

Katy Hussey-Sloniker: Welcome to the AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation Evidence Webinar, Addressing Homelessness and Housing Insecurity in Kentucky Through National Service. We're glad you joined us today. My name is Katy Hussey-Sloniker and I'm the learning officer for the AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation. Next slide, please.

The 2024 shared report of the National Census counted over 770,000 people living in unsheltered locations or in a supportive housing setting, an 18% increase from the previous year. Individuals and families experiencing homelessness encounter threats to their personal safety, trauma, infectious and non-infectious diseases, risk of victimization, difficulties attending to work or school, and shortened life span. Meanwhile, communities incur the costs for shelters in supportive housing, emergency care, incarceration, and other financial costs associated with homelessness.

One way our AmeriCorps and its partners advance economic opportunities for Americans is through providing services that increase access to affordable housing and for those experiencing homelessness. Today, our webinar will highlight National Service in Kentucky, share the Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky's work to create pathways to housing and homeownership for Kentucky citizens, by leveraging national service through their Homes For All AmeriCorps interventions. And finally, we'll highlight the home for all AmeriCorps return on investment study conducted by ICF that found a positive return for every hundred dollar invested in Homes For All AmeriCorps.

Next slide, please. Today we're excited to have our presenters share their knowledge and experience on this topic. The session will be packed, so we're encouraging participants to place questions in the chat that will be compiled and answered in our Q&A discussion towards the end of the webinar. And with that, I would like to introduce Dr. Lily Zandniapour from the AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation to kick off our public release of the ROI report and webinar presentation. Thank you, Lily.

Lily Zandniapour: Hello. Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for joining us today. It is my pleasure to kick us off here. My name, as Katy said, is Lily Zandniapour. I'm a research and evaluation manager at AmeriCorps and an economist by training. I oversee a portfolio of projects at the agency that includes program evaluations and capacity building initiatives. This study and work we will talk about in this session falls in that portfolio. Before we dive into the topic of the session and introduce our return on investment project, and guest speakers, I want to provide you with some background about AmeriCorps and the Office of Research and Evaluation that I represent, and then pass it to my colleagues. Next slide, please.

As probably all of you know, AmeriCorps is the federal agency dedicated to national service and volunteering. The agency's mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. AmeriCorps administers a number of flagship programs such as

AmeriCorps State & National, AmeriCorps Seniors, Volunteers In Service To America or VISTA, and National Civilian Community Corps or NCCC. Through these programs, the agency provides opportunities to thousands of Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve the country, and to affect change in their communities while gaining valuable skills and experiences for themselves.

AmeriCorps supported programs are located across the country in areas covering urban, rural, and frontier communities, and they are designed to deliver direct and/or capacity building services. National service members and senior volunteers work with agency partners to deliver such services, meet critical community needs and solve local challenges. Community needs are primarily identified and solutions are developed at the local and state level. National service members and volunteers then engage in communities to address challenges identified and bring solutions to create positive impact where they serve. AmeriCorps supports initiatives in education, economic opportunity, healthy futures, disaster services, environmental stewardship, and veterans and military families. Now let me tell you a little bit about the Office of Research and Evaluation that I represent. Next slide, please.

The Office of Research and Evaluation, or ORE for short, at AmeriCorps promotes the development, dissemination, and use of research and evaluation evidence to support and strengthen the agency's programs, operations, policies and investments. AmeriCorps has used performance measures for outputs and outcomes since the inception of the agency. However, starting about 15 or so years ago, more emphasis was placed on the use of rigorous evaluations to systematically assess how impactful the agency's work and investments are for members and volunteers, supported programs, organizations, and communities we serve. Over time, these efforts have resulted in the emergence of a robust base of evidence about what works across the five domains that make up AmeriCorps ecosystem of impact as you see in the visual on this slide. Next slide, please.

The intentional evidence building AmeriCorps promotes led to the agency then developing a research agenda tied to its strategic plan and focused on the financial return to our investments. We started asking questions like, can we monetize the benefits that our supported programs generate? Can the cost of the program per participant or otherwise be estimated? Can we estimate the return on investment for the programs we implement or support? Are the investments we are making in service and communities sound and worthwhile? Are we generating good value for the country, the government, and the public? This is where return on investment project was born. In today's webinar, we will introduce you to the return on investment project that our office leads, and then specifically go over what the return on investment is for the program that addresses homelessness and housing insecurity at a state level, based on a recent commission study. With that, I will now turn it over to my colleague Emily McDonald, who manages this work with ORE. Thank you.

