

NATIONAL SERVICE RECOGNITION DAY



COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

April 3, 2018



Dear Leaders for National Service,

Thank you for participating in National Service Recognition Day on April 3, 2018!

On this day, thousands of local leaders like you will thank AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers for making your communities stronger. Participation by local leaders will help highlight and amplify the importance of national service and inspire even more residents to get involved.

This Communications Toolkit will make it easy for you to plan and execute an event, engage with the press, and communicate the impact of national service through social media. By effectively communicating your appreciation for national service, you can reach a much larger audience and make your local action resonate with folks across the country.

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Resources that are not contained in this toolkit, including logos, web banners, and customizable event materials, are available on our National Service Recognition Day [Resources Page](#).

Your Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) [State Office](#) can lend a helping hand as you plan events, produce materials, and communicate the impact of national service. State Offices can also provide profiles that compile and display data on national service members, funding, and programming in your jurisdiction.

Thank you again for your ongoing commitment to national service. We look forward to working with you to make this day a success! If you have questions, event ideas, or require assistance, please email RecognitionDay@cns.gov.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- **Host an Appreciation Event:** Show your gratitude for national service members by inviting them to an appreciation event. Give a speech, present awards to national service members, and post group pictures on social media. See the [Planning a Great Event](#) section on page 4 for more details.
- **Host a Recognition Ceremony:** Invite national service members and their host organization to a recognition ceremony during your official council board meeting. Ask a national service member to tell their personal story of how they have impacted the community.
- **Visit a National Service Program:** Witness a national service program in action by visiting a school, homeless shelter, community center, national park, or another location where AmeriCorps members or Senior Corps volunteers serve.
- **Organize a Service Project:** Organize a service project that brings together national service members and other local community volunteers. Serve alongside them as a “member for a day” to highlight their important work.
- **Become an Employer of National Service:** AmeriCorps and Peace Corps alumni are strong leaders who are motivated and outcome-oriented. By becoming an [Employer of National Service](#), city, county and tribal governments have enhanced access to this dedicated, highly qualified, and mission-oriented pool of potential employees. More than 500 companies, nonprofits, and state and local governments have already signed on to this initiative. We encourage local officials to sign up and announce their participation on April 3rd.
- **Take to Social Media:** Use Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other social media platforms to thank national service members serving in your community and across the country. See the [Social Media Guide](#) on page 7 for more details.
- **Issue a Media Advisory or Press Release, or Op-Ed:** Issue a media advisory or press release to inform press and constituents about National Service Recognition Day activities. Write an op-ed on the scope and impact of national service in your community. Discuss national service in your weekly press conference or other media venue. See the [Sample Media Advisory](#) on page 8, the [Sample Press Release](#) on page 9, and the [Sample Op-Ed](#) on page 11 for more details.
- **Issue a Proclamation:** Issue a proclamation naming April 3, 2018 as National Service Recognition Day. See the [Sample Proclamation](#) on page 12 for more details.
- **Film an Appreciation Video:** If you have access to video services or local cable channels, or even just a smartphone, put together a short video that shows what national service is doing in your jurisdiction. Include interviews and B-roll with national service participants and shots from your National Service Recognition Day activities. Post the video on social media, your YouTube channel, and play it through local T.V.

PLANNING A GREAT EVENT

Every National Service Recognition event looks different based on the size and scope of national service in your community. [CNCS State Offices](#) can be key resources in helping plan, brand, hold, and amplify your event. Here are some tips to get started:

- **Identify a Time:** Any time on (or around) Tuesday, April 3, 2018 that allows for maximum community participation is ideal. If members of the press are invited, mid-morning to early afternoon tends to be the most effective, since it allows them time to produce their coverage that same day.
- **Secure a Venue:** Find the right venue for your event. This could be the steps of city hall, the city council chambers, a park, or an AmeriCorps or Senior Corps service location. Regardless of where you hold your event, ensure that your chosen site has the space to accommodate your expected audience. If you're expecting a small crowd, use a small space—it makes the photos look better!
- **Build a Crowd:** National Service Recognition Day is an amazing opportunity to engage a large number of local national service members and alumni. As you recruit, think big and include the entire national service family. That includes Senior Corps (Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP) and AmeriCorps (including AmeriCorps State and National grantees, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC, if a team is deployed in your area). Contact your [CNCS State Director](#) for a list of all of the national service programs in your community you can reach out to.
- **Brand the Event:** When branding your event, make sure to think of the visuals that will be present, including city or county logos, National Service Recognition Day signs, and AmeriCorps and Senior Corps logos. You can download and print your own materials using the National Service Recognition Day [Resource Page](#).
- **Hold the Event:** Great events usually have a couple of speeches, some refreshments, and AmeriCorps members and/or Senior Corps volunteers present. Past events have included appreciation ceremonies in city halls, site visits to national service locations, service projects to clean up parks or beautify schools, and much, much more. This event is a great opportunity to thank your local national service members, let them share their stories of service, and highlight their accomplishments in your community. In addition, you can use this event to highlight your priorities, announce new grants, or proclaim your government as an [Employer of National Service](#).
- **Amplify the Event:** Let everyone know your event was a success! Share photos on social media to amplify the reach of your event. Check out our [Social Media Guide](#) on page 7 for sample tweets and posts.

