Public Engagement, Outreach, and Education Plan
2017

Guidance for the National Service and Social Innovation Communities

NationalService.gov
December 21, 2016

Dear National Service and Social Innovation Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that I share with you our 2017 Public Engagement, Outreach, and Education Calendar. This plan builds on the accomplishments we achieved together over the last several years and provides a roadmap for another year of successes and impact.

As a community, we are advancing national service and expanding innovative solutions as effective responses to local and national challenges. We all work together to strengthen the impact of our programs, strengthen accountability, share our successes with our funders and local leaders, and lead with our collective brand. More and more elected officials and community, philanthropic, and corporate leaders know about the impact of AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Social Innovation Fund.

In addition, we, along with many state governments, will experience a transition early in 2017. We will work with the incoming Administration to ensure a smooth transition. This plan serves as a resource as you collaborate with the new agency leadership and continue to communicate our impact in the New Year.

At every point, we will share how national service and social innovation are such a good investment:

- We are deploying resources to more than 11,000 schools to help students who need assistance to stay on track and in school, as well as learn healthy habits.
- We are finding what works and making it work for more people.
- We are supporting veteran families during deployment and are helping veterans and their families transition to civilian life.
- We are among the first to show up for a disaster and the last to leave.
- We are helping communities make streets safer and saving valuable local public safety resources.
- We are helping more people gain the resources they need to reduce and end homelessness across the nation.
- We are supporting innovative and sustainable pathways to employment, including communities affected by job displacement.
- We are improving access to our nation’s parks and public lands.
- And, as a result of their service, individuals are earning money for college and valuable workplace skills.

These and many other accomplishments are important to the fabric of our nation, and it is up to us to continue to tell the story, engage more partners in our work, and continue to be vigilant in our oversight.
It has never been more important than now for us to engage individuals in service, social entrepreneurship, and volunteering to make our communities stronger and more resilient.

Whether you are part of AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, the Social Innovation Fund, the Volunteer Generation Fund, or leaders of Governor-Appointed State Service Commissions, your colleagues are counting on you to share your examples of impact over the coming year. We will continue to have theme months that will help amplify the collective accomplishments of national service and social innovation. Tying your story to research, evaluation, and impact along with personal narratives will better illustrate the real impact you are making.

Finally, please let us know when you have important announcements to make, as well as 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. If you have questions, please contact the Office of External Affairs at engagement@cns.gov.

Warmest Regards,

Wendy Spencer, CEO
Corporation for National and Community Service
Section I: Objectives and Outcomes

Introduction

The Office of External Affairs produces this guide for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) staff in Washington, D.C. and state offices, grantees, programs, project sponsors, partners, Governor-appointed State Service Commissions, members and alumni, and champions.

Our goal is that all of our grantees and partners use this guide to maximize and coordinate awareness of the impact we make for individuals and communities across the country and increase our shared awareness of best practices and accountability.

This guide is organized into focus months with key activities or milestones as noted in Section III. We hope you will participate in the months that apply to your program and always follow all of our social media channels to help us reach as many people as possible. In addition, you will also find a draft calendar of events (that will always be an evolving tool) so you know what reports, announcements, activities, or engagements will originate from CNCS. All of these materials are available online, and we will let you know when we make updates.

Goal of this Guide

Inspire Americans to increase their knowledge, awareness, and support of national service and social innovation as the country’s best investment in community-led problem solving, civic engagement, and collaboration.

Objectives

- Amplify the impact of AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, the Social Innovation Fund, and the Volunteer Generation Fund as cost effective and evidence-based investments to improve communities and provide opportunities for Americans to make their communities stronger and thereby increasing impact and participation.
- Partner with AmeriCorps and Social Innovation Fund grantees on promoting evaluations of their evidence based practices and program impact.
- Partner with Senior Corps on promoting the evaluations of the Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP programs.
- Partner with the Social Innovation Fund on promoting its projects, evaluation reports, and impact via its grantees.
- Leverage amplification of best practices and programmatic impact to increase partnerships and resources to expand national service and social innovation investments and impact.
- Strengthen ties with established supporters of national service, social innovation and performance-based outcomes to reinforce and expand the tradition of bipartisan investment in national service.
- Demonstrate the value of AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Social Innovation Fund by using the
identified program weeks as opportunities to educate the public about program impact, sharing solutions to national and local challenges, and engaging more participants to make our communities stronger and healthier.