Emily McDonald:

Thank you, Lily. Good afternoon. My name is Emily McDonald and I am a research analyst here at AmeriCorps. And as Lily said, I have the privilege of managing this exciting effort to build evidence around the cost-effectiveness of AmeriCorps programs and intervention areas. Next slide, please. So return on investment studies estimate the amount of benefit that a program generates for each unit of cost. So an ROI estimate tells you what the payoffs are for each dollar of investment. So the too long, don't read is, this is the bang for the buck. So to develop an ROI study, researchers capture program benefits and monetize them. Costs also must be measured, including contributions from various funding streams. So one of the important things about ROI estimates is that they make comparisons possible. An ROI for one program can be compared to the ROI of another program, and then that comparison works if the programs are similar, and it also works that the programs do very different types of interventions.

So the ability to make comparisons can inform policy and our investment decisions. It's also important to remember that ROI estimates are based on the measurement of benefits and costs. As programs get better at measuring benefits and costs, ROI estimates can change and they can become more reliable. So it's not just a one-time measurement and then you're done studying the area. These types of measurements should keep evolving and being updated. And it's also true that not every program is necessarily ready for an ROI analysis. So ROIs depend on prior research to effectively monetize the results. So for example, you can show that kids' educational performance improved in a program, but unless you have prior studies that link that kind of improvement to something like lifetime earnings, there's no way to say how much improvement is worth the dollars. Worth in dollars, I'm sorry. So therefore, when a program is ROI ready, it is a real testament to their commitment to building evidence about their interventions, the communities served and the service members themselves. Next slide, please.

So the effort to build ROI analysis into national service has evolved over time. There was a 2013 study by Columbia University that looked at all youth and senior based national service in the US. In 2020, ICF looked at the return on investment of more than two dozen AmeriCorps programs combined, and then there were macro studies that looked across programs and interventions. So starting in 2019, AmeriCorps began the ROI studies project, which is where we are today, and that's an initiative to estimate the return on investment for specific programs that rely on national service. And ICF is supporting this multi-year effort. So what happens is first they review AmeriCorps National Service, our national service portfolio for ROI ready programs, and then they select programs for a deeper look at ROI feasibility, and then they develop multiple ROI studies for us every year. Next slide, please.

So this slide just gets bigger and bigger over time, which is very exciting. We wanted to quickly show you the programs studied that are under this current project. So you can see the broad array of programs studied. The programs represented here cover all AmeriCorps focus areas. So in disaster services, we

studied SBP, which is a national organization that engages in disaster recovery efforts across the country. We have five studies that look at programs and economic opportunity, including Homes For All, a program of the Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky, which is why we're here today.

Five studies have looked at education programs. They range from a study of a preschool home instruction program, to a program all the way helping young adults access college and succeed there. In environmental stewardship, the ROI studies project has looked at five different programs. An ROI study published late last year, estimated the return on ancestral lands conservation core services that preserve sites of cultural and historic significance to Native American communities. In healthy futures, three studies have looked at return on investment. Most recently, a study on crime reduction efforts and other activities of the AmeriCorps Urban Safety Program in Detroit. And finally, for veterans and military families, the project study at the Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs VetCorps Program. And that program engages AmeriCorps members to help veterans and their family members take advantage of educational benefits and services earned through their military service.

Next slide, please. So I want to zoom in quickly and turn our lens to housing within the ROI studies project. So we have two other studies that address housing issues in different ways within this portfolio of work. So first, Habitat for Humanity AmeriCorps was studied several years ago. That segment of Habitat's work that engages AmeriCorps members, provide affordable housing through new construction and rehabilitation, as well as organization's other activities in support of affordable homeownership. That return on investment analysis estimated Habitat for Humanity's AmeriCorps ROI to be 62 cents to \$2.61 per funder dollar.

Another study conducted last fiscal year, looked at the return on investment on weatherization work by AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps, also known as NCCC teams. So, they weatherized homes, increasing energy efficiency and producing environmental economic and health benefits. And the ROI analysis for total benefits per federal dollar estimated NCCC weatherization projects to have an ROI between a negative \$2.96 return, up to \$7.60. So for both of these programs, the programs produce benefits that accrue over time, which is why the programs pay off in the long term. And then excitingly, the Homes For All ROI study is the first in the project to look at national service work that directly addresses homelessness. And we'll introduce you to that program, that study shortly. Next, I'm pleased to hand it over to our commission partners at Serve Kentucky, Carie Kizziar. Thank you.

Carie Kizziar:

Hello everyone. I am Carie Kizziar. I am the director for Program Development Serve Kentucky and very excited to be here, and what we consider to be one of our very best programs in the state, which is Homes For All, and a longtime partner or actually longest AmeriCorps program in the history of Kentucky. So we're very excited that this. Next slide, please. I'm just going to give you a quick

overview of Serve Kentucky, and then I'm going to introduce you to our Homes For All and HHCK team, so they can tell you a little bit more about the work that they do. But as I said, we consider them a very valuable program. We hold up a lot of the work that they do with our other programs, who are new and trying to build their programs. And so, we're very excited that they've had this opportunity.

