Corporation for
NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

National Veteran Corps Ceremony Toolkit

NATIONALSERVICE.GOV/VETERAN-CORPS

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OVERVIEW

Our servicemen and women risk their lives to protect our freedom and way of life. As Americans, it is our solemn obligation to support them and their families when they come home. Serving those who served us, and engaging the talents of our veterans and military families, is a priority for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Our commitment to veterans and their families is deep and it's twofold: We serve them, and we ask them to serve with us.

Building on decades of experience, and consistent with the vision of the bipartisan Serve America Act, we are working with our partners to increase our support for the military community. Across the country, we invest millions of dollars and countless volunteer hours to this mission. Through our efforts, more than 780,000 veterans and military family members across every state are served by AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers. We have awarded grants to hundreds of organizations and our members and volunteers have served in more than 2,700 communities to support the veteran and military family community.

Because of our commitment, on Veterans Day, November 11, 2015, we will honor veterans who are serving our country again as AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers, as well as national service members whose primary focus is supporting veterans and military families. On Veterans Day, the national service family will say a collective thank you by recognizing these dedicated individuals as members of the **National Veteran Corps**.

We encourage programs that have veterans serving with them or which have a primary focus on serving the veteran and military family community to plan an event to honor these individuals on Veterans Day. We are pleased to offer the opportunity for programs to order specially designed pins to use in these recognition ceremonies. This toolkit provides useful tips on planning, promoting, and leading a Veteran Corps Pinning Ceremony event.

This toolkit is designed for programs that engage veterans as members or volunteers or have a primary focus on serving veterans and military families to help them plan a Veteran Corps Pinning Ceremony. In some locations, there may be more than one organization that has national service members to be honored in this way. We encourage you to join together for a national service community event to honor them. This toolkit also contains media, messaging, and branding that is relevant for all programs.

We wish you the best in planning for November 11, 2015!

The Office of External Affairs
Corporation for National and Community Service

EVENT PLANNING

TAKE THE FIRST STEPS

1. **Determine the number of veterans in your program and order Veteran Corps pins**
2. **Determine if there are other national service or community based programs that will be planning an event for November 11**
3. **Designate an event coordinator**
4. **Settle on a time**
5. **Secure a venue**
6. **Develop a budget**

For major events, early planning is essential. There are many steps to take and partners to work with. Here are some tips to get started:

Determine the number of veterans in your program and order Veteran Corps pins.
The first step is determining whether your program has veterans serving or if your primary focus is serving the military community. Based on that assessment, and the number of members or volunteers that are eligible to receive pins, you should place your order for Veteran Corps pins on our online ordering system.

Determine if there are other national service or community based programs that will be planning an event for November 11. Veterans Day is a time when many communities already pay tribute to military veterans. You might start your planning by learning if your community has a tradition and if it would be appropriate to have your pinning ceremony as part of a larger celebration. If you are close to a military post or base, you should contact the post public affairs office for information about ongoing Veterans Day ceremonies and attempt to make your ceremony a part of a larger ongoing celebration. You should also coordinate with other national service programs in your community because all of you may benefit by jointly planning your Veteran Corps pinning ceremony. Your state service commission or CNCS state office should be able to help you make those connections to other national service programs in your community.

Designate an event coordinator to plan your event and serve as the primary point of contact. Coordinators should develop a timeline of tasks and deadlines and oversee the completion of these assignments. You may want to establish an event committee (especially if you partner with other organizations) to help make decisions and provide for a better coordinated event. You may also seek out pro bono help from a PR or event planning firm.

Settle on a time: Try to settle on a time that allows for maximum participation, including local media. That usually means mid-morning to early afternoon for same day coverage, although early morning breakfast events can work as well. Pay attention to other Veterans Day events taking place in your community and try to avoid holding your ceremony at the same time as other events that could draw media or VIP attendees away from your event.

Secure a venue: If you haven't already, you must secure your venue. Here are some things to consider:

- Think big. Consider inviting program alums, program staff, and key stakeholders in your community including elected officials and their staff, and military personnel if you are close to a military facility.
- Ensure that your chosen site has the space to accommodate your expected audience.
- Reach out to partners. For example, a local veteran's organization may have access to a good venue.
- Look into any permits or special conditions that may be in effect for your location.
- Consider your AV needs. You may want to show videos, photos, or other visuals.

