



AMERICORPS 20th ANNIVERSARY

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## Disaster Services Toolkit

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## AmeriCorps 20th Anniversary Disaster Services Overview

Each year, AmeriCorps members help communities across the country prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of disasters. Whether providing disaster preparedness training to prevent home fires, coordinating volunteers immediately following a tornado, or helping rebuild a community after a hurricane, AmeriCorps is there.

From supporting American Red Cross with disaster shelters, assisting FEMA and local and state emergency management with survivor outreach, or serving nonprofits, faith-based, or local, state, tribal and federal government – AmeriCorps is on the front line of disaster services. With innovative partnerships like FEMA Corps and AmeriCorps Disaster Response Teams, AmeriCorps is shaping the next generation of emergency managers and disaster service leaders.

As part of the AmeriCorps 20th anniversary, the Corporation for National and Community Service is observing August 2014 as Disaster Services month. Together with our partners, members, and alums, we will highlight the many ways that AmeriCorps is making America more disaster resilient.

This toolkit provides background on AmeriCorps disaster services work, engagement ideas, statistics, social media tips, and links for more information and resources. Join us in celebrating the vital role of AmeriCorps in helping communities before, during, and after disaster strikes.

## AmeriCorps 20th Anniversary Key Messages

- **A Vital Resource:** From forest fires and floods, to hurricanes and tornadoes, to terror attacks and oil spills, AmeriCorps has provided critical support to millions of Americans affected by disasters since 1994.
- **Strengthening Communities:** AmeriCorps makes the communities they serve more resilient; bringing disaster experience, volunteer leadership, preparedness support, and many other services to communities before, during, and after disasters.
- **Cost-Effective:** The hours and in-kind donations served, leveraged, and tracked by AmeriCorps members can be used to offset the non-federal cost share of state and local jurisdictions. This can amount to millions of dollars in savings for disaster impacted communities.
- **Force Multiplier:** AmeriCorps members leverage and coordinate volunteers, providing additional needed support to communities for recovery.

- **Capacity-building:** AmeriCorps supports National VOAD organizations and provides additional surge capacity before and after disaster, allowing those organizations to serve more survivors.
- **Customizable:** Through AmeriCorps, support to communities can be customized to the specific service, length of time, and skills needed in a community during disaster response and recovery operations.

### **AmeriCorps Disaster Service Statistics**

#### **AmeriCorps Capacity At Large**

- 4,200 AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team members deployable throughout the country.
- 1,400 AmeriCorps NCCC FEMA Corps members directly deployable by FEMA throughout the country.

#### **Key Disaster Events**

- Hurricane Sandy struck the north east in October 2012, since that time, AmeriCorps has deployed more than 3,800 members to New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. These members have mucked and gutted more than 3,700 homes, coordinated and partnered with more than 200 nonprofit and community organization, leveraged and managed more than 11,000 volunteers valued at over \$1.5 million, and more.
- During the BP Oil Spill, more than 217 AmeriCorps members were deployed to support disaster response and recovery operations. These members provided more than 63,700 hours of service to support affected Gulf Coast communities with volunteer management, food shelter, case management, and other nonprofit and faith-based organization support.
- After the catastrophic Joplin tornado in May 2011, more than 350 AmeriCorps members were deployed to support the disaster response. These members leveraged, coordinated and documented more than 75,000 volunteers contributing over 500,000 hours of service to Joplin. Joplin city officials reported to FEMA that the city received donated resources and volunteer hours totaling \$17.7 million, the largest amount in Missouri's history and the largest amount ever recorded in FEMA's region VII. AmeriCorps members were instrumental to mobilizing this influx of volunteers and donations, which saved the city more than \$17.7 million in disaster costs.
- After Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma caused widespread destruction in 2005 CNCS provided more than \$200 million worth of resources to Gulf Coast states recovering from the storms. In the first five year after Katrina, more than 17,000 AmeriCorps members gave 8.5 million hours of service and recruited and

managed more than 611,000 volunteers. AmeriCorps members supported shelter operations and housing placement; established call centers and warehousing sites; assisted with case work and benefits coordination; set up school and youth programs; removed debris, gutted and mucked homes; served on long-term recovery committees; and built homes for low-income families.

