Evidence of AmeriCorps NCCC's Impact on Strengthening Communities

FINAL REPORT

December 29, 2023

*Value of **thought**.*
*Value of **solution**.*

⊚ JBS INTERNATIONAL

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Executive Summary

The Corporation for National and Community Service (dba AmeriCorps) is the federal agency connecting individuals and organizations through service and volunteering to tackle the nation's most pressing challenges. AmeriCorps engages and provides opportunities for more than five million individuals to serve their communities and address local needs through its core programs AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps NCCC, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps Seniors. The service that members and volunteers provide through the core programs is embodied in AmeriCorps's mission statement: *To improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering*. Operating under the AmeriCorps umbrella and mission is the AmeriCorps NCCC program, with its own, related, mission statement: *To strengthen communities and develop leaders through direct, team-based national and community service*.

AmeriCorps retained JBS International (JBS) to design a mixed-methods longitudinal evaluation consisting of three studies: (1) measure the impact of service on leadership skills among members; (2) define and gauge how AmeriCorps NCCC strengthens the communities in which its members serve; and (3) evaluate the factors affecting retention of members.

This report discusses the evidence of how AmeriCorps NCCC strengthens the communities in which its members serve. AmeriCorps promotes community building through service and demonstrates the capacity of government and nonprofit partnerships to improve communities and serve the most vulnerable. This report uses a wealth of quantitative and qualitative data that AmeriCorps NCCC collected for more than 10 years on the outputs and outcomes of completed service projects and a survey of sponsor organizations, which is supplemented with 3 case studies. The mixed methods approach provides insight into the impact of AmeriCorps NCCC on individuals, organizations and the communities members served. The mixed methods approach permits exploration of multiple sources of data to clarify the connection between quantified outputs and meaningful outcomes to support the evidence of the impact of AmeriCorps NCCC on the communities it serves.

Objectives

This study achieves three primary objectives:

1. Define what strengthening communities means in the context of AmeriCorps NCCC.
2. Assess the evidence of how AmeriCorps NCCC strengthens communities where its members serve.
3. Calculate the social return on investment of AmeriCorps' response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The core mission for AmeriCorps NCCC is to develop leaders and to strengthen communities through the service projects that support local community needs. This is AmeriCorps' first systematic effort to define what "strengthening communities" means in the context of service with AmeriCorps NCCC, nor has there been a national assessment of the impact of service projects on the communities where AmeriCorps members served. The main results of the study are noted below.

Evidence of AmeriCorps NCCC's Impact on Strengthening Communities

AmeriCorps NCCC mobilizes different resources to support organizations and communities meet local needs.

These resources are

Social
» Network of relationships and connections between people

Natural
» Natural environments and human-made infrastructures

Institutional
» Institutional structures and processes within the community

Human
» Build skills, knowledge and capacity of residents to access resources

The evidence of the mobilization of these resources

» Communities feel more connected and purposeful » Increase agency, amplify community voices	» Revitalize recreational spaces, parks, housing » Support ecological restoration	» Enhance outreach, productivity, & efficiency » Grow connections & partnerships	» Build confidence, knowledge, & awareness » Empower individuals

AmeriCorps NCCC service activities support community strengthening at multiple levels.

Individuals

Individuals in the community receive direct and indirect benefits from services, resulting in increased personal well being and quality of life.

Organizations

Organizations expand their capacity and enhance their capacity to serve their constituents.

Communities

Community as a whole benefit because the projects are tailored to the community's own unique needs.

Members

AmeriCorps members develop leadership skills, develop professional network, gain cultural competence.

AmeriCorps NCCC creates short-term, long-term as well as tangible and intangible benefits that strengthen communities' well-being and resilience.

Short-term benefits
» Expand organization's capacity and ability to redirect resources
» Infuse organization with skills, ideas, & innovation
» Create resources that enhance organizational infrastructure

Long-term benefits
» Create sustainable documents, tools, & processes for the organization
» Increase community's resilience & disaster preparedness
» Upgrade community's emergency evacuation plans

Tangible benefits
» Support individuals with disaster assistance, recovery, and preparation
» Support individuals' basic needs (access to food, housing, water, health care)
» Improve organization's physical infrastructure

Intangible benefits
» Support special populations (veterans, people in crisis such as disaster)
» Improve mental health related to disaster recovery
» Enhance organization efficiency to expand services

Benefits accruing to individuals, organizations and communities are quantified through AmeriCorps members service activities

AmeriCorps NCCC's impact can be counted through specific indicators.

Communities
- Special Populations — 636
- Psychosocial Benefits — 675
- Physical Health & Safety - General — 956
- Physical Health & Safety - COVID — 106
- Human Capital — 949
- Disaster Assistance — 1789
- Basic Needs — 1118

Organizations
- COVID Adjacent Services — 208
- COVID Direct Services — 122
- Organizational effectiveness — 1932
- Infrastructure — 2526
- Disaster readiness — 160

Individuals
- Expected economic benefit — 206
- Disaster mitigation — 384
- Special events — 632
- Built & natural capital — 3185

No. of project impacts reported 2012-2023

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AmeriCorps

The social return on the investment to use AmeriCorps members for the COVID-19 public health emergency

$6.22

for each dollar invested, the return over a period of 10 years is $6.22.

"The energy and the selflessness that they put into it, I think that's not seen so much."

"They were all pretty driven, all pretty motivated. They all wanted to do something, and they all wanted to be hands-on – sometimes that's kind of rare to find."

"There's a wide range of talents already comprised in this team…basically having a whole crew where I can say, 'Who's got experience with this?'"

"They give you a lot more insight into some things that you haven't even thought of. They've been very innovative with the way maybe information would be set up from a tracker standpoint."

55%

Of sponsors agreed it would have taken longer to accomplish their community's goals without AmeriCorps NCCC.

AmeriCorps members contribute a range of skills that strengthen communities.

» **Professional skills** (e.g., work ethic, self-motivation)

» **Prosocial skills** (e.g., sharing, helping, collaborating)

» **Life skills** (e.g., energy, open-mindedness, desire to be of service)

AmeriCorps members' flexibility, work ethic, engagement and team dynamics helped accomplish organizational goals
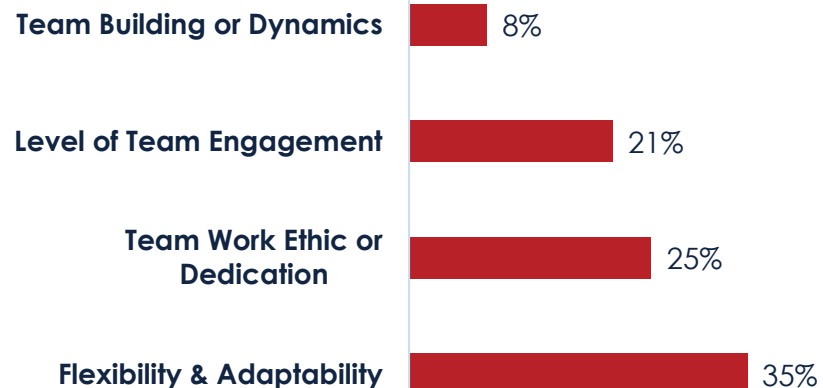
Team Building or Dynamics	8%
Level of Team Engagement	21%
Team Work Ethic or Dedication	25%
Flexibility & Adaptability	35%

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AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps NCCC creates a lasting positive impact on communities' overall well-being and resilience In collaboration with sponsor organizations.

Project Initiation

Key
- Sponsor organizations
- AmeriCorps members
- AmeriCorps NCCC

- Develop a project; plan & prepare for members
- Bring flexibility, open mindedness, & eagerness to tackle the assignment
- Provide comprehensive training & supervision
- Form strong relationships in communities
- Offer refresher trainings & networking/mentorship
- Maximize visibility of members to drive interest & engagement
- Promote positive experiences with members
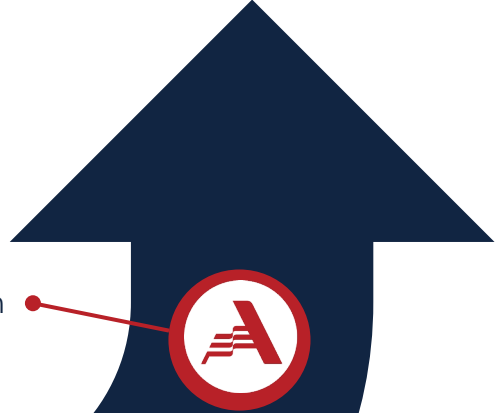
Impact

- Highlight stories of impact, focusing on host sites
- Use participatory methods, tangible & intangible indicators to capture breadth of impact

"The intent for us with these AmeriCorps teams is [to] build some sustainability. We know we can't have them year round, so [we try] to leverage what they're able to do while they're with us; I think that is working. We've had a number of volunteers this year work on large tree plantings and that's all a function of what they're seeing: Everybody wants to be part of good things happening; they see all this new work and I think they're much more inclined to participate."

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AmeriCorps

Introduction

The Corporation for National and Community Service (dba AmeriCorps) is the federal agency that connects individuals and organizations through service and volunteering to tackle the nation's most pressing challenges. Throughout its history, AmeriCorps has engaged and provided opportunities for more than five million individuals to serve their communities and address local needs through its core programs – AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps NCCC, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps Seniors. The service that members and volunteers provide through the core programs is embodied in AmeriCorps's mission statement: *To improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering*. Operating under the AmeriCorps umbrella and mission is the AmeriCorps NCCC program, with its own, related, mission statement: *To strengthen communities and develop leaders through direct, team-based national and community service*.

The Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE), as the principal office for research activity within AmeriCorps, relies on multiple sources of scientific inquiry to provide credible and reliable evidence to support the agency's mission, drive the agency's business decisions, allocate resources strategically, and grow effective national service programs. AmeriCorps NCCC and ORE embarked on a collaboration to evaluate how AmeriCorps NCCC promotes leaderships skills among its members and how the service projects strengthen the communities in which the members served. This national evaluation is closely linked to AmeriCorps' strategic plan, which the agency developed in accordance with the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (FEBP) of 2018, Pub. L. 115-435. The strategic plan provides the agency a roadmap for generating credible, relevant, and actionable information for strategic learning and decision-making to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of AmeriCorps and its programs.

In September 2018, AmeriCorps retained JBS International (JBS) to design a longitudinal evaluation consisting of three studies: (1) measure the impact of service on leadership skills among members; (2) define and gauge how AmeriCorps NCCC strengthens the communities in which its members serve; and (3) evaluate the factors affecting retention of members. In January 2020, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved the data collection (OMB Control Number 3045-0189) for the three studies. This report discusses the findings how AmeriCorps NCCC strengthens the communities in which its members serve. Two accompanying reports discuss the findings on the impact of service on members' leadership skills[1] and on the factors that affect member retention[2].

Study Objectives

AmeriCorps promotes community building through service and demonstrates the capacity of government and nonprofit partnerships to serve the most vulnerable and to improve communities. The core mission for the AmeriCorps NCCC program is to develop leaders and to

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[1] Georges, A., Smith, S.J., Hussain, B., Shannon, R., Sum, C., Tait, E., LaTaillade, J., Alvarado, A., & Krauss, J. (2023). *Leadership through Service: AmeriCorps NCCC Impact's on Members.* San Mateo, CA: JBS International, Inc.

[2] Georges, A., Smith, S.J., Shannon, R., Hussain, B., Sum, C., Tait, E., LaTaillade, J., Alvarado, A., & Krauss, J. (2023). *Exploring Demographics, Motivation, Interpersonal and Group Cohesion Factors in Retaining Members through their Term of Service: A National Study of AmeriCorps NCCC.* San Mateo, CA: JBS International, Inc.

strengthen communities through the service projects that support local community needs. To assess how AmeriCorps NCCC meets its core mission to strengthen communities, there must first be a definition of the concept of community strengthening. This is AmeriCorps' first systematic effort to define what "strengthening communities" means in the context of service with AmeriCorps NCCC, nor has there been a national assessment of the impact of service projects on the communities where AmeriCorps members served. This report utilizes the wealth of quantitative and qualitative data AmeriCorps NCCC collected for more than 10 years on the outputs and outcomes of completed service projects and a satisfaction survey of sponsor organizations, which we supplemented with 3 case studies to achieve 3 primary objectives:

1. Define strengthening communities in the context of AmeriCorps NCCC.
2. Assess the evidence of AmeriCorps NCCC's impact on the communities where its members serve.
3. Calculate the social return on investment of AmeriCorps response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Appendix A outlines the associated research questions that guided the development of the study's data collection instruments and the analysis to address the objectives. The study's exploratory mixed methods approach provides insight into the impact of Traditional Corps and FEMA Corps teams on individuals, sponsor organizations, and the communities at large where members serve. The mixed methods approach clarifies the connection between quantified outputs and meaningful outcomes of AmeriCorps NCCC's service projects on strengthening communities.

Organization of the report

The report is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 describes the conceptual framework and logic model that guided the evaluation. Chapter 2 defines what strengthening communities means in the AmeriCorps NCCC context. Chapter 3 describes evidence of AmeriCorps NCCC's impact on the communities where its members serve and the social return on investment of AmeriCorps response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter 4 summarizes the body of evidence. Chapter 5 outlines the lessons learned and future areas of research.

Chapter 1 Conceptual Framework and Logic Model

AmeriCorps NCCC is a full-time, residential, team-based program for young adults aged 18-26, with a focus on achieving the dual purposes of developing leaders and strengthening the communities that are served. AmeriCorps NCCC combines practices of civilian service with aspects of military service, including short-term on-site deployments, leadership development, and team building. AmeriCorps NCCC teams are assigned to three rounds of service, each of which includes one or more projects. All AmeriCorps NCCC projects fit into one or more of these primary issue areas: Energy Conservation (EC), Environmental Stewardship and Conservation (ENV), Infrastructure Improvement (INF), Natural and Other Disasters (DIS), Urban and Rural Development (URD), FEMA and Populations Assisted and Engaged (VAR).

AmeriCorps NCCC maintains the Traditional Corps and FEMA Corps programs. In Traditional Corps, members perform service projects such as leading youth development activities, constructing and rehabilitating low-income housing, performing environmental clean-up, helping

communities develop emergency plans, and addressing other pressing local needs. The FEMA Corps program is a partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In FEMA Corps, members gain professional skills in emergency management while serving with FEMA on disaster response and recovery efforts. The FEMA Corps program works solely on emergency management and long-term recovery projects within FEMA and helps coordinate services for disaster survivors. FEMA Corps projects may involve indirect assignment in FEMA offices that support FEMA's overall mission or direct assignment in disaster sites, such as helping survivors in remote regions sign up for Disaster Survivor Assistance.

AmeriCorps members in Traditional Corps serve for 10 months; those in FEMA Corps serve for 12 months[3]. Each team has a team leader and consists of 8 to 12 members. Team leaders are enrolled through a separate selection process and are on average similar in age; but there is no age limit for team leaders. Team leaders are responsible for team performance in fulfilling the mission. Team leaders work closely with sponsors or FEMA points of contact (POCs) and have ongoing communication with NCCC Unit Leaders[4].

There are three target participants in the AmeriCorps NCCC program. Participants who serve are between the ages of 18-26 and have demonstrated strong interest and commitment to national service; team leaders have no age restrictions and can be older than 26. Sponsors are public agencies or nonprofits, local branches of large nonprofits such as Habitat for Humanity, or small independent nonprofits. State and local governments may also sponsor AmeriCorps NCCC projects. Community beneficiaries are wide-ranging and include disaster survivors; older adults and people with disabilities; people in low-income communities facing housing or food insecurity; and veterans and military families.

AmeriCorps NCCC's theory of change is to contribute to the creation of empowered and prepared citizens who will be more civically engaged, will work to strengthen their communities, and will be dedicated to improving the lives of those in their community. The root of the pathway to achieving this vision lies in the service placements that enable members to personally experience the challenges and needs of communities and provide members opportunities to develop and engage in solutions to address these problems.

The core intervention is the training and professional development combined with service assignments in different communities. The training and service assignments ensure members' success in the program and enhance their personal and professional development. The components of the intervention include community and member development activities such as:

- Conduct needs assessments and asset-based community development planning.
- Complete Corps Member Training Institute (CTI), which lasts 3½ weeks; CTI begins at the start of service when members arrive on campus. CTI provides a foundation of necessary skills and knowledge to become a successful member. The learning objectives include a strong understanding of the value of service,

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[3] FEMA Corps recently adjusted their term of service to 10-months.
[4] NCCC Unit Leaders are AmeriCorps staff with leadership and coordination responsibilities, who oversee a group of AmeriCorps members, providing guidance, support, and direction to ensure service projects are carried out effectively.

service learning, team dynamics, leadership skills, civic engagement, professionalism, customer service, project skills, and strengthening communities.

- Complete FEMA Academy for members who will serve with FEMA Corps. FEMA Academy occurs after CTI and is in addition to the 3½ weeks of CTI. This is an opportunity for FEMA Corps members to receive their FEMA position-specific training before deployment.
- Complete Team Leader Training (TLT) which provides the foundation for team leaders to develop leadership and management skills necessary to guide a team of 8-10 members. TLT's learning objectives include supervisory skills, diversity awareness, project preparation and management, policies and procedures, management and leadership, and administrative responsibilities.
- Complete in-service training:
  - o Pre-project and project training that focuses on the hard skills needed to complete a given project. The training typically takes place at the project site upon arrival, coordinated by the sponsor organization.
  - o Transition training is the period of time after teams end one project and before they begin another.
  - o Life after AmeriCorps Training (LAA) is provided to all members throughout their service year. The focus of LAA occurs during transitions throughout the service period.
- Service Learning underpins the Service Leadership goals and is fully integrated throughout the service experience. Service learning is a methodology through which members acquire the knowledge and skills needed to perform community service projects and gain an understanding of the value and impact of their assignment.
- Disaster Training includes American Red Cross training during CTI for all Traditional Corps members and wildland firefighting training provided to at least two teams at each campus.

These activities contribute to the core mission of strengthening communities via two pathways:

- Training expands members' ability to contribute to strengthening communities during and after their service by increasing members' skills, understanding, and commitment to strengthening communities.
- Training and the service experience help members develop hard skills (e.g., construction) and soft skills (e.g., professionalism), which then allow teams to directly impact communities by engaging in activities such as construction and infrastructure development, assistance to disaster survivors, long-term disaster recovery, public land improvement and community beautification, and volunteer management.

Appendix B shows the logic model that guided the evaluation. It illustrates how members successfully complete the training and their service projects and receive the support and mentoring from staff, team leaders and sponsors. The outcomes are members' civic participation and leadership that indirectly affect their future activities. Communities experience short-term benefits such as increases in built and natural capital, improvements in community safety and livability, more effective and efficient recovery from disaster, and improved capacity to use

community volunteers. They also experience long-term benefits including: 1) disaster resilience; 2) economic development; 3) improved health; 4) increased trust and sense of community; and 5) increased engagement and empowerment to address community needs. Appendix C provides an overview of the geographic characteristics and distribution of service projects.

Chapter 2 Defining Strengthening Community

This chapter focuses on the first objective: to define strengthening communities in the context of AmeriCorps NCCC. The definition of "strengthening community" has two parts. The first part is what service is done that leads to increased strength. The second part is the community where the activity or the service occurs. Community is a complex term used in a variety of ways throughout the literature. Much of the literature differentiates between communities of location or geographical communities, which are spatially bound, and communities of interest or functional communities (Black & Hughes, 2001b; Fraser, 2005; Lovell, Gray, & Boucher, 2015; Ohmer, Coulton, Freedman, Sobeck, & Booth, 2019; Shaver & Tudbull, 2002).

AmeriCorps NCCC targets individuals, organizations, and communities at large to affect change. Both geographic locations and communities of interest are relevant to AmeriCorps' mission. The specification of what constitutes communities varies based on the context of the service projects. The most common occurrence of communities is defined by the physical address where members conduct their service. These place-based or geographic communities may be as large as a city or town, and as small as a census tract or a lot within a block. The communities may also be activity spaces such as parks or other recreational places where individuals spend time.

AmeriCorps NCCC also serves communities of interest or special populations that are not bound by place or a specific location. These communities of interest could be veterans, military families, people with physical challenges, youth organizations, summer camp children, houseless or unhoused individuals, older adults, limited-English speakers, political refugees, or crisis survivors. Our case studies identified these communities of interest. For example, when talking with sponsors and site supervisors with the Girl Scouts, respondents shared that safe places for children to interact was a vital component of community. Another respondent shared that their work in park cleanup helped to create space for "*people visiting at Waubedonia County Park with recreational experience in mind, camping and so forth.*"

In several instances, members identified the organizations with which they served as communities in and of themselves; as one respondent explained, "*If we were to deploy with IMAT, I think the community that we're really serving is the National IMAT community.*" Another said, "*The other community would be the community of FEMA people and personnel, that includes everybody that works for FEMA and even the other federal agencies and the partners.*" AmeriCorps members themselves are a community of interest. Training and development are intended to shape members as leaders who will continue to serve their communities beyond their term of service.

Individuals who benefit from AmeriCorps NCCC service projects may experience a plurality of community if they identify with multiple communities (Black & Hughes, 2001b). Assessing how well-being is improved through this "mosaic of communities" may be critical to understanding community strengthening (Black & Hughes, 2001a). In addition, Draper, Hewitt, and Rifkin

(2010) emphasize the need to differentiate between community-based interventions that focus on achieving change in individuals (aka community-based interventions focused on, for example, offering food or educational services to individuals) and community-level interventions that focus on achieving change in the community itself (e.g., interventions that engage community members in participatory decision-making and transformation).

The components of strong communities include sustainability, resiliency, capacity, development, and health (Black & Hughes, 2001b). The concept of capital is vital to community strength, and includes social, natural, institutional, economic, and human capital; in particular, a community's social capital – the ability of members to work together in concert – has important implications for the strength of that community (Beckley, Martz, & Nadeau, 2008; Black & Hughes, 2001a; Nitzberg, 2005). Community vitality is also an aspect of community strength; Scott (2010) characterizes vital communities as those that include active and inclusive relationships between members of the community, the private and public sectors, and civil society organizations where these actors work together to foster well-being at the collective and individual levels and adapt to changes.