Develop a budget to carefully plan your expected expenses in a detailed spreadsheet. Seek out cash and in-kind support from private sector or foundation partners. Look for pro bono help on event planning and media. If you have questions about allocating time or resources to your grant, consult your program officer.

BUILD A CROWD

1. **Make your invitation list**
2. **Send invitations**
3. **Track your head count**

Make your invitation list: This is an amazing opportunity to engage a large number of stakeholders. As you make your list, think big. Aim for inviting other organizations that serve veterans and their families, family members of those who will be pinned, other national service programs, your alums, program staff, and key stakeholders in your community including elected officials and their staff.

For help in getting the word out:

- Consult with your CNCS State Director on reaching out to AmeriCorps VISTA or Senior Corps.
- For AmeriCorps NCCC and FEMA Corps, check with the regional campus for your state.
- For AmeriCorps State Programs, contact your state service commission. For AmeriCorps National Direct programs operating in your state, contact your program officer. The National Service State Profiles list CNCS programs by city and state.

Save the date and invite: Once you have your venue and time secured and a system for capturing RSVPs, send a "save the date" to your invitees. Given the distractions of early fall, you should resend your invitation more than once.

Track your head count: When publicizing your event, consider using an online registration tool, such as Eventbrite.com. This can help you streamline the list-management process, get a better head count for your ceremony, and provide opportunities for follow-up later.

CREATE A DAZZLING PROGRAM

1. **Determine your program**
2. **Invite elected officials to speak**
3. **Find an emcee**
4. **Keep everybody happy**
5. **Plan for accessibility**
6. **Consider audio-visual**

Determine your program: The success of your event depends on the program and logistics management. Start now to determine who your speakers will be. Your program shouldn't be more than 45 minutes to one hour. Limit speaking times to keep the program moving and focused on the individuals being honored. Be sure to include one or more AmeriCorps members or Senior Corps volunteers to tell their compelling stories of service. Their perspective is key to remind the audience what this ceremony is about and how important the service is. Make sure to invite elected officials (see below). Other potential speakers could include a beneficiary of service, a sponsor to explain why they invest in your program, a military official, or a nonprofit leader with whom you collaborate.

Create a preliminary outline for the event now, including a draft run-of-show with potential speakers (and back up speakers) and other parts of the program such as a color guard, the Pledge of Allegiance, or the National Anthem. The presentation of colors is usually conducted by a military, Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), Coast Guard, National Guard, or Scout color guard. Book color guards and performers early. See our *Sample Event Program* in the Appendix.

Invite elected officials to speak: Identify bipartisan federal, state, and local elected officials who would be appropriate to speak at your event. These could include a U.S. Senator or House Member, Governor or Lt. Governor, or Mayor or County Executive. Aim for bipartisanship – national service has always had bipartisan support and the speakers should reflect this. If you are unsure about which elected officials to invite, or how

to go about it, contact engagement@cns.gov for assistance. Your invitation letter to an elected official should be formal. You can find a *Sample Invitation* in the Appendix.

Find an emcee: Consider inviting a local television anchor or other prominent leader to emcee your program. Having a TV anchor not only ensures professional delivery, but also can help increase visibility.

Keep everybody happy: Make sure your speaking order and seating arrangements follow proper protocol. Generally, the lowest ranking official should speak first; the highest ranking official last. Staff members of elected officials do not have to speak unless they are reading a letter or certificate, but should be recognized. If you have questions on speaking order, contact Tess Mason-Elder at tmason-elder@cns.gov.

Plan for accessibility: Arrange for an interpreter for the hearing-impaired and make sure that the seating area is accessible to people in wheelchairs.

Consider audio-visuals: If your budget and venue allow, incorporate video projection. Use videos or slide shows for pre-program, and incorporate video into the program. Consider a slide show including photographs from service in your state. We have CNCS video assets and the national service photo gallery available for you to use.

