

## National Service and Civic Engagement Grant Competition FY 2015

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**Congressional District:** 01

**Funding:** \$12,800

### **Purpose/Research Questions:**

The dissertation will study the AmeriCorps program through the lens of a growing economic literature on the interaction between private charitable giving and government funding for public goods. In its analysis of the relationship between the AmeriCorps program and private donations to its nonprofit partners, this is the first analysis of whether government funded labor might crowd out or crowd in private capital.

The research will match data on the placement of AmeriCorps with financial data from IRS filings to create a large panel of nonprofits with and without AmeriCorps members. The study will vary the number of AmeriCorps embedded with a nonprofit to isolate the relationship between their presence and the level of private donations. Preliminary research finds a positive relationship between AmeriCorps and donations. The research will exploit increases in AmeriCorps sponsorship caused by The Kennedy Serve America Act, which increased the number of AmeriCorps by roughly 10 percent, to determine whether AmeriCorps has a causal impact on donations to its nonprofit sponsors. In doing so, the research will lead to a better understanding of the economic forces that underlay our civic infrastructure. Moreover, if the hypothesis is confirmed, the research will provide evidence of the economic benefits of national service programs.