

National Service and Civic Engagement Grant Competition FY 2015

Arizona State University

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Purpose/Research Questions:

AmeriCorps is the path some adults choose to build their employment skills, earn an income, and get a job. But, there is scant evidence-based qualitative data that illuminates how these experiences translate into employment outcomes. In addition, there is no data that provides the organizational perspective on employing AmeriCorps members. This proposed study will examine who serves and why, where job opportunities are created and how, how service impacts preparation and employment among working-age adults, and how these adults are perceived by organizations. The research will provide an in-depth analysis of the impact of service in AmeriCorps State and National Programs on organizations, individual career paths and how their experiences may vary from the general population.

Researchers will survey approximately 250 organizations that hosted AmeriCorps members from 2011-2015 to determine the hiring status of AmeriCorps members and how other jobs are impacted in those organizations in the state of Arizona. Based on these survey findings, focus groups will be held in three different regions of the state with organizations that have hired AmeriCorps members. The purpose of these groups is to understand the organizations' perspectives on employment and AmeriCorps members. Specifically, the study will examine what factors lead to hiring decisions. In addition, we will conduct six focus groups with AmeriCorps alumni who have served from 2011-2015 in these same regions to understand their perspectives on employment, career preparation, career goals, and the job search experience (e.g., do they affiliate themselves with the site where they served or with AmeriCorps?) The purpose of these groups is to determine what types of conversations AmeriCorps alumni have with the greater business community about AmeriCorps. It should be noted that to test this study's methods, this is a one-year pilot study to be held in only one state. This study will be inductive in that it will draw upon the input of advisors with CNCS and recent incoming data from the Alumni Survey when shaping this study's final focus group questions.