Next slide, please. So Kentucky is a small but mighty commission. We have 19 operational programs. We have two public health core programs and six planning grant programs for this current 24 cycle. Next slide, please. In Kentucky, we are big on national service. We have 13 national direct programs. Last year we had seven NCCC teams come to Kentucky. We have 23 state programs. There are 20 VISTA programs and 21 senior programs. So all together between volunteers and members serving in Kentucky, we have 4,662. We have about 750 service locations across all of these. And we're looking at a total investment of \$27.7 million in Kentucky, which is huge. What I'll say is, one of the things that I love about Homes For All is that they're one of our few programs that does economic opportunity. A majority of our programs are education based, but we are starting to grow more programs that are non-education based. And so, Homes For All will be one of those models that we hold up and how other programs that operate client-based services can operate. Next slide, please.

So as I said, most of our programs are education based, so we have 74,000 youth served, so that's children that are getting tutoring, college access, and other school services like mentoring. Our Housing and Homeless Coalition, their Homes For All program does a lot of housing services. We also have a program called Christian Appalachian Project AmeriCorps, and they do a lot of housing repair, but not housing counseling services or anything like that. So a majority of their housing work is just weatherization and maybe building ramps for homes to be accessible.

We have no veteran programs, but we have several programs that actually serve veterans. And you can see those numbers here. Of our students served, we are, one of our programs is in the largest school district in Kentucky, and there are actually three programs working in that area also supporting that very large school district. Excuse me. And then, one of the other things that we do a lot in Kentucky is food, food insecurity. A lot of our youth programs and our school-based programs also supplements weekend food. And so, we have a lot of programs that are helping distribute food to students and/or clients, maybe even in the homeless shelters. And so, we have a lot of, in our last group that does senior services, they provide food for seniors. Next slide.

Okay, so now as I said, I'm going to introduce Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky and their Homes For All AmeriCorps program. And like I said before, this is what we consider one of our premier programs and are very, very proud to have them as part of our group. And one of my favorite things about Homes For All is they also do a lot of advocacy work, and they don't just do their

AmeriCorps work, which is immense, but they also do a lot of advocate work for their clients through the legislature and through awareness. I love the work that they do. I'm going to let them introduce themselves. We have Adrienne, Holly, and Emily. Ladies, if you would like to introduce yourselves.

Holly Dennis:

Thanks, Carie, and thank you AmeriCorps and ICF for having us here. With us presenting for our Homes For All AmeriCorps program, we have Adrienne Bush, who is the executive director of the Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky. I'm going to shorten that down from here on out and just say HHCK. And I'm Holly Dennis. I am our AmeriCorps program director. And then, also we have a current AmeriCorps member, Emily Patrick, who you will be hearing from today as well. Next slide, please.

I wanted to share this slide. So our program's little catchphrase that we use is building homes and building opportunities. So of course our primary focus is our moving and transitioning someone into permanent housing. That can look different and we want it to be safe, and affordable, but we're also building opportunities for our AmeriCorps members. We know that their time with us is not forever, but their experience within our AmeriCorps program is going to lift them up to whatever's next for them. It's also, again, building opportunities for the most vulnerable neighbors that we have across Kentucky. Next slide, please. I'm going to hand it on over to Adrienne.

Adrienne Bush:

Yep. Yeah, I'll jump in here and just say that HHCK. We are a statewide nonpartisan policy organization. We have a unique perspective on administering housing assistance to people experiencing homelessness, because we do that. Our housing services team administers several federally funded programs, as well as our Homes For All AmeriCorps and VISTA programs. Our primary mission is to eliminate the threat of homelessness, fulfill the promise of safe, decent, affordable housing, and we are also authorized by the Kentucky Revised Statute to convene and staff the Kentucky Interagency Council on Homelessness, which is the statewide homeless policy and planning body. And a couple of things about us. We abide by a couple of principles, that housing is a human right and that housing is what solves homelessness. Next slide.

Some of our programs. So, today we're focusing on National Service, our AmeriCorps State, and our AmeriCorps VISTA programs. As I mentioned, we have a couple of supportive housing programs through the continuum of care, as well as remaining emergency rental assistance. And as Carie mentioned, we do a significant amount of education and awareness building, and policy work with our state legislature, our state executive branch with Kentucky's Congressional delegation. And so, that is something that is really, that I focus on, where Holly focuses more on the national service and running a high quality program there. A couple of notes for you. We have a couple of components in all of our programming. We want to focus on evidence-based practice. So when we're talking about homeless services for our members placed at different sites, making sure that we're providing housing with services, with wraparound supports, not just housing alone.