PRE-EVENT PREPARATIONS

1. **Build your event**
2. **Your big announcement**
3. **Prepare your speakers**
4. **Gather your assets**

Build your event: There are lots of logistics to consider when planning your event. Here are some:

- Secure PA system, pipe and drapes, chairs, the podium, signage, and flags for the event. You may determine you don't need all of these, but for a veterans event, you will probably want to secure flags.
- Will you need to build anything for the event (stage, risers for performers, press risers, etc.)? Make plans now to prevent a last-minute scramble.
- If you plan to have media, plan to order a mult-box (box with multiple outputs to connect audio) and press risers.
- Order directional signs, podium signs, and banners from the National Service Gear website (operated by Industries for the Blind) at http://nationalservicegear.org/programs.
- You can also download AmeriCorps and Senior Corps logos to print your own signage.

- Consider hiring a professional photographer and videographer to ensure that you get quality photos and videos from the event. If that isn't in your budget, seek out an experienced amateur photographer.
- Do you have space or is there a community partner where people can gather after the event? Give people a place to linger and talk about the program. They already have something in common, help them relive the good old days or swap stories with current members/volunteers. You may want to capture some of their stories for your wrap-up materials.

Your big announcement: Given all the attention focused on your event, this will be a great opportunity to make a big announcement. Begin thinking now about what you want to amplify – even if it means holding back an announcement until November. Here are a few ideas:

- Do you have a new grant that has not yet been announced? This is the perfect time to announce it.
- New Partnership: Announce a new public—private partnership to expand service opportunities or new partners that will allow you to provide more services to veterans and military families.
- Impact data: This will be a great time to amplify some of the accomplishments of AmeriCorps/Senior Corps for veterans in your state/community.

Prepare your speakers

- As you get close to the event, provide talking points for speakers and elected officials. See the *Key Messages* in the Appendix, or contact engagement@cns.gov for help.
- Help AmeriCorps members, alums, and Senior Corps volunteers polish their stories to ensure a smooth program.

Gather your assets

1. **Alert the media**
2. **Prepare your spokespeople**
3. **Prepare your reporters**
4. **Provide an early media availability period**
5. **Market the event**
6. **Tell us what's happening!**

Be sure to use all the traditional and social media channels at your disposal. Develop an event communications plan early on, and follow it.

Alert the media:

- *Develop a Pitch List:* Begin compiling a pitch list of reporters you want to cover your event. Gather contact info for assignment editors at TV and radio stations, print reporters who cover beats that pertain to veterans. Be sure to include prominent bloggers or online news sources in your pitch list.

- *Traditional media (print, TV, radio):* Contact your local media to pitch stories about your AmeriCorps members, Senior Corps volunteers, and programs using media advisories, press releases, and phone calls. Pitch stories and editorial commentaries in the month prior to the event. Get your event listed on community calendars.
- *Blogs:* Write blog posts to incorporate into your organization's blog. Place posts that you write in other blogs in your community like ones that are neighborhood or issue specific. Pitch your story to bloggers in your community that have influence with the audiences you are trying to reach.
- *Social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram):* create messaging that communicates your programmatic successes and that are appropriate for each of the social media platforms you would use.

Prepare your spokespeople: Determine who will be your lead spokesperson to talk to the media. Provide them with talking points and have them do some practice interviews. Prepare several AmeriCorps members and alums and/or Senior Corps volunteers to be ready to tell their stories to the media. Make sure all people interacting with the media have strong AmeriCorps/Senior Corps branding and are well-prepared with talking points.

Prepare your reporters: Provide a lot of background about AmeriCorps/Senior Corps and what your program has done in your community for reporters covering the event. We have a great story, make it easy for them to tell it. Make sure fact sheets, press packets, and programs are up to date and available for reporters and interested officials.

Provide an early media availability period: If your ceremony is taking place in the afternoon -- make sure you have a media availability period for program speakers and participants *before the event* to better facilitate deadlines for evening news broadcasts and print media.

Market the event: Use your email lists to ramp up excitement about the event as it nears. Also, don't ignore the power of social media to promote your event. Twitter and Facebook are effective tools for letting people know about your celebration. Ask your AmeriCorps members/Senior Corps volunteers to help promote your event too.

Tell us what's happening: It's important for CNCS headquarters to know what is happening around the country. That will help us deploy speakers and other resources, work with national media, and amplify what is taking place on this amazing day when we honor veterans.