TALKING POINTS

Whether you're giving a speech, issuing a press release, or writing an op-ed, these talking points will help you communicate the impact of national service writ large, the motivation for National Service Recognition Day, and the effect of AmeriCorps and Senior Corps on your local community.

Background: How National Service Gets Things Done

- Service to others is a hallmark of the American character, and central to how we meet our challenges.
- Given the diverse challenges facing our communities, mayors, county officials, and tribal leaders are increasingly turning to national service and volunteerism as a cost-effective solution to local problems.
- A key partner in our efforts is the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). CNCS is the federal agency that oversees AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and other programs that engage millions of citizens in service each year. CNCS works hand-in-hand with counties, nonprofits, and other local partners to support high-impact national service at more than 50,000 sites across the country.
- AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers tackle tough problems. Whether helping communities recover from natural disasters, fighting the opioid epidemic, restoring parks, strengthening public safety, or tutoring and mentoring disadvantaged students, national service members get things done.
- National service participants increase the impact of the organizations they serve with, both through their direct service and by recruiting and mobilizing millions of additional volunteers.
- You don't hear their stories on the nightly news, but every day they head out, quietly and without fanfare, to improve lives and strengthen communities.

National Service Recognition Day

- I am proud to join in this nationwide salute to highlight the importance of citizen engagement, recognize the dedication of national service members, and inspire more residents to get involved in their communities.
- Across the country, local leaders are visiting national service programs, hosting roundtable discussions, issuing proclamations, and communicating the impact of national service far and wide. I'm pleased to join my fellow public servants on this special day.

Local Impact of National Service:

To get data on the size, scope, and impact of national service in your jurisdiction, contact your [CNCS State Office](#).

- More than [#NUMBER] AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members serve in [JURISDICTION], providing vital support to residents and improving the quality of life.
- [GIVE EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL SERVICE ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT].
- As the [TITLE] of [JURISDICTION], I am grateful for the dedication and sacrifice of these citizens, who are helping make our [CITY/COUNTY/TRIBE] stronger, safer, and healthier. I have seen their impact first-hand: [DISCUSS EXAMPLES OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES].
- If you're interested in getting involved, or would like to learn more about national service opportunities, go to [NationalService.gov](#) or [YOUR JURISDICTION'S WEBSITE FOR VOLUNTEERING] to find a volunteer opportunity that matches your skills and interests.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE

Social media is a powerful tool to highlight the impact of national service, thank those who serve, and invite more citizens to serve your community. We strongly encourage you to use social media to build buzz and engagement on and around April 3rd.

CNCS will use #NationalServiceWorks to thank AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers and highlight their important work. We'll retweet the messages you're sharing and help start a national conversation. Our official Twitter and Facebook accounts are @AmeriCorps, @SeniorCorps, and @NationalService. On Instagram, we're @NationalService.

In your social media messages, you can use the shortened URL <http://bit.ly/2l4la05> to link to our National Service Recognition Day webpage.

Twitter

Here are some sample tweets to get you started. Make sure to take and share photos!

- Excited to thank @AmeriCorps and @Senior Corps on @NationalService Recognition Day. #NationalServiceWorks for [JURISDICTION].
- #NationalServiceWorks for [JURISDICTION] because _____.
- RT to thank the [#] @AmeriCorps & [#] @SeniorCorps members serving in [JURISDICTION] on @NationalService Recognition Day.
- #NationalServiceWorks/#AmeriCorpsWorks/#SeniorCorpsWorks for [#EDUCATION/#VETERANS/#HUNGER, etc.] in [JURISDICTION] through [ORGANIZATION].
- [#NUMBER] @AmeriCorps & @SeniorCorps members are helping to make [JURISDICTION] stronger, safer, and healthier. #NationalServiceWorks.

Facebook

Badges and graphics are available on our National Service Recognition Day [Resources Page](#). Please tag the official [Corporation for National and Community Service](#) or [AmeriCorps](#) or [Senior Corps](#) pages so we can see your great posts!