If there are different areas of best practice in single family housing development or housing counseling, those are the practices that we encourage and train our members on. And then, also as a nonprofit organization, we too are very focused on return on investment. And so, we were very honored to be selected as part of this ROI project that AmeriCorps is undertaking, because we want to see, we feel like we are stewards, where we do have federal dollars and where we do have trust of partners across the Commonwealth. We want the best returns. We were very pleased to see that the return on investment analysis indicates that there is a high ROI associated with the Homes For All program. Next slide.

All right, and just an overview of housing in Kentucky, because sometimes we are viewed as a more affordable state than maybe some other states, but we do have our housing challenges. And so, I wanted to share with you an analysis that was done by Boeing National Research at the behest of our state housing finance agency in 2024, that shows that we have a deficit of a little bit over 200,000 homes. This is our housing supply gap. And really, from our perspective, we are laser focused on the left-hand side of that graphic. We are concerned about housing for people who are between zero and 30% of area median income. Some of our partners, some of our Homes For All sites may be working with folks up to 80% area median income, more moderate income, or even 120% area median income. But the bottom line is, Kentucky is short across the board in all of these areas, in both the rental market, as well as the single family homeownership for sale market.

If we do nothing from a policy perspective and conditions remain the same, we can expect this housing supply gap to grow over the next five years to nearly 300,000 homes. And so, that is why we really like the Homes For All model, because communities can work with us. We can provide some additional capacity for rehabbing our existing homes, building new ones, helping folks experiencing homelessness, buying rental housing, etc. Holly will get more into that.

But just so you know that we are laser focused on trying to close the housing supply gap from the view of the lowest income Kentuckians first. With that, next slide, and I will turn it back to... Oh, no, I will not. Sorry. I have one more slide. And that is just a point about rising housing costs. The housing supply shortage is what is driving up rent across the board, and that is resulting in Kentucky becoming less and less affordable. We work closely with the National Low Income Housing Coalition on our policy initiatives.

They do a report annually called Out of Reach. I encourage you all to check that out. It has, every state has its own report and it really gets into what does it take for a household to be able to afford a two-bedroom home to rent. That is the state housing wage that is then quantified. When I started at the Homeless and Housing Coalition, Kentucky was number 50, so we were at the bottom of the list. We were considered pretty affordable, but as you can see, we have moved up to number 38 in 2024.

And so, that is an indication that we are becoming less affordable. And again, we can tie this back to our housing shortage. What it ends up happening is that you have one in four Kentuckians paying more than 30% of their income toward housing. And that six out of 10 extremely low income renters are paying more than 50%. And we also see that a little bit over 5,000 Kentuckians were experiencing homelessness during the point in time count in 2024. Next slide. And with that, I will really turn it over to Holly to talk more about Homes For All.

Holly Dennis:

Thank you. Okay. So Homes For All AmeriCorps. Our primary focus is to address the affordable housing crisis through housing development, repair, and provision of housing and homeless services. So members with our Homes For All AmeriCorps program, they will be serving at housing non-profits around the state. They can be providing housing and homeless services. Those services can include many different types of activities. They could be building and helping with that new home construction with their site. They could be doing home repairs to that existing housing that we have to make it up to code, and make it safe for living. We have programs that provide housing-focused case management to the clients and individuals that they are serving. We have homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing partners, homeownership counseling, so getting people to that homeownership status if that's where they're at within their housing situation. And also, just housing navigation.

With that housing navigation, we may be having members that are working directly with landlords, they may be doing some case management or even recruiting new landlords to partner with some of those housing programs that their sites offer for affordable housing. I also just wanted to take this moment to also talk about the other program that we operate here at HHCK. Even though the ROI study was not conducted on our AmeriCorps VISTA program, I did just want to do a quick shout out that we do operate a AmeriCorps VISTA program. We have had our program since 2016. It is also a statewide program. Members within our VISTA program. They're focusing on activities such as grant writing, fundraising, program development, and improvement. They could be identifying new systems, they could be providing community outreach, volunteer management, volunteer recruitment and volunteer training. I think that it's important to mention our Homes For All VISTA program, because this indirect work is helping organizations build their capacity, so that they are providing services that are more effective and efficient for people to reach their housing goal. Next slide, please.

This slide covers our program's accomplishments during the '22, '23 program year. During the ROI study program year, we had 32 members serve with our Homes For All State & National program. We had 20 partner organizations across the Commonwealth of Kentucky. We had nine members after their year of service with Homes For All, they were hired on directly by their service sites. So now they are a full-time employee where they completed either one to two, to three years of service. After the '22, '23 program year, we had 12 members return for another year of service for the '23, '24 program year.