Building from the identified components of strong communities, Black and Hughes (2001b) proposed that: "Community strength refers to the extent to which resources and processes within a community maintain and enhance both individual and collective well-being in ways consistent with the principles of equity, comprehensiveness, participation, self-reliance, and social responsibility" (p. 7). Strong communities can advocate effectively, can respond to disasters, and are able to absorb change (Lovell, Gray, & Boucher, 2015). Community building can refer to a comprehensive approach to community strengthening and renewal, describing investment by people and development of relationships and structures that work together to sustain those investments to improve conditions; outcomes of such a process are an improved capacity to accomplish tasks and goals and a heightened sense of community (Nitzberg, 2005). From the literature, three common themes of the definition of community strengthening emerge:

- Enhanced collective and individual well-being,
- Strengthened social ties and relationships,
- Increased capacity to improve conditions and adapt to change.

In a comprehensive review of the literature, Ohmer and colleagues (2019) outline four ecological settings (individual, collective, community, and societal) that interact with each other and have different spheres of direct and indirect influences on individual and collective well-being. The individual level includes skills, community participation and engagement, attitudes, and cognition. The collective level evaluates actions of collectives such as community organizing groups, grassroot organizations, and neighborhood associations. The community level includes three aspects that Ohmer and colleagues (2019) describe as built and natural environments that shape communities and neighborhoods, availability of resources and amenities that are accessible to residents, and inclusivity. Societal level factors include all levels of policies that support or hinder communities.

A data-driven definition of how AmeriCorps NCCC contributes to community strength

AmeriCorps NCCC harnesses social, natural, institutional, and human capital to support organizations and communities in addressing unique local needs. Through service and in partnership with individuals, organizations, and communities, AmeriCorps NCCC creates short-term and long-term positive impacts on community well-being and resilience. AmeriCorps members, through their service, experience personal benefits evidenced in strong leadership skills and civic engagement.

Through partnerships, AmeriCorps NCCC operates within three distinct environments to strengthen communities; each distinct environment incorporates elements of social, natural, institutional, and human capital that interact directly and indirectly to foster community growth and resilience in both the short and long term.

Social	» Network of relationships and connections between people
Natural	» Natural environments and human-made infrastructures
Institutional	» Institutional structures and processes within the community
Human	» Build skills, knowledge, and capacity of residents to access resources
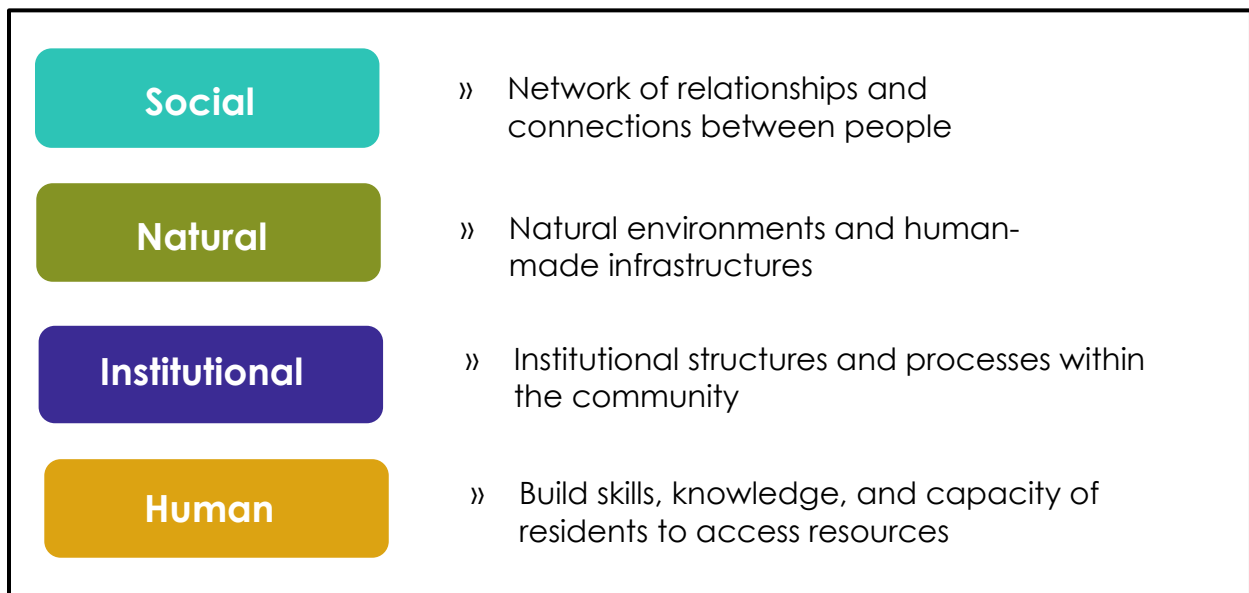
The three distinct environments in which AmeriCorps NCCC affect change are individual, organization, and community. The **individual** is the beneficiary within the communities that AmeriCorps NCCC teams serve through the sponsors' projects. The individual directly or indirectly benefits from the team's service, which results in positive impacts on individuals' personal well-being and quality of life. The **organization** involves entities like FEMA and other sponsor organizations that collaborate with the teams to provide service to their constituents. In this capacity, AmeriCorps NCCC is a conduit that assists and supports broader networks beyond individual communities. Within the **community**, AmeriCorps NCCC's involvement is initiated through a sponsor that requests support based on the community's unique needs, objectives, and goals. The approach to assisting the community is tailored to align with the sponsor's assessment and definition of the community's requirements.

By recognizing the unique needs of communities and collaborating with sponsor organizations to benefit individuals, AmeriCorps NCCC creates a lasting positive impact on communities' overall well-being and resilience. AmeriCorps members are also a community of interest that is strengthened by the range of personal and developmental benefits they experience such as skill development, leadership opportunities, networking and relationship building, collaboration and exposure to different organizations and institutions, cultural competence from interacting with diverse communities, and personal satisfaction and fulfilment gained from witnessing positive changes to communities because of their service.

Definition of strengthened communities by different stakeholders

Stakeholders' definition of AmeriCorps NCCC success in strengthening communities can be categorized under the four types of capital: social, natural, institutional, and human capital (Beckley, Martz, & Nadeau, 2008; Black & Hughes, 2001a; Nitzberg, 2005a).

Social Capital. Social capital can be produced strategically by individuals or by collective actors through participation in institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition (Portes, 1998). Social capital is the sum of actual or potential resources (and power) linked to possession of a durable network of relationships (Bourdieu, 1986).

The concept of a strong community is greater than the sum of its parts; it is not just a collection of individuals but an entity where there are strong ties, mutual support, relationship building, and collective action among those individuals. One of the defining features of strengthened communities identified through our case studies was an increased sense of social connectedness, which arises out of shared purpose and goals. For example, one respondent said that they define community as a "*group of people that come together with a united sense of purpose.*" Another respondent noted that, "*What would make a strong community is a group of people that are working together towards the same goal.*" More broadly, respondents described strong communities as "*collective spaces where people are able to share life experiences, bring themselves into a bigger collective*" and "*bring yourself within a space where other people can rely on you.*" One case study respondent explained, "*The outcome is….the interaction that you see from our veterans with the community and with each other.*"

> **Examples of Social Capital**
>
> » Communities feel more connected and purposeful
> » Increase agency, amplify community voices

The importance of "third spaces"[5] – non-home, non-work spaces in which individuals can connect with others – in building community is reinforced through our case studies[6].

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[5] "Third spaces" is a coin termed by Ray Oldenburg; it refers to places where people spend time between home (aka "first place") and work (aka "second place). These are locations where individuals can "exchange ideas, have a good time, and build relationships" (Butler & Diaz, 2016).

[6] Butler, S.M., & Diaz, C. (2016). *"Third places" as community builders*. Brookings. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2016/09/14/third-places-as-community-builders/ ; Jeffres, L.W., Bracken, C.C., Jian, G., & Casey < M.F.

Respondents described the presence of safe "third spaces" for connection and growth for members of the community as an essential element of strong communities. For example, one respondent shared, "*Being able to have that opportunity to create a different space outside of the home I think is very important.*" Another respondent shared, "*Now it's built into kind of a routine of all these kids coming together and working on art in the art room. [That] is something that they'll continue to do because we were there to reorganize their room and give life to this part of Boys and Girls Club that really wasn't being utilized when we showed up.*"

Another respondent shared, "*The team helped to – we created Friday Family Fun Night and once a month on a Friday night the team would be there and they would play outside and play activities with the kids and sporting events and we'd show a movie. It was amazing the activities that they were able to do there.*" Respondents spoke to the importance of camp as a place for connection and community: "*Creating this space where we can have camp and kids can build character is important in that long-term growth of our community;*" "*What strengthening the community means is making camp accessible to as many people as possible...because the more girls we can accept, the more girls we reach, the stronger that community is.*"

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic challenged individuals' and communities' sense of safety and security with regard to work, health, house, and home. Respondents from the COVID-19 case studies mentioned the creation of safe spaces and increasing access to necessary services that foster a sense of safety and promote positive health and well-being. One respondent noted being able to have the necessary staffing to facilitate implementation of and access to mobile vaccination sites was an important outcome for the health and safety of the community during the pandemic: "*In the later stages, people were really listening to their trusted friends, and trusted family members, and trusted community members, and then making a decision to go seek out vaccine. So, having [a vaccination mobile] unit in place for, you know, a week or two, so that word could kind of circulate around the community 'This is a good place to go.'*" Another respondent also noted the value of having welcoming spaces in the hospital setting: "*Like those windows probably haven't been washed for a year and a half because we're focusing our cleaning efforts on our patient care spaces, so you are directly benefiting not only [hospital] employees but the, you know, the visitors, anybody that walks through this space and sees a clean, inviting environment.*"

Respondents also described the importance of community empowerment as a component of strengthening communities. When asked how they would define strengthening communities, one respondent shared, "*If I had to give a flat definition it would be allocating resources for creating a system in which the members of community feel empowered.*" Respondents described the role of increasing agency, such as the inclusion of community member voices in decision-making and collective action taken by communities. One respondent shared, "*Strengthening communities is making sure that the people who are living in those communities know that they're being listened to.*" Another respondent, pointing out that community voices must be centered in project decisions, emphasized, "*You need to find the things that are most important and most vital to community. You've gotta strengthen the things that really affect people.*" Similarly, another respondent said that strengthening communities occurred "*when the community identifies what it wants done and you help them achieve those goals, not the goals you come in with.*" Another respondent said that strengthening communities requires "*ensuring that people feel that their voice is being heard and that action is being taken to address their concerns.*"

Respondents described strong communities as places where those in need receive assistance, there is access to safe and affordable homes, and there are educational opportunities. These generally accepted metrics of healthy communities are enriched by including social connectedness, access to safe spaces, fostering collective empowerment, and robust outreach to community members.

Natural Capital. Natural capital, a term first coined in the 1980s by economist David W. Pearce, describes natural resources and services; and it recognizes that human well-being relies on the well-being of the rest of nature (Missemer, 2018; Costanza, 2020). As noted above in reference to social capital, safe "third spaces" are a vital component of strong communities. Natural areas – such as parks – can provide these third spaces. The profound impact of natural capital on communities is evident through the creation and preservation of high-quality parks that serve as vital recreational spaces and communal meeting points. These parks, with their diverse range of programs, education initiatives, and preservation efforts, offer a shared green space where people can connect, engage in activities, and interact with one another. Respondents described parks and other green and recreational spaces as critical to strong communities: "*providing access to public purpose parks with free and low-cost programs, recreation, education, and preservation;*" "*public parks are a great place for communities to meet up and meet people and talk to each other;*" "*having high quality natural areas in parks, public green space is really important to the community.*"

> **Examples of Natural Capital**
>
> » Revitalize recreational spaces, parks, housing
> » Support ecological restoration

The benefits of natural capital to communities are vividly illustrated through initiatives such as long-term ecological restoration and the creation of accessible parks for both residents and visitors. These endeavors profoundly impact individuals with varying abilities, making outdoor spaces inclusive and enriching. One case study respondent shared an example from a past experience working with the Girl Scouts, where a young girl faced challenges due to a spine-related disability, recalling "*To see her not be able to participate in the camp activities was really hard. So NCCC… went through and rebased all those trails for us.*" AmeriCorps NCCC played an instrumental role by embarking on a trail-rebasing project, specifically catering to individuals with disabilities. "*They went through and uh, regroomed all those trails that are– are designated for individuals with those type of uh, disabilities. And I mean, it– it looks amazing, and they did a great job, and I know that many other community members will benefit.*" Another respondent shared, "*When they've done restoration at different sites, that's something that's visible to the public. The natural area is healthier. It has more diversity with plants and animals but also…the site looks better because of the work that the crew has done here.*" Efforts like these extend beyond the individual case, radiating positive effects throughout the community, promoting inclusivity and well-being.

Institutional Capital. Institutional capital refers to the different institutional structures and processes within a community. The three most identified types of institutional structures include the public sector, the private enterprise sector, and a third sector composed of non-governmental, not-for-profit organizations, and institutions. Direct engagement with institutions uses tactics that

tap into the resources, expertise, and networks available to integrate knowledge and collective efforts to enhance community well-being and address its needs effectively.

When exploring the concepts of harnessing institutional capital for community enhancement, respondents frequently detailed the establishment of connections between the served community and both public and private sectors, as well as governmental bodies. In one case study, a respondent illustrated the role of AmeriCorps members in cultivating these relationships to bolster community members through engagement with state and federal institutions. The respondent affirmed, "*They are strengthening the community by having that direct engagement with them and having the knowledge that they can bring from what they learned with Blue, and through FEMA, and from their prior service and projects. And they're bringing that in. And then, all of – I think, as a result, we all kind of come together as one to be able to support the community in one effort, one unity of effort.*"

Examples of Institutional Capital

» Enhance outreach, productivity, & efficiency
» Grow connections & partnerships

Throughout our case studies, participants' responses demonstrate the pivotal role of institutional capital in service provided by AmeriCorps NCCC. These efforts translate to an enhanced scope of outreach, productivity, efficiency, confidence, and an amplified level of community backing. Respondents discussed their observation of an increase in outreach directed towards community members, encompassing endeavors to enhance awareness, disseminate information, and allocate resources regarding veteran issues. These initiatives are geared toward facilitating access to support services and vital resources, encompassing aspects such as COVID-19 measures and emergency protocols. The suite of services offered extends to referrals, directing individuals to external agencies, partners, or organizations for comprehensive assistance and support. As a respondent stated, "*...It's not only about us. It's about awareness for the need and telling it in a way that sometimes is positive; sometimes is sad; sometimes in the middle. And so, the more people we reach and the more people any organization reaches, the more impact they have.*" Respondents underscored the collaborative efforts among institutions within communities. These organizations are engaging in strategic partnerships aimed at coalescing towards a common objective.

For the subset of COVID-19 and related case studies, institutional capital is reflected in the collaboration between community organizations and state agencies to ensure access to vaccination and testing. One respondent noted: "*It was making sure that throughout the duration of eight weeks, we didn't want to let our partners with the State Police down…We wanted to make sure, in this case, that volunteerism would not impede the community's way of getting in and getting vaccinated. And, we wanted to make sure there were no barriers for anyone to receive access. So, that was a big success. And, I don't know. It would've been so much harder to – next to impossible, I mean, for us to do that without NCCC. So, in that way, that is success.*"

Human Capital. Human capital is the "skills and abilities of residents as well as the capacity to access outside resources and knowledge in order to increase understanding and to identify promising practices (education, health, skills, and youth)." Human capital also addresses

leadership's ability "to lead across differences, to focus on assets, to be inclusive and participatory, and to be proactive in shaping the future of the community or group."[7]

> **Examples of Human Capital**
>
> » Build confidence, knowledge, & awareness
> » Empower individuals

Sponsors identified ways in which AmeriCorps NCCC service helped to foster greater *awareness of community resources*. As one respondent said, "*Building knowledge and awareness goes a long way towards kind of making an impact on the community, if not today then in the future.*" Another shared a meaningful experience in which AmeriCorps members supported individuals: "*The ladies realized that the resource tables down below, that there was housing and jobs being offered…They were talking amongst each other saying… 'You go down and get yourself some help.'*"

In some cases, respondents also provided support through *mentorship* and building up *confidence* and *knowledge* among community members. As one respondent in a restricted case study shared, "*The youth really did individualize attention to our kids…They really felt like they can reach this mentor, knew that this person was going to be there the next day and the next day and the next day.*" In an in-depth case study with Habitat for Humanity, stakeholders described the impact of AmeriCorps NCCC service as helping to build confidence among homeowners. A respondent shared that it was moving to work with Afghan refugees and "*see them grow week by week and learn things week by week.*" Other respondents said that the service provided by AmeriCorps NCCC "*empowered*" individuals to cope with challenges.

Chapter 3 Evidence of Impact

This chapter focuses on the second objective. It presents the evidence of how AmeriCorps NCCC strengthens communities. The indicators to assess this evidence are taken from AmeriCorps NCCC Service Projects Database (SPD), the primary source of information describing the activities of the service projects as well as the impact on the individuals, organizations, and communities. Each project has narrative texts that reflect the team's perceptions of the project's impact and what the team gained by working on the project. The evidence of how AmeriCorps NCCC strengthens communities is from coding narrative texts of more than 6,700 completed projects since 2012, supplemented with a wealth of data from three types of case studies. Appendix D describes the data sources to identify the connection between quantified outputs and meaningful outcomes to support the evidence of AmeriCorps NCCC's impact on communities it serves.

The impacts of AmeriCorps NCCC occur at the individual, organization, and community levels, as well as distinguishing tangible and intangible benefits at each of these three levels. In most cases, AmeriCorps NCCC projects focus on communities in the geographic sense, facilitating

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[7] Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Agricultural Economics: Cornhuskers Economics. (2015, September 2). *Community Capitals Framework as a Measure of Community Development*. https://agecon.unl.edu/cornhusker-economics/2015/community-capitals-framework

improvements in infrastructure, organizational capacity, and social connectedness among residents of a particular geographic area. In some cases, the projects serve communities of interest, such as veteran or refugee populations. Across these communities, AmeriCorps members provide the infusion of support to strengthen human, social, institutional, and natural capital. The findings from the focus groups, interviews, site visits, analysis of the SPD, and sponsor survey illustrate how AmeriCorps NCCC strengthens the skills and conditions of individuals residing within communities, organizations that support and serve these communities, and the community-level conditions themselves.

Individual Level Impact

The most impacts at the individual level include disaster assistance and preparedness, support of basic needs, and psychosocial benefits. Figure 3.1 shows the trends in the number of projects that resulted in tangible and intangible benefits accruing to individuals. During this period, the highest number of projects supported individuals with disaster assistance, recovery, and preparedness, followed by support of basic needs which includes access to food, water, and clothing as well as affordable housing. The intangible benefits to individuals include increased knowledge on recovering from a natural disaster and preparing for a natural disaster. Individuals' psychosocial well-being includes enhanced mental health and trust within the community. In 2020 with the onset of the pandemic, AmeriCorps NCCC projects recorded impacts on physical health and safety specific to COVID-19. These projects involved promoting testing services and vaccinations to individuals in communities where AmeriCorps NCCC teams served. As the COVID-19 response waned, there is a decline in the number of projects with these individual level benefits.

Figure 3.1 Number of projects resulting in tangible and intangible benefits at the individual level, 2012-2022
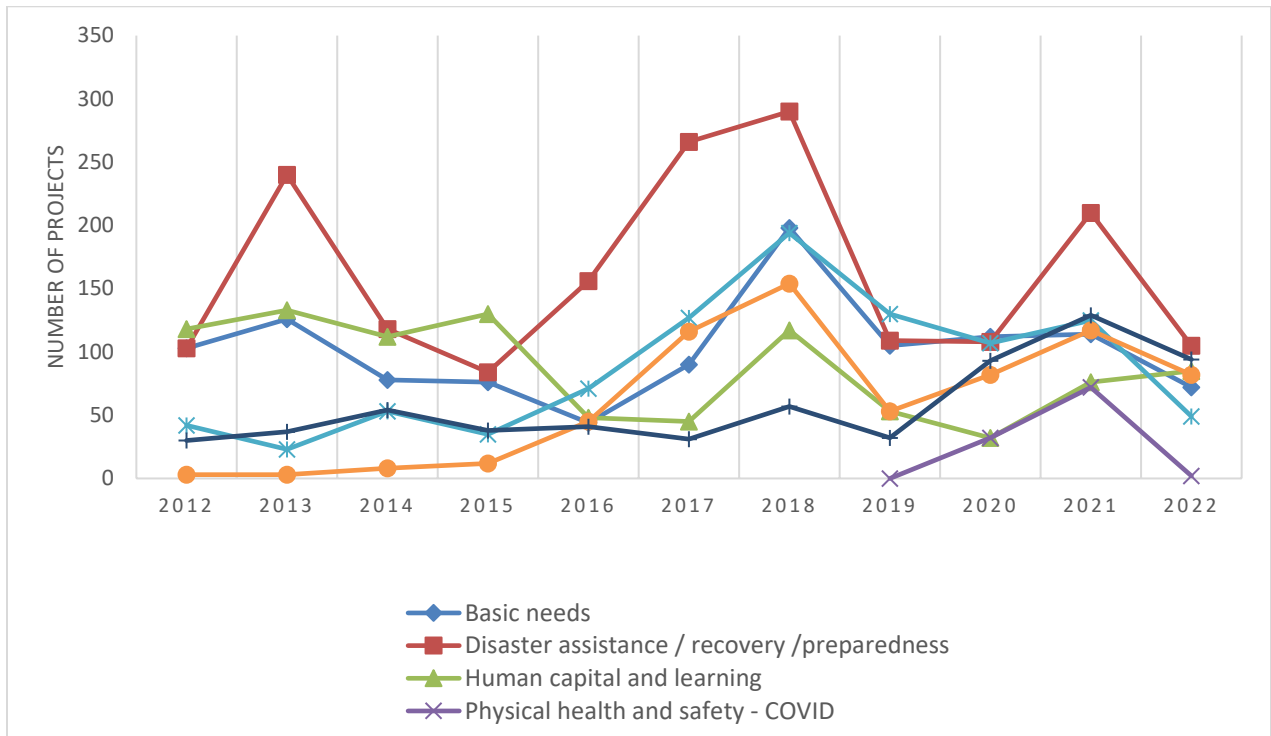
The fluctuation in the tangible and intangible benefits accruing to individuals is reflective of the trends in number and type of projects and not a decline in the benefits that results from the members' service. Figure 3.2 shows the trends in tangible and intangible benefits as a percent of total completed projects in that year.