- Be sure to give us details about your Veterans Day event on our tracking tool located on our National Veteran Corps Registration site.
- Share stories of service with us at engagement@cns.gov
- Share photos now and after the event! See our *Photo Guidance* in the Appendix.

MEDIA PLANNING BEYOND YOUR EVENT

In the last section we gave you tips on using traditional and social media to support your November 11 pinning ceremony. But this ceremony provides opportunities to promote AmeriCorps and Senior Corps above and beyond your event. This section provides tips on how to do that.

1. **Make a Plan**
2. **Gather Your Stories**
3. **Develop Your Pitches**
4. **Go Big and Wide**
5. **Be Creative With Social Media**

Make a plan: Don't wing it! Write down a plan for how you will generate media in the weeks before and after the Veterans Day event. As part of your planning, talk to the AmeriCorps/Senior Corps programs and organizations that are linked to veterans like the Blue Star Families, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion or a veterans hospital if you have one in your area to find out what else is taking place and how best to coordinate. Your plan should include:

- Timing of and tools for media outreach
- Target media list
- List of Senior Corps volunteer/AmeriCorps member and alum stories
- Data points you need to gather about accomplishments
- List of documents/invitations/signage that you will need
- Main messages
- Primary spokesperson
- Assigning responsibilities to specific individuals, i.e., who's doing what

Gather your stories: Start now to gather Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and alumni stories. It will take some time to find and polish their stories, so the sooner you start the better.

Here are some narratives that make for compelling human interest stories:

- **Pathway to Economic Opportunity:** Find a veteran whose service in AmeriCorps was a vehicle to continue serving, increase job skills, and find employment.
- **Helping Veterans Readjust to Civilian Life:** Veterans bring outstanding skills and leadership abilities that can be applied to problems on the home front. Highlight a returned Iraq or Afghanistan veteran who is serving again through AmeriCorps; or a Vietnam, Desert Storm, or Korean War veteran who is serving in Senior Corps.

- **Supporting Military Families:** Senior Corps volunteers and AmeriCorps members may have helped a family that was struggling with deployment. Having a beneficiary tell their story can be even more powerful than having a volunteer or member tell it.
- **Family:** Find someone who was inspired to join AmeriCorps by a parent who was in the military or a Senior Corps volunteer who decided to serve because a family member served in the military.

Develop your pitches: Show how AmeriCorps/Senior Corps is supporting veterans or military families in your community, region, or state. Pitch your local media with real-life examples of how AmeriCorps/Senior Corps are having an impact on those issues. Have impact data and beneficiary stories at your fingertips. Find out who covers your issue beat and prepare a member and someone they helped to be ready to tell their story.

Go big and wide: Think about reaching out to the full range of media outlets in your community.

- **Write a letter to the editor**. Letters to the Editor are one of the most popular parts of the newspaper. They are also easy to write and get placed. Keep them short and personal. Write about your AmeriCorps/Senior Corps experience, or thank AmeriCorps members/Senior Corps volunteers for their service. Ask people or organizations that your AmeriCorps members/Senior Corps volunteers have assisted to write letters relating their positive experiences.
- **Submit an op-ed column**. An op-ed can be written by a staff member, an AmeriCorps member, a Senior Corps volunteer, or someone who has benefitted from the service of your program, members, or volunteers. Check out the editorial pages of your local newspaper to learn how to submit yours.
- **Get on Radio or TV:** As you reach out to the media for your November 11 event, don't forget public affairs and talk shows on your local TV and radio stations. Contact your local public radio, talk radio station, or a popular radio show and ask to be a guest on one of their shows. Likewise, find the public affairs shows on your network affiliates and cable channels, including the public access channels.

Be creative with social media: Here is a list of suggestions and ideas to get you started. Don't forget to use #VetCorps so we can catch all your content!

- Have a blog? Consider having a program member, volunteer or alumni write guest posts for your platform. You might also find a recipient of your service who could pen a blog post.
- Use social media to build a crowd for your event. Share the link for your event and ask your Senior Corps volunteers, AmeriCorps members, and partners to share it as well.
- Host a Twitter chat and invite notable alumni, elected officials, or programs to participate. It can be centered around veterans and military family support
- Invite members of your community to answer a single question – What can we do to support veterans and military families?
- Most importantly: Use #VetCorps. We want to be able to share your content too!

