

AMERICORPS 20th ANNIVERSARY

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Guidance on Outreach and Engagement for the AmeriCorps Community

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Contact Us

If you have questions about this document or suggestions for the ongoing 20th Anniversary, please contact Marsha Meeks Kelly at mmeekskelly@cns.gov or 202-606-6841.



SECTION I

Goal

Inspire Americans to increase their knowledge and awareness of AmeriCorps as the country's best example of civic engagement, collaboration, and problem solving

Objectives

- Amplify AmeriCorps as an innovative way to improve communities and provide additional opportunities for Americans to serve
- Strengthen ties with established supporters of national service and reinforce the tradition of bipartisan support for national service
- Encourage more Americans to learn about AmeriCorps and actively share what they learn about our impact

Principal Outcomes

- Energized and engaged validators within each target audience
- Stronger brand association between AmeriCorps and its grantees and sponsors
- Increased awareness of AmeriCorps' contribution to the country
- Additional interagency and private-sector partnerships
- More sources of funding for our programs

Key Audiences

Internal

- State Commission members (current and past)
- Project sponsors (current and past)
- Organization's board of directors
- Current AmeriCorps members

External

- AmeriCorps alums
- Elected officials at all levels
- Grantees/sponsors
- Corporate supporters
- Entertainment community

Please note that the President's Task Force on Expanding National Service is one way to identify and announce new private-sector support during the year-long anniversary.



SECTION II

Core Anniversary Actions

The following is an outline of how State Commissions, project sponsors, and grantees can engage in the anniversary-related events in ways that create the strongest impact. The three core activities below, along with the optional themes (Section III), will guide us through the year to ensure that the AmeriCorps community has a common definition of what success will look like.

Core Activity 1: Swearing-in Ceremony in September 2014

AmeriCorps programs will have a menu of options from which to choose how to engage in the anniversary-related events. The following includes a set of three expectations that serve as the core anniversary activities.

The vision for the September 12, 2014 event is a simultaneous swearing-in of AmeriCorps members in every state and territory, on the same day, at the same time. This replicates the first swearing-in ceremony done on September 12, 1994. This event will feature a “sworn-in again” component for AmeriCorps alums who can recommit their pledge.

This nationwide ceremony also will include service champions, a bipartisan group of elected leaders, and partners from the private and public sectors.

Core Activity 2: Branding Association with AmeriCorps

The year-long celebration is an ideal opportunity to ensure that every audience with which we connect knows that their community is benefiting from AmeriCorps. This also is the moment to ensure all grantees are following the branding requirements.

By January 2014, all grantees must verify that all digital properties, media materials, and other relevant items reflect their association with AmeriCorps. Here are prime examples of how to execute the branding association:

- The standard AmeriCorps logo (or 20th Anniversary logo) 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 affiliation, and, when appropriate, directly reference the 20th anniversary
- All gear for AmeriCorps-funded programs will include the AmeriCorps logo (*grantees have the option of using the commemorative 20th Anniversary logo, although it is not required, as the principal objective is strong brand association*)



- All sites where AmeriCorps members 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 AmeriCorps 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 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 anniversary 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:

- AmeriCorps alums
- Elected officials at all levels of government
- Grantees/sponsors
- Corporate supporters

As a reminder, what ties these groups together is that we are asking them to share their experience (AmeriCorps alums), better understand the role of AmeriCorps in their communities (elected allies/corporate supporters), and strengthen their brand identity with AmeriCorps (formula grant recipients in states).

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



SECTION III

Amplification of Monthly Focus/Theme

Throughout the year-long celebration, CNCS will choose a specific monthly focus that programs can choose to highlight if it connects to their issue area. One source for the monthly menu will be the CNCS focus areas (see chart below).

The considerations include:

- Announcing a new AmeriCorps partnership in a key focus area
- Organizing a service project run by AmeriCorps members that engages volunteers, thus providing the opportunity for more community members to see AmeriCorps in action
- Coordinating with CNCS to announce a grant with elected leaders and others
- Arranging a gathering with AmeriCorps alums
- Amplifying CNCS research that ties to a specific focus area

The following is a list of suggested themes to give you a sense of how to amplify your work in these areas:

MONTH	THEME	KEY CONNECTION(S)
September	AmeriCorps 20th Anniversary Launch	Kickoff event on September 20
October	National Service and Inclusion	National Disability Employment Awareness Month
November	Volunteer Mobilization (Subtheme: Veterans Serving in AmeriCorps; see July for more on veterans and military families)	Release of the CNCS <i>Volunteering in America</i> report/ Veterans Day
December	Public-Private Partnerships	Saluting private-sector partners as important to our progress
January	Economic Opportunity	VISTA – launch of War on Poverty in January (50th anniversary), MLK Day of Service
February	Education	Mid-way through the school year
March	Healthy Futures	National Nutrition Month
April	Environmental Stewardship	Earth Day
May	Senior Service	Senior Corps Week, Older Americans Month, Seniors in AmeriCorps
June	Recruitment	Graduation season – What comes next?
July	Veterans and Military Families	Independence Day, Patriotism Theme
August	Disaster Services	Hurricane season, preparedness
September	Lifetime of Service (alums)	Simultaneous nationwide swearing-in ceremonies, including “sworn-in again” AmeriCorps alums

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. In the fall, you also will receive information about the 50th Anniversary of the VISTA program, which will be marked in 2015.