Figure 3.2 Percent of projects resulting in tangible and intangible benefits at the individual level, 2012-2022
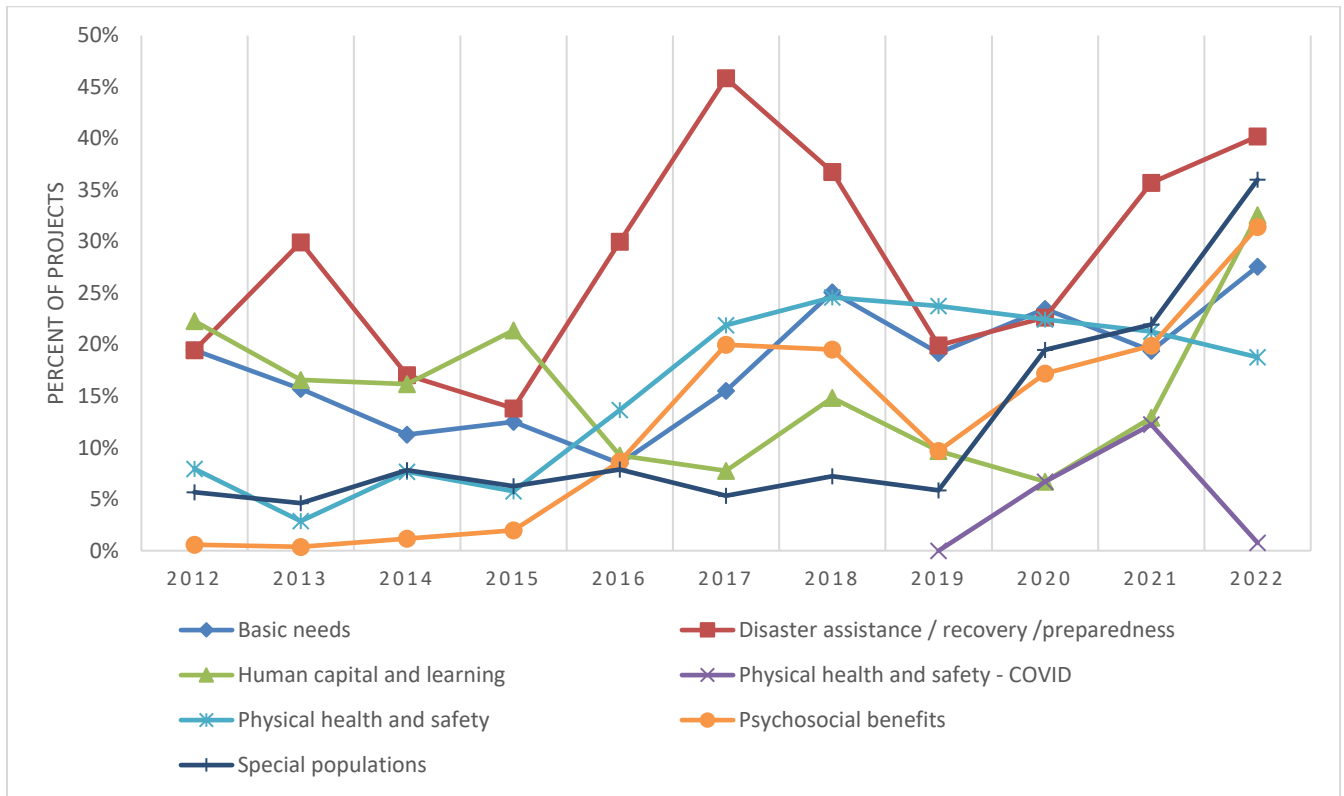
From 2012 to 2022, 1,118 service projects yielded direct benefits to individuals in the communities served. These projects resulted in increased access to food, water, and shelter (Figure 3.3). About eight percent of service projects from 2012 to 2022 supported affordable housing. Often, members did this through direct, physical labor, such as aiding in construction, mucking and gutting, and restoration. Nearly one-fifth of service projects from 2012 to 2022 focused on housing assistance related to disaster, including aiding in the rebuilding and refurbishing process (5%), improving the livability of a home after disaster (6%), and increasing disaster preparedness knowledge (5%).

A member working with Habitat for Humanity in Colorado explained that their work mattered, *"because the housing costs are so high, it's just giving more people an opportunity to live here that wouldn't have had that opportunity before."* Particularly with FEMA, members ensure communities could access the federal funding they needed to rebuild after disasters. As one member shared, *"I probably spent 500 to 600 hours looking at pictures of debris piles to determine eligibility. Then going down to Mayfield a couple months later and being able to recognize the areas we were driving through and being like, 'Oh I remember there being a huge pile of debris here.'"*

Figure 3.3 Direct benefits accruing to individuals
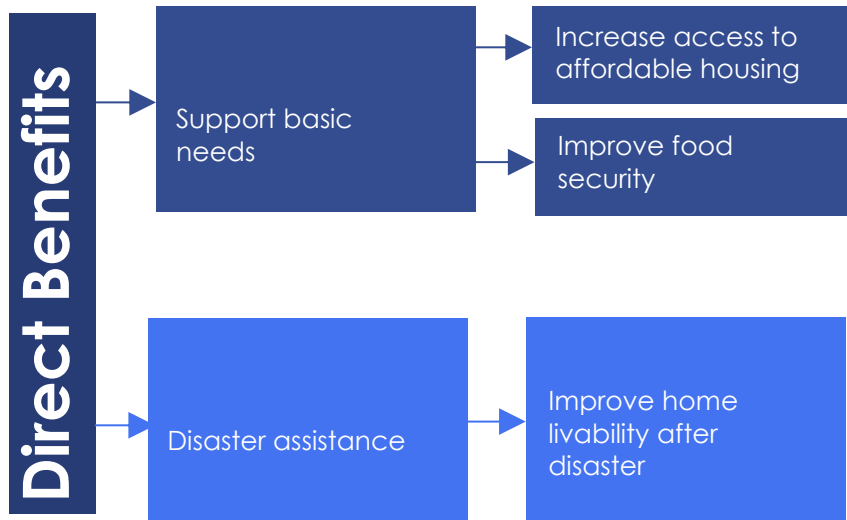
Measures of indirect benefits to individuals include greater trust in government and local organizations, enhanced diversity of background and experience, and increased personal growth and self-esteem (Figure 3.4). The presence of NCCC teams increased trust and appreciation for government and other organizational services. For example, one member shared, *"One benefit is at least people are seeing that teams are going out and trying to preserve some of their parks. The public is seeing that, so they know at least one action is being taken, someone is doing something, which I think helped a lot of the community put trust in their parks department."* Another shared that service was, *"showing people that are on Pine Island or in a disaster area, that there's still an effort to help people. I think that gives some hope to people."* A member noted that the impact of their project on the community was *"giving others hope. Us going in is giving them a glimmer of hope in what would otherwise be a bleak environment."* FEMA Corps members noted that, *"when you wear your FEMA uniform out, we're more associated with FEMA….so the response is based on how they see FEMA."*

Figure 3.4 Indirect benefits accruing to individuals
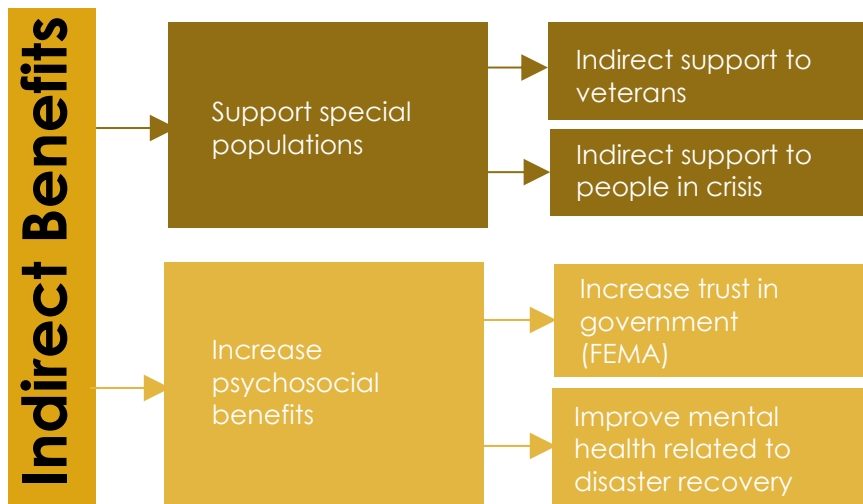
Other respondents described the ways in which members' service helped instill self-esteem, pride, and hope to individuals in the communities. For example, respondents described service provided to refugees and the value of AmeriCorps' contributions in helping these individuals rebuild their lives. Another respondent, whose organization supported disaster recovery, shared, *"We empowered them to tackle this themselves…It's the whole community and giving them a sense of direction in how to tackle this."*

Beneficiaries described ways in which AmeriCorps members affected long-term welfare of communities by helping them get back on their feet financially, gain access home ownership, or maintain their homes. For example, one respondent described the ways in which members created long-term outcomes for survivors of disaster, *"I think it means to help them get back on their feet, and if they are back on their feet, to reinforce those ties, reinforce the resources available for them, making sure there's long-term success in place."* Another shared that the project helped by, *"bringing them into the homeownership world, that's a very huge and long-term impact."* Another shared that, *"the long-term impact for her is that the project will help her conserve her property better – better yards, windows, conserve energy."*

Members working on food distribution projects discussed visible accomplishments, including packing boxes, picking up donations, interacting with recipients, creating recipe cards to introduce meal kits, and creating social media posts and healthy food advertisements. Other tangible outcomes members produced include cleaning up a space for a café style co-working area and adding a mural, painting and fixing drywall, clearing out a storeroom to keep a warehouse organized and safe, recreating workforce development materials and lesson plans to support volunteers, developing a presentation in which certain slides were shared with the governor's office, and much more.

Members' service supporting COVID-19 and related projects had widespread community impact and lasting effects on communities. From giving hospital patients a smooth experience and proper care to supporting area nonprofits and providing a service to families, members contributed to communities' safety and served as a vital tool to expand programs and offerings during peak unpredictability.

Community stakeholders interviewed as part of the in-depth case studies described having positive impressions of AmeriCorps members, specifically noting that they were *"genuinely good people,"* who were energetic, polite and pleasant to work with. Interviewee highlights indicated they were *"grateful and appreciative"* of the work performed and that the work itself was impressive, as was the willingness of members to *"give back."* A respondent shared, "*You know, that's a very selfless kind of act, so maybe that's not seen. They see that stuff going up and it's like, 'Yeah that's cool, they helped build those houses.' But like, you know, the energy and the selflessness that they put into it, I think maybe that's not seen so much."*

Respondents noted that they thought it was a great program and went on to describe AmeriCorps members as being empathetic, with a good work ethic. As one respondent shared, *"They're definitely gonna come out of this with more heart and their work ethic was already pretty impressive. I just think the program is awesome. I think it really shows people how fortunate we really are for what we have."* Another respondent shared, "*I can remember one community neighbor coming and saying that she actually had a negative…her persona on young adults was*

very negative to meeting the NCCC team. And then seeing them in the community…helped her to realize that the world needs young people and that they're our future leaders. She was able to take a negative impression of young people and turn it into something positive."

Beneficiaries who participated in the COVID-19 case studies also described positive impressions of AmeriCorps members, specifically describing the meaningful connections that members made within hospitals. Interviewees noted that *"just those connections mean something to people, and I really didn't think it meant much, but [it did]."* AmeriCorps members also commented on the connections their team formed with individuals in the community, with one member stating, *"It's been a very eye opening and learning experience for me because of creating that network and that trust and that open communication."*

Organizational Level Impact

At the organizational level, the most recurring benefits of members' service are improvements to the organization's infrastructure and effectiveness. Figure 3.5 shows the trends in the number of projects that resulted in tangible and intangible benefits to projects' sponsoring organizations. Over a period of 10 years, service through AmeriCorps NCCC improved sponsoring organizations' infrastructure; these improvements include physical infrastructures like buildings or office equipment, as well as data, reports or materials, and policies or procedures. Beyond the ability to expand services, the overall benefits of the members' service increased efficiency in these organizations.

Figure 3.5 The most recurring benefits at the organizational level are improvement to physical infrastructure, enhancement to the organization's ability to expend its services
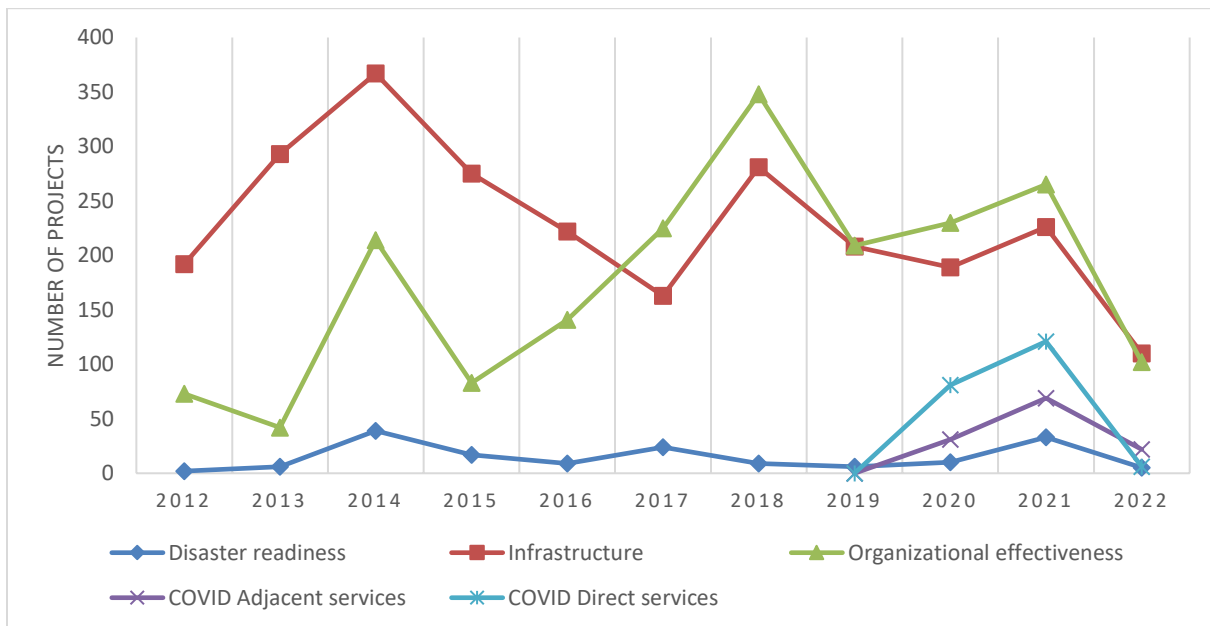
The fluctuation in the tangible and intangible benefits accruing to organizations is reflective of the trends in number and type of projects as well as being a function of the activities required to successfully complete the project. The trend is not reflective of a decline in the benefits that results from the projects. Figure 3.6 shows the trends in tangible and intangible benefits as a percent of total completed projects in that year.

Figure 3.6 Percent of projects resulting in tangible and intangible benefits at the organizational level, 2012-2022
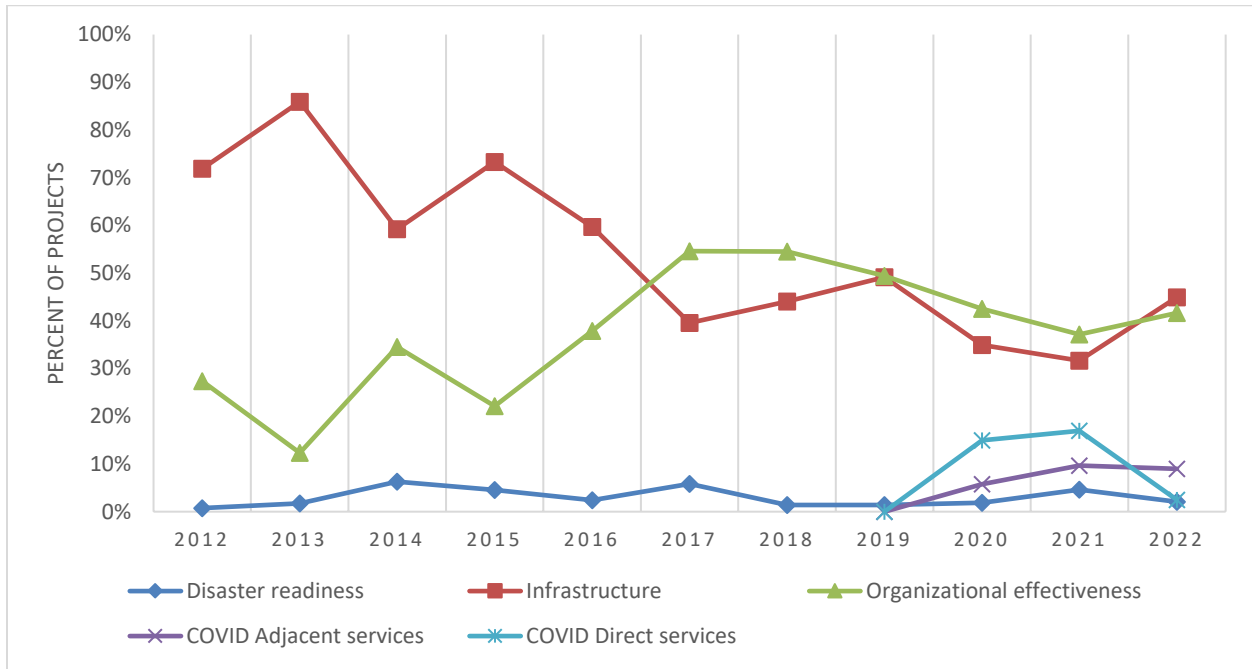
The analysis of responses from the sponsor survey supports these sentiments as 55 percent of surveyed sponsors agreed that it would have taken them significantly longer to accomplish their goals if AmeriCorps NCCC had not been involved.

Three themes emerged from an analysis of multiple data sources that include case studies data, the SPD, and a survey of sponsors. The emerging themes of how members' service affects sponsor organizations' ability to serve and strengthen communities are: 1) expand capacity for staff and ability to redirect resources; 2) infuse the organization with additional skills, ideas, and energy; and 3) enhance the organization's infrastructure, and resource creation.

Expand capacity for staff and ability to redirect resources. The most common responses when asked about how AmeriCorps members contribute to sponsor organizations are the ways in which the members expand capacity for staff at these organizations and free organizations' ability to direct resources elsewhere. The term "force multiplier" was used to describe the benefits of AmeriCorps NCCC teams on partner organizations. Respondents described ways in which members accomplished tasks that might otherwise not have been completed, either due to limited staff capacity or limited volunteer resources. At a Girl Scout camp involved in a case

study, the site supervisor shared that his work would have taken him "six times longer" without AmeriCorps NCCC's support.

Another respondent shared that the team was helpful in "*building organizational capacity to do work and more projects especially during winter when the volunteer pool is very low.*" Similarly, in a case study interview, a respondent shared, "*The major thing that it did was change the capacity…We wouldn't be able to be where we're at in the camp if it were not for the contributions of the NCCC teams…that jump started us and got us to where we are now being able to bring kids in.*" An organizational partner shared, "*Had they not been there, things [would] go slower because they added to the workforce…more than doubled our capacity.*" Another said, "*The fact that you could have an AmeriCorps team with 8 to 12 people who are consistent can't hurt. We're capable of getting a lot more done than they could've with maybe just two people.*"

Other respondents described times in which the addition of AmeriCorps members freed staff to focus on new or different tasks that they would otherwise not have had the time or energy to pursue. One FEMA Corps member shared that, "*CMs [Corps members] act as a 'force multiplier' that allows staff to redirect their time to other tasks while obtaining important professional skills.*" Another respondent shared, "*That really helps free up all our staff time. We can get more done having that consistent representation onsite.*" A member shared, "*We were going and being there, where originally they would have one staff member to host these events, talk to parents, and entertain the kids…So, us being there kind of allowed that one staff member to really communicate with the parents…while we did the activity with the kids.*" Finally, a respondent from a sponsor organization shared, "*Having extra people to do those tasks so that I'm not out there stacking firewood and I can be trying to hire camp staff. It helps us be able to focus on what our jobs should be.*"

AmeriCorps NCCC teams strengthened staff capacity at sponsor organizations coping with staff shortages during the pandemic. For example, one respondent from the COVID-19 case studies noted: "*If it had not been for them, literally with this person leaving, if they had not been here and this person was leaving, I don't know that I would have stayed in this position. It, it would be overwhelming. And with what I had to do. So, they brought me back to an okay, I'm in a good place; I've got all this done. I can stay and I can find another person to pick up. And it's giving me breathing time to be able to, to do it.*" Given continued staff shortages throughout the pandemic, organizational staff were working longer than expected hours over extended periods and were at risk of burnout as well as illness. The presence of AmeriCorps helped to support a healthy staff workforce. One respondent stated: "*When we brought them [the NCCC team] on board and I don't have the current numbers now, they're probably even worse, we're about 600 positions vacant out of about 4,000 positions in our entire portfolio. So, a big chunk, right? And we have brought in a lot of [travel] nursing staff but we didn't really have a lot of those options for some of our service delivery departments like food services, environmental services. And so, what we're seeing is staff working a lot of long hours, extra days, we were feeling burnout, people were leaving. We-we still are very challenging hiring environment, and so, their overall goal was to provide some relief to those staff um, so that we can provide the patient care support that we need to for our community.*"

Respondents who participated in the COVID19 case studies also homed in on the different ways that members expanded capacity for staff at these organizations, which allowed for more time for organizations (e.g., hospitals, COVID-19 clinics, food distribution centers) to redirect resources. Many respondents described the variety of ways in which members helped to accomplish tasks that took significant staff time or might otherwise not have been completed due to limited staff capacity or limited volunteer resources. These tasks included food distribution, support at COVID-19 vaccination sites (e.g., check-ins, screenings, traffic control), staffing COVID-19 clinics (e.g., contact tracing, information distribution), PPE distribution, support conducting non-clinical work at hospitals (e.g., sitting with patients, meal tray delivery, transportation of equipment and supplies, building maintenance, stocking nurse cabinets, stocking lab carts, collecting trash, and visitor, patient, and staff screenings), arranging an organization's open house, and tabling at an emergency preparedness disaster readiness campaign.

At a hospital, one site supervisor reported, *"Directly across all departments they served in impacted our capacity… These are the departments that really allow our patient care to happen, so those folks can focus on the patient."* Another noted, *"They were just a Godsend to support staffing."* A food distribution supervisor described, *"I think something that a lot of AmeriCorps teams have an effect on is that when they go into a place and all of a sudden, they get a lot of things done, then whoever is in charge of making decisions at that place like, has some leeway in asking for things [referring to ability to hold open house]."* A team leader explained the teams' work, *"Having multiple people interested in working every now and then really goes a long way in taking stress off the staff members or taking responsibilities off their shoulders;"* while a supervisor simply stated, *"Many hands make light work of things like distributions."*

AmeriCorps NCCC teams enhanced the services of the sponsor organizations in multiple ways, as is supported through a survey of sponsor organizations. As shown in Figure 3.7, nearly half (48%) of responding sponsors indicated that they were able to provide services to a greater number of individuals because of the service of AmeriCorps members. Nearly one-third of sponsors agreed that they were able to provide services quicker as well as offer new or higher quality services to the individuals in their community. Most organizations experienced an increase in community perception. A quarter of surveyed sponsors indicated that the community showed a great deal more awareness of the organization and its missions (26%), while 44 percent of sponsors indicated there was somewhat more awareness.

