

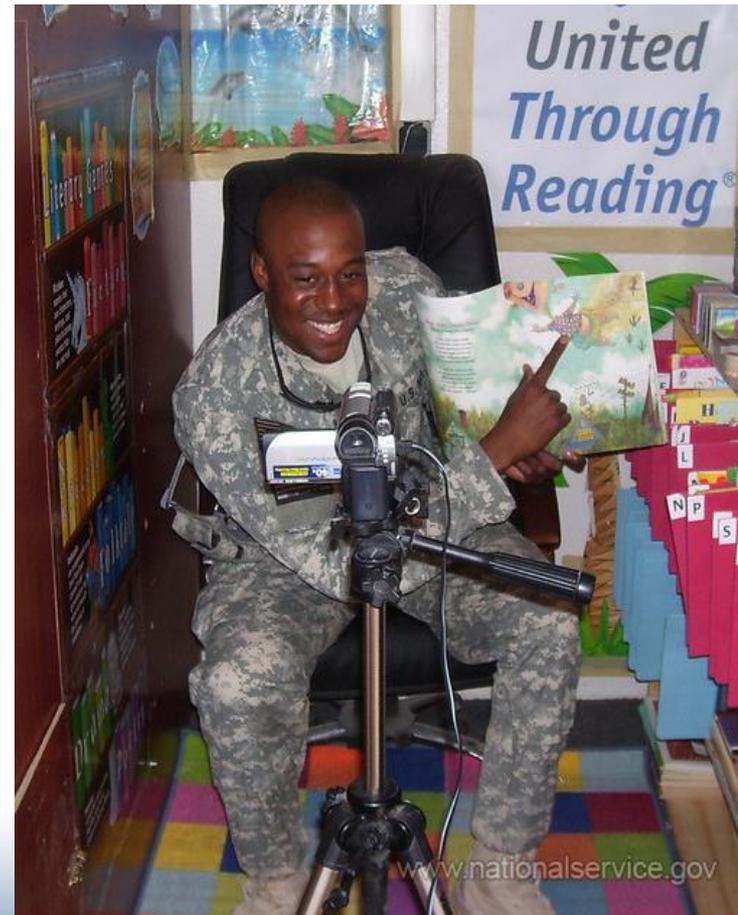


# Veterans and Military Families Focus Area



# CNCS 2015 Funding Priorities

- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Futures
- Economic Opportunity
- Disaster Services
- **VETERANS & MILITARY FAMILIES**



# What We Will Cover

- The History of the Veterans and Military Families (VMF) focus area
- The Serve America Act of 2009
- The Agency's Response
- Eight Issue Areas
- Current Status of the Focus Area

# A Brief History

## Edward M Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009

- [Sec. 2(a)(19)] “recognize the expertise that veterans can offer to national service programs, expand the participation of the veterans in the national service programs, and assist the families of veterans and members of the Armed Forces on active duty.”
- Gave CNCS authority to carry out national service programs through a **Veterans Corps** that identifies and meets unmet needs of veterans and members of the Armed Forces who are on active duty
- Identified **eight activities** to be carried out by Veterans Corps

# Issue Areas Identified by SAA

1. Services and Support to Military Families
2. Volunteer Opportunities for Veterans
3. Education and Certifications
4. Employment
5. Access to Benefits
6. Military Children
7. Transportation
8. Wellness and Other Support Services

# CNCS's Response to the SAA

CNCS included VMF in the agency's 2011 – 2016 Strategic Plan for the first time. The language closely adheres to the SAA:

- Increase the number of veterans and military families served by national service programs
- Increase the number of veterans and military families engaged as participants in national service programs
- Increase services to under-represented communities, including veterans and military families
- Increase health benefits from national service to veterans 55 and older
- Increase CNCS'S understanding of the veterans and military families community
- Identify best practices for expanding national service opportunities within the veterans and military families' community

# 1. Services and Support to Military Families

Promote community-based efforts to meet the unique needs of military families while a family member is deployed and upon that family member's return home.

- Providing education to families about both deployment and reintegration
- Facilitating communication between the family and deployed service member
- Supporting Welcome Home ceremonies and other events aimed at reconnecting the service member with his/her loved ones

## 2. Volunteer Opportunities for Veterans

Recruit Veterans, particularly returning Veterans, into service opportunities, including opportunities that utilize their military experience.

- **Civic Engagement and Reintegration**
  - Volunteering as a reintegration strategy
- **Volunteering As Pathway to Employment**
  - Volunteering as a way to learn new skills that translate into civilian employment
- **The Veteran-Serving-Veteran Model**
  - Recruiting veterans as volunteers to better engage veteran populations.