I think that those correlate to the ROI study, and it's really showing the impact of someone's experience within our Homes For All program and the development that they have within themselves to get to that next step to where they're going. Some other accomplishments for the '22, '23 program year, our Homes For All State National members as a whole, we served a little over 1500 individuals. They received case management services. We had 18 households that were repaired to make them safe to be lived in. We had 171 households that received eviction prevention services. So what that means is they may have received an eviction notice or about to receive an eviction notice, and our members help 171 households remain housed. We also had 354 households, they either maintain or transition into permanent housing during the '22, '23 program year. Next slide, please.

This graphic was one that we made. I wanted to also use this time to show where we are at throughout the state of Kentucky. So these are all of our partner organizations that work with the Homes For All program, State & National program, and also our VISTA program. So, again, we are statewide and this just kind of, I wanted to use this time to give a little shout-out to our partners, because if it was not for them, the Homes For All program would not be as strong as we are.

Next slide, please. These are just some quick snapshots from times that we are with our members. So as you can see, maybe we are doing a project and we are cutting the limbs down, because they're so overgrown someone can't get to their porch or their sidewalk to get to their house. Maybe we are getting some appreciation from our governor during AmeriCorps week. And then, the last picture again is just showing us out, putting up the walls for a new home for a flood survivor from the '22 floods that impacted Eastern Kentucky.

Next slide, please. So now we are going to talk a little bit about Emily's story. The questions that you see on the presentation are the questions that we are asking Emily to answer for us. A little bit about Emily before I hand it over to her. Emily is currently serving in her second year of service with the Homes For All program. Well, I'm sorry. Now I'll hand it over to Emily to answer these questions, to kind of show how Homes For All has kind of played a part in where she's at now.

Emily Patrick:

Hello, everyone. My name is Emily Patrick. I'm currently serving with HHCK. I'm a direct service member. I work with the homeless directly. I had first found out about AmeriCorps through my case manager when I was facing homelessness in 2022. And then, once I graduated the program, she was going to also serve at HHCK. So she had told me to apply to AmeriCorps at the transitional home that I used to be at. And I did and I loved it, and I loved helping my clients, and I loved being able to help those who helped me. So I decided to give back and I have been doing it ever since, and I couldn't imagine doing anything else, because it is been wonderful. Holly, I'm going to hand it over to you.

Holly Dennis: Okay. Emily, if you, yeah, leave your camera on please. Can you answer a little bit about how AmeriCorps impacted you and your plans for your future?

Emily Patrick: Yes. I'm currently working on my bachelor's degree in social work and it has helped me so much with school, including the education award and just the real world experience. That has been wonderful for me. And just living day to day with helping people to know resources, you find out resources to help those in need.

Holly Dennis: Thank you so much. Next slide, please. Okay. On this slide we just wanted to share the social media channels that we use. We highlight our members on our Facebook and our Instagram, so if you would like to give us a follow, we would love that. We also share information regarding housing, not just within Kentucky, but also nationwide through the HHCK Facebook and other social media channels that our organization has. Our YouTube channel, we record any of their trainings that we offer our AmeriCorps members through the years. So if you're interested, you can hop on there as well and look at some of the things that we've offered throughout the years to help build our members up for whatever's next for them. Next slide, please.

Here's our contact information. So our program email is the first email you'll see. There's my email address, also our executive director, Adrienne Bush's, and then our HHCK website. So feel free to do some research if you would like to learn more about Homes For All or the other types of work that we do at HHCK. If you have any questions about the Homes For All AmeriCorps program, feel free to reach out to me. Next slide, please. Okay. Now I would like to introduce the team that conducted the return on investment study for the Homes For All AmeriCorps from ICF. Now you are going to hear from Ben and Dominic. Thank you.

Benjamin Miller: Thank you very much Holly, and it's a pleasure to be here. It's a real privilege for us at ICF to be able to support AmeriCorps in this ROI study project. We've studied, as Emily pointed out, a wide array of programs, each of them interesting and groundbreaking to study in their own rate. I also wanted to start just by thanking HHCK. HHCK worked with us to help us understand Homes For All and their important work, and provided a lot of program data and other resources to help us rigorously monetize the impacts that the program has, and that enabled us to do the ROI study. So thanks to HHCK for that. Next slide, please.

This slide is a little bit of a review of what HHCK presented about the Homes For All program, but just to emphasize some of these points, the Homes For All program provides housing-related services to individuals and families across Kentucky who are experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, or are in search of affordable homeownership opportunities. And you can see here in the smaller bullets, a wide array of activities that Homes For All AmeriCorps members support, everything from new home construction and home repairs to eviction prevention, connect activities, case management activities, other

activities to connect people experiencing homelessness to affordable permanent housing. Next slide, please.