Figure 3.7 Sponsor organizations helped more people because of the service AmeriCorps members provided

Source: AmeriCorps NCCC Sponsor Survey, N=884

Respondents described ways in which members' service allowed them to redirect resources or save money. For example, one organization explained that there were "*economic benefits of having volunteers do this extensive work free of charge and quicker than other contractors.*" A member shared that the

> Sponsors reported increased leadership skills because of their involvement with NCCC teams. Three-fourths of surveyed sponsors indicated that they grew as a leader at least to a moderate extent (45%) or large extent (31%) by working with AmeriCorps members.

work the team did helped the organization avoid "*spending money in ordering a new [tent] – that is a lot of money. We definitely saved them some time, money, and effort in that space.*" Another organization shared that the "*teams help to save the park system money.*"

Respondents described positive aspects of AmeriCorps members' participation in their organizations and noted the opportunity cost to invest time and energy into onboarding, training, supervision, and guidance. Some respondents noted that, while there were time commitments required to support NCCC teams, there were benefits to having these more extended volunteer commitments as opposed to one-off volunteers. One organization involved in a case study shared that they were "*able to lean on the team a little more than on regular volunteers and not have to repeat safety speeches or train on a daily basis as with new volunteers.*" A member shared, "*They can always use more hands, but having more consistent people there that pick up on things and learn things so next time they don't have to reteach it – I think that definitely helps.*" Some partner organizations noted that the ability to rely on an NCCC team coming every year was an asset as they knew they could depend on this capacity injection at key moments. Given the amount of work that teams accomplish, multiple sponsors emphasized the importance of organizations being prepared with tasks to keep teams busy.

Infusion of skills, ideas, and energy. Respondents described AmeriCorps members' technical skills as a valuable addition to their organizations. One site supervisor noted that members had useful skills related to nursing and carpentry. In another case, a respondent described members

with training in fields like photography and environmental science that were relevant to the tasks assigned to the team. Respondents also described computer and technology skills that members brought to bear to their service activities. Others described data collection and analysis skills, which, in some cases, were closely related to skills in particular software and technology platforms. For example, one respondent shared that, "*One CM created the Microsoft forms and links used to track attendees, made pivot tables in Excel, and compiled information.*" Respondents also described interpersonal skills such as communication, collaboration, leadership, and relationship building members leveraged in their assignment.

Respondents described AmeriCorps members' contribution of new and diverse ideas, energy, and innovation into the organizations. As one respondent shared, "*They have no fear when it comes to trying something new and innovative, and they are quick to learn.*" One respondent explained, "*Having the variety, having the teams be diverse as they are, we can utilize them in different departments,*" and another described the benefit of having "*a fresh set of eyes*" on their work. Others simply shared that the NCCC teams are "*fun to have around,*" bringing youthful energy to organizations that may otherwise be lacking.

Respondents who participated in the COVID-19 case study interviews reported on the valuable skills members brought to their organizations. One site supervisor noted the technology skills members had saying, "*The generation of people that were on those teams, they're young folks. They understand the technology a lot better than people my age. They just catch onto it really quick.*" Another supervisor at a hospital stated, "*I'm finding NCCC really, really come, and while they all have different skill levels, as a group, it is much more productive and helpful to me.*" A food distribution supervisor reported that a member was able to secure a virtual reality training course for them at a discount with their ability to negotiate. That member shared, "*I was able to get Beans and Rice a really solid deal for the next five years with $2000.00 off of the original cost of what the course would be.*" Also of note, one respondent shared their appreciation of the painting skills a member brought, who single-handedly painted a mural.

Respondents shared their delight for the youthful perspective, vibrant energy and positive outlook AmeriCorps team members brought, with one stating, "*They were young and vibrant. They were energetic and enthusiastic.*" As one site supervisor noted, "*There's just kind of a lack of young people in this area; it's a lot of retired people. So, something that they've been really grateful for is, like, having younger voices.*" Another described the appreciation of their staff for AmeriCorps members, "*I know the staff has been appreciative of the ideas we've brought into and the energy, I guess, that we have.*" AmeriCorps members' youthful energy motivated community members – as one

> A sponsor shared: "*Remember how you had to get two vaccines? We had people coming back from the beginning that were coming to get them. So, we had to know the difference. That wasn't written in the policy or anything in the procedures. And so… [the NCCC team members] quickly realized okay, we need this. And then, they quickly would ask people, and they quickly put that process into place…. I wouldn't have done it any different than they did. It was perfect.*"

supervisor explained, *"A younger demographic of people who are helping out and motivated in the community was really great for just bringing new people in who hadn't been to Red Lodge before."*

A hospital supervisor noted the effect members had on patients saying, *"When we have our NCCC folks that can boost morale, it can go further than just our department given that they interact with patients as well. They can boost our patients' days."* The ability to leverage the perspectives of AmeriCorps members was helpful for engaging certain populations in the community. As noted by one respondent from the COVID-19 case studies: *"The insights that they've given have been very helpful because a lot of our programs, we're working with, individuals their age. And so, we really want to draw in individuals that are of their age and into our community. So, one of the things that was very helpful was hearing, having their voice in the materials that were being developed."*

A FEMA point of contact shared, "T*hey give you a lot more insight into some things that you haven't even thought of. They've been very innovative with the way maybe information would be set up from a tracker standpoint.*"
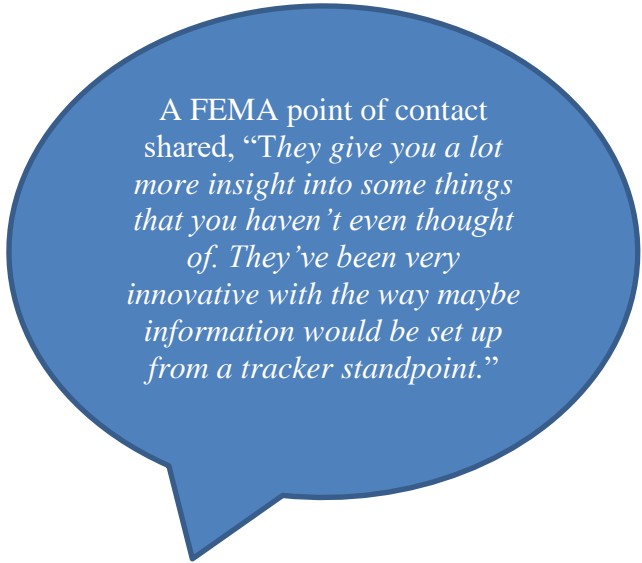
Enhance organizational infrastructure and resource creation. AmeriCorps members completed several tasks that enhanced organizational infrastructure such as organizing inventory and supplies; preparing standard operating procedures (SOPs); creating and implementing tools related to data collection and analysis; drafting tools, reports, and communications; leading trainings and explaining policies and regulations to partners; conducting site inspections; updating policies, procedures, guidelines, and other documents; and archiving, tracking, and reviewing information. Several organizations noted they would continue to use the systems put in place by NCCC teams. One member explained. "*I think we kind of filled some gaps of making their community whole and helping them out, doing things that they might not have the time or resources to do like creating a standard operating procedure.*" Another shared, "*One thing that I've done was helping them track the trainings. It helps them figure out what trainings they need to continue doing more to help the applicant better.*"

One member explained "*As a program, we tend to fill the gaps that FEMA doesn't even know that they have. For example, a lot of times we create whiteboards that really help with situational awareness.*"

Other tasks AmeriCorps members completed include organizing food distribution inventory and PPE supplies; conducting community outreach to support organizations; and using social media skills. As one site supervisor explained, *"I think also with our community outreach, it, I think it looks good for them to have these young people going around helping and like, being invested in their mission as well."* NCCC teams also contributed to policies and procedures to support vaccinations. For example, one respondent described how the NCCC team helped create a procedure for tracking persons in need of their second COVID-19 vaccination.

AmeriCorps members also helped build and expand cultural awareness within organizations by offering different perspectives, speaking multiple languages, and highlighting different cultures (e.g., with the creation of recipe cards representing different cultures that listed ingredients that were affordable), and educating organizations on the different dietary preferences and needs of community members. A food distribution site supervisor also noted, *"Their connection to different communities, their backgrounds, their diversity that made them up as a team. Sometimes they have easier accessibility to different communities and understanding like, 'Hey, we shouldn't do this in this area because… they need low sodium [or]…they're vegetarians.'"* Sponsors appreciate the different perspectives that team members brought, and their diversity of their backgrounds. One supervisor noted, *"So, how does that translate into what the rest of us and what we're currently doing in…To me, it says, you know, how do we need to change? Just because we've always done it this way doesn't mean it's the best way to do it. They bring an insight from their perspectives."* A FEMA supervisor reported, *"They all give us a new view of how to see things, how to see a problem. If they were in a disaster, what would they need or what will they value more in those types of scenarios? So, I think they're able to bring that different culture with them. And really FEMA needs a wide diversity of an inclusion to help support our customers, which are the American people."*

As one member explained, *"The focus that we came up with, it was highlighting different cultures. Kind of giving people an idea of things outside of this area; but the recipes, they were created on canvas, so they exist in an online space that can be printed onto a card."*

Respondents expressed their appreciation of AmeriCorps members' ability to assimilate, specifically citing their ability to work in rural areas and integrate themselves seamlessly into a variety of organizational structures. As one site supervisor explained, *"It took a load off my plate because if I knew that they were handling certain geographic areas, certain target markets or whatever that I could focus then the rest of my resources on others as opposed to me having to birddog that for them. And so, I entrusted that to them, and they got it done – especially when they were out in geographically isolated areas, like either foothill regions or rural, like farm communities."* Another supervisor reported, *"They did come in and just a seamless mesh with our process, and seemed to understand our process, and worked well within it."*

AmeriCorps members expanded organizations' community knowledge by *"just bringing more attention to the work that Beans and Rice does and expanding the community's knowledge of the nonprofit."* Respondents reported that members improved community opinions of their organizations, with one hospital supervisor explaining, *"I think that it will definitely show the, the culture, I guess, here at [hospital name], of how we're willing to try to help, get any support in that we can to help support our team; and show for the long term that, for the community and*

for our staff and the patients that we serve, that we really want to provide the best level care that we can."

Some respondents described the documents, tools, and processes that NCCC teams created as having the potential for long-term effects on the organizations and communities. For example, one respondent shared, *"The long-term effects of these projects is everything they worked on. They're going to be living documents that we'll continue to update."* Beyond individual products created, respondents described how members helped generate awareness of organizational services in the community, encouraging others to access and trust in these services. As one respondent shared of an NCCC team's work with Habitat for Humanity: *"I think once they see a house done with new windows or a new fence homeowners will be like, 'Hey, how did that happen?'. And it's word of mouth – where the homeowner's like, 'I applied for Habitat, they approved me, they came and assessed my house, and they did all this for us. I think that's the way it'll help the community and strengthen the community because, you know, neighbors talk to neighbors."* In some cases, this awareness might also inspire other community members to serve their communities and to join in efforts sponsored by these organizations.

In the COVID-19 case study projects, members and site supervisors described the long-term implications, including supporting the supply chain network, upgrading emergency evacuation plans, formulating an emergency response team, simplifying a hospital workflow, opening clinical staff to focus on patients, revamping processes that will carry forward, and much more. After witnessing the success of these projects, the promise and potential of AmeriCorps members have also spread to other local organizations, who are reported to be applying for and already hosting teams.

Intangible and tangible accomplishments. Members recognized the value of "fulfilling labor shortages" and alleviating stress created by the pandemic (e.g., relieving staff members to do other work or take breaks and helping them avoid having to take on so much). Mirroring this recognition, site supervisors expressed gratitude for the "supplemental staffing" AmeriCorps NCCC provided, which allowed their employees to stick to tasks within their assigned roles, work an appropriate number of hours, and preserve their passion for serving and helping people. One supervisor commented, *"It is huge because… there would be a lot of services that we may have to cut, or we might not be able to provide. So, without their support or assistance, we may have to – we would cut."* Another supervisor talked about how the presence of AmeriCorps members strengthened their department and uplifted the moods during a challenging time when they were stretched thin.

Besides site supervisors, beneficiaries and those being served expressed gratitude to members for their personal time and efforts, and the thoughtfulness in their service. Hospital patients during COVID-19 felt cared for with human contact from members, a feeling amplified by the absence of visitors. On another project with non-visible benefits, a site supervisor commented on members obtaining information about vulnerable residents and providing them with resources to educate them about preparedness and resilience with the goal of future behavior change. For instance, at projects where members supported COVID-19 vaccination, members provided community outreach to businesses, letting them know where their employees could get the vaccine, and equitable access (making it easier for those living in rural areas) to receive the vaccine in a stress-free environment.

Members supported registration, logistics, and organization for vaccine clinics. One supervisor commented: *"For the Covid vaccination clinics, although they weren't allowed to do direct service, they helped with set up, tear down, clean up, directing traffic…Nuts and bolts of event management. We wouldn't have been able to host that many people…without their help,"* and another echoed saying: *"We would not have been able to launch those Covid vaccination clinics without NCCC's help. And, as soon as they left…it became a free-for-all. We were much less organized."* One supervisor talked about the value a team added by having vehicles, enabling them to distribute N95 masks during purple air days to farm workers in harvest season. In addition, some members who spoke Spanish or Indigenous languages were able to provide information to the farm workers as they handed out masks, which was *"immediately impactful in the communities,"* according to this supervisor.

The analysis of the case studies data revealed that, through service, AmeriCorps members demonstrate the development of leadership skills and experience personal benefits evidenced in strong leadership skills and civic engagement. We organized these skills in two themes: initiative and ability to achieve tasks.

Initiative. Community stakeholders (from in-depth case studies) observed that AmeriCorps members demonstrated great initiative and leadership qualities. One respondent described, *"They had something that's called initiative. And once they learned what had to be done, you didn't have to tell them what they'd do. When they saw something that needed to be done, they did it. I didn't have to – by the time they left here, I didn't have to tell them anything except, "That's our house."* One respondent admired the leadership roles women had on job sites. *"The leadership roles of women on the jobsite, like, that was clear and evident. And they were really the champions. They were really the leaders out there. And they were the bearers of most of the knowledge. So, I really appreciated that."*

Interviewees (from COVID-19 case studies) reported on their observations of members' initiative, describing both positive leadership qualities and an eagerness to jump in. As one key stakeholder described the leadership they shared, *"Having that strong team leader, the strong counterpart at NCCC was very helpful."* Another key stakeholder noted, *"They jumped right in where they were needed, as needed, and took the direction, and started work…and in some cases, they were the first face of the state-sponsored clinic, to help direct folks on their path forward."*

Ability to achieve tasks. Community stakeholders (from in-depth case studies) described their perception of AmeriCorps members as "fearless" workers, who never hesitated to do the "dirty work," and kept things moving along. One respondent reported, *"As far as actual physical labor, I mean, they're huge and instrumental in being, you know, keeping the whole construction track on schedule. They get a lot of tasks. They're here – you know, they have been here a lot of hours, so yeah, they definitely keep things moving along. Without them, I think there would be a deficit for sure."* Another interviewee noted, *"One house, in particular – and I think you might have been out there at the one house – particularly nasty. And, uh, those four of them, you know, as I say, they just weren't afraid of anything. I told everybody going in is that place was optional. And those kids, they didn't hesitate. They followed me right on in there. And I really admire that in young people, you know. I got a lot of respect for that."*

Respondents described their appreciation of how AmeriCorps members used resources properly, in particular finding tasks that members can excel at, outside of just hard labor. As one community stakeholder described, *"One of the members on that first team, for example, really wasn't worth anything in the field as far as doing labor. But they ended up putting her to do some administrative tasks and she was fantastic at it. So, uh, it's all about utilizing your resources properly. You know, you kind of give them an opportunity to experience new things, but when you see they don't wanna experience them, then you try to find what they're best at."* Another interviewee noted, *"From the specific point, the team, like all things, there was a handful of them that were very, extremely hard workers. And a handful of them that didn't work extremely hard, but they had uses in other areas other than doing physical labor that, uh, they excelled at."*

Interviewees (from COVID-19 case studies) also described their perceptions of AmeriCorps members and their ability to achieve tasks in different community locations that required support during COVID-19, including hospitals and vaccination sites. As one interviewee reported, *"The community itself, I mean there were some people who didn't necessarily want to get vaccinated or didn't believe in the vaccines, so we ran into a few people like that who kinda passed through the site."* Interviewees described how NCCC teams supported hospital staff during difficult times and dealt with difficult situations at vaccine sites (e.g., anti-vax events). As one key stakeholder noted, "*The community, we'd have some people drive by and like give us the finger type thing."* Interviewees noted that AmeriCorps team members were able to roll with resistance and remain non-judgmental when faced with challenges, qualities that they appreciated.

Community Level Impact

At the community level, the most recurring impact is improvement to natural capital and built capital. These impacts include enhancement of resources, creation of new public spaces or private residences as well as the addition of community gardens or community camps. Figure 3.8 shows the trends in the number of projects coded as improvement to built and natural capital fluctuated with the total number of completed projects. From 2012 to 2022, 4,169 service projects increased the built and natural capital across communities.
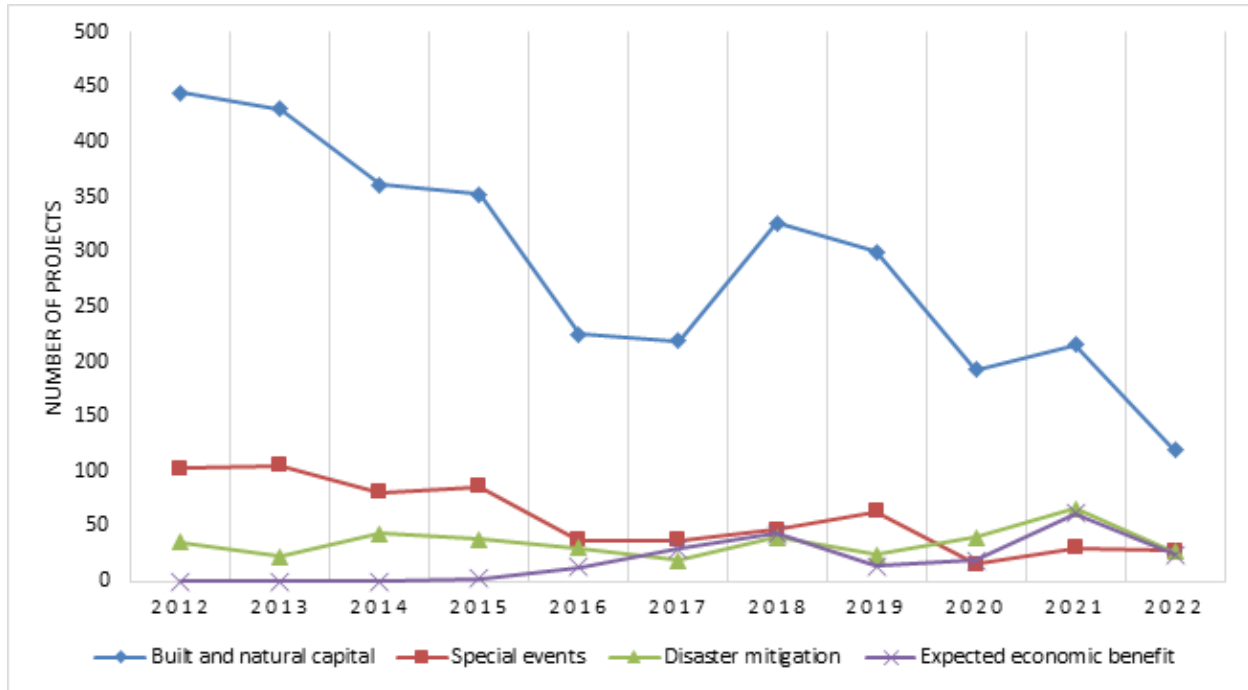
The fluctuation of the impact on communities at large reflects the trends in number and type of projects and not a decline in the benefits that results from the projects. Figure 3.9 shows the impacts on communities as a percent of total completed projects in that year. Service projects that focus on creating or improving community public spaces make up half of completed projects from 2012 to 2022. Nearly one-fifth of these service projects focused on the maintenance of camps (18%), and 12 percent of them resulted in the addition or improvement to community gardens and farms. Figure 3.9 shows various community impacts, underscoring the consistent contributions in special event, disaster mitigation, and expected economic benefits. Notably, the impact to special events, encompassing contributions and assistance to community events, experienced a significant decline in 2020 most likely due to emergency shelter in place and a reduction in special events projects. Conversely, disaster mitigation as a community impact demonstrated an increase that same year.

