>Education examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to school time; highlight program accomplishments from previous year • Preview your service for school year 2016-2017
September	<p>Disaster Services #DisasterServe #9/11Day</p>	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Preparedness Month • Congressional Recess Ends (September 5) • 15th anniversary of 9/11 honored on September 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance • AmeriCorps Symposium (Washington, DC) • National Senior Corps Association Meeting (45th Anniversary of RSVP) • SIF grantee convening (September 7 – 9) • 2016 Honor Roll winners announced <p>Disaster Services examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the service of members, volunteers an programs in disaster response • Spotlight preparedness
October	<p>Volunteer Mobilization #GoVolunteer</p>	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Swearing-in Day for AmeriCorps (Date TBD) • Make A Difference Day (October 24) <p>Volunteer Mobilization examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Generation Fund accomplishments • Great time to recruit volunteers to support your program • Talk about the value volunteers bring to your community
November	<p>Veterans and Military Families #VeteransServe</p>	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans Day (November 11) <p>Veterans and Military Families examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Veterans Corps • Highlight service by and for veterans and their families
December	<p>Giving Back #GivingBack</p>	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of the CNCS <i>Volunteering in America</i> report (tentative)

		<p>Giving Back examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Season of giving • Focus on members and volunteers who make your programs strong • Good time to work with others in your community to meet the needs of the most vulnerable • Thank those who contribute to the success of your program • Begin promoting MLK Day of Service as Giving Back commitment
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