Part of our approach for these return on investment studies is to narrow in on a segment of outcomes from the programs we're studying that we can rigorously monetize. And by monetize we mean measure and calculate a monetary value for the impact of the program. And that enables us to put those values into the ROI calculation that Emily outlined at the beginning of the webinar today. In this case, we zeroed in using various data sources on Homes For All's impacts, connecting individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent affordable housing. So we'll show you in a few moments how we measured and put a dollar value on that impact of connecting people experiencing homelessness to permanent affordable housing. And in addition, we focused on the prevention of evictions and the measurable monetizable benefits of preventing those evictions.

I won't go deep into AmeriCorps VISTA. Holly spoke really eloquently about the important contributions that AmeriCorps VISTA makes for HHCK and the work that VISTA members do in HHCK partner organizations. So AmeriCorps VISTA wasn't part of the ROI study itself, but we don't per minute forget the important contributions that VISTA members are making in terms of the grant writing, fundraising, volunteer recruitment, and other things that VISTA does.

Next slide, please. We wanted to review what data sources and research results we used to put together the return on investment study. And a key element, a key data source was programmatic data from HHCK. HHCK had good records of placements in permanent affordable housing of people that were experiencing homelessness and also great records on evictions that were prevented as a result of their program's work. So that was really I think, the bedrock of our analysis. To that programmatic data, we also added in and used publicly available data on homelessness, participation in homelessness programs and homelessness program success rates. And a lot of that data was from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In addition, we also used research results and the paper, if you have a chance to read through it, outlines how findings in the research helped us to monetize the impacts of Homes For All. There are three particular areas that this was particularly helpful. One is figuring out what increased earnings people enjoy if their eviction is prevented. There are research results that show that if you avoid eviction, you avoid unemployment. And we were able to use those research results in our analysis. Similarly, there are findings that connect increased earnings for families that have been placed in permanent affordable housing. And then finally, there are research results on reduced government spending on public assistance, corrections, health care programs when there's reduced homelessness. So all three of those are examples of research results that we're able to use as part of the analysis. At this point, I'll turn the presentation over to Dominic Modicamore, our lead technical analyst, and he

will talk a little bit about the specific benefits we analyzed as part of this study. Dominic, over to you.

Dominic Modicamore: Thanks, Ben, and good afternoon. It's a pleasure to be presenting today on this great program. Next slide, please. I'm just going to go over the program benefits. Ben talked a little bit about the methodology we use to develop these benefits, and I'll go into the actual benefits and also the ROI results. So the Homes For All program leads to monetary benefits for the individuals and families the program serves, and for AmeriCorps members and the government. The research shows that stable housing is associated with increased employment outcomes, which leads to increased earnings. This is a result of eviction prevention and connecting previously homeless individuals and families to housing.

So Homes For All AmeriCorps members benefit from additional lifetime earnings from increased educational attainment associated with the education awards they receive, and from greater employment outcomes associated with the experience and skills they gain while serving. And we gathered data from a AmeriCorps alumni study that showed that these benefits are very prevalent for the AmeriCorps members. The government benefits monetarily from reduced spending on public assistance, corrections and healthcare programs due to reduced homelessness, and improved employment outcomes. And also, they benefit from increased tax revenue as a result of the improved employment outcomes of both the individuals served and the AmeriCorps members. Next slide, please.

So this shows the results of the ROI. We've got three different scenarios that encompass different timeframes. The short-term scenario is just a one-year benefit. So the year following the program year that we studied, the medium term looks at accumulation of 15 years of benefits, and the long term is 30 years. So the ROI, we're going to focus on the medium term, but if we look at the range of benefits, the ROI estimated that the Homes For All programs ROI is between \$2.87 and \$8.68 for every \$1 in funding. So this is a pretty significant ROI. The return on each dollar of federal funding for the program. So this just looks at the federal funds that were provided, ranges between \$3.52 for every dollar of federal funding to \$10.65 for every dollar of federal funding in the long term.

So the program, as you see, provides benefits in all three scenarios. And sometimes it's actually not that often that we see ROIs in the first year prior to the program, because often it takes time for the benefits to accumulate and then recover the amount of funding, and then become positive. But in this case, the Homes For All program sees immediate impact even in the first year. So the magnitude of the ROI results are driven by the benefits of the program that Ben had mentioned. This includes the increased earnings by the individual served by Homes For All and by the AmeriCorps members, and also the decreased cost to government due to the reduction in homelessness and increased revenue from the increased earnings. And that they realize those increased revenues through

additional income taxes, social security taxes, Medicare taxes, Medicaid, that sort of revenue generation, and they see a large savings in public assistance programs as well. So this is a very, very robust program that returns, that has a very positive return on its investment even in the short term. So I will now turn it back over to Carie Kizziar.