Figure 3.9 Percent of projects benefitting communities at large, 2012-2022
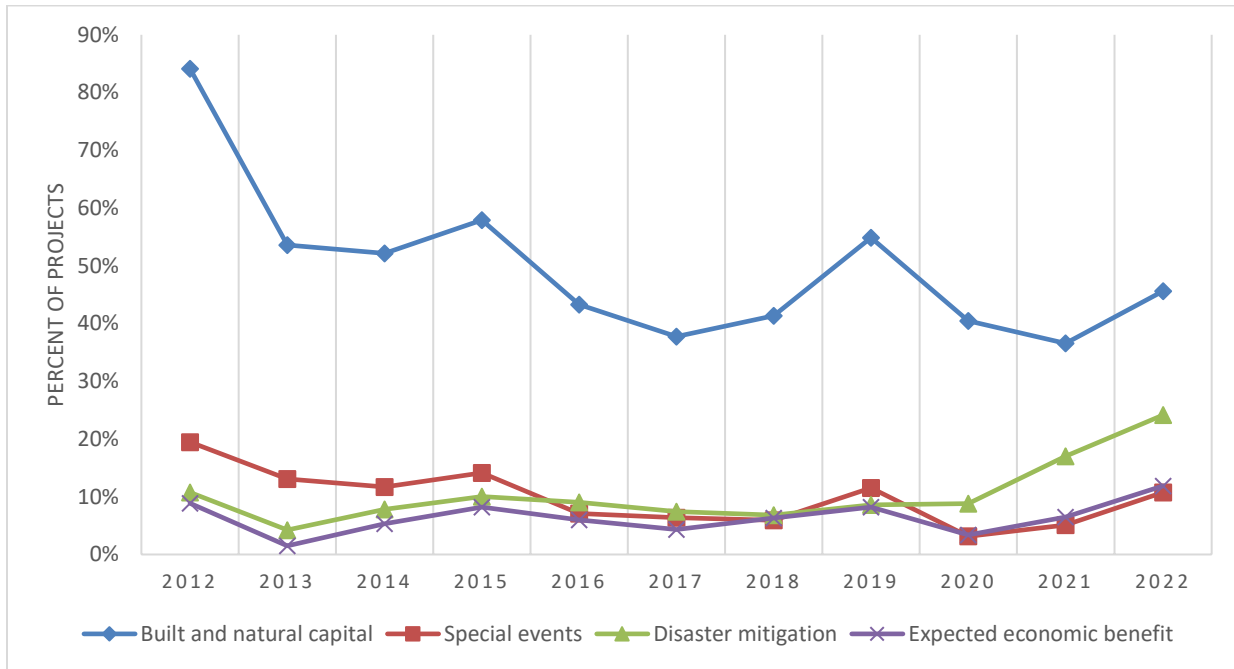
During the research team's site visit, sponsors identified the structures that the NCCC teams created (e.g., nature-inspired play structure), cleaned up (e.g., yurts at a camp), and constructed (e.g., structures for disaster response). One member shared, *"We were building a playground and some features were completed before other features. We were able to see kids playing on this playground we had half-finished, and we were like, 'This is not done yet but it's still cool to see kids playing in it.'"* Another respondent shared that the NCCC team had *"contributed enormously to the safety and the security of the camp itself."* Finally, a team leader shared that one of their proudest accomplishments was *"The trails…There's a huge difference 'cause they've had a lot of overgrowth in the trails. So visually seeing the trails that are now clean – the past three years they haven't been maintenance [sic.] 'cause no one was using them."*

Long-term effects. Respondents described several long-term effects of the service that members provided to the communities. One of these is increasing resiliency and preparedness for future disasters. One member shared that their work was helping to, *"build the resiliency of the impacted communities, whether that's by mitigation measures or being able to provide them funding to do their own work. We don't want to just go in and tell people what to do or how to live their lives; we're just providing the resources and the tools for them to help themselves."* Other members shared that the work they did in restoring and preserving the environment had long-term effects, including the ways that the environment was linked to disaster resiliency. One member stated, *"I think in terms of long term...ecological restoration is clearly strengthening the communities, especially tying into the potential for disasters."*

Impact. Beneficiaries perceived AmeriCorps' presence as "hugely beneficial" to the community. Respondents described feeling a sense of community with members, with shared goals. One respondent shared, *"I think they were like a subset of the AmeriCorps. My experience was great. I mean, I think just being out there on kind of the Habitat jobsite, there's a sense of community*

within there, as well. And just, you know, the shared goal of creating affordable housing. But also, just being part of something that's mission driven and value focused, is always fun." Community stakeholders also described how AmeriCorps members touched people's lives in the community, with one hurricane disaster relief respondent noting, *"These people down here, I don't think, will forget the work that those kids did. I mean, they touched the lives. I told them, I told them all, I said, 'You can't change the world, but you can change one person's view of the world.'"* A community member from a Habitat for Humanity project explained, *"Better housing, improves the neighborhood, makes houses prettier, and people happier. That is very positive. NCCC do a lot of good things and we are grateful. I miss the group now that they are gone."*

Respondents also shared the impact that AmeriCorps members made on the lives of people in the community, noting that they provided hope to community members. One hurricane disaster relief interviewee shared, *"Some – most of them, you know – were in their 70's or 80's that we were dealing with. And, to them, it's like they can't do it, you know. They were stuck. They were helpless. And along come our group with these kids. And they, you know, give them some kind of hope again."* Another respondent reported, *"They had an impact on a lot of people down here. In fact, not – not just the people they helped. Everybody on this island is just, like, so grateful for what, you know, the volunteers have been doing. And, uh, so, I think it will stay with them forever."*

Respondents who participated in the COVID-19 case study interviews also described positive perceptions of the impact NCCC teams had in their communities. Beneficiaries shared stories of the gratitude of community members, including positive feedback they received from their communities. One key stakeholder noted, *"From the feedback that we got in the community people were really pleased to have that type of outreach. We definitely saw a return on investment using that approach."* A member described the appreciation they heard from community members, *"I'd probably say the gratefulness of just individuals, you know. Like there are people who thanked us. I don't know if you can have a spreadsheet of how many people did that, but we're getting that personal time with them...it's their gratitude for us being here."* The value and impact of NCCC members was also noted, with one beneficiary reporting, *"I believe that in the long term…these volunteers are greatly valued, and their impact really makes a huge difference within the, anywhere in the hospital."*

Reflection on contributors to success and ability of AmeriCorps NCCC to strengthen communities. Sponsor organizations had clearly defined goals and gauged success based on whether or not the AmeriCorps NCCC was able to meet those goals. As one case study respondent noted, "*Some of the times they exceeded a goal because of what the group before us had done."* In other cases, success was intangible, and the sponsor described things such as the attitudes of members, changed perspectives of community members, and a sense of connection between AmeriCorps members and the community. These types of relationships fostered deep connections between the AmeriCorps members, the organizations, and communities they served, with some returning to work in the communities where they served. One respondent shared that they felt a project had been successful when it garnered positive sentiment within a community: "*We went to eat at such-and-such place and people came and hugged us and thanked us for being in the community*."

For some respondents, the impact on AmeriCorps members themselves was a component of project success: "*A successful project for me would be hearing that more than half of NCCC members felt that the project moved them in some way.*" Similarly, another respondent shared, "*It's not the number of hours. It's not how many trees they planted. It's not that they painted a house. It's, did this really impact these young peoples' lives enough to where they felt they had a mark on our community when they left?*" Another respondent shared, "*I define that [project success] when they've been able to gain new knowledge or skills based upon the work that they've done.*"

Case studies respondents described the characteristics of members who strengthened communities. These characteristics are professional skills, prosocial skills, and life skills.

The most common professional skills respondents described as a contributor to strengthening the community were work ethic and a general willingness to "get the job done;" self-motivation and the ability to direct oneself; and effective communication skills. While members contributed technical skills, respondents seemed to value self-motivation, self-direction, commitment, hard work, and communication. For example, at one site, a supervisor noted that "*the team was self-motivated and had the ability to identify the things that needed to be done and accomplished.*" A member shared, "*Our reputation is just getting right to it and getting things done and working hard.*" A sponsor organization shared, "*They were all pretty driven, all pretty motivated. They all wanted to do something, and they all wanted to be hands-on – sometimes that's kind of rare to find.*"

> **Professional skills** are qualities, abilities, knowledge, or personal characteristics that enable a person to succeed in their job.

The teams that accomplished tasks and understood when and from whom to ask for assistance, were perceived as highly effective. Respondents noted that teams with diverse skillsets and experiences were strong as they could lean on one another's expertise; as one member shared, *"There's a wide range of talents already comprised in this team…basically having a whole crew where I can say, 'Who's got experience with this?'"*

Respondents also described prosocial skills such as a sincere desire to do good, that help support the community and help those in need. A respondent shared, "*They had a lot of initiative, they went after it. They weren't afraid of anything; they'd follow me into any mess I went into. They were just super impressive as far as their willingness to engage in the physical labor and to get dirty and to do the work to help people out here.*" Respondents described the empathy, understanding, and compassion that members contributed to the organization. A hurricane disaster relief respondent shared an example in which the mucking and gutting crew that they had worked with was trying to wrap up work quickly, discarding items out a window that "were very important to him [the homeowner];" recognizing this, the AmeriCorps crew stayed behind and "*got on our hands and knees and went through it one item at a time. The empathy and understanding of losing everything…these people need hope right now…The AmeriCorps kids helped me go through the closet with Mr. John.*"

> **Prosocial skills** are behaviors purposed to assist other people-- for example sharing, helping, encouraging, and collaborating.

Finally, respondents described members as cooperative, collaborative, responsive, flexible, and supportive. One respondent shared, "*The ability for the NCCC team to be flexible and adaptable and go to whatever site is needed during the week is probably the most important characteristic I've seen because we're really able to place them at those sites where we have the most need.*"

Finally, respondents described the life skills that helped members contribute to the organizations, projects, and communities they served. Specifically, respondents described energy, enthusiasm, engagement, and excitement as critical characteristics

> **Life skills** are behaviors that enable people to effectively manage the demands and challenges encountered in daily life.

for members to bring to their service. One respondent said, "*The energy and the selflessness that they put into it, I think that's not seen so much.*" Another respondent shared, "*We know that the work can be really hard…so just having a positive attitude, their interest in things always makes it a lot easier when they ask a lot of questions and show that they are really engaged.*" Respondents described open-mindedness and a willingness to learn as highly important. One respondent explained, "*My experience with the team was that was kind of an added bonus for me; I loved being able to work with those kids and see them grow. They're learning, they're doing something that other kids aren't doing.*"

Respondents described being personable and easy to interact with as beneficial characteristics of members. One respondent shared of the team that they worked with, "*They are very personable. They are very easy to talk to and I think they have great people-to-people skills and personalities that make it very easy for them to interact with me and the rest of the camp directors as well as my staff and the rest of the community.*"

Some respondents noted that a general desire to be of service is highly beneficial for NCCC teams; as one respondent shared, "*I think it is 100 percent about the attitude of the team…They have to have the desire to serve, and this team had that 100 percent. It's a great program but it's dependent on the team members.*" Respondents also described high levels of commitment as a beneficial characteristic of NCCC teams with one respondent stating that it is helpful to have "*volunteer corps that are committed and do the work for free.*" Strong relationships within the team and a lack of conflict also help teams find success. A respondent shared that the team serving their organization "*was a well-bonded team that was joking. While all communications were not verbal, they worked together long enough that they were seamless in their work.*" Another respondent shared, "*The team just being a unit together – they worked so well on how they communicated with each other and, also, I saw how they communicated with different members on the team throughout the duration of their projects. That is definitely a characteristic that I would like to see [on] every single FEMA Corps team in the future.*"

Figure 3.10 shows the distribution of sponsors' responses of team characteristics that contribute to the impact on the organizations and communities. More than one-third (35%) of surveyed sponsors reported flexibility and adaptability as their team's greatest strength. A quarter of surveyed sponsors highlighted team work ethic and dedication, followed by high team engagement (21%) and positive team dynamics (8%).

Figure 3.10 According to sponsors, flexibility and adaptability are vital characteristics for members to possess to accomplish their project's goals

Flexibility and Adaptability — 35%
Team Work Ethic or Dedication — 25%
Level of Team Engagement — 21%
Team Building or Dynamics — 8%
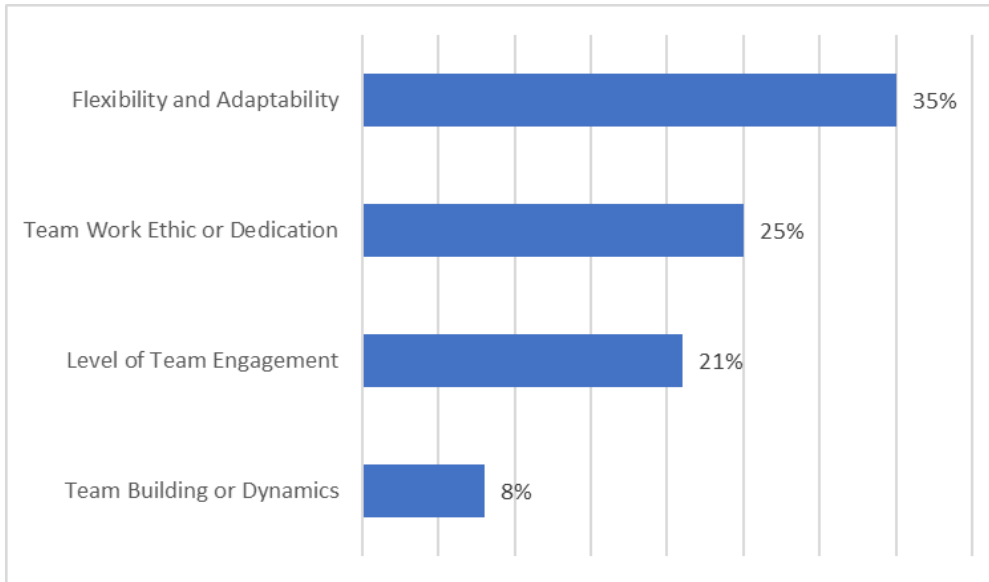
Sources: AmeriCorps NCCC sponsor survey, N=772

Respondents described characteristics of projects, the partner organizations, or communities that influenced the ability of NCCC teams to strengthen communities. For example, respondents noted the importance of organizations having open communication with communities that they are serving and focusing on the people being served. Involving community members in solutions was seen as particularly impactful. One member shared, *"Working with homeowners, I heard a mom say that she had someone take a picture of her and she said, 'I want my kids to know how hard I worked for this home.' That was pretty moving – her sense of confidence in what she's doing and pride that she wanted to share."*

The structure and support the organizations provide determine the success of the projects. Some respondents suggested that organizations should have clear standard operating procedures (SOPs) and structures for their programs, and others noted that sponsor organizations experienced in hosting NCCC teams provided a favorable experience. In general, respondents described the *"dedication and loyalty of sponsoring organizations"* as important to the success of projects and teams. Sponsor organizations ensure project success by providing comprehensive training and supervision as well as a clear plan for keeping NCCC teams busy during their service period. For example, at a Habitat for Humanity site, a member noted that the site supervisor *"provided instructions on power tools at the beginning of the day and checked in with members during the course of their work. Other supervisors worked side-by-side with members and provided guidance as they were working."*

One volunteer/stakeholder noted that sponsoring organizations who made it relatively easy to join were appealing: *"I looked their [sponsoring organization's] websites up. They all wanted to do background checks, which was fine by me. But Cajun Navy just said turn in your information*

and get down here; we need your help. The others wanted to wait two or three days and I wasn't waiting…so I signed up with the Cajun Navy."

In some cases, respondents noted that visibility and awareness of AmeriCorps NCCC in the community was important. As one respondent shared, *"A lot of people have recognized us and they've said that they worked for AmeriCorps years ago and they said it makes them very happy seeing other people in the program and just continuing to do the work."* Community members expressed sincere gratitude for the service of AmeriCorps NCCC. One member shared, *"After my service term ended, I got a card from another person. She mailed us all cards saying thank you for the work that you did in my home. There was also another time where I was working a vaccine site and a woman came and just cried and said thank you because she was so desperate for this Covid vaccine."*

Repeatedly, supervisors of COVID-19 projects commented on members' positive attitudes and commitment to serve, which contributed to profound benefits to the organizations. Even in a challenging and ever-changing environment, members were consistently looking at how to contribute to communities, often above and beyond what some might consider their job description. Some examples include one member putting their car up for sale and contributing $3,000 of the proceeds to a feeding program, and the site supervisor recalling how, during a "huge snowstorm," *"[the team] stayed…on site at the hospital just to make sure that the goal and task…to feed our patients safely…And there is no possible way we would have been able to deliver all of the patient trays that we needed to if they were not here for that project, to help and support us."*

Across COVID-19 projects, members gained leadership skills and stretched across all stakeholders. Team leaders, for example, noted learning how to work as a unit, effectively disseminate information, delegate, and direct to ensure task completion. One respondent noted: *"It's great for us to see [NCCC team members] – see the next generation of leaders, how they, you know, build the team. How they ended up working together, you find everybody from that team is from a different part of the US. And they all come together, and they start making some great relationships. Or at least learn how to be civil and polite with each other. And, you know, to get the job done."*

> One member statement provides a concise summary of organizational benefits of COVID-19 projects, including alleviating staff shortages and related overwhelming stress, as well as longer-term member development: *"In short term, it shows that…young adults from anywhere in the country can come together and really get a lot of things done…This is only temporary but it really shows that we are already helping alleviate some of those staff shortage numbers and the stress and overwhelming…Long term…we are coming in with a different mindset and be a part of what we can do to make things better for the areas we are serving in."*

In the hospital projects, members reflected on being directly part of the solution, while learning valuable information and having powerful experiences they "wouldn't have otherwise been exposed to," which, many will carry into the future. One member shared that serving on a Covid-19 project was a *"really eye-opening and…cool experience, to be able to take on the responsibilities of the actual full-time staff and do what they do on a daily basis."* Other

members talked about building empathy and interpersonal skills, gaining perspective, increasing maturity, and learning flexibility in scheduling due to their time in service. Organizational staff had a chance to grow through the experience of hosting members at their site. One site supervisor's statement illuminates the "give and take" or reciprocal benefits of intentionally developing members while also inherently developing staff: *"It really motivated those that permanently work here to…be a good teacher…to help them understand…help them along their journey to their career paths to where they want to be. So, I always see that in the staff that are here when the FEMA Corps team comes…Opportunities to mentor the leaders on that and their ability to counsel the members and provide them guidance. So, there was – it was a good amount of give and take from that aspect."* A few site supervisors noted that they would look to hire AmeriCorps members and were helping some members make connections for future jobs and learn more about their career plans.

Outside of the hospital, task variation led to variation in project quality. Whereas some COVID-19 projects allowed members to take part in an array of tasks that provided both certifications and experience, others were assigned more menial tasks. In richer experiences, some members had the opportunity to revamp materials and conduct research, become certified on forklifts, gain experience in warehouse operations and inventory management, become trained in preparedness, and much more. Many members were required to balance multiple tasks – acting as both public-facing volunteers and in physical roles behind the scenes.

In contrast, some members requested more opportunities for skill- and resume-building through their service, noting that they were given menial tasks that did not need training. One member commented, for example, *"Having more variety in the work and more skill building. 'Cause I think that was also one of the bigger issues that I've had with this project is that it just not only was there no work, the work that was there had zero skill building, whatsoever."* Thus, highlighting the varied roles and projects that were available considering the pandemic and the need to pivot that was present.

Site supervisors reported that members include a younger diverse population, who arrive with energy, optimism, and motivation to support the community. The "*excited exuberance*" and positivity members bring helps to boost morale and strengthen departments as well as the organizational community. Staff saw the value and were appreciative and uplifted by teams supporting their mission and helping them with their jobs. One supervisor commented: *"When they first got here, they had great attitudes. They still do. And they boosted my team's morale…They're just friendly, bright faces that…come in and they light up the room. And I feel that is an accomplishment for them. Especially, because they may not know, but they have brought a lot of light to my team."*

Another supervisor went on to say that members' work ethic and attitude is *"contagious…it also sets a tone for the rest of my team."* Members not only motivate the staff, acting as a "*spark of life to the rest of the workforce that are here,"* as one supervisor stated; they also bring their consciousness and perspectives, which gives organizations "*a new view of how to see things*." Members not only improved the morale of staff, but also motivated them to support these young people in their learning and along their career paths.

Social Return on the investment to use AmeriCorps to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency

An analysis of the social return on investment of AmeriCorps NCCC's support to communities to address the COVID-19 pandemic allows us to measure and value the social, economic, environmental impact of COVID 19-related service projects. The range of COVID-19 service projects include vaccines distribution mission assignments, COVID-19-adjacent projects such as services in hospitals, food banks, mobile vaccine distribution, and other community-based projects related to COVID-19. The primary objective of the social return on investment is to measure the cost savings of using AmeriCorps NCCC for the COVID-19 pandemic response. These values are the social return accrued to the community, FEMA, the sponsoring organizations, and the individuals in the communities. Appendix E describes the social return on investment calculation.

The direct economic impacts are the actual costs of the services provided by AmeriCorps NCCC compared to the costs that would have been incurred if these services were not provided by AmeriCorps NCCC. The fair market value costs used for the calculation are based on the average hourly rate of a U.S. Census Bureau surveyor in 2020. The type of COVID-19 activities the AmeriCorps NCCC teams performed include contact tracing calls, wellness check calls with older adults, supporting services for COVID-19 vaccination sites and COVID-19 testing sites, distributing PPE, and scheduling or confirming vaccination appointments. The COVID-19 support projects occurred from 2020 to 2021.

> Same year return on investment is $2.83 --; that is, for each dollar invested to deploy a NCCC team, the social return is worth $2.83 during the same year the investment is made.

Accrued benefits occur beyond the initial period of service. To project the long-term impact, the calculation accounts for the fact that some of the benefits would have occurred without the services provided by AmeriCorps NCCC teams. Long-term impact takes years to materialize, and the return is not one-to-one. For example, many individuals were vaccinated regardless of the efforts of AmeriCorps NCCC teams, but many were eventually vaccinated at least in part by having been contacted by a member to schedule a vaccine appointment. Another example is that many of the individuals did wear, or would have worn, masks even if NCCC teams did not distribute them.

Consequential impacts are the longer-term effects (also known as "outcomes") that actions or events have on economic factors. These impacts can include changes in medical care, community social support costs, governmental benefit programs, personal income, and other areas. These effects are projected over a period of 10 years.

The projected net consequential dollar-impact of the services is $3.78 -- that is, for each dollar invested, the return over a period of 5 years is $3.78.

The total net direct and consequential dollar-impact of the COVID-19 services provided by AmeriCorps NCCC is $6.22; that is, for each dollar invested, the return over a period of 10 years is $6.22.

The analysis also compares the cost of using AmeriCorps NCCC services to Department of Defense and FEMA personnel costs. The projected costs that would have been incurred by using Department of Defense personnel for the level of services AmeriCorps NCCC provided are greater. The projected costs of AmeriCorps NCCC members are $1,251,000. The projected costs for Department of Defense personnel are $4,705,000. This yields a total saving of $3,454,000. The projected costs for Department of Defense personnel are based on the wage and health benefits of an E-2 Private Second Class. The projected costs that would have been incurred by using FEMA personnel are significantly greater. The projected costs for FEMA personnel are $7,603,000, yielding a total saving of $6,352,000 when compared to the cost of AmeriCorps NCCC members. The projections for FEMA personnel are based on the wage and health benefits of a Customer Service representative.

Chapter 4 Summary of Findings

This report provides a data-driven and NCCC-specific definition of strengthening communities grounded in more than ten years of data collected from completed service projects, and in primary research conducted with AmeriCorps staff, members, and sponsor organization:

AmeriCorps NCCC harnesses social, natural, institutional, and human capital to support communities and organizations in addressing unique local needs. Through service and in partnership with communities, organizations, and individuals, AmeriCorps NCCC creates short-term and long-term positive impacts on community well-being and resilience. AmeriCorps members, through their service, experience personal benefits evidenced in strong leadership skills and civic engagement.