MESSAGING

Below are key messages for your event. For guidance on how you can align your activities with our big picture goals throughout the year, please download our Guidance on Outreach and Engagement.

KEY MESSAGES

- **Working hand in hand with hundreds of local partners, the Corporation for National and Community Service has made supporting veterans and military families a priority in its AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs.**
- **AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers provide a range of critical services to support veterans and their families.**
- **Through AmeriCorps and Senior Corps, veterans are continuing to serve their country, applying their leadership abilities and skills to solve problems on the homefront.**
- **National service works for veterans and military families!**

Working hand in hand with hundreds of local partners, the Corporation for National and Community Service has made supporting veterans and military families a priority in its AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs.

- Our servicemen and women risk their lives to protect our freedom and way of life. As Americans, it is our solemn obligation to support them and their families when they come home.
- Serving those who served us, and engaging the talents of our veterans and military families, is a priority for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).
- Our commitment to veterans and their families is deep and it's twofold: We serve them, and we ask them to serve with us.
- Building on decades of experience, and consistent with the vision of the bipartisan Serve America Act, we are working with our partners to increase our support for the military community. Across the country, we invest millions of dollars and countless volunteer hours to this mission.
- On Veterans Day, November 11, 2015, we will honor veterans who are serving our country again through AmeriCorps and Senior Corps, as well as national service members whose primary focus is supporting veterans and military families by recognizing these dedicated individuals as members of the National Veteran Corps.
- Across the country, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs will hold events on and around Veterans Day to honor these dedicated individuals and bestow specially designed pins for their service.

AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers provide a range of critical services to support veterans and their families.

- National service members serve at hundreds of VA clinics and hospitals, veteran service organizations, and at nonprofits and public agencies that serve veterans. They carry out a range of vital services for veterans and military families, including connecting veterans to health, education, and employment benefits; providing job counseling; offering transportation to medical appointments, offering independent living assistance, and mentoring and tutoring children of military families.

- Last year, AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers served more than 780,000 veterans and military family members in every state. Our members and volunteers have served in more than 2,700 communities to support the veteran and military family community.
- National service members serve through a variety of organizations that serve veterans and military families, including American Legion Auxiliary, AMVETS, Blue Star Families, Code of Support Foundation, National Military Family Association, Operation Homefront, Points of Light, Student Veterans of America, Team Rubicon, and more.

Through AmeriCorps and Senior Corps, veterans are continuing to serve their country, applying their leadership abilities and skills to solve problems on the homefront.

- National service gives our heroes a new mission on the homefront, a pathway to opportunity, and a better transition to civilian life.
- Veterans bring the skills they acquired in the service to continue serving on the homefront through AmeriCorps and Senior Corps - responding to disasters, building homes, mentoring at-risk youth, and supporting other veterans and their families.
- Veterans of all ages have demonstrated a desire to serve their country both in and out of the service and this continues to be true for our youngest generation of veterans. A landmark report by Civic Enterprises found that younger veterans are eager to continue serving, and that veterans who volunteer have more successful transitions home than those who do not.
- Last year, more than 18,500 veterans provided leadership through AmeriCorps and Senior Corps service.
- AmeriCorps expands education and economic opportunity for veterans. Members gain valuable skills, leadership abilities, and college scholarship money to help them transition to civilian life and jumpstart their careers.
- Veterans know what other veterans have been through. They are highly effective when they use their skills and experience to support other veterans. That's why so many of our most successful national service programs are 'Vets helping Vets' – and why we are actively recruiting more vets to serve in our programs.

National service works for veterans and military families!

- National service is an innovative, cost-effective, and proven solution to many of the challenges facing our nation's heroes, from accessing benefits and services to utilizing the post-9/11 GI Bill to reintegrating to civilian life.
- CNCS is committed to supporting the veteran and military community and has increased its investment in recent years.
- As the federal agency charged with expanding impactful, community-based solutions to serve veterans and military families, we are poised to do more to continue and expand our efforts to serve and engage veterans.
- We are the only federal agency with access to such a vast network of grantees, community-based partners, national service members, and volunteers that improve the lives of Americans every day.