- AmeriCorps has responded to many other disasters, such as the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, 9/11, Oso, Washington mudslide and numerous wildfires, mudslides, tornadoes, hurricanes, and flooding events since 1994.

## **AmeriCorps Disaster Service Talking Points**

### **AmeriCorps Disaster Services Overview**

- From forest fires and floods, to hurricanes and tornadoes, to terror attacks and oil spills, AmeriCorps has provided critical support to millions of Americans affected by disasters since 1994.
- Reflecting the agency's growing expertise and commitment in disaster services, the CNCS board of directors made disaster services one of the agency's focus areas for its 2011-2015 strategic plan and this has extended to the 2015-2018 strategic plan.
- AmeriCorps activities cover the full range of disaster services from response to long-term recovery, preparedness, and mitigation.
- More than 4,200 AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team members are ready, trained, and ready to deploy. An additional 1,000 FEMA Corps members are also actively engaged in disaster service.
- You count on us to respond fast and stay last. Right now, specially trained AmeriCorps members are hard at work in several states, providing skilled manpower and managing hundreds of volunteers. We'll be in these communities long after the cameras are gone.

### **CNCS Disaster Services Unit**

- Through the Disaster Services Unit (DSU), which has agency-wide responsibility for coordination of disaster services activities, CNCS provides expertise, ongoing support, and access to a network of dedicated volunteers.
- CNCS subscribes to the belief that all disasters are local. We focus on enhancing and adding value to what already exists in communities and infrastructure - working in partnership with State Service Commissions, local government, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations.

### **Partnership**

- You can count on us to team up. Our agility on the ground is due in part to the relationships we've built with national, state, and local leaders from the nonprofit, government, and private sectors.
- AmeriCorps is a strong partner in the emergency management and disaster services field. AmeriCorps supports federal and state emergency management agencies, national and state Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) and organizations including American Red Cross, Salvation Army, NECHAMA, Team Rubicon, and more.
- AmeriCorps is providing capacity to FEMA through FEMA Corps. Since 2012, FEMA Corps has provided FEMA additional ground force to more quickly and reliably reach survivors, identify their needs, and provide support to communities.
- Through AmeriCorps grants, AmeriCorps is building capacity with the American Red Cross to provide critical disaster preparedness to diverse communities across the country. American Red Cross National Preparedness and Response Corps provide age appropriate training on home fire prevention, lifesaving CPR and first aid, and are ready to deploy to support disaster response operations, such as sheltering, feeding, and case-management operations.

### **Impact**

- AmeriCorps is a leader in documenting volunteer service hours. These hours can be utilized by local emergency managers to provide FEMA soft-match to offset federal costs of a disaster response in a federally declared disaster, saving local and state governments millions of dollars, in some cases.
- Each year, approximately 3,000 national service participants have engaged in disaster response across the country, with larger disasters like Hurricane Sandy engaging more than 4,100 participants alone.
- Since 2011, national service programs have leveraged more than 111,000 volunteers serving over 846,518 hours in disaster response. This service is valued at an estimated \$21.5 million.

### **Opportunities to Get Involved**

There are many opportunities to engage throughout the month. Be sure to use the **#DisasterServe** hashtag so we can hear what you're up to!

### **Current AmeriCorps Members and Alums**

- **August 14: Disaster Service Day of the “A”:** Share your best disaster photos that show the AmeriCorps “A” on your social media. Be sure to tag them with **#DayofTheA**.

#### **For State Service Commissions and AmeriCorps Grantees**

- Dedicate a Day of Service in the next year to disaster preparedness or disaster recovery.
- Prepare and release a Statement of Commitment to engage in Prepare-A-Thon.