- Increase visibility of Governor-appointed State Service Commissions and state funded programs.

**Principal Outcomes**

- Increased awareness of the impact that AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, the Social Innovation Fund, and the Volunteer Generation Fund make in our country that energizes and engages validators and increases investments in those programs.
- The Social Innovation Fund grows in recognition as a vital investment that uses public-private partnerships and evidence-based practices to tackle national and local challenges.
- Increased awareness that National Service programs are not only helping communities build capacity to address critical challenges related to student success, public safety, healthy futures, disaster response and recovery, and economic opportunity, but are also providing valuable employment skills to those who serve.
- More sources of funding for our programs through enhanced public-private partnerships.
- Better collaboration and coordination between our agency and its grantees during program focus weeks, focus months, and national days of service.

**Key Audiences**

**Internal**

- CNCS Board of Directors (Senate-Confirmed)
- CNCS Staff including state-based Federal Offices of CNCS
- 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
- Social Innovation Fund grantees and subgrantees

**External**

- High-performing community-based and national organizations that seek to replicate best practices and increase their capacity and impact
- Elected officials at all levels, including members of Congress, Governors, Mayors, and State Legislators whose communities benefit from or could benefit from CNCS resources
- Corporate supporters and foundations (current and potential)
- Education systems at all levels
- Aging organizations that provide resources to support low-income senior citizens
- Other volunteer organizations and affiliated groups (i.e. AmeriCorps Alums, Voices for National Service, Results for America, Service Year Alliance, Senior Corps Associations)
Messaging

We will share key statistics (as available) each month to help quantify our collective impact. When developing your messages each month, we suggest you lead with your programmatic impact, understanding these metrics will be prior year accomplishments. Make the story as personal as you can and define the geographic location to the maximum extent possible. If you have any statistics on cost savings to the individuals/community/state, it is important to share them.

For example (please note that these are examples and are not factual statements about our current service):

- Senior Corps volunteers helped 25 families affected by flooding return to their homes in [Name of Town], West Virginia. [Follow this with a personal story and a community validator whenever possible.]
- AmeriCorps members in Oklahoma weatherized more than 75 homes for low-income senior citizens saving them an estimated $1000 in utility bills for each home. [Follow this with a personal story and a community validator whenever possible.]
- AmeriCorps members serving with [Name of Organization] program helped raise reading proficiency by an average of [XX] for students in [Name] city/state. [Follow this with a personal story and a community validator whenever possible.]
- [Social Innovation fund grantee] awarded a total of $[Amount] by #SIFund to replicate and expand its coaching model and support up to 1000 graduates of the Boston Public Schools. [Follow this with a personal story of a coach helping students gain entry to college and helping them remain in school through graduation.]

Each month we will use hashtags that promote our programs first, for example:

- #SeniorCorpsWorks to help kids read better in Syracuse. #edsuccess (include a photo and link to stats)
- #AmeriCorpsWorks with [Name] program to increase reading scores in Baltimore. #edsuccess (include a photo and link to stats)
- #SIFundWorks partners with @CSHInfo’s to link more people with supportive housing and health services and reduce the use of expensive crisis care.
Section II: Engagement Opportunities

Core Actions

The following is an outline of how the CNCS 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 have a common definition of success.

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.

Programs and grantees/subgrantees should work collaboratively with the Office of External Affairs to maximize exposure during your specific focus week.

If you are an AmeriCorps grantee, please plan for the national swearing-in day in October 2017 (exact date TBD). Even though some programs chose to do an alternate swearing-in date in 2016, the activities were highly successful in helping to create a national esprit de corps and to draw attention to the important impact AmeriCorps members make in communities. And, as we continue to highlight the impact of service on AmeriCorps members, we encourage you to continue to recruit Employers of National Service. It is also helpful to quantify the skills members hone while serving.