FAST FACTS: NATIONAL SERVICE AND VETERANS

- **18,684** *(you can say "more than 18,000")*
  Number of veterans who served as AmeriCorps members or Senior Corps volunteers in 2013.

- **783,498** *(you can say "nearly 800,000")*
  Number of veterans and military family members assisted by AmeriCorps and Senior Corps in 2013.

- **934** *(you can say "nearly 1,000")*
  Number of locations where veterans are serving with AmeriCorps and Senior Corps.

CNCS RESOURCES

Below are links to various resources from the CNCS website that can help you plan your event and communicate about how national service engages and serves veterans and military families. Please visit these links to learn what's available and how you might be able to use them.

Register Your Pinning Ceremony:
http://www.nationalservice.gov/veteran-corps-registration

How CNCS Serves Veterans and Military Families:
http://www.nationalservice.gov/focus-areas/veterans-and-military-families

Testimony:
Written Testimony of CEO Wendy Spencer Before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Videos:
National Service Works for Veterans and Military Families

AmeriCorps and Senior Corps Logos:
http://www.nationalservice.gov/newsroom/marketing/logos

President's Volunteer Service Award:
http://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov

National Service in Your State:
http://www.nationalservice.gov/impact-our-nation/state-profiles

Questions? Please email engagement@cns.gov.

APPENDIX

EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

Are you on track for November 11? Use this handy list to be sure the major components of your event are on schedule.

October 2015

- ☐ Select and book your venue for the event on November 11
- ☐ Designate event coordinator and/or event committee
- ☐ Develop your program and begin inviting speakers, including elected officials (see sample)
- ☐ Book emcee, color guard, musical entertainment, and other participants in event program
- ☐ Send a Save-the-Date with basic info on event to AmeriCorps programs, Senior Corps grantees, and stakeholders in your area
- ☐ Collect member and program stories, videos, and photos – and share them with CNCS
- ☐ Order official signage (such as banners, podium signs, etc.)
- ☐ Determine accommodations for guests or members with special needs, and secure those services
- ☐ Hire professional photographer and videographer
- ☐ Determine volunteer needs
- ☐ Register your event on the ceremony registration page: nationalservice.gov/veteran-corps-registration
- ☐ Start social media amplification (don't forget to use #VetCorps)
- ☐ Secure additional vendors for event (A/V, site build, chairs, buses, etc.)
- ☐ Conduct outreach to programs, alumni, members, corporate sponsors, and supporters
- ☐ Send a Save-the-Date to local and regional media
- ☐ Launch online registration for event and send invitations
- ☐ Determine what announcements you will make at the event
- ☐ Confirm speakers and other program participants (emcee, color guard, musical entertainment, sign language interpreters)
- ☐ Produce any A/V assets such as slideshows or videos
- ☐ Send second save-the-date to media and guests
- ☐ Prepare fact sheets and program
- ☐ Determine media spokespeople and train them
- ☐ Schedule and host walk-through of venue
- ☐ Write remarks for speakers
- ☐ Finalize event program
- ☐ Recruit volunteers

November 2015

- ☐ Train volunteers
- ☐ Finalize press materials
- ☐ Send media advisory
- ☐ Print program books
- ☐ On day of event, send and post press release

BRANDING REQUIREMENTS

The National Veteran Corps pinning ceremony is an ideal opportunity to ensure that every audience with which we connect knows that their community is benefiting from AmeriCorps and/or Senior Corps. This also is the moment to ensure all grantees are following the branding requirements.

All grantees should ensure that all digital properties, media materials, and other relevant items reflect their association with AmeriCorps or Senior Corps. Here are prime examples of how to execute the branding association:

Logo:

- The standard AmeriCorps and/or Senior Corps logo prominently displayed on websites, most notably on the home page and "about us" sections.

Language:

- The standardized language used to describe the program in press releases and other public documents will identify the organization's AmeriCorps and/or Senior Corps affiliation.

Gear:

- All gear for AmeriCorps-funded programs will include the AmeriCorps logo.
- All gear for Senior Corps-funded programs should include the Senior Corps logo.