Carie Kizziar:

So I just want to talk to you guys a little bit about the way that Serve Kentucky sees this ROI and how it can benefit our state. As I said before, this Homes For All program is considered one of our best programs, not only because they're the longest running program we have, but they build systems and they do work that no one else in our state does. And so, I was really excited, and I'll admit a little bias here, we stole their original program director. She's now one of my program officers, because they're so awesome. But for us in Kentucky, the way that I see even this return on investment study helping us, one, explain, for example, our executive director is in DC right now making visits on the hill, and talking about what a great program AmeriCorps is and why it needs to be funded.

And so, this kind of study gives him something to take and say, "This is what AmeriCorps can do."

And we can do that in our state as well. So we can go to our state legislators and our national state legislators to say, "Here's how AmeriCorps benefits, and this is just one program. We have 20, this is the kind of work that we can do."

And so, we're hoping that having this Return on investment study will help us maximize our AmeriCorps funding by using the member related data to secure additional AmeriCorps dollars, enhance and expand our opportunity to reach Kentuckians across the state. It also can highlight our statewide impact. So we have, Kentucky is one of those weird places that has a ridiculous number of counties, and we have 120 counties. And thanks to Homes For All being a statewide program, we have AmeriCorps members in a hundred of those 120 counties. And so, they help expand services in counties where we might not otherwise have members, and that doesn't include the neighboring counties they may serve. So a organization that Homes For All Works with might serve three or four counties that we don't count. We just count where the AmeriCorps member is actually doing their service. So it's very likely that every county in Kentucky is covered by some sort of AmeriCorps member.

And then, we want to use this material to help engage stakeholders and partners. And based on just the way AmeriCorps works and the potential for funding to always be on the chopping block, we're trying to find ways to diversify the work that we can do through AmeriCorps by helping our programs find other people that can support their work. And so, having studies like this allow us to say, "Hey, look, here's what AmeriCorps brings to the table. What can you bring to the table for us too, to help promote the other things that AmeriCorps is doing and provide better services?"

And obviously just, it's a great workforce development program. As Holly said, a lot of their members go on to become employed by the organization that they were serving with. But I think most importantly probably is the opportunity that they get through the Education Award to further their education. And so, while they may not end up working at the service site where they served, they're likely going to end up going to school and getting a social services, a social work degree, which then they can go out and get better employment. So all of these things that the ORI study does for us is just help promote AmeriCorps as one, a workforce development program and two, a change maker in Kentucky, and that when we bring federal dollars to Kentucky, we spend them appropriately and we get a good return on our investment.

And so, I think that if any of you are ever wondering how you could do this work, I would highly recommend this, because I think it's going to move us forward in a way that we've been trying to figure out how to do for quite some time. That's all I have. Next slide. I think we now are going to do a Q&A session. And so, our panelists that include, I don't know if Adrienne and Holly, and Benjamin and Dominic, and Emily, and Lily and I, we're all going to hang out here and give you guys an opportunity to ask us some questions. Does anybody else-

Emily McDonald: Thank you so much, Carie.

Carie Kizziar: There we go, Emily. Okay, great.

Emily McDonald: All right. So I just want to welcome our panelists back and we have, our first question is from Elaine, and I believe this is probably for the Homes For All program. Elaine asked, "Are any of these programs specifically targeted at addressing college student housing insecurity? And if yes, can you share any examples?"

Adrienne Bush: I'll say right now, no, but you've given me a great idea just by asking the question. So I think that is something we can explore. One of the bills that we are monitoring in the Kentucky legislature right now would allow for the equivalent of a McKinney-Vento homeless liaison at college campuses. So for those of you who may not know, the McKinney-Vento program is the authorizing legislation for homeless assistance by the United States Congress. And one of the elements of that law and that program is that school districts, K through 12 public school districts have what they call homeless liaisons, whose job it is to work with students and families experiencing housing insecurity, and really try to provide those wraparound supports and help them with any housing that they can, to try to positively impact their education. Because we know that housing is foundational to everything else, including education. So this is something that I think our legislature may have an interest in. It's something that we can, Holly, you and I can add this to the list of people to talk to this spring, talking to different colleges in Kentucky.

Emily McDonald: Thank you. And I know Holly shared y'all's social media and all that good stuff, but Jennifer is from Kentucky and Jennifer asked, what are some ways that they can get involved with HHCK?

Holly Dennis: Hop on over to our HHCK.org website, and I think you can check it out. We provide a newsletter, if that's what you were going to say, Adrienne, to keep up to date with the work that we are doing within the Homes For All programs. And again, at the advocacy level that Adrienne represents our organization as well.

Adrienne Bush: And also, if you are on social media, I will say we do tend to update that in a little more real time. And feel free to reach out to either Holly or me over email. We'd love to hear more about what you're doing honestly in whatever state you landed in, although we obviously miss you in Kentucky.

