



AmeriCorps

Schools of National Service

Key Messages



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Schools of National Service is a way for higher education to attract top talent.

- Nearly 1.2 million people have served in AmeriCorps since 1993, and approximately 75,000 people serve in AmeriCorps each year.
- AmeriCorps alumni are more likely to attain a bachelor's degree or higher degree than the average American adult.
- 80% of alumni say AmeriCorps benefitted their career path.

AmeriCorps alumni are an asset to higher education.

- 90% of members said they gained new skills while in AmeriCorps.
- 80% of alumni feel confident they can create a plan to address a community issue and get others to care about it.

National service has a long history of partnering with the higher education community.

- AmeriCorps proudly partners with post-secondary education institutions across the country, engaging students in service and strengthening volunteerism. Together, they play a critical role in responding to some of our nation's greatest challenges while developing a culture of service on college campuses and in the communities they serve.
- A number of colleges and universities operate or host AmeriCorps programs, engaging thousands of men and women of all ages in service. Many of these AmeriCorps members are current college students who continue their own education as they meet community needs by serving as mentors, tutors, and more.
- For decades, the AmeriCorps program has helped Americans pursue their dream of higher education by making it more accessible and affordable.
- Each year, AmeriCorps members help students achieve their dreams of higher education through college counseling programs like College Possible, College Advising Corps, and others.
- After completing their service, all AmeriCorps members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award that can be used to pay for college or technical school or to pay back student loans, allowing them to further their own education.

COVID-19 has brought unprecedented challenges and inspired innovative solutions.

- Many students are weighing returning to or starting post-secondary education because of the COVID-19 pandemic and changes related to virtual learning.
- Rewarding students who have served vulnerable communities with a financial incentive to use their education award at participating institutions will encourage enrollment among 75,000 AmeriCorps alumni each year.
- In addition, participating institutions may wish to become an AmeriCorps program or a host site to allow students to serve with their institution; this opportunity may increase student loyalty to an institution while addressing tough community challenges.

HOW IT WORKS

How Will Higher Education Institutions Benefit from Schools of National Service?

Higher education institutions increase their applicant pool and establish service-mindedness as an institutional value. A [2018 study found](#) that American college students are more eager to serve than ever, with 61% of respondents indicating a willingness to participate in a national service program in exchange for a grant or financial assistance to help pay for college.

AmeriCorps members are ideal higher education candidates. Upon completing their tenure with AmeriCorps, alumni have a strong sense of purpose, believe that they can solve community problems, and bring their Segal AmeriCorps Education Award which can pay for qualified expenses or tuition. AmeriCorps alumni report that service influenced their career path, making them better prepared to take advantage of their education. They also bring their passion for service and leadership experience to campus.

COVID-19 has increased enrollment stress in higher education. A targeted partnership with AmeriCorps will increase access to nearly 1.2 million AmeriCorps alumni, increase the number of Eli Segal awards used at an institution, and incentivize AmeriCorps members to return to college after pursuing purposeful work during a gap or deferment year.

How Does an Institution Qualify as a School of National Service?

A post-secondary institution can qualify as a School of National Service by entering a written commitment to provide incentives to AmeriCorps members and alumni.

Options for Schools of National Service Include:

- Tuition matching for the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award (could be at the undergraduate or graduate level and could be specific to a school or program)
- Scholarship or fellowship to AmeriCorps alumni
- Priority points for admission consideration for AmeriCorps alumni
- In-state tuition for AmeriCorps alumni
- Cover expenses like books and supplies, room and board, or other personal costs like transportation for AmeriCorps alumni
- One-year enrollment deferrals for individuals to serve in AmeriCorps
- Academic credit for AmeriCorps experience
- Other incentives that vary by institution

How to Become a School of National Service Post-secondary institutions can become Schools of National Service by signing a commitment to incentivize national service through any of the initiatives listed above or one that you work with AmeriCorps to design. Once involved in the Schools of National Service program, participating institutions may sustain or expand their offerings to AmeriCorps members and alumni over time. For more information, visit [Schools of National Service](#) on our website or contact SegalAward@cns.gov.

KEY MESSAGES FOR TARGET AUDIENCES

Higher Education:

College administrators can leverage Schools of National Service to increase their applicant pool and establish service-mindedness as an institutional value. Using the 'School of National Service' tagline, higher education institutions can market themselves as schools that value community engagement and produce changemakers.

Financial aid offices, career centers, and work study offices can leverage the benefits of Schools of National Service such as accessible higher education at a lower cost, new post-graduate career paths, and marketable, meaningful work experience. The Schools of National Service program, partnered with [Employers of National Service](#), can increase post-graduate employment rates for undergraduate institutions.

The benefits of their university's Schools of National Service affiliation will create options for service-minded students from clubs and organizations such as Greek life,

volunteer organizations, and cultural affinity groups as they pursue internships, gap years, or post-graduate opportunities.

Prospective AmeriCorps Members/Students:

Schools of National Service is an effective recruitment tool for potential AmeriCorps members because it opens a host of options after AmeriCorps. Potential members who are considering continuing education after their term of service or are taking a gap year benefit from the opportunities offered by Schools of National Service institutions.

AmeriCorps members who completed their education before serving can leverage their Segal Education Award at a matching institution in order to pursue a graduate degree.

Prospective Parents:

Parents can gain understanding of the opportunities and pathways that AmeriCorps and Schools of National Service provides for their student. AmeriCorps is a concrete path for students to gain work experience while earning money for college, whether they are deferring for a year, considering a semester off, or planning their next steps post-graduation.

Parents will find that Schools of National Service incentives make it easier for high school graduates to take a gap year with AmeriCorps, allowing young adults to build their resumes, hone their leadership skills, and gain life experience before going to college. Completion of AmeriCorps service also provides a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to be used for qualified educational expenses or to pay student loans.

AmeriCorps Programs:

AmeriCorps Schools of National Service is a powerful recruitment tool, incentivizing AmeriCorps participation by providing prospective members with increased options after their term of service. Through Schools of National Service, AmeriCorps helps make college or other post-secondary programs more accessible for national service members and alumni.

Individual AmeriCorps programs can also help to recruit new Schools of National Service. Many AmeriCorps programs are linked to higher education institutions; for those that are, participation in Schools of National Service is a powerful recruitment tool for prospective and current students. This benefit and formal relationship could help both programs and colleges recruit AmeriCorps members and students, creating a win-win.