If you are a Senior Corps grantee, not only do we want to talk about your impact in communities and the cost-effectiveness of your service, we should also link your service to research about the health impacts of volunteering.

If you are a Social Innovation Fund grantee, use this opportunity to thank your match funders, your subgrantees, and community stakeholders for supporting our efforts to use evidence-based practices to tackle national and local challenges.

- Partner with subgrantees, funders, elected officials, and community stakeholders to develop a SIF Week video or event to educate more people on your efforts.
- Challenge grantee and subgrantee staff, funders, and stakeholders to wear SIF-branded gear available at National Service Gear.
- Share your activities with the media and your social networks with #SIFund.
Core Activity 2: Adhere to 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 CNCS funding. This also is the moment to ensure all grantees are following the branding requirements of being a grantee.

All grantees are 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. Use the beginning of each year to take an annual inventory to make sure your properties and materials appropriately reflect your CNCS 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 your 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 evaluation reports that include results that are in part attributed to CNCS programs should include attribution to the program (AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Social Innovation Fund) and CNCS. Approval of appropriate attribution should be requested from your Program Officer and engagement@cns.gov.
- All gear for CNCS programs will include their appropriate AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, or Social Innovation Fund logo.
  - All uniforms will include the AmeriCorps or Senior Corps brand. If your AmeriCorps members or Senior Corps volunteers do not wear uniforms, you will provide them with alternative methods (like a pin or name plate) that includes the AmeriCorps or Senior Corp brand that they should always wear when serving.
- All sites where AmeriCorps members or Senior Corps volunteers are serving or where Social Innovation Fund programs are implemented should have signs or posters that feature the grantee and their AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, or Social Innovation Fund logos. No one visiting your program should leave without knowledge of your CNCS affiliation.

Core Activity 3: Conduct public outreach and engagement

Outreach and engagement actions are important tactics to energize those who are already part of the AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Social Innovation Fund family and educate more people about the impact of service. 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
National service and social innovation are cost effective strategies to address critical community issues. Community leaders and elected officials are increasingly looking for cost effective solutions with a good return on investment to effect change. This key strategy ties us together across all jurisdictions. Engaging current and former members and volunteers in telling this story is essential. For Social Innovation Fund grantees, engaging match funders and subgrantees is vital. It is also very important to engage key community validators in sharing the impact of CNCS funding. Often they are in a good position to articulate the community investment, impact and savings.

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

Social Innovation Fund grantees/subgrantees will also be able to amplify their work in many of the focus months and elevate their connection to the Social Innovation Fund, and more importantly their success in advancing evidence-based practices to tackle national and local challenges.

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. These are also great opportunities to form alliances with local leaders to bring a burst of volunteer energy to an important community challenge.

The Office of Government Relations will help you access state and local program profiles as well as stand ready to assist you with inquiries and general support when engaging elected officials. You can reach them at GovernmentRelations@cns.gov.

Finally, we encourage you to work with CNCS State Offices in your state to make sure that all the mayors and county executives where you serve or implement your programs are part of the annual Mayor, County, and Tribal Recognition Day for National Service on April 4, 2017.
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 2016, 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 2017.

Even if the monthly focus area does not align with your work, we hope you will 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, Employers of National Service, or program impact reports in the focus area. Having all CNCS grantees and partners highlighting their accomplishments is a powerful way to draw attention to the important impact of our work. The considerations include:

- Announcing a new partnership in a key focus area
- Engaging a key program validator to talk about the impact of your service through an op. ed, letter to the editor, video statement, blog post, or other social media
- 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 with shared investment in the impact of the grant
- Amplifying CNCS or your program research that ties to a specific focus area
- Announcing evaluation results 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.

