

Corporation for National and Community Service

NationalService.gov



National Service: Solving Problems and Expanding Opportunity

America's greatness comes from the extraordinary acts of ordinary citizens. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) makes America great by **empowering citizens to solve local problems, expanding economic opportunity, encouraging personal responsibility, and strengthening civil society**. Based on principles of local control, competition, and public-private partnership, CNCS is a cost-effective investment in America's future. Through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and the Social Innovation Fund, CNCS engages three million Americans in results-driven service each year at 50,000 locations across the country, from small towns and rural areas to inner cities. CNCS works closely with 52 Governor-appointed State Service Commissions, and mayors and county officials across the country to invest in local community solutions. CNCS strengthens civil society and builds our civic infrastructure by engaging 325,000 trained, skilled national service members in sustained service at schools, food banks, homeless shelters, veteran's homes, youth centers, and hospitals to mobilize volunteers and meet pressing local needs. **The result: more engaged citizens, greater economic opportunity, less dependence on government, safer neighborhoods, stronger communities, and a more unified nation.**

Engaging Citizens in Solving Local Problems

National service invests in citizens – not bureaucracies - to solve problems. Working hand in hand with thousands of local partners, CNCS taps the ingenuity and can-do spirit of the American people to tackle some of our nation's biggest challenges:

- **Educating Students for the 21st Century Workforce:** National service powers education success, reform, and choice by placing tens of thousands of teachers, tutors, and mentors into low-performing schools to improve student attendance, behavior, and academic performance. Members serve in more than 11,000 public, parochial, and charter schools, helping students stay in school, graduate on time, and be prepared for college or career. Rigorous independent evaluations have demonstrated the positive impact of AmeriCorps on early childhood education, third-grade literacy, college access, and other critical measures of educational success:
 - AmeriCorps tutors with Minnesota Reading Corps helped four- and five-year-old students **meet or exceed targets** for kindergarten readiness in five key literacy benchmarks compared to only one for students in comparison classrooms.
 - 266 Reading Partners AmeriCorps members recruit and manage 13,500 volunteers who provide one-on-one tutoring to 10,900 struggling readers in 208 low-income elementary schools across the country. Reading Partners had a **positive and statistically significant impact** on all three measures of student reading proficiency examined. Reading Partners also demonstrated a \$980 cost-saving per student compared to schools operating similar reading programs.
 - AmeriCorps members serving with College Possible provide intensive, tailored coaching to low-income students to increase their college enrollment rates. A **Harvard University** study found statistically significant improvement in college application and enrollment rates compared to a control group, with participation increasing the likelihood of college enrollment by 15%.

- **Expanding Economic Opportunity:** By helping seniors live independently, preparing students for the workforce, and connecting returning veterans to jobs, our programs increase opportunity and family stability.
 - Working with Congressman Hal Rogers and Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin, AmeriCorps members have connected 25,000 Eastern Kentucky residents to job training and placement services, including hundreds of unemployed coal miners.
 - A [recent evaluation](#) of social enterprise organizations funded by the Social Innovation Fund found that workers' average monthly income increased by 91% while their income from government benefits dropped from 71% to 24%.
- **Supporting Veterans and Military Families:** AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members serve more than 750,000 veterans and military family members each year, providing employment services, benefits counseling, transportation, housing support, and more. More than 23,000 veterans serve in CNCS programs, applying the skills and leadership they gained in the military to tackle problems on the homefront.
- **Reducing Crime and Reviving Inner Cities:** CNCS works with mayors and police departments to fight crime and bring economic renewal to inner cities. In Detroit, a university partnered with Governor Rick Snyder and local police to create an AmeriCorps program that engages the community in removing blight, creating safe routes to schools, expanding neighborhood watch groups, and other steps to reduce crime. In the neighborhoods where AmeriCorps members serve, crime has declined by 26%, an estimated savings of \$302 million.
- **Fighting the Opioid Epidemic:** Senior Corps and AmeriCorps members provide drug abuse education, work with law enforcement, strengthen anti-drug organizations, and help young people stay away from opioid and prescription drug abuse. CNCS prioritized drug prevention and recovery in its 2017 grant competitions.
- **Responding to Disasters:** Over the last four years, CNCS programs have responded to more than 100 disasters including floods, fires, hurricanes, and tornadoes affecting millions of Americans. In response to the historic flooding that devastated Louisiana in August, 1,390 AmeriCorps members have mucked and gutted 600 homes, and provided shelter, meals, supplies, or other services to 62,305 flood survivors.
- **Helping Seniors Live Independently:** 11,500 Senior Companion volunteers provide independent living services to 43,000 adults - primarily frail seniors – helping them to live with dignity in their own homes instead of moving to costly institutional care. Volunteers also provide respite care to 26,000 families and caregivers.