This definition focuses on the ways in which AmeriCorps NCCC leverages four types of capital (i.e., resources) to strengthen communities in which members serve. This includes leveraging **social capital** – the value derived from the network of relationships and connections between people – to help communities feel more connected and purposeful and to increase the agency of community members, amplifying voices from within these communities in decision-making processes. AmeriCorps NCCC leverages and builds **natural capital** – which refers to both natural environments and human-made infrastructure – by revitalizing recreational spaces, parks, and housing and supporting ecological restoration. AmeriCorps NCCC leverages and fosters **institutional capital** – the structures and processes of institutions and service providers operating within communities – by enhancing an organization's productivity, outreach, and efficiency and by growing connections and partnerships between agencies. Finally, AmeriCorps

NCCC leverages and builds **human capital**, such as building skills, knowledge, confidence, and awareness of and capacity to access resources and empowering individuals within communities.

The harnessing of these four types of capital generates benefits both in the short-term and long-term for individuals, sponsor organizations, and the communities that members serve. Individual community members receive both direct and indirect benefits from members' services, resulting in benefits on their personal well-being and quality of life. Sponsor organizations benefit by collaborating with AmeriCorps NCCC to provide services to their clients and to strengthen their own organizational capacity. Communities as a whole benefit as well because AmeriCorps' approach is tailored to align with community-defined needs. Finally, AmeriCorps members themselves experience a range of benefits including skill building, opportunities to practice and develop leadership skills, networking opportunities, opportunities to gain cultural competence, and overall satisfaction with the program and experience.

The benefits AmeriCorps NCCC generates short-term – such as expanded organizational capacity for near-term needs and the ability for organizations to redirect staff and financial resources, injections of skills, ideas, and energy at critical moments, and enhanced infrastructure (e.g. construction, equipment set up, resource creation, data organization) – as well as longer-term benefits, which include the creation of sustainable tools, documents, and processes, increased community resilience and preparedness for disasters, and upgraded emergency evacuation plans, processes, and teams. The benefits are tangible (e.g., access to food, water, healthcare; physical infrastructure) and intangible (e.g., mental health care; learning; increased efficiency; faster project completion).

The wealth of existing data permitted the categorization of benefits into discrete indicators at the individual, organization and community levels as well as facilitated quantification of results and comparison over time. For projects that members completed between 2012 and 2022, the most frequently occurring project impacts include: built and natural capital improvements (20% of total impacts recorded), infrastructure enhancements (16% of total impacts recorded), improved organizational effectiveness (12% of total impacts recorded), and disaster assistance provided (11% of total impacts recorded).[8]

The body of evidence of the ways in which AmeriCorps NCCC contributes to strengthening communities includes both perceptions of staff, community members, and sponsors as well as calculated social return on investment (SROI). Fifty-five percent of surveyed sponsors, for instance, agreed that it would have taken their organizations longer to accomplish their goals if they had not had AmeriCorps NCCC support. Sponsors said things like, "*The energy and the selflessness that they put into it – I think that's not seen so much*," and, "*They were all pretty driven, all pretty motivated. Sometimes that's kind of rare to find.*" The SROI analysis demonstrated that for each dollar invested to deploy a NCCC team, the return over a 10-year period is $6.22.

Members contributed their professional skills (e.g., work ethic), prosocial skills (e.g., collaboration), and life skills (e.g., energy, open-mindedness) to strengthen communities.

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[8] N (total impacts recorded) = 15,584

Sponsors indicated that the top qualities and skills of members contributing to the achievement of organizational goals were flexibility and adaptability; work ethic and dedication; high levels of team engagement; and strong team dynamics.

Chapter 5 Lessons Learned and Future Research

AmeriCorps NCCC leverages social, natural, institutional, and human capital to strengthen communities where its members serve. AmeriCorps NCCC considers each community's unique needs and collaborates with a diverse group of sponsor organizations to benefit individuals and create a lasting positive impact on communities' overall well-being and resilience. As they serve, members increase capacity, efficiency, and effectiveness of organizations to support and serve their constituents; individuals who reside in these communities receive increased support and access to community resources to meet their basic needs and enhance overall health and well-being and trust in the community.

Members restore and revitalize housing, public parks, and recreational spaces. This restoration and revitalization strengthens social connection, purposefulness, and agency among community members. Members' service strengthen the organizations and the communities, and members gain a range of leadership skills as a result of their service, such as development of professional, prosocial and life skills, leadership opportunities, networking and relationship building, collaboration and exposure to different organizations and institutions, increased cultural competence from interacting with diverse communities, and personal satisfaction and fulfilment gained from witnessing positive changes to the communities they serve.

Drawing from the case studies analysis, we provide the following recommendations for sustaining the benefits of members' service.

Use the visibility of members to increase local interest in AmeriCorps, and in, potentially, longer-term community engagement. A shared takeaway from interviews with community members and sponsor organizations is that member visibility in the community contributes to an increased interest in both AmeriCorps and the project; and, perhaps more importantly, members' presence sparks an interest in longer-term engagement from the community with the sponsor organization and the issue more broadly. Multiple respondents from sponsor organizations noted that having young people in uniform and engaging in service is a good way to advertise projects where community members can get involved. In addition, *"a lot of business owners"* and other nonprofits have seen the members and "*inquired with us about how [they] would go about getting a crew.*" For example, one respondent recalled how when *"core volunteers,"* who regularly serve at a site, saw young AmeriCorps NCCC members serving, it encouraged them to get more involved and increased their work production.

The presence of AmeriCorps members increases trust and appreciation for government and other organizational services and agencies within the community. Consistent with AmeriCorps NCCC's theory of change, the increased visibility of Traditional Corps and FEMA Corps members enthusiastically working side-by-side with community constituents to help them recover from disasters and achieve a sense of safety and livability, and preserve and revitalize public recreational spaces, assists beneficiaries with accessing resources and can serve as a

catalyst for community interest in AmeriCorps in promoting long-term civic and community engagement.

Encourage sponsor organizations and community members to promote their experiences with AmeriCorps. Respondents from sponsor organizations described how AmeriCorps members benefited their ability to serve and strengthen communities by increasing their efficiency, expanding their staff capacity, giving them the ability to redirect staff and other resources; infusing their organizations with members' professional skills, energy, and innovative ideas; enhancing their organizational infrastructure; and creating resources. Having sponsor organizations and community members share their positive experiences with AmeriCorps NCCC could prompt continued interest in AmeriCorps from other organizations. In fact, a few site supervisors indicated they were *"spreading the word"* about AmeriCorps NCCC, and interest in obtaining a team is growing, *"especially with the nonprofits"* in certain community geographic areas. As noted by one interviewee*, "So there are other small business owners and even some of the larger general contractors that we work with have kind of been "oh, that's really cool that they do that for you and that you can get a crew out there," so yeah. ... people are getting to know a little bit more about it, specifically up here."*

Toward that end, some site supervisors underscored their use of social media coverage to both "bring in more volunteers" and grow interest in AmeriCorps NCCC from other nonprofits. For one organization, using social media to share AmeriCorps NCCC stories of service is valuable for reaching younger and broader audiences, while building "momentum" around volunteer engagement. Another interviewee talked about how the mention of AmeriCorps NCCC partnership in a news story raised awareness to other local organizations as well. Such efforts could also be used to facilitate recruitment for AmeriCorps.

Leverage visible improvements from service projects (especially improvements in public recreational spaces, parks, housing) to pique community interest and increase community engagement. Given their cohesive team dynamics and predictable volunteer hours, AmeriCorps members have the unique ability to contribute to visible changes in the community. Similarly, an undercurrent noted in the data is to consciously place members in projects with high visibility and frequent consumer touchpoints. While this consideration cannot be universally applied to ensure projects are responsive to community needs (some of the most necessary projects will not meet this criterion), case studies respondents indicate that such projects, often those that focus on built and natural capital, generate excitement and inspiration because of witnessing progress both in the short- and long-term.

As noted by one respondent, *"...that's always the intent for us with these AmeriCorps teams – is build some sustainability and stuff. We know we can't have them year-round, so it's you know to leverage what they're able to do while they're with us with the community and I think that is working. I think we've had a number of volunteers this year work on a large tree plantings. We had some corporate groups and that's all a function of what they're seeing. So everybody wants to be part of success and part of good things happening. So they see all this new work and tree planting and invasive species work that's going on and I think they're much more inclined to participate...."*

Urge site supervisors to encourage members to engage with community residents to further the positive work they are doing, even beyond the scope of the service project. When residents see energized AmeriCorps members serving the community and have a chance to learn about who they are and what they are doing, a sense of care and belonging is fostered. This finding was particularly prevalent in the home repair and building projects, where a site supervisor reflected on how beneficial it is for members and the homeowners with whom they are working to meet and interact. As one respondent stated, "*Sometimes they make connections and get to know the homeowner in special ways,*" and another described how when homeowners "*see that there are folks willing to come out and dedicate months of their time to building or repairing homes," "it has an impact on strengthening our community.*"

Use both tangible and intangible indicators to measure project success and sustainability. Although most respondents centered on immediately measurable outputs and process measures (such as whether project goals were met, the quality of members' experiences, and community benefits observed), the results highlight the importance of several non-visible or intangible indicators of strengthened communities, such as improved mental health, increased resilience, changed perspectives of community members, increased social connections, gains in knowledge, and preparedness to support future behavior change. Given the relevance of these indicators to strengthening communities, assessment of these indicators at the close of projects would provide critical information on the impact of AmeriCorps' presence on strengthening the communities they serve.

Respondents described several factors at the individual, organization, and community levels that, once in place, would increase the likelihood of AmeriCorps NCCC strengthening communities.

Preparation, thoughtful planning, adequate resources, and collaboration. The responsibility for meaningful, full-bodied projects designed to actively engage AmeriCorps members rests with the sponsor organizations, including establishing on-the-ground partnerships, good project planning, having tools and equipment at the ready, and identification of contingency projects. Respondents noted the structure and support organizations provide help determine the success of the projects. Adequate preparation allows the organization to leverage members' presence to strengthen the organization and the community being served. AmeriCorps members bring energy, skills, and knowledge, which increase the efficiency of the work done on their projects. As such, it is imperative that organizations have a clear plan for keeping members busy and engaged in their tasks. Sponsors discussed different aspects of scoping, including the need to be accurate in applications, the difficulty of forecasting project needs and workloads, and collaborating with NCCC staff to structure successful projects. The following bubbled up as implementation facilitators:

- Collaboration with local partners
- Thoughtful assignment of teams and tasks that considers team members' interests and skills
- Recognition of the role of larger systems and structures, such as poverty or external organizations temporarily coming in to serve a community, in addressing the project issue area.

Providing comprehensive training, ongoing supervision, and mentorship. Critical to members' ability to successfully complete the projects is the extent to which they acquire the knowledge and skills needed to perform these service projects. Training expands members' ability to contribute to strengthening communities during and after their service by increasing members' skills, understanding, and commitment to strengthening communities. Training and development are intended to shape members as leaders who will continue to serve their communities beyond their term of service. It is generally expected that sponsors and site supervisors will, at the start of the project, onboard teams to project tasks, train members on the skills needed, and orient them to the communities to be served.

As projects progress, members noted it was helpful when sponsors and/or site supervisors also provided ongoing training and check-ins and worked with them side-by-side, providing guidance as they complete tasks. When the organization makes a point to have members see their clients and programming in action and build skills, it provides them with an experience that lasts beyond the term of service. In some cases, members channeled the training and guidance received to provide mentorship, guidance, and knowledge and build the confidence of the community members they served through their projects.

For team leaders, mentorship and working closely with sponsors and/or site supervisors helped them learn how to work as a unit, effectively disseminate information to members, and delegate and direct to ensure task completion. Some organizational staff grew through the experience of hosting members at their site. One site supervisor's statement illuminates the "give and take" or reciprocal benefits of intentionally developing members while also inherently developing staff. Additionally, some sponsors reported positive impacts on their own leadership skills because of their mentorship and personal involvement with NCCC team members.

Additional facilitators discussed critical paths to effectiveness, including:

- Variation in task complexity, allowing members to learn and gain experience with tasks that foster development of multiple professional, leadership, prosocial, and life skills
- Availability of sponsors and site supervisors to provide ongoing training and support throughout the duration of the project
- Having clear standard operating procedures (SOPs) that team leaders and members can reference and use a resource to supplement their training and task completion

Facilitating close and positive connections through mentorship and networking. Analysis of the case studies data suggests that strong linkages to the organization help members connect tasks to the project's purpose and context, effectively implement tasks, and develop networks and the knowledge needed to successfully complete the project. Some respondents mentioned that their staff connects with members to learn more about them personally and provide positive support in their lives by helping *"them with thinking about what they want to do in the future…."* When staff and members have a chance to connect, the organization can learn about new resources for their programming, and the members can network and gain some perspective and guidance for their lives after AmeriCorps.

Many sponsors conveyed that they had positive relationships with the teams, with one calling them "godsends." The development of such close relationships, often through mentorship, sometimes led to organizations looking toward, if not actually, hiring AmeriCorps members as well as helping some members make connections for future jobs that support civic and community engagement. Similarly, it is beneficial for organizations to have open communication with communities that they are serving and focus on the people being served. Involving community members in solutions was seen as particularly impactful towards strengthening communities. Overall, it is the mutual benefits that make these relationships and partnerships successful and play a role in strengthening communities.

Members, sponsors, and site supervisors described several factors that affect the ability of AmeriCorps members to be successful in serving their communities. Members bring flexibility, open-mindedness, and excited energy to projects. In addition, their youth, histories, and experiences enhance interaction with community members, beneficiaries, and staff. These characteristics were also cited to shape the project activities, and their feedback was repeatedly mentioned as important for improvement. Sponsors recounted that the teams' energy reinvigorated their staff and lifted the spirits of the communities they served at a time often characterized by high stress and burnout.

Members' initiative, positive leadership qualities, and an eagerness to jump in are seen as critical to successfully complete the project. Community stakeholder respondents observed that AmeriCorps members took charge and demonstrated great initiative and leadership qualities. In addition, members were able to achieve project tasks and served as "force multipliers" to complete work that the sponsor could not do previously due to limited staff or more pressing tasks; alleviated burnout; and enabled the organizations to serve the community and exponentially increase their efficiency to do so. Sponsors view AmeriCorps members as "fearless" and hard workers who never hesitate to do the "dirty work," and keep things moving along. Respondents also described their appreciation of how AmeriCorps members used resources properly, finding tasks that members can excel at, outside of just hard labor.

The ability of members to form positive impressions and relationships with an organizations' staff was also seen as critical to success and contributed to AmeriCorps members being viewed by respondents as "hugely beneficial" to the community. Demonstrating a heartfelt dedication to service and a willingness to "give back" to community members helped engender a sense of hope among the communities the members served. In addition, their age, histories, and experiences enhance interaction with community members, beneficiaries, and staff. These characteristics were also cited to shape the project activities, and their feedback was repeatedly mentioned as important to obtain for improvement. Residents in the community who directly interacted with members conveyed positive impressions of AmeriCorps, often describing teams as energetic, dedicated, and hard-working. Some interviewees focused on how AmeriCorps members comprise a younger cohort, which may contribute to softening the negative rhetoric around young people's work and community ethics. Respondents noted that visibility and awareness of AmeriCorps NCCC in the community was important towards engaging and strengthening communities. Both staff and community members described how seeing

AmeriCorps members in action may inspire others to serve and build trust in the government as embodied representatives.

Future Research

The current study was exploratory; future research investigating project, sponsor, and community-level predictors of community strengthening might consider examining how such predictors vary by project type, as well as the extent to which the project was effective in achieving their goals. It might also be helpful to examine the extent to which some projects might lead to community benefits. Below we offer some methodological recommendations to strengthen and guide future impact research on strengthening communities.

Consider changing the unit of analysis to be the host sites. Host site stakeholders admitted difficulty recalling issues when responding to some of the questions, especially when they hosted multiple teams since the project in question occurred. It may be the accumulation of efforts put forth by multiple teams that has the potential for lasting change, even when each project is distinct. For example, one park's tree planting project helped the host site to refine systems for large group volunteer projects (both AmeriCorps and otherwise) and forced supervisors to get into the field, making them aware of needs that otherwise would not have been accounted for and creating a needs inventory for future large group volunteer projects (both NCCC and otherwise), while also providing long-term ecological impacts that accumulate alongside other such small-scale activities.

By not limiting the respondent group to projects, the pool to draw perspectives on potential impact would be widened. For this to occur successfully, we recognize that study participants should be incentivized. This would allow members to move beyond their team's interpersonal dynamics and broaden the conversation to focus on how members view impact more broadly. This would also widen the pool of residents who can be invited to comment on how projects may have affected the community, including those who may not have had direct involvement with a particular team but have benefited from infrastructure changes, for example.

An additional enhancement that may be derived from a more expansive unit of analysis is that the windshield tours can be detached from any particular team and selected by project goal instead, which would need to be purposefully selected to fit the potential of a windshield tour or walking survey. More considerations for windshield tours or walking surveys include:

- How much time needs to have passed for a change to be detectable in space or services?
- Can prior community needs assessments or visual documentation of the landscape be utilized to make comparisons both before and after work by AmeriCorps members? How do we document change without a capture of the before (or if a longer-term study, can researchers document the before and then come back at various increments)?
- Can community residents provide narrative on how the use of the space or service has shifted over time and, if compensated, contribute to the research activities as co-researchers?

Longer-term outcomes are complex to measure. To get a more nuanced and deeper perspective in some areas, it is important to use methods such as: photovoice, community engagement studio, world cafe, or mapping to include diverse voices into the evaluative learning process.

Appendix A. Study Objectives and Research Questions

The table states the research questions that guided the data collection and analysis

Objective	Research questions
Define strengthening communities in the context of AmeriCorps NCCC.	a. What is meant by strengthening communities? b. How is success in strengthening communities defined by different stakeholders? c. How do sponsor organizations perceive project success?
Assess the evidence of AmeriCorps NCCC's impact on the communities where its members serve.	a. What are the indicators of how AmeriCorps NCCC strengthens communities? How do AmeriCorps NCCC projects strengthen communities? b. How do AmeriCorps members affect sponsor organizations' ability to serve and strengthen communities? c. What do members, sponsors and site supervisors, and community stakeholders believe are the most important factors influencing the ability for AmeriCorps NCCC to strengthen communities? d. What are the direct, indirect, unintended, and long-term effects of AmeriCorps NCCC's service on communities? e. How do community members perceive AmeriCorps NCCC and FEMA Corps?
Calculate the social return on investment of AmeriCorps response to the Covid-19 pandemic	a. What is the return on investment of AmeriCorps' response to the Covid-19 pandemic? What are the cost savings of using AmeriCorps to respond to the pandemic?

Appendix B. AmeriCorps NCCC Logic Model for Strengthening Communities

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES		
			Short Term	**Intermediate**	**Long Term**

• AmeriCorps NCCC funding
• FEMA Staff
• NCCC Members and potential members
• Funding
• Sponsors and partners
• Venues
• Technical Assistance
• Accommodations for NCCC members
• Laws and regulations
• Curriculum for training members on strengthening communities
	NCCC Community & Member Development Activity
	
	• Developing the strengthening communities' plan/model
	• Conducting needs assessments
	• Training members in strengthening communities, including how to:
	  o Recruit, train and coordinate volunteers
	  o Build relationships with community-based organizations and coalitions
	  o Work with community members to solve community problems
	• Training team leaders to support members in community activities
	• Supervising and coaching team leaders and Corps Members in strengthening communities
	• Evaluating and assessing member development and community activities
		• Corps members and team leaders trained in strengthening communities
		• Members and leaders receive supervision
			Member Level
			
			• Increased knowledge about strengthening communities; how to:
			  o Recruit, train and coordinate volunteers
			  o Build relationships with community-based organizations and coalitions
			  o Work with community members to solve community problems
			• Increased desire to take action to strengthen communities
			• Increased self-efficacy regarding ability to lead others to strengthen communities
				• Increased civic participation and volunteerism
				• Increased leadership in local community strengthening initiatives
					• Indirect effects on dimensions of strengthening communities in members' and leaders' future home and work communities

	Corps Members Activities in the Community (Short-term, team-based projects)		Community/Beneficiary Level		
	Building Community and Organizational Capacity • Recruiting, registering, and coordinating volunteers • Fostering collaborations or partnerships between organizations • Increasing community engagement and participation by supporting events, partnerships, and collaborative projects • Integrating into communities and working alongside community members and project beneficiaries • Assisting in building or renovating physical spaces used by community and government agencies to serve community members • Creating or enhancing systems or tools (e.g., databases) to be used by community and government agencies to serve community members	Building Community and Organizational Capacity • Increased number of volunteers • Increased partnerships between organizations • Improved physical infrastructure for community-serving agencies	Building Community and Organizational Capacity • Increased volunteer engagement • Help to establish connections, or increase connections, between community-serving organizations • Ability to serve more beneficiaries	Building Community and Organizational Capacity • Increased efficiency and effectiveness of community-led volunteer efforts • Increased ability of community serving organizations to leverage community assets • Increased capacity of community and government agencies to serve community members, including ability to serve greater numbers of clients, to serve the needs of existing clients more holistically, and/or to deliver existing services more efficiently effectively	Building Community and Organizational Capacity • Increased organizational and interorganizational capacity to serve community needs • Increased community member health and well-being (e.g., due to ability to use trails, reduced exposure to mold)

	Community Improvement
	• Constructing, renovating, and rebuilding homes and public buildings
	• Restoring public fixtures and beautifying community (e.g., painting streetlamps, boarding up abandoned houses)
	• Improving public lands including parks and historic sites (e.g., removing exotic vegetation, creating or modifying hiking trails, creating irrigation systems)
	• Building or improving community farms and gardens
	• Supporting infrastructure development and capacity building of small nonprofits
	• Providing direct assistance for vulnerable individuals (e.g., seniors, veterans, people who are homeless, people facing food insecurity, people with disabilities)
		Community Improvement
		• Public land improvements made, including:
		  o Hiking trails established or fixed
		  o Exotic vegetation removed
		  o Community gardens or farms created or supported
		• Construction, restoration, or renovation of private homes and public buildings
		  o Houses built
		  o Houses restored or renovated
			Community Improvement
			• Increased number of people with access to public lands and trails
			• Increased access to safe and affordable housing for direct project beneficiaries
			• Reduced food insecurity
			• Improved short-term well-being of vulnerable community members
			• Reduced perceptions of neighborhood physical disorder
				Community Improvement
				• Increased number of people using public lands and trails
				• Increased ability of people experiencing housing or food instability to focus on higher order needs (e.g. education, work)
				• Increased community member sense of safety and livability	