#### **For Everyone**

- Donate your time: Check out [Prepare-A-Thon activities](#) near you and volunteer.
- Get Prepared! Take training in CERT or in CPR/First Aid.
- Become an affiliated volunteer with a National Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster. Check out [National VOAD's page](#) to see how you can help.
- Follow us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Tumblr and repost our resources, pictures, and stories all month long. Use #DisasterServe to follow.

### **Spreading The Word On Social Media**

Below are some other ways you can highlight the contributions of this program with social media content during the month of March. (We recommend using the hashtag **#DisasterServe** to highlight your comments).

#### **AmeriCorps Grantees**

- Share how your members are getting things done to make your state’s communities more disaster resilient.
- (commission or grantee name here)’s members are (insert activity here) to help (community name) (prepare for/respond to/recover) #DisasterServe.
- Ask the program directors and administrators you work with to consider submitting op-ed or blog items explaining how important AmeriCorps members are to their healthy future initiatives. You may also submit AmeriCorps success stories to [pressoffice@cns.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cns.gov) (300-500 words).

#### **AmeriCorps Members**

- If you are a current AmeriCorps member in a disaster service program, tweet about your service and impact:

- *I am helping support communities through @AmeriCorps by (your service activity)*
- *Get Prepared with @AmeriCorps #DisasterServe*
- On August 14, Disaster Service Day of the “A”, share your best disaster photos that show the AmeriCorps “A” on your social media. Be sure to tag them with #DayofTheA.
- Send us a photo of video of you and your AmeriCorps team engaged in disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, or recovery. Follow the steps at <http://nationalservice.tumblr.com/submit-photos-videos>
- Submit your personal AmeriCorps disaster service success stories all month long to [pressoffice@cns.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cns.gov) (300-500 words).

### **AmeriCorps Alums**

- On **August 7**, share your #TBT (Throw Back Thursday) of your disaster service pics on your social media accounts.
- On **August 14**, Disaster Service Day of the “A”, share your best disaster photos that show the AmeriCorps “A” on your social media. Be sure to tag them with #DayofTheA.
- Share your disaster service story with us all month long! Send stories of 300-500 words to [pressoffice@cns.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cns.gov).
- Share the AmeriCorps 20th Anniversary logo on Facebook and share your story of disaster service on social media.
  - *#DisasterServe with @AmeriCorps alum with (program name) at (organization)*

### **CNCS Disaster Services Online Resources**

#### **Volunteer Reception Center Model PowerPoint**

[www.nationalserviceresources.gov/online-library/items/m4107#.U8VvfPldWtY](http://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/online-library/items/m4107#.U8VvfPldWtY)

#### **National Service and Disaster Brochure**

[www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/disasterpub.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/disasterpub.pdf)

#### **AmeriCorps NCCC Fact Sheet**

[www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/factsheet\\_ac\\_nccc.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/factsheet_ac_nccc.pdf)

#### **AmeriCorps Fact Sheet**

[www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/AmeriCorps Fact Sheet June 2013.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/AmeriCorps_Fact_Sheet_June_2013.pdf)

**CNCS Disaster Service Timeline**

[www.cncs.gov/sites/default/files/upload/disastertimeline.pdf](http://www.cncs.gov/sites/default/files/upload/disastertimeline.pdf)

**Investing in Resilience: Investing in Whole Community, A National Preparedness Leadership Institute Report**

[www.cncs.gov/sites/default/files/upload/InvestingInResilience\\_DSU.pdf](http://www.cncs.gov/sites/default/files/upload/InvestingInResilience_DSU.pdf)

**Research on Disaster's Effects on Civic Behavior**

[www.cncs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/katrina\\_research\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.cncs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/katrina_research_factsheet.pdf)

**Disaster Online Resources from Our Partners**

**Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH)®**

[www.flash.org/volunteers/](http://www.flash.org/volunteers/)

**PrepareAthon Resources**

[www.community.fema.gov/connect.tj/AmericasPrepareathon](http://www.community.fema.gov/connect.tj/AmericasPrepareathon)

**National VOAD Resources**

[www.nvoad.org/resource-center/](http://www.nvoad.org/resource-center/)