# 3. Education and Certifications.

Assist Veterans in developing their educational opportunities (including opportunities for professional certification, licensure, or credentials), coordinating activities with and assisting state and local agencies administering Veterans' education benefits.

- **The Student Veteran Corps Model**
  - Ensuring that veterans are integrated into college campuses and have high retention rates
- **Professional Training Programs**
  - Providing professional training programs, which may lead to professional certifications
- **Basic or Remedial Education**
  - Provide basic or remedial education training in various areas, including (among others) computer skills

# 4. Employment



Coordinate activities with and assist entities administering Veterans' programs with internships and fellowships that could lead to employment in the private and public sectors.

- **Education and Training**
  - Providing professional training programs leading to employment
- **General Employment Support**
  - Providing support to help veterans with resume writing, preparing for an interview, and understanding what to expect in the interview process itself.
- **Assistance with Finding Jobs.**
  - Providing help with finding work and, as importantly, keeping jobs.

# 5. Access to Benefits



Promote efforts within a community to serve the needs of veterans and active duty members, including helping veterans file benefits claims, and assisting federal agencies in providing services to veterans.

- Assisting veterans and spouses obtain their GI bill financial aid benefits, disability benefits, and health benefits
- Providing assistance in obtaining birth certificates, Social Security papers, and referrals to family counseling services, substance abuse, and group therapy services

# 6. Military Children



Provide mentoring to military children, and assist Veterans to develop mentoring relationships with economically disadvantaged students.

- Providing tutoring and mentoring, summer camps, after-school programs, academic assistance, fitness activities, enrichment activities for military children
- Developing cognitive and social skills, providing positive encouragement, and helping prepare young children get ready to attend school

# 7. Transportation

Develop projects to assist Veterans with disabilities, unemployed Veterans, older Veterans, and Veterans in rural communities, including assisting them with transportation.

- Assisting veterans in getting to the VA Hospital or other medical appointments
- Providing veterans with rides to job interviews, or to run routine errands, such as to the supermarket, Veterans' Center or barber shop

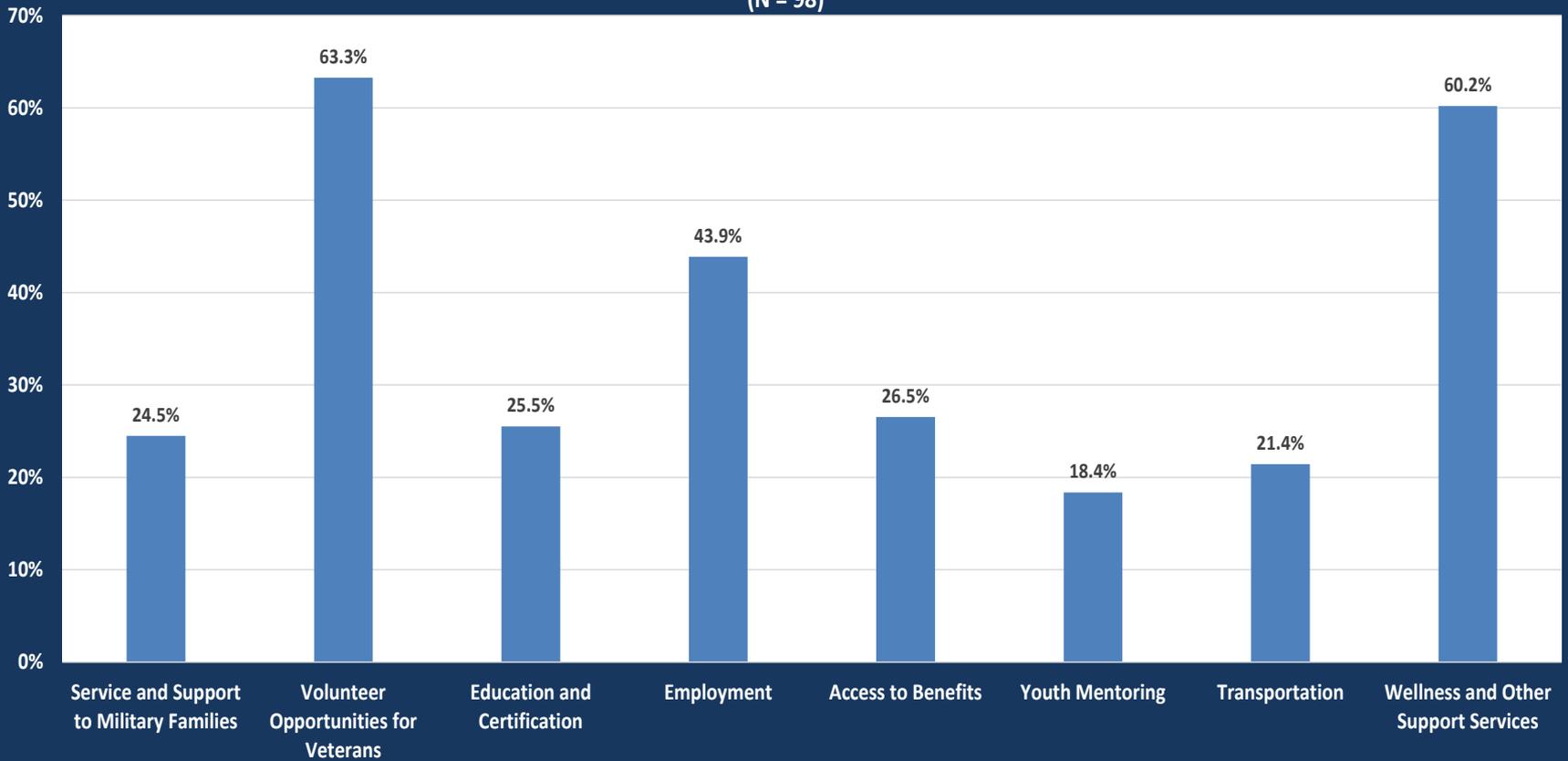
# 8. Wellness and Other Support Services