For AmeriCorps and Senior Corps, 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>THEME/MESSAGE</th>
<th>KEY CONNECTION(S)</th>
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</table>
| **January** | Economic Opportunity #MLKDay #Opportunity #AmeriCorps, SeniorCorps, SIFFund Works | Message: Connect your impact and focus area with your community, driving home the message that service and social innovation work to advance economic opportunity. | Events:  
- Mentoring Month (Success Mentors)  
- Martin Luther King, Jr. National Day of Service (January 16)  
- Presidential Inauguration (January 20)  
Economic Opportunity examples/messages:  
- Supporting college access (Federal Application For Student Aid completion)  
- Tax Preparation/Earned Income Tax Credit  
- Job readiness  
- Tutoring/mentoring success  
- Housing (people formerly homeless who have been housed)  
- Hunger Relief – immediate and long term successes  
- Workforce Development  
- Share the quantifiable outcomes of SIF awards and focus on what the SIF EO grantees are doing that is unique |
| **February** | Social Innovation #SIFFundWorks #AmeriCorps, SeniorCorps, SIFFund Works | Message: Connect your impact and focus area with your community, driving home the message that service and social innovation work. We invest in proven solutions to alleviate poverty in America. | Events:  
- Social Innovation Fund Week (February 20-24)  
- Mentoring Summit (February 1 – 3)  
- NARSVPD meeting, Washington, DC (February 12 – 15)  
- Friends of Service Awards, Washington, DC (February 14)  
Social Innovation examples/messages:  
- Amplify results of SIF evaluation studies  
- All CNCS grantees highlight innovative evidence-based models yielding results (across all streams of service) |
| **March** | Public-Private Partnerships #AmeriCorps, SeniorCorps, SIFFund Works | Message: Connect your impact and focus area with your community and your private sector partner, driving home the message that service and social innovation work and you have important partners and funders for your work. | Events:  
- AmeriCorps Week (March 4 - 11)  
  - Amplify and recruit Employers of National Service  
  - Connect all the dots: your impact, your funders, your validators, your workforce development  
  - AmeriCorps is a strategic investment with proven impact  
- Cesar Chavez Day (March 31)  
- NSCA and NAFGP meeting in Washington, DC (March 13 – 17)  
- National Youth Leadership Council Conference (March 22-24)  
- Southern Regional Convening, Orlando, FL (March 27 – 29)  
Public-Private Partnerships examples:  
- Spotlight partnerships that make your programs possible  
- Thank your partners and connect them to your national service program  
- Spotlight the public-private partnerships developed between the SIF and grantees |
| **April** | Environmental Stewardship #ServeTheEarth #AmeriCorps, SeniorCorps, SIFFund Works | Message: Connect your impact | Events:  
- Mayor, County and Tribal Recognition Day for National Service (April 4)  
- Global Youth Service Day (April 21 - 23)  
- National Volunteer Week (April 23 - 29)  
- America’s Promise 20th anniversary summit, NYC (April 18)  
- Earth Day (April 22) |
and focus area with your community, driving home the message that service and social innovation work to restore and protect the environment.

Environmental Stewardship examples:
- Highlight projects and members that are supporting environment integrity and engaging other volunteers in environmental stewardship including impact numbers
- Provide an update on SIF’s DC Water award

### May

**Senior Service**

- SeniorCorpsWorks
- [AmeriCorps, SIFund] Works

**Message:** Connect your impact and focus area with your community, driving home the message that service and social innovation work. And, this month, connect the contributions of older Americans serving in our programs.

**Events:**
- Older Americans Month
- North Central Regional Convening, Columbus, OH (May 8 – 10)
- Senior Corps Week (May 15 - 19)
- Southwest/Pacific Regional Convening, Phoenix, AZ (May 22 – 24)
- Day of Service Grantee Meeting (TBD)
- Celebration honoring 100th birthday of President John F. Kennedy (May 26 – 29)

**Senior Service examples:**
- Spotlight seniors in AmeriCorps
- Great time to spotlight senior veterans in your program or your service to veterans again
- Spotlight SIF’s awards to AARP Foundation

### June

**Healthy Futures**

- HealthyFutures
- [AmeriCorps, SeniorCorps, SIFund] Works

**Message:** Connect your impact and focus area with your community, driving home the message that service and social innovation work to support healthy futures.