- Post your thank you message along with a photo or graphic. Ask the national service members, volunteers, and alumni to tag themselves in it.
- Facebook users love fill-in-the-blank questions, so post something like: "National Service works for [JURISDICTION] because _____."

SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release
March XX, 2018

Contact Name
Phone and Email

[TITLE & NAME] to Join Nationwide Effort to Recognize Impact of National Service

[JURISDICTION, STATE]– On April 3, [TITLE & NAME] will join more than [TBD – UPDATED NUMBER ON WEBSITE] city and county leaders across the country in a day of recognition to highlight the impact of AmeriCorps and Senior Corps on [JURISDICTION] challenges.

[TITLE & NAME] will participate in National Service Recognition Day by [INSERT SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES HERE].

The nation’s local leaders are increasingly turning to national service and volunteerism as a cost-effective strategy to address local challenges at a time of fiscal constraint. More than [NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS] AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers serve in [JURISDICTION], providing vital support to local residents by [NUMBERS FROM COUNTY/CITY PROFILE – ALSO CAN INCLUDE IMPACTS FROM LOCAL PROGRAMS].

National Service Recognition Day activities in [JURISDICTION] are part of a national bipartisan effort to recognize the positive impact of national service, thank those who serve, and to encourage citizens to give back.

WHAT:

WHO:

WHERE:

WHEN:

The effort is sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, and Cities of Service. For more information, visit NationalService.gov/RecognitionDay.

[INSERT JURISDICTION’S BOILERPLATE DESCRIPTION]

The Corporation for National and Community Service is the federal agency for volunteering, service, and civic engagement. The agency engages millions of Americans in citizen service through its AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs and leads the nation’s volunteering and service efforts. For more information, visit NationalService.gov.



SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
April 3, 2018

Contact:
Phone and Email:

[TITLE & NAME] Joins Nationwide Effort to Recognize Impact of National Service

[JURISDICTION, STATE]– [TITLE & NAME] joined more than [CHECK WEBSITE FOR LATEST TOTAL] local leaders across the country in a nationwide bipartisan initiative to highlight the impact of national service in tackling local problems.

“National service is a vital resource for [JURISDICTION],” said [TITLE & NAME]. “AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers make our counties better places to live. As [TITLE] of [JURISDICTION], I am grateful for the dedication and sacrifice of these exceptional citizens, who are helping make [JURISDICTION] stronger, safer, and healthier.”

[TITLE & NAME] participated in [INSERT SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES ELECTED OFFICIAL ENGAGED IN ON NATIONAL SERVICE RECOGNITION DAY].

Given the many challenges facing communities, county and city leaders are increasingly turning to national service as a cost-effective strategy to meet local needs. More than [NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM COUNTY/CITY PROFILE] AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers serve in [JURISDICTION], providing vital support by [LIST SERVICE ACTIVITIES].

[ADD PARAGRAPH ABOUT EXAMPLE OF NATIONAL SERVICE IMPACT OR HOW NATIONAL SERVICE HAS HELPED CARRY OUT COUNTY/CITY PRIORITIES].

National Service Recognition Day is a nationwide bipartisan effort to recognize the positive impact of national service, to thank those who serve, and to encourage more citizens to give back to their communities. This day is sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, and Cities of Service.

As the federal agency for service and volunteering, CNCS annually engages millions of Americans in service at more than 50,000 locations through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and other programs. National service participants address the most pressing challenges facing our counties and nation. From helping communities recover from natural disasters, fighting the opioid epidemic, restoring parks, strengthening public safety, to tutoring and mentoring disadvantaged students, national service members get things done.



Across the nation, local leaders are participating in a variety of activities, including visiting national service programs, hosting roundtable discussions, issuing proclamations, and communicating the impact of national service through social media. By shining the spotlight on the impact of service and thanking those who serve, local officials hope to inspire more residents to get involved in their communities.

“National service shows the best of the American spirit – people turning toward problems instead of away, working together to find community solutions,” said [TITLE & NAME]. “Today, as we thank national service members for their commitment, let us all pledge to do our part to strengthen our county through service and volunteering.”

For more information including background and a list of participating county officials and mayors, visit NationalService.gov/RecognitionDay.

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[INSERT JURISDICTION’S BOILERPLATE DESCRIPTION]

The Corporation for National and Community Service is the federal agency for volunteering, service, and civic engagement. The agency engages millions of Americans in citizen service through its AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs and leads the nation’s volunteering and service efforts. For more information, visit NationalService.gov.