[Expanding Economic Opportunity](#)

- By helping seniors live independently, keeping students on track to graduate, and connecting returning veterans to jobs, national service increases economic independence and builds family stability.
- Since 1994, more than one million individuals have served in AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps alumni have earned \$3.3 billion in scholarships to reduce student loan debt or pay for college or technical school. More than \$1 billion of AmeriCorps scholarship funds have gone to repay student loans. About 40% of AmeriCorps members that serve each year do not have college degrees so this support is critical at a time of skyrocketing college costs.
- Through Senior Corps, 35,500 low-income seniors serve as Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion volunteers, mentoring at-risk youth and helping frail seniors live independently in their homes. These volunteers receive small but important stipends that pay for essentials like food, clothing, and medicine.

A Model of Local Control

- CNCS believes the best solutions come from outside Washington, where citizens are finding innovative ways to meet needs in their communities. CNCS invests in those solutions.
- Governors play a key role in deciding where AmeriCorps funding is invested – 75% of AmeriCorps funding is controlled by Governor-appointed state service commissions. Funding then goes to local schools, nonprofits, and community groups, which in turn recruit, select, and supervise AmeriCorps members. The remaining 25% is invested in effective organizations operating locally through a national competition.
- CNCS works closely with bipartisan city and county officials to identify local needs and deploy resources to meet them. Last year, 3,539 mayors and county leaders representing 178 million Americans joined in a national day of recognition day to support AmeriCorps and Senior Corps.

Private Sector Support

- Congress created CNCS to be a public-private partnership that invests limited federal dollars to leverage substantial private investment to improve lives and communities. In 2015, CNCS generated \$1.26 billion in outside resources from private businesses, foundations, and other sources, an amount exceeding the federal appropriation. These investments from companies like Walmart, Home Depot, Target, Cisco, CSX, Comcast NBC Universal, and Citigroup increase the return on the taxpayer dollar and demonstrate great confidence in CNCS's ability to deliver results on America's pressing problems.
- 440 companies with 2.3 million jobs including Accenture, Sodexo, CSX, Disney, and Delta Air Lines have signed up to be Employers of National Service, committing to hire more AmeriCorps alumni because they value the leadership, skills and work ethic AmeriCorps members acquire during their service.
- The CNCS Social Innovation Fund addresses critical challenges like chronic unemployment, systemic homelessness, workforce readiness, and mental health by investing in evidence-based programs that improve lives and build economic independence. Over the past six years, it has attracted private-sector matching commitments totaling \$627.5 million - more than double the federal investment.

Strengthening Civil Society and Voluntary Organizations

- CNCS bolsters the nonprofit, faith-based and neighborhood organizations essential to nation's economic and social well-being. CNCS funds more than 3,000 organizations including Habitat for Humanity, Teach For America, United Ways, Boys and Girls Clubs, Catholic Charities, expanding their reach and impact. CNCS provides grants, volunteers, and training to help these organizations better achieve their mission. Last year, CNCS programs mobilized more than three million volunteers.
- The Social Innovation Fund has funded 426 evidence-based programs in 44 states, helping hundreds of thousands of Americans find jobs, gain skills, and improve health. It also funds Pay for Success – an innovative model that produces better outcomes and saves tax dollars by only paying providers after they have produced clear results.

Business-Like Focus on Competition, Evidence, and Results

- Congress created CNCS as a government corporation modeled after a private business: small, efficient, results-oriented, guided by a board of directors, able to build partnerships and leverage outside funds, and using an alternative personnel system that rewards performance.
- CNCS maximizes the return on public investments by using competition to drive funds to the highest-quality, highest-value programs. Organizations compete for funding and have to demonstrate results through performance measures. CNCS uses data and evidence in budget, management, and grantmaking decisions.
- The impact and value of CNCS has made national service popular with the American people. A recent poll by TargetPoint Consulting found that 83% of voters in swing states want to maintain or increase federal support for AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. The survey also found that:
 - 78% of voters said national service helps restore important values of patriotism and civic duty
 - 80% said it helps prepare young people for the workforce
 - 75% said it empowers people to be more self-sufficient and less dependent on the government.