Establishing or augmenting programs that assist veterans and family members with access to legal assistance, mental health resources, employment counseling or training, education counseling or training, affordable housing, and other support services.

- **Affordable housing and homeless services**
  - Providing services to homeless veterans and efforts to rebuild or rehabilitate existing homes
- **Assistance accessing appropriate mental health care**
  - Connecting veterans to health resources to help cope with PTSD, TBI, military sexual trauma, and other health and behavioral health disorders
- **Legal assistance to veterans**
  - Assisting veterans with legal cases, case assessments and referrals and providing technical support to attorneys who have veterans clients



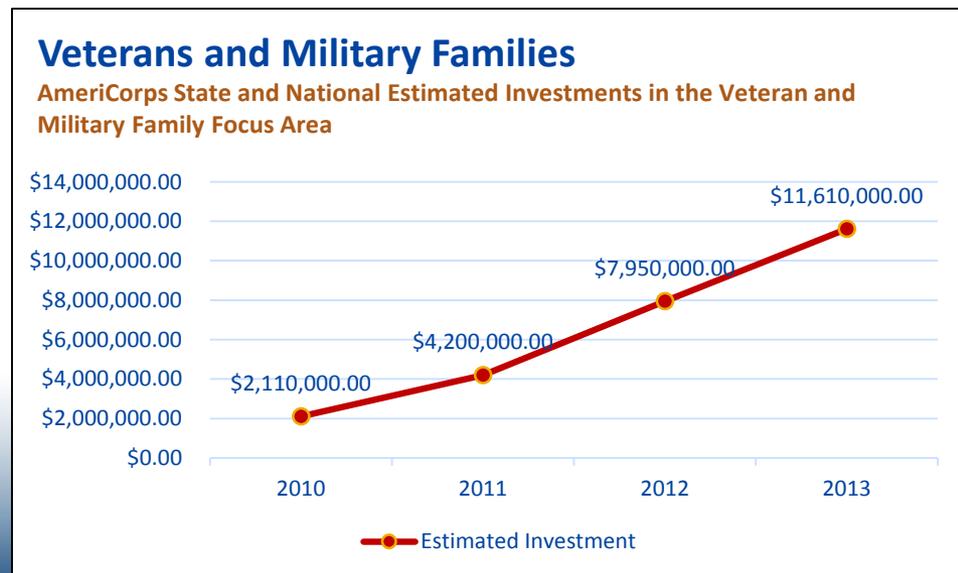
### VMF Engagement by Issue Area (N = 98)



Source: Inventory of National Service Programs that Engage Veterans and military Family Members. WESTAT. 10 Jan 2013

# The Current Status of the Focus Area

- More than **23,000** veterans are continuing to serve the country and their communities in AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs
- Thousands of AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers serving more than **780,000** veterans and military family members in every state



# Questions?



Thank You!

John J Lira

Veterans and Military Families Program Officer

[jlira@cns.gov](mailto:jlira@cns.gov)

202-606-6876