



Transformation and Sustainability Plan

Message from the CEO

For nearly a quarter century, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has leveraged our Nation’s greatest resource—the American people—to get things done. Working hand in hand with thousands of local partners, CNCS funds programs that improve lives, expand opportunity, encourage personal responsibility, and strengthen civil society.

Through the AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs, 300,000 trained and dedicated citizens provide their service at 50,000 sites across the country. They take on tough problems, assume leadership roles, and deliver powerful results, recruiting millions of additional volunteers to increase their impact.

Our members and volunteers help millions of Americans succeed in school, prepare for 21st century jobs, live with independence and dignity, increase self-sufficiency, and rebuild their lives after addiction, homelessness, job loss, or natural disasters. We are advancing multiple priorities of President Trump’s Administration to promote economic mobility, develop workforce skills, revitalize cities, combat the opioid crisis, prevent elder abuse, support veterans and military families, and grow the economy.

Supporting this large and decentralized system of national service requires a strong, high-performing agency. Our **Transformation and Sustainability Plan** will make CNCS more efficient, effective, and accountable to better serve our customers, meet the needs of the Nation, and be responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars.

The plan outlines specific steps the agency will take to:

- Ensure our core business functions are accountable and effective
- Make it easier for organizations and individuals to participate in our programs
- Strengthen our impact in communities by prioritizing evidence-based models
- Align our workforce and workplaces to better serve our customers, meet evolving needs, and ensure efficient use of public funds

This plan outlines the work we need to do to achieve our mission, increase our impact, and build long-term sustainability. It is the culmination of months of intensive review of our operations and programs. We considered a wide range of recommendations from the Office of Management and Budget, Congress, the Office of Inspector General, the Government Accountability Office, and other CNCS evaluations and reports. We also considered years of input and ideas from staff, grantees, national service members, and other stakeholders.

The plan responds to the requirement for all Federal agencies to develop recommendations to increase effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability. It also aligns with the President's Management Agenda for modernizing the Federal Government to better deliver on mission outcomes, provide excellent customer service, and effectively manage taxpayer dollars. We look forward to sharing this plan with our stakeholders and seeking their input on implementation.

As CEO, my top priority is implementing this plan to ensure the sustainability of national service. My experience in the private sector has taught me that every organization can and must look for opportunities for improvement. CNCS is no exception.

Making these improvements will take an all-hands-on-deck effort. Knowing the level of dedication and professionalism of our staff, grantees, and members, I am confident we will rise to this challenge. Our responsibility is too great and our mission is too important not to make the improvements necessary to produce the lasting change we all desire. And when we have made these changes, we will be in a much stronger position to increase our positive impact in communities across the Nation.

America's greatness comes from the extraordinary acts of ordinary citizens. For nearly 25 years, CNCS has tapped the ingenuity and can-do spirit of the American people to solve local problems. We look forward to strengthening this foundation and creating more opportunities for Americans to serve their communities and strengthen our Nation.

Warmest Regards,



Barbara Stewart
Chief Executive Officer
Corporation for National and Community Service



Transformation and Sustainability Plan

Goal 1: Strengthen core business functions

What: CNCS will strengthen and improve its core operational functions, including:

- Improving mission-critical information technology
- Improving accounting, financial, and budgetary practices and systems
- Increasing compliance among grantees for critical grant requirements, such as adhering to the Criminal History Check protocol
- Significantly decreasing the agency's improper payment rate through proactive technical support to grantees throughout the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act process
- Exploring the use of shared services for transactional accounting, human capital, and procurement functions.

Why: These changes will increase capacity across operation areas and better support the work of our grantees. Without a solid operational foothold, many of the larger-scale initiatives in this plan will be difficult to achieve.

Improving core operational functions will provide a strong foundation for creating more impact across the Nation.

Goal 2: Strengthen and align grants management and monitoring to improve efficiencies and maximize effectiveness

What: CNCS will develop a new combined portfolio manager role responsible for program and financial management. In addition, CNCS will establish a central monitoring and compliance office to strengthen grantee oversight.

Why: This change will address grantee concerns about having multiple agency points of contact for multiple awards and address issues that can arise when those who are responsible for providing technical assistance and ongoing support also oversee grantee compliance. It will also ensure more robust and consistent oversight of grants. The Government Accountability Office recommended this following an audit of CNCS' monitoring process.

This change makes it easier for grantees to interact with the agency and separates award management from monitoring for improved oversight.

Goal 3: Prioritize evidence-based interventions

What: CNCS will further refine the intervention models it funds based on evidence and demonstrated success, while maintaining the flexibility to support statutory and Administration priorities. CNCS will also continue to support innovative interventions and approaches based upon preliminary evidence in order to build grantee capacity, foster innovation, and meet evolving community needs, and will evaluate these interventions to learn more about whether they are effective.

Why: Historically, CNCS has not been prescriptive in the types of interventions it funds beyond identifying areas of need. CNCS now has more than two decades of experience and research data that help identify the most impactful interventions across its programs. Going forward, CNCS will target those interventions that have demonstrated success based on data and evidence.

This deliberate and focused approach will enable states and CNCS to maximize the impact of federal and matching funds.

Goal 4: Simplify and streamline the application process

What: CNCS will continue to simplify the existing application and work toward the development and deployment of a common application for all programs. CNCS will provide applicants and grantees with a single point of entry and common application for its programs.

Why: While CNCS has multiple programs with different statutory authorities, similarities among these programs create an opportunity to improve the application process. In addition to streamlining the process for applicants, a common application will increase the efficiency of the review and award processes, reducing administrative costs and burden.

This change will make it easier for current and prospective grantees, including smaller organizations, to navigate the application process.

Goal 5: Simplify the CNCS brand

What: CNCS will analyze our multiple brands in order to simplify our message and increase public awareness.

Why: Since its creation in 1993, CNCS has struggled to create an easily recognized brand. Further, its legal status as a corporation is confusing to staff, stakeholders, and especially to those unfamiliar with its core programming.

A simplified brand will eliminate confusion about CNCS programs and allow the American people to better understand and participate in national service.

Goal 6: Align our workforces and workplaces to better serve our customers, meet evolving needs, and ensure efficient use of taxpayer dollars

What: CNCS will restructure and regionalize its workforce to better accomplish the goals outlined in this plan. CNCS will increase the standardization and uniformity of management across all programs by assigning the program development and support functions in a redesigned field structure. CNCS will:

- Maximize the talent, knowledge, institutional memory and commitment of CNCS's greatest asset, its workforce, by creating working teams that include employees from the field, programs, and operations to help determine the best regional structure. These teams will help determine positions and duties needed to fulfill our mission.
- Rationalize and reorganize the current field structure to more effectively manage grant awards and external partnerships, while also separating it from the monitoring function for improved oversight, and empower regionally-based leaders with the necessary authority to successfully manage their regions
- Locate newly created portfolio manager roles (see Goal 2) in the new regional structure
- Ensure that the realigned regional structure can build and sustain strong stakeholder relationships
- Provide more robust and explicit career ladders for staff to maximize benefit of experience, institutional history and reduce attrition
- Centralize policy development, data collection, and evidence.

Why: In addition to de-coupling support and oversight responsibilities, this goal further streamlines CNCS work processes and structure in order to build greater capacity and reduce redundancies, strengthens staff capabilities to support succession planning, improves service to the public, promotes accountability across the agency, and expands career development and advancement opportunities to retain high-quality staff.

Restructuring the CNCS workforce and geographic footprint will enable CNCS to more effectively meet its mission and be responsible stewards of Federal funding.