Signage:

- All sites where AmeriCorps members are serving should have signs or posters that feature the grantee and AmeriCorps logos.
- All sites where Senior Corps volunteers are serving should have signs or posters that feature the grantee and the Senior Corps program logo.

SAMPLE ELECTED OFFICIAL INVITATION

Date

The Honorable [name]
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear [Title Name],

Every day in more than X communities like ours, [AmeriCorps members] [Senior Corps volunteers] are making a powerful impact on the most critical issues facing our communities. Whether improving schools, fighting poverty, rebuilding after disasters, providing health services, preserving the environment, or supporting veterans and military families, , [AmeriCorps members] [Senior Corps volunteers] get things done.

On November 11, 2015, there is a nationwide pinning ceremony for veterans who are now serving as [AmeriCorps members] [Senior Corps volunteers] and [AmeriCorps members] [Senior Corps volunteers] who are serving veterans and their families.

As part of this national event, the [PROGRAM] is hosting a Veteran Corps pinning ceremony at [TIME] on Wednesday, November 11, 2015 at the [VENUE] in [CITY]. We expect more than [ATTENDEES] including [AmeriCorps members, alums] [Senior Corps volunteers], nonprofit leaders, corporate champions, family members, and other partners to attend.

We would be honored if you could join us for this historic occasion as we celebrate the extraordinary impact veterans are still making in their communities and [AmeriCorps members] [Senior Corps volunteers] who are providing valuable services to veterans and their families. We invite you to give brief remarks at the event and will provide further details as we get close to the event.

We are grateful for your support of national and community service and hope you can join us for this celebration. To confirm your participation or request more information, please contact [NAME AND TITLE] at [ORGANIZATION] at [PHONE] or [EMAIL].

Warmest regards,

Executive Director
[PROGRAM]

SAMPLE EVENT PROGRAM

Veteran Corps Pinning Ceremony
November 11, 2015
Sample Program

Pre-Program (Video or slideshow of AmeriCorps members or Senior Corps volunteers in action)

Presentation of the Colors

National Anthem (Member, university, youth or church choir, professional singer, etc.)

Remarks of AmeriCorps member/alum or Senior Corps volunteer

- Story
- Introduction of emcee

Remarks by Emcee (can be local TV anchor, prominent leader/funder, etc.)

- Welcome, audience recognitions, person remarks
- Introduction of Mayor or elected official

Remarks of Mayor or elected official

- Honoring those who served and continue to serve

Remarks of Program Director

- Facts on accomplishments, thanking partners
- Introduction of next speaker

Remarks of U.S. Senator or House Member, other elected official, or sponsor/partner

- Thanking members for their service

Pinning Ceremony with program director, military personnel, elected officials, and sponsor

Closing Remarks by AmeriCorps member or Senior Corps volunteer

PHOTO GUIDANCE

We want to highlight what you do leading up to the 2015 National Veteran Corps Pinning Ceremony!

We are asking members and programs to send in your best picture(s) highlighting the great work you are doing in communities throughout the country. Capture a moment, face or place that defines national service and our service with and for veterans and military families. Here is what to do:

1. **Take pictures** of AmeriCorps member(s) and/or Senior Corps volunteer(s) in action. Make sure the AmeriCorps/Senior Corps logo and branding are prominent!

2. **Upload the best image** at WeTransfer.com and send it to engagement@cns.gov.
    a. Include **'EVENT PIC – [City, State]'** in the subject line.
    b. Provide a detailed caption along with names of people in photo.
    c. Follow naming convention for image file name: "AmeriCorps-City.State.jpg" or "SeniorCorps-City.State.jpg"

3. That's it! Your photo may be used on national service websites, social media and throughout the year in our publications.

Specifications:

• Send high-resolution images (*at least* 1000px or 150dpi)
• Images should be JPG, PNG, or GIF format
• Include AmeriCorps/Senior Corps branding in shots
• Use free service WeTransfer.com to upload and send images to engagement@cns.gov
• Include 'EVENT PIC – [State]' in email subject line
• Follow naming convention for image file name: "AmeriCorps-City.State.jpg" "or "SeniorCorps-City.State.jpg"
• Examples at photos.nationalservice.gov
• Technical questions? Contact engagement@cns.gov