Carie Kizziar: Can I just add to that, as Holly mentioned, when she was doing her part of the presentation, she talked about how they helped rebuild some homes that were people who lost their homes in previous flooding. We currently have another situation in which people have lost homes and they do a spring project. And I think your last spring project was in eastern Kentucky, helping rebuild those homes. And so, if you want to plan a trip back to Kentucky, you might want to check in with Holly when they do their spring event, and maybe you can come down and help build some houses.

Adrienne Bush: Carie, that's a great idea. Thank you.

Emily McDonald: I love that. This is for Lily, Ben, and Dominic, if any of our other panelists want to chime in, please do. So, "Can similar national service or volunteer programs that address homelessness and housing insecurity use the Homes For All ROI study findings to speak to their own work? And if so, what are some strategies for using these findings in their communications?"

Benjamin Miller: I'll take a stab at that first. I loved the question. I think the answer is definitely yes. If you follow the link that Katy put into the chat a little while ago and download the study, and go to Appendix B, that's the portion of the study that provides a really detailed methodology for how we approached doing a rigorous study of Homes For All. And you could use that to essentially create a similar methodology for your own program and follow step-by-step how we approached it for Homes For All. So that's the first place I would go to take a stab at assessing your own return on investment for a program elsewhere. Dominic, Lily, other thoughts you would add to that?

Lily Zandniapour: I would just add to what Ben said, that these studies in general are really paving the way for doing measurement that maybe previously was not thought possible. And it sort of opens innovative approaches that can fill gaps and really add. So I think the studies within housing definitely help other housing programs look at their benefits and data they have, and evidence that they have to monetize and capture their costs, and speak to that. But across the board, in

pretty much all of the programs that we have commissioned studies in, we have been lucky to have ICF do this work and really, with their team of specialists, really do very innovative approaches that have really been gateways for further analysis.

Benjamin Miller: If I can add one additional thought, we didn't talk that much about the process of doing the ROI, but one of the steps in our process is logic modeling and coming up with a systematic diagram of the program's activities, outcomes, and outputs. And doing that I think can unlock a lot of ideas for what data do we collect, what data could we collect to capture and measure not only our outputs and outcomes, but the monetary value of those outputs and outcomes? Those are both important steps in the process that also a person could do when they're looking at their own program and figuring out, "How could I do return on investment for my program?"

Dominic Modicamore: Yeah, the logic model is a great first step, and there's a lot of research that goes into these studies, a lot of literature review of previous research and also a lot of data collection. And as Ben mentioned in the appendix, we include a lot of our sources. So that could be a real benefit when trying to design your own type of study.

Emily McDonald: In a similar vein to that, can HHCK or Homes For All also speak to the time commitment? What was it like working to do an ROI study under this project? Tell us about your experience there.

Holly Dennis: Sorry, I thought I hit unmute. It was very seamless working with ICF. Their questions we met, they knew exactly what they wanted to focus on. And then, after that it was just some brief communication, just to get any type of clarifying data points. I mean, it was truly, I mean, Adrienne can speak more on it, but it was a seamless working relationship and we hope to keep in touch, as well.

Adrienne Bush: Yes, we weren't really sure what to expect when we were approached, but we really tried to build a culture at our organization of, well, we're up to try things and we are not afraid of evaluation. We like input and we like feedback, and if it helps us answer some questions about Homes For All, about our program, then that's great. And so, I mean, I think it was probably about nine to 12 months, if I am remembering that accurately. And we had positive engagements. We were, sometimes if there were questions about one particular metric or performance measure, or how we were categorizing federal versus non-federal, we were able to get that resolved. And yeah, it was overall, I mean, it was a great experience.

Emily McDonald: Awesome. All right, well, that is all for our Q and A session. Thank you all so much, and I'm going to pass that back to Katy to close this out.

Katy Hussey-Sloniker: We're now at the close of our webinar. We'd like to thank each of our presenters for making time to share their work with us today. We hope we hit our mark on the webinar objectives and that you walk away from the session

excited about the research, the tools, and the resources offered on the return on investment study. I would like to extend a thank you to our Guardians of Honor colleague for their technical support and coordination.

This webinar recording and support material will be posted on the AmeriCorps.gov website under evidence and impact webinars within the coming weeks. It'll also be posted on YouTube under the research and evaluation playlist. Please feel free to share this webinar with your colleagues and that we'll also be sending out a short post webinar survey once this webinar concludes. So please let us know your thoughts on the webinar and any ideas for future webinars.

Learn more about how you can make a difference by exploring our data, reviewing our research and applied guide, and engaging with your community by visiting our AmeriCorps Learn page and AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange. Join us March 27th for our webinar titled, Building a Pathway for the Next Generation of Public Health Champions Using a National Service, where we'll focus on the public health AmeriCorps national assessment interim findings on members. We hope you all have a wonderful rest of the day, and thank you very much.