SAMPLE OP-ED

National Service Strengthens [COUNTY/CITY NAME]

[LEAD OFF WITH ONE OR TWO EXAMPLES OF AMERICORPS OR SENIOR CORPS IN YOUR JURISDICTION—EXAMPLES BELOW]

[As one of the only members of his family to graduate from college, John Smith always wanted to do something to help children from disadvantaged backgrounds make the most of their education. Through AmeriCorps, John now serves as a full-time mentor and tutor at [NAME] high school, giving extra attention to struggling students to help them stay on track to graduate.]

[At age XX, Mary Smith could be expected to live a quiet life of retirement. Instead, she volunteers 20 hours a week as a Foster Grandparent, helping needy kids develop early literacy skills. Mary is using her lifetime of experience to put young people on a path to success.]

John and Mary are just two examples of how [JURISDICTION] citizens are making a difference through national service. Altogether, more than [NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS] AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers are serving in [JURISDICTION], tackling tough challenges including adult literacy, disaster preparedness, neighborhood revitalization, and bridging the education gap.

You don't hear their stories on the nightly news, but every day they head out, quietly and without fanfare, to improve lives and strengthen communities.

As [TITLE] of [JURISDICTION], I am grateful for the dedication and sacrifice of these every day heroes, who are helping make our great county stronger, safer, and healthier. I have seen their impact first-hand, and know that national service is a cost-effective strategy to meet critical community needs.

That's why I am pleased to join local leaders across the country today in celebrating National Service Recognition Day. We are taking time to recognize the impact of national service and thank those who serve.

Given the many challenges facing our communities, local leaders are increasingly turning to national service and volunteerism to help meet local needs. We know that engaging citizens is a smart strategy to make progress on issues important to local communities.

A key partner in our efforts is the Corporation for National and Service (CNCS), the federal agency for volunteering, service, and civic engagement. The agency oversees the AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs, engaging millions of Americans in service each year. CNCS works



hand-in-hand with counties, cities, nonprofits, and other local partners to support high-impact national service at more than 50,000 locations across the country.

Here in *[JURISDICTION]*, more than *[NUMBER]* AmeriCorps members *[INSERT SERVICE ACTIVITIES]*. More than *[NUMBER]* Senior Corps volunteers *[INSERT SERVICE ACTIVITIES]*.

[EXAMPLE OF NATIONAL SERVICE IMPACT OR HOW NATIONAL SERVICE HAS HELPED CARRY OUT COUNTY/CITY-WIDE SERVICE PLAN OR OTHER LOCAL PRIORITY/POLICY].

National service shows the best of the American spirit – people turning toward problems instead of away, and working together to find common solutions. Today, as we thank national service members for their commitment, let us all pledge to do our part to strengthen *[JURISDICTION]* through service and volunteering.

[COUNTY OFFICIAL/MAYOR NAME] is *[TITLE]* of *[JURISDICTION]*. To find a volunteer opportunity, visit *[WEBSITE WITH LOCAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES]* or *serve.gov*. To learn more about AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and other national service programs, visit NationalService.gov.



SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, service to others is a hallmark of the American character, and central to how we meet our challenges; and

WHEREAS, the nation's [COUNTIES/CITIES/TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS] are increasingly turning to national service and volunteerism as a cost-effective strategy to meet their needs; and

WHEREAS, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps participants address the most pressing challenges facing our communities, from educating students for the jobs of the 21st century, to fighting the opioid epidemic, to responding to natural disasters, to supporting veterans and military families; and

WHEREAS, national service expands economic opportunity by creating more sustainable, resilient communities and providing education, career skills, and leadership abilities for those who serve; and

WHEREAS, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps participants serve in more than 50,000 locations across the country, bolstering the civic, neighborhood, and faith-based organizations that are so vital to our economic and social well-being; and

WHEREAS, national service participants increase the impact of the organizations they serve, both through their direct service and by managing millions of additional volunteers; and

WHEREAS, national service represents a unique public-private partnership that invests in community solutions and leverages non-federal resources to strengthen community impact and increase the return on taxpayer dollars; and

WHEREAS, national service participants demonstrate commitment, dedication, and patriotism by making an intensive commitment to service, a commitment that remains with them in their future endeavors; and

WHEREAS, the Corporation for National and Community Service shares a priority with local leaders nationwide to engage citizens, improve lives, and strengthen communities; and is joining with the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, Cities of Service, and local leaders across the country for National Service Recognition Day on April 3, 2018.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, [COUNTY OFFICIAL/MAYOR NAME], County Official/Mayor of [COUNTY/CITY], do hereby proclaim April 3, 2018, as National Service Recognition Day, and encourage residents to recognize the positive impact of national service in our community, to thank those who serve; and to find ways to give back to their communities.