**Events:**
- Launch of summer hunger-relief programs
- Great Outdoors Month
- Atlantic Regional Convening, Baltimore, MD (June 4 - 7)
- National Convening on Volunteering and Service in Seattle, WA (June 19 - 21)

**Healthy Futures examples connected to service and innovation:**
- Feature community gardening
- Promote summer meal program awareness
- Feature healthy lifestyles and outdoor fitness
- Share the quantifiable outcomes of SIF awards and focus on what the SIF HF grantees are doing that is unique

### July

**Inclusion**

- Service4All
- [AmeriCorps, SeniorCorps, SIFund] Works

**Message:** Connect your impact and focus area with your community, driving home the message that service and social innovation work are both supporting individuals with disabilities and providing meaningful opportunities for them to contribute to their communities and learn valuable skills.

**Events:**
- Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

**Inclusion examples:**
- Highlight examples of members/volunteers with disabilities serving
- Highlight programs that promote inclusion
- Highlight national service’s role in advancing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities
- Highlight how SIF grantees are defining the United States we leave for generations to come- looking it at through the lens of inclusion
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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
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<td>- Congressional August Recess Period</td>
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<td>Education examples:</td>
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<td>- Back to school time; highlight program accomplishments from previous year</td>
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<td>- Preview your service for school year 2017-2018</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Disaster Services</td>
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<td>- National Preparedness Month</td>
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<td>- September 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance</td>
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<td>- AmeriCorps Symposium (Washington, DC DATE: TBD)</td>
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<td>- National Senior Corps Association Meeting (Date TBD)</td>
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<td>- SIF grantee convening (Date TBD)</td>
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<td>- 2017 Honor Roll winners announced</td>
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<td>- NARSVPD Washington, DC (Date TBD)</td>
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<td>Disaster Services and 9/11 examples:</td>
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<td>- Highlight the service of members, volunteers, and programs in disaster response</td>
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<td>- Spotlight preparedness</td>
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<td>- Connect your day of service with local needs</td>
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<td>- Report out on the impact that SIF programs have had in communities that have recently dealt with disasters</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>Volunteer Mobilization</td>
<td>Events:</td>
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<td>- National Swearing-in Day for AmeriCorps (Date TBD)</td>
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<td>- Make A Difference Day (October 28)</td>
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<td>Volunteer Mobilization examples:</td>
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<td>- Volunteer Generation Fund accomplishments</td>
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<td>- Great time to recruit volunteers to support your program</td>
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<td>- Talk about the value volunteers bring to your community and your role in their deployment and impact</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>Veterans and Military Families</td>
<td>Events:</td>
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<td>- Veterans Day (November 11)</td>
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<td>- Giving Tuesday</td>
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<td>Veterans and Military Families examples:</td>
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<td>- National Veterans Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>Message: Connect your impact and focus area with your community, driving home the message that service and social innovation work to help veterans and their families.</td>
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| • Highlight service by and for veterans and their families  
• Connect Giving Tuesday to volunteering  
• Amplify national service role in mobilizing volunteers  
• Promote success stories from SIF grantees that are touching veterans due to the nature of their work  
• Provide an update on the SIF/VA award to Social Finance |
| Giving Back  
#GivingBack  
#[AmeriCorps, SeniorCorps, SIFund] Works |
| December |
| Message: Connect your impact and focus area with your community, driving home the message that service and social innovation work. Share the story of how you are giving back to your community. |
| Events:  
• World AIDS Day (Dec 1) |
| Giving Back examples:  
• 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 |

About the Office of External Affairs

The Office of External Affairs is responsible for how the outside world sees the investment the American people make in national service and social innovation. Working with programs, grantees, and other partners, we manage multiple relationships and communicate with many audiences. Our principal responsibility is to use effective communication and engagement tools to demonstrate the impact of our programs, share best practices, and increase partnerships that allow us to expand investments in community-driven results.

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