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES		
			Short Term	**Intermediate**	**Long Term**

		o Public buildings restored or renovated
		• Community beautification
		  o Houses, streetlamps, or other fixtures painted
		  o Abandoned properties boarded up
		• Vulnerable individuals supported			

	Disaster Preparation, Mitigation and Recovery
	• Supporting FEMA Corps activities (e.g., performing assessments, mapping) to improve efficiency of planning and targeting of resources
	• Providing direct support to individuals affected by disaster (e.g., helping them to obtain aid)
	• Educating community members on disaster preparation and recovery, including conducting trainings and distributing publications and other materials
	• Improving physical structures or environments to prevent or mitigate future disasters (e.g., installing smoke detectors)
	• Supporting short-term recovery from disaster by addressing immediate health and safety hazards (e.g., removing debris)
	• Supporting long-term recovery from disaster by addressing potential threats to long-term health and safety (e.g., mucking out and gutting homes)
		Disaster Preparation, Mitigation and Recovery
		• Infrastructure improvements made, including:
		  o Houses mucked and gutted
		  o Pounds of debris cleared
		  o Smoke detectors installed
		• Assessments or maps created
		• Publications created or distributed
		• Trainings conducted / people trained in disaster preparation and response
		• Volunteers registered or managed
		• Individuals affected by disaster who receive assistance
		• Individuals contacted (or made contact with) to provide disaster information assistance, such as finding shelter and other support services
		• Individuals registered to receive disaster assistance, such as filing for FEMA assistance paperwork
		• Individuals received disaster assistance
			Disaster Preparation, Mitigation, and Recovery
			• Increased community member knowledge of disaster preparation and recovery
			• Reduced time before businesses open
			• Reduced time before disaster survivors can move into their homes and/or go back to work
			• Reduced mold in homes of disaster survivors
			• Increased data and infrastructure for FEMA of the needs and characteristics of current and potential disaster survivors
				Disaster Preparation, Mitigation, and Recovery
				• Increased steps taken by community members to follow disaster preparation recommendations
				• Increased ability of community members and businesses to gain steady income
				• Reduced health issues caused by mold and other disaster-related challenges
				• Increased ability of FEMA to target resources effectively
					Disaster Preparation, Mitigation, and Recovery
					• Increased disaster resilience—preventing disasters, mitigating their effects, and enhancing efficiency of recovery

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES		
			Short Term	**Intermediate**	**Long Term**
			Potential indirect or unintentional outcomes • Increased trust, hope, and sense of community • Increased pride in community and desire to care for community resources • Increased positive sentiment about the community and hopefulness for the future among community members, volunteers, and project beneficiaries • Improved perceptions of youth among elder community members • Possibility of unintentional negative effects or consequences	Potential indirect or unintentional outcomes • Increasing trust, hope, and sense of community • Increased action taken by community members to care for community resources • Possibility of unintentional negative effects or consequences	Potential indirect or unintentional outcomes • Increased trust, hope, and sense of community • Increased community empowerment and perceived ability of community members to collectively serve their own needs • Improved intergenerational relationships • Increased built and natural capital • Improved economic development in low-income and/or disaster affected regions • Possibility of unintentional negative effects or consequences

Appendix C: Geographic Distribution and Characteristics of Service Projects

This section describes the geographic distribution of AmeriCorps NCCC projects. Figure C.1 shows the geographic distributions of service projects from 2012-2022. Each dot on the map represents the site where an AmeriCorps NCCC team was deployed at least once and completed a service project. Between 2012 and 2022, AmeriCorps completed 6,753 service projects, serving multiple locations in each of the 48 contiguous states, Alaska, Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. During this period, 29 percent of the projects took place in the Southern region, 28 percent in the Pacific region, 24 percent in the North Central region, and 19 percent in the Southwest region.

Figure C.1: Communities served by AmeriCorps NCCC service, 2012-2022
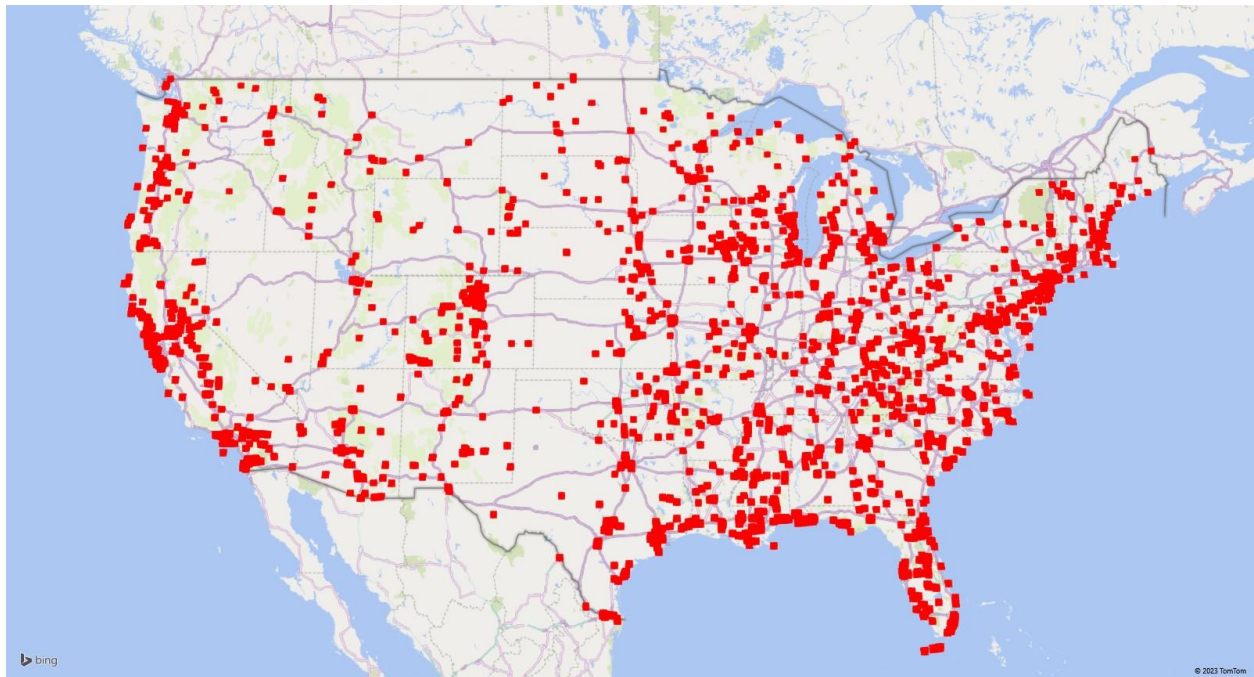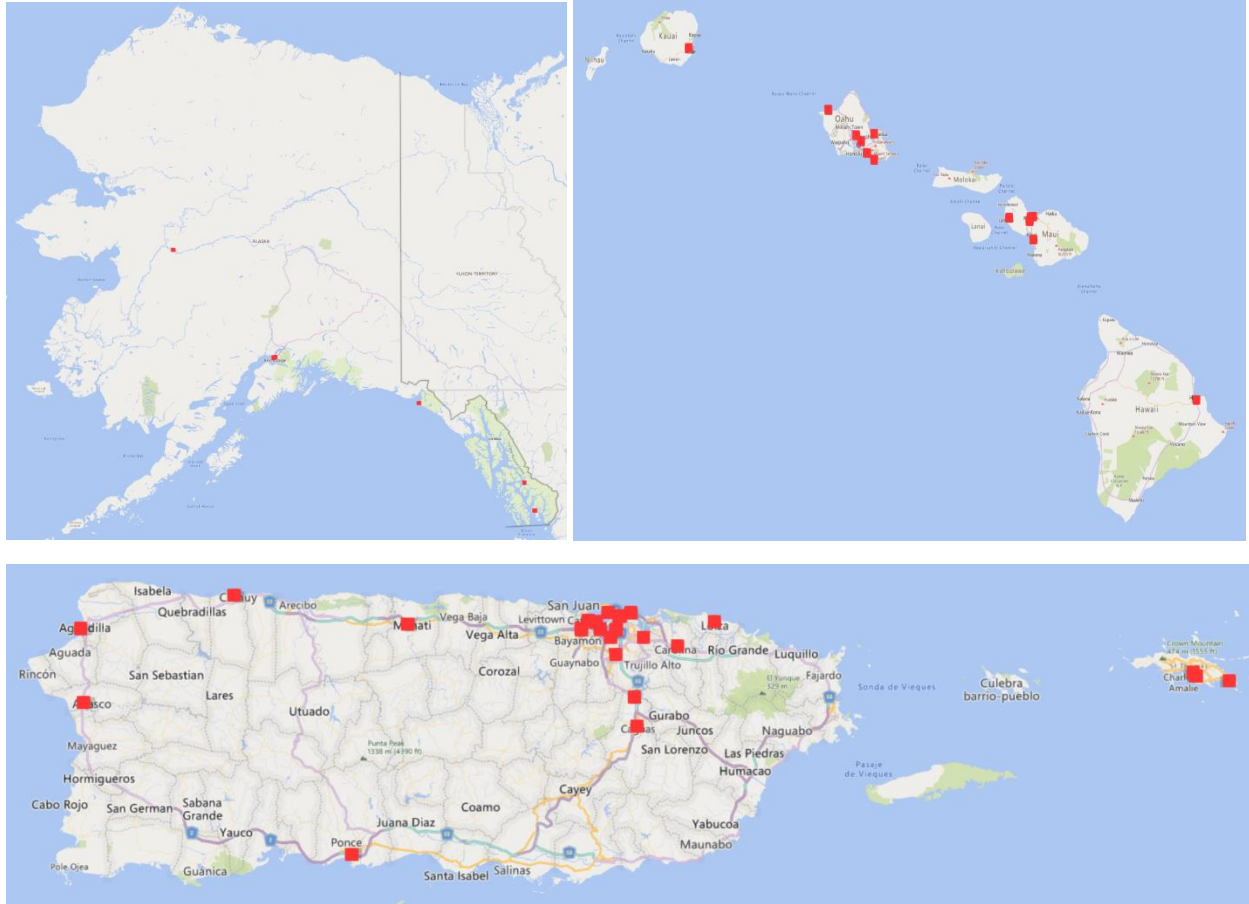
Community beneficiaries are wide-ranging and include disaster survivors, children and youth, older adults, veterans and family members of veterans, people with disabilities, and people in low-income communities facing housing or food insecurity. Figure C.2 shows the distribution of projects that had an impact on what is considered a 'special population.' These projects provided direct and indirect support to special populations, such as individuals with disabilities, older adults, immigrants or refugees, non-English language speakers, disadvantaged youth, and projects with tribal communities and indigenous peoples. From 2012 to 2022, 242 projects served special populations.

Figure C.2: Distribution of Special Population Projects 2012-2022
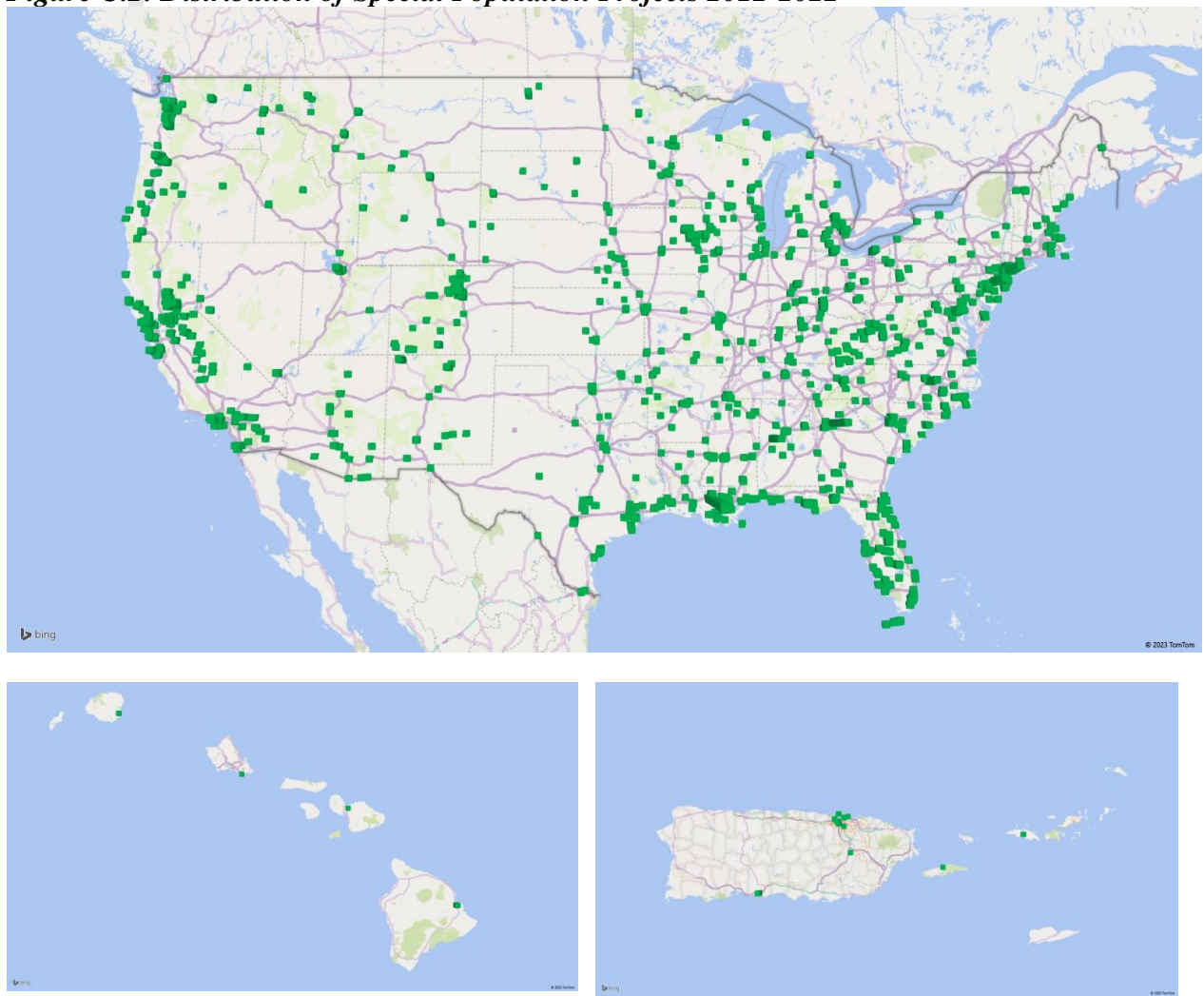
Since 2012, projects where at least some of the outcome addressed disaster (i.e., disaster prevention, preparedness, and mitigation, disaster recovery, disaster response) remain the most prevalent types of projects for AmeriCorps NCCC teams. Figure C.3 shows the geographic distribution of project outcomes that focused on disaster. Of the 6,753 projects, 2,012 had a disaster prevention preparedness and mitigation outcome; 2,142 had a disaster recovery outcome; and 1,312 had a disaster response outcome.

Figure C.3: The most prevalent outcomes of AmeriCorps NCCC disaster service projects

Disaster Projects 2012-2022
- DISASTER PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS, and MITIGATION
- DISASTER RECOVERY
- DISASTER RESPONSE
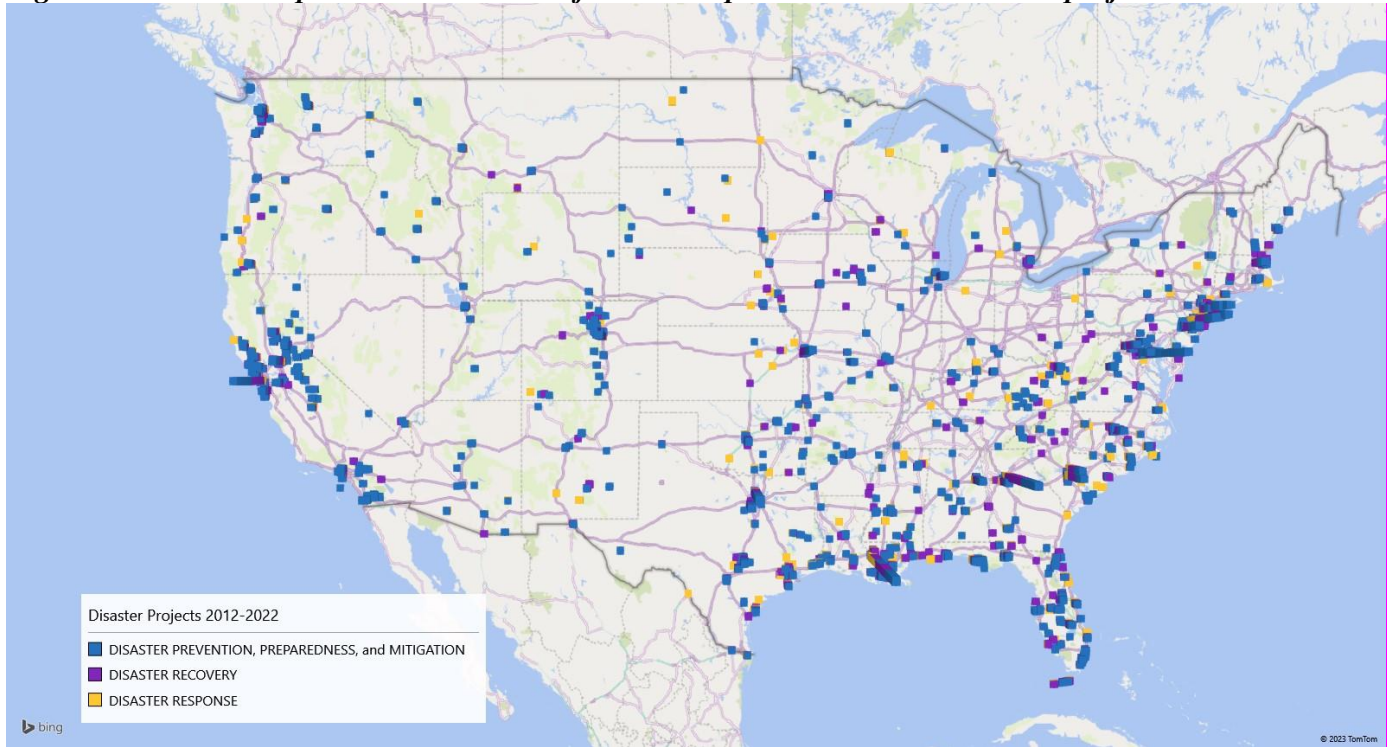
Figure C.4: Percentage of disaster projects over the years
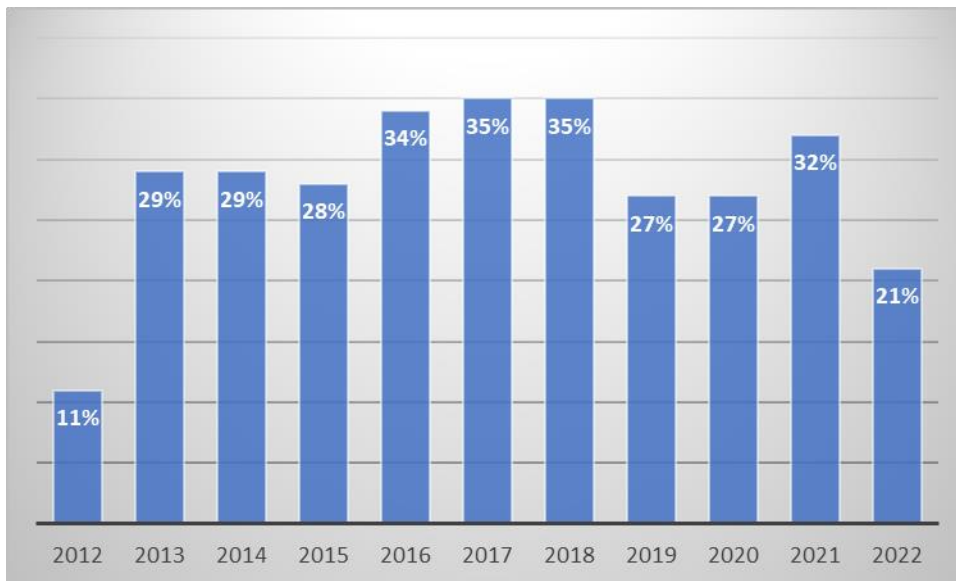
For every year between 2012 and 2022, the distribution of disaster focused project outcomes remained in the range of 27 to 35 percent (Figure C.4)

As previously mentioned, from the outset, AmeriCorps NCCC served and supported communities through the Covid-19 pandemic. Between January 2020 and August 2022, of the 1,401 projects, 194 (14%) percent were pandemic related disaster projects. In addition to AmeriCorps NCCC's response to the Covid-19 public health emergency during this period, the teams completed 434 projects that had a disaster recovery outcome, which makes up 31 percent

of the projects completed from 2020-2022; 422 projects had a disaster prevention, preparedness, and mitigation outcome (30%), and 274 projects had a disaster response outcome (20%).

Despite the pandemic, the distribution of projects across the focus areas remained consistent over time.

The distribution of project outcomes is consistent with the distribution of projects' primary focus areas (Table C.5). About half of the projects are in the Natural and Other Disaster primary issue area.

Table C.5: Distribution of projects' primary issue area, 2017-2019 compared to 2020-2022

Primary Focus Area	2017-2019	2020-2022
Natural and Other Disasters (DIS)	51%	50%
Urban and Rural Development (URD)	28%	25%
Environmental Stewardship and Conservation (ENV)	16%	19%
Infrastructure Improvement (INF)	4%	5%
Energy Conservation (EC)	1%	1%

N = 2,013 projects in 2017-2019 and 1,401 projects in 2020-August 2022.

Appendix D. Data Sources to Develop Indicators of Strengthened Communities

The use of multiple data sources to identify the connection between quantified outputs and meaningful outcomes to support the evidence of AmeriCorps NCCC's impact on communities it serves. The sources include thematically coded data on more than 6,700 completed service projects between 2012 and 2022, three types of case studies, and data from a yearly survey of sponsors administered by AmeriCorps NCCC. The mixed methods approach provides insight into the impact of Traditional NCCC and FEMA Corps on the communities that members serve.

The AmeriCorps NCCC Service Projects Database (SPD) is the primary data source that provides quantitative indicators of the impact of projects on the communities served. The variables in the SPD are issue areas, project accomplishments, project characteristics, disaster type (when applicable), type of sponsor, and sponsor and site locations. Each project has narrative texts that reflect the team's narrative of the project's outcomes and what the team gained from working on the project.

The research team developed a framework that coded the narrative texts written by each team for each service project (Sum, Shannon, Birmingham, et.al., 2020). These codes identify the primary types of impacts reported for the project. The coding framework distinguishes the unit where the impact occurred (i.e., individual, organization, community), the tangible impacts, and the intangible impacts. Tangible impacts capture outcomes that are clear to observers, such as providing food and clothing to survivors of a disaster. Intangible impacts capture outcomes that are not concrete or clear to observers, such as providing emotional support to survivors after a crisis or listening to people in the community who are struggling with addiction.

Although the SPD quantifies the breadth of measurable community benefits observed or predicted by the teams, the SPD does not provide information about the projects' deeper impacts on sponsor organizations and communities as observed or inferred by the organizations and community stakeholders, including the long-term and unexpected effects. To bridge the gap, the quantitative data are supplemented with three case studies.

Restricted Case Studies. The restricted case studies consist of 12 service projects, including both active and past projects. These case studies include review of selected documentation about the projects and phone interviews with sponsors and site supervisors to gain insight about projects that might be too difficult or impractical to be the subjects of a comprehensive in-depth case study. For the restricted case studies, we analyzed the SPD to select a sample of 12 service projects. The selection criteria were projects that serve less clearly defined communities or large geographic regions, projects that were new or being conducted with a new partner, projects that had less clearly predicted outcomes, or projects where a site visit would be disruptive or harmful. We also sampled projects deemed less successful, allowing for an exploration of whether and how AmeriCorps NCCC continues to have a lasting impact after its presence has ceased.

In-Depth Case Studies. The in-depth case studies include six active projects, four active Traditional Corps projects from each campus representing different issue areas and two active FEMA Corps projects, including one steady-state project and one active or formerly active disaster site. These case studies included an in-person site visit to an active project site; remote focus groups with members; and remote interviews with the team leaders, sponsors and site

supervisors, and community stakeholders. During the site visit, the research team incorporated a walking/windshield observation of a nearby service project. One year after the initial site visit, we completed follow-up phone interviews with sponsors and site supervisors to obtain additional insight into the long-term impacts of studied projects.

The selection of the six in-depth case studies was a collaboration between region staff and the research team. The selection of the six projects occurred on an ongoing basis as each region deployed new teams to various communities throughout the U.S. From January 2022 through October 2022, each region provided the research team their upcoming project docket for each new round of classes deployed within the region. The research team reviewed the dockets then selected a short-list of six case study projects generated using the following criteria: project type Traditional Corps versus FEMA Corps, issue area, and inclusion of special populations. The data collection for each in-depth case study, which occurred between April and November 2022, consisted of four major components: document review, site visits and observations, windshield tours, and remote interviews with sponsors, site supervisors, team leaders, and community members. For FEMA Corps projects, the research team interviewed the FEMA points of contact (POCs). AmeriCorps members serving in each project participated in a remote focus group.

The data collection for the in-depth case studies was delayed by almost two years because of the public health emergency due to the coronavirus (Covid-19). Starting in March 2020, AmeriCorps paused campus arrival of new members, which lasted through June 2020. The pause in arrival necessitated a concomitant pause in the start of the in-depth case studies. Data collection for the in-depth case studies began in January 2022. Although there was a pause to on-site arrival to the campuses, members continued to serve their communities. Traditional Corps and FEMA Corps members pivoted to supporting local communities during this public health emergency. AmeriCorps NCCC classifies each service project with one or more outcome: basic needs, community well-being, disaster prevention, preparedness, and mitigation, disaster recovery, disaster response, energy and environmental practices, housing, natural resources, public space and infrastructure, and special populations.

In-Depth Case Study Data Collection. Each in-depth case study included four major data collection activities:

- **Document review**. Prior to the start of the case study, two researchers reviewed background documents and materials on each project to familiarize themselves with its objectives and accomplishments. The researchers reviewed the project's application, service project reports, and other extant materials specific to the project.
- **Site visits**. The two researchers conducted site visits as part of each case study. These site visits lasted two to three days and provided the researchers with real-time observations of the project's team in the "field," be it in a green space planting trees or in an office drafting a PowerPoint presentation. The researchers utilized an observation form to capture objective and subjective notes and direct quotations. The researchers also conducted windshield tours at recently completed project sites when possible.
- **Interviews**. The researchers completed 28 interviews with 29 respondents using a structured interview protocol that allowed for organic probes. The interview respondents

include sponsors, site supervisors, FEMA points of contact (POCs), team leaders, and community members.

- o Twenty-eight interviews were completed across six projects. The 29 respondents consisted of 12 sponsors/POCs/site supervisors, 11 community stakeholders, and 6 team leaders. Two interviewees were on one community stakeholder interview for the Disaster Response Hurricane Ian project.

NCCC Project	Interviews completed
Disaster Response Hurricane Ian	6
Girl Scouts of Alaska	4
Habitat for Humanity Metro Denver	9
Ozaukee County Planning and Parks	3
FEMA Kentucky Tornadoes PA/OPS	2
FEMA National IMAT Blue	4
Total	*28*

- **Focus groups**. AmeriCorps members from each of the six NCCC teams participated in a virtual focus group. Two researchers facilitated each focus group using a structured protocol that allowed for organic probes. Thirty-five AmeriCorps members participated in six virtual focus groups.

NCCC Project	Actual number of participants per focus group
Disaster Response Hurricane Ian	6
Girl Scouts of Alaska	7
Habitat for Humanity Metro Denver	5
Ozaukee County Planning and Parks	6
FEMA Kentucky Tornadoes PA/OPS	7
FEMA National IMAT Blue	4
Total	*35*

Covid-19 Case Studies. A third type of case study included projects focused on AmeriCorps' response to Covid-19. The Covid-19 case studies included 13 service projects. Four of the projects were active at the time of the data collection between January and April 2022. In subsequent months, none of the regions had new Covid-19 projects. Therefore, in October 2022, we identified six Covid-19-related projects completed between 2020 and 2021 using available data from the SPD. Three projects supported Covid-19 vaccination distribution sites or Covid-19 testing sites; two projects from the group of projects provided Covid-19 direct services but did not include support of vaccination or testing sites; and one project from the subset of projects was not explicitly identified as Covid-19-related, but based on the project narrative, it was determined that the project supported Covid-19 direct services. Since these projects were completed for at least a year prior to data collection, these case studies were treated as "restricted" case studies, meaning we conducted remote interviews with sponsors supplemented by information from the SPD and project documents provided by NCCC staff. We did not

conduct interviews with team leaders or focus groups with members. In addition to assessing the contribution of Covid-19 to supporting communities, AmeriCorps conducted an analysis of the social return on investment (SROI) of AmeriCorps NCCC's support to communities to address the Covid-19 pandemic. SROI measures and values the social, economic, environmental impact of Covid-19-related service projects.

Covid-19 Case Study Data Collection. Data collection included 10 Covid-19 case studies consisting of 13 projects. While four of the case studies involved data collection while the projects were still active, projects were closed for 1.5 – 2 years at the time of data collection for six of the case studies. Each Covid-19 Case Study included two or three data collection components: document review, interviews and focus groups.

- **Document review**. Before starting the case study, two researchers reviewed background documents and materials on the associated case study project(s) to familiarize themselves with its objectives and accomplishments, including reviewing the service project application and other extant materials specific to the project. For completed projects, the review also included project portfolios or project completion reports, as well as key information from the NCCC Service Project Database (SPD), particularly around the project's impact on the AmeriCorps members, team leaders, and communities served.
- **Interviews**. The researchers completed 18 interviews with 19 respondents using a structured interview protocol that allowed for organic probes. Interview respondents included sponsors, site supervisors, FEMA points of contact (POCs), and team leaders. Researchers also interviewed team leaders for the four case studies with active projects during data collection.
- **Eighteen interviews were conducted across ten NCCC Covid-19 Case Studies.** Researchers interviewed 19 respondents for the case studies, including 14 sponsors/POCs or site supervisors and five team leaders from active project sites. One interview included two sponsors.

NCCC Covid-19 Disaster Case Study	# Projects included	Interviews completed
Beans & Rice Food Distribution	1	2
COVID-19 Containment Response Corps (CCRC) Contact Tracing	1	1
Creek Fire Response	1	1
Four Seasons Town Center Vaccination Site	1	1
Kentucky Hospitals	2	5
Kootenai Health	1	2
FEMA Oregon Vaccination Missions	3	3
FEMA Pre-Stage for Hurricane Season Commodities Distribution	1	1
Constructing Affordable Housing, Volunteer Relief	1	1
Supporting COVID-19 Vaccination at Ford Field Community Clinic	1	1
Total	**13**	**18**

- **Focus groups**. Researchers conducted virtual focus group discussions with AmeriCorps members for the four case studies with active projects during data collection. Two researchers facilitated each focus group using a structured protocol that allowed for organic probes. Twenty-four AmeriCorps members participated in four virtual focus groups.

NCCC Covid-19 Disaster Case Study	# Projects included	Actual number of participants per focus group
Beans & Rice Food Distribution	1	7
Kentucky Hospitals	2	7
Kootenai Health	1	7
Oregon Vaccination Missions	2	3
Total	**7**	**24**

Table D.1. Number and Types of Interviewees by Case Study

Case Study Type	Number of Interviews	Number of Focus Groups	Number of Sites/Projects	Number & Types of Interviewees*
Restricted	16	N/A	14	Sponsors (14) Site Supervisors/POCs (3) Team Leaders (2)
In-Depth	28	6	6	Sponsors (6) Site Supervisors/POCs (6) AmeriCorps members (35) Team Leaders (6) Community Stakeholders (11)
Covid-19	18	7	13	Site Supervisors/POCs (14) Team Leaders (5) AmeriCorps members (24)
Total	62	10	33	91

Note: Some interviews had more than one participant, so total may not match the number of interviewees

Table D.2 shows the range of community level indicators across the projects. These indicators are community wide impacts such as if the service project resulted in a community asset. An example of the text coded as community impact: "*The team assisted in starting 10 raised garden beds for the community to use to plant vegetables. Cedar 4 worked together to install 15,000 feet of an irrigation system to the farm area. Finally, the team relocated 185 bales of hay in order to prevent animals from getting into the garden and eating the plants.*"

Table D.2: Indicators of impact at the community level

Indicator	Definition of Indicator
Built and natural capital	Increased built and natural capital though the creation of new public spaces or private residences, or the enhancement of existing

	resources. Includes producing a community asset, such as community gardens, farms, and camps.
Special events	Contribution to community events, including assistance in preparing for, setting up, and cleaning up and/or working directly with event staff, volunteers, or attendees.
Disaster mitigation	Prevention or mitigation of future disasters on public lands, typically through changes to the physical environment.
Expected economic benefit	Actual and potential economic benefits gained by the community through project activities, such as economic recovery after a disaster, increased tourism revenue due to enhanced trails, facilities, etc.

Some service projects also impacted the community's economy, which is captured in the expected economic benefit indicator. An example of this indicator: "*In plugging the cattle-formed gully within Little Hunter's Meadow, Silver Seven was part of an effort to preserve the water so that it will eventually channel into rivers holding key species. Without water, John Day's forests will decay, and its citizens will lose their main source of income. As a result, Silver Seven's service not only impacts the health of the Malheur National Forest, but also that of John Day's economy.*"

Table D.3 shows the range of organizational level indicators across the projects. These indicators include projects specifically focused on Covid-19. An example of text coded as organizational level impact: "*After the Team's arrival, the site's one day vaccination high was 9,545 and the average per day was 7,326. The Team was partly responsible for this improvement. In particular, they reorganized the section of the site where cars were directed out of the vaccination center, immediately mitigating backlog and reducing delays due to their efforts.*"

Table D.3: Indicators of impact at the organizational level

Indicator	Definition of Indicator
Disaster readiness	Organizations or groups have increased readiness to respond to disasters because of disaster simulations, drills, and related activities that provide opportunities for first responders and others who will be expected to respond to disasters to practice and improve response.
Infrastructure	Increased data or infrastructure for organizations including physical infrastructure (e.g., buildings, computers) or changes are made inside buildings (e.g., constructing bookcases), and organizational infrastructure (e.g., procedures, protocols);
Organizational effectiveness	Increased organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including increased capacity of community and government agencies to serve community members. This may include the ability to serve more people, offer more or better services, or to finish projects faster than they would be done otherwise.
Covid adjacent services	Increased organizational efficiency and infrastructure support to support the normal operations of the sponsor organization that have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, e.g., fixing trails that saw a big increase in

	visitation during Covid-19, or setting up equipment to assist during staff shortages.
Covid direct services	Increased organizational efficiency and infrastructure support specifically in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, such as providing relief to staff working on testing/vaccination, assisting in hospitals dealing with staffing shortages, or increasing awareness of testing, safety procedures, and vaccinations.

Table D.4 shows the range of individual level indicators across the projects. Indicators at the individual level focus on impacts on individuals in the communities served by the project, they include the tangible impact, such as with basic needs, which includes food, clothing, and housing, and intangible impact. An example of text coded as tangible impact: "*The clothing, food, and supplies distributed to the community members aided them and supplied their needs temporarily as disaster recovery began.*"

Table D.4: Indicators of impact at the individual level

Indicator	Definition of Indicator
Basic needs	People have increased access to food, water, clothing, shelter, health care or other basic needs that they would not have otherwise. Needs that are more immediate, crucial, to be addressed very soon.
Disaster assistance / recovery / preparedness	Increased knowledge of or access to funding, labor, or other resources that can assist in long-term recovery from disaster, including rebuilding homes. Increased community member knowledge related to disaster preparation or the creation of materials that can aid in increasing knowledge of disaster preparedness. Disaster recovery includes activities in support of the rebuilding process.
Human capital and learning	Enhanced human capital achieved by teaching new skills to community members, community volunteers, students, or others, including tutoring, mentoring, or teaching in a school or after-school program.
Physical health and safety	People have or are expected to have better physical health outcomes in the future including reduced disease, accidental injury due to safety hazards or disasters or death.
Physical health and safety - Covid	Individuals receive health benefits related to Covid-19, such as receiving testing services, health services, or vaccination.
Psychosocial benefits	Increased psychosocial well-being including enhanced mental health, trust, hope, and/or sense of community.
Special populations	Direct and indirect support provided to special populations, such as individuals with disabilities, senior citizens, immigrants or refugees, non-English language speakers, and disadvantaged youth; could include work with tribal communities.

Another tangible indicator is physical health and safety, which means the project results in better physical health outcomes. There is a specialized indicator for Covid-19 health impacts as well:

"*The team has been assigned to contact tracing and case investigating in Larimer County and other northeast counties of Colorado, but with the team's help, the case count has consistently gotten lower and lower. Thus, the team has been able to move on to assist other regions of the state and now contact traces and case investigates in counties all across Colorado.*"

One example of intangible impact is human capital and learning, which indicates a project increased human capital: "*Blue Two served at a community event in which they taught children how to plant trees. This educational experience may impact the mindset of these children as they grow older to bolster a more environmentally conscious generation.*"

Another intangible impact is psychosocial benefits, which indicates the improvement of mental health in the community: "*The residents of the Laurel Shelter and the employees were very pleased by the painting that had been completed by Delta 2 and felt that it 'lifted spirits around the home'*"

Appendix E. AmeriCorps Covid-19 Services Social Economic Impact Analysis[9]

Executive Summary of the AmeriCorps COVID-19 services Social Economic Impact Analysis

This is a summary of the Social Return on Investment from the activities provided by AmeriCorps NCCC teams that are related to Covid-19. Based on the service projects database (SPD) these activities include vaccines distribution mission assignments, Covid-adjacent projects such as services in hospitals, food banks, mobile vaccine distribution and other community-based projects related to Covid-19. The primary objective is to measure the cost savings of using AmeriCorps NCCC for the COVID-19 pandemic response. These values are the social return accrued to the community, FEMA, the sponsoring organizations, and the individuals in the communities.

The direct economic impacts are the actual costs of the services by AmeriCorps NCCC compared to the costs that would have been incurred if these services were not provided by AmeriCorps NCCC. The fair market value costs used for the calculation are based on the average hourly rate of a U.S. Census Bureau surveyor in 2020. The type of Covid-19 activities performed by AmeriCorps NCCC teams include contact tracing calls, wellness check calls with seniors, supporting services for Covid vaccination sites and Covid testing sites, distribute PPE, and scheduling or confirming vaccination appointments. The Covid-19 services occurred from 2020 – 2021.

The calculated return in the year the services occurred is $2.83 -- $2.83:$1.00; that is for each dollar invested to deploy a NCCC team, the social return is $2.83.

There are accrued benefits that occur beyond the initial period of service. To project the long-term impact, the calculation accounts for the fact some of the benefits would have occurred without the services provided by AmeriCorps NCCC teams. Long term impact takes years to materialize, and the return is not 1-to-1. For example, many individuals were vaccinated regardless of the efforts of AmeriCorps NCCC teams, including the individuals the teams contacted by phone to schedule a vaccine appointment. Another example is that many of the individuals did wear, or would have worn, masks even if NCCC teams did not distribute them.

Consequential impacts are the longer-term effects (also known as "outcomes") that actions or events have on economic factors. These impacts can include changes in medical care, community social support costs, governmental benefit programs, personal income, and other areas. and are calculated over a period of 10 years.

The projected net consequential impact of the services is $3.78 -- $3.78:$1.00; that is for each dollar invested the return over a period of 5 years is $3.78.

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[9] Community Services Analysis LLC conducted and authored the social economic impact and return on investment analysis (www.csaco.org).

The total net direct and consequential impact of the Covid-19 services provided by AmeriCorps NCCC is $6.22:$1.00; that is for each dollar invested the return over a period of 10 years is $6.22.

What is Social Return on Investment?

In normal financial analysis, Return on Investment is the ratio of money gained or lost relative to the money invested. In social service organizations, Social Return on Investment measures the financial value created by the organization through delivery of services to the community.

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is an approach to measuring and understanding the financial impact of a social services organization. While SROI is built on the logic of cost/benefit analysis, it is different in that it measures the comparable value of organizations whose results cannot be easily measured in money. In the same way that a business plan contains more information than simply financial projections, SROI provides information about actual and long- term results of services, and the qualitative, quantitative, and financial information on which to base decisions about the delivery of social services by organizations.

A standardized SROI analysis methodology has been developing since the 1960's, primarily based on a detailed multi-year study conducted by Social Value International, The New Economics Foundation, New Philanthropy Capital, the National Council on Voluntary Organization, and the Government of Scotland.

Many additional organizations are continually contributing to the SROI body of knowledge, including the Global Impact Investing Network, the International Financial Reporting Standards Foundation, the Global Reporting Initiative, and the United Nations Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development.
There are two separate phases of SROI:

Phase 1 is the measurement of the value delivered to the community by the services currently being delivered by the organization (the **"Outputs"**). The most accurate and understandable measurement basis for these outputs is the Fair Market Value of the services being delivered - what it would cost the community to acquire the same services that a social service provider delivers if that provider did not exist - plus the value of benefits received during the immediate period under study. This result is a measurement of the comparative efficiency of the organization in delivering or providing the services.
Phase 2 is the measurement of the long-term value of the results of these output services delivered - known as the "**Outcomes**". These measurements may take years to realize. For example, people with disabilities who receive training on independent living skills and how to more fully integrate within the community and require significantly less financial support from the community over the course of their lives.

By way of another example, people who receive assistance in finding and retaining employment require less future financial support from their communities, plus their future demands on the law enforcement and legal systems are less, their future needs for community-based medical assistance are less, and their future tax payments are greater.

A SROI analysis can fulfill a range of purposes. It can be used as a tool for strategic planning, as a basis for funding and investment decisions, as a basis for communicating impact and financial results to stakeholders, and as a methodology for comparative evaluation of an organization's long-term effectiveness.

While not the only basis for funding and investment decisions, the SROI results provide the most accurate and comprehensible answer to three of the important questions asked by funding decision makers:

- **What are the long-term economic impacts from these services?**
- **What are the financial benefits we receive for our funding?**
- **What is the measurable "bang for the buck"?**
-
- **The History of Social Return on Investment and the Development of An Internationally Standardized Valuation Methodology**
  Social Return on Investment has existed as a conceptual research area for over 60 years.

- The First True Comprehensive Social Economic Impact Measurement Process:
- The Government of Scotland – 1990's. The results:
- Development of a Standardized Methodology:
- The establishment of the SROI Network
- Release of the initial SROI Methodology paper   2001
- Release of the first SROI Methodology Framework draft   2004
- Release of finalized SROI Methodology Framework   2005
- Measuring Value – 2nd Edition Published   2008
- Updated SROI Methodology Framework   2012
- Consolidation of the SROI Network and
- Social Industry Analysts Association into   2014
  Social Value International
- Updated SROI Methodology Framework   2017
- Updates SROI Methodology Framework   2022
- Currently, the SROI International economic impact/social return on investment model is the internationally accepted and accredited standard in over 30 countries including the U.K., Canada, France, Japan, Russia, Australia, Italy, Sweden, South Africa, and many others.
  Social Value – United States is the U.S. Affiliate of Social Value International.

ABOUT COMMUNITY SERVICES ANALYSIS LLC

Community Services Analysis LLC (CSACO) is a leading provider of Social Return on Investment Analysis in the United States. Since 2007, CSACO has completed over 300 Social Economic Impact and SROI studies for individual organizations, social services membership associations, and local and state governmental agencies around the country, including such clients as the State of Pennsylvania Department of Education, the National Science Foundation, the State of California Department of Rehabilitation, the City of Philadelphia, United Way, United Cerebral Palsy, Habitat for Humanity, the State of Arizona Library and Public Archives, IEEE (the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers) Humanitarian Foundation, the Community Investment Corporation, multiple educational institutions, and over 250 Civil Legal Aid organizations nationwide.

CSACO was the first organization in the United States to be a member of The SROI Network (now Social Value International), the international Social Return on Investment standards and accreditation organization, and has been recognized by many national social services organizations such as ANCOR *(the American Network of Community Options and Resources)*, ACCSES *(the American Congress of Community Support and Employment Services)*, NFSN *(the National Family Support Network)*, and NLADA *(the National Legal Aid and Defender Association)*. CSACO is also a founding board member of Social Value – United States and is a member of the American Evaluation Association.

In 2013, following a detailed analysis of multiple Cost Benefit/Return on Investment methodologies and providers, the National Legal Aid and Defender Association selected CSACO as their SROI analysis national partner.

In 2018, CSACO was named the national economic impact analysis partner for the National Family Support Network.

John Byrnes (Founder and Principal of CSACO) has also been named the Evaluation Expert of the Year for 2021 in Finance Monthly's annual Global Awards.

Project Summary Results

AmeriCorps Covid-19 Services

The services performed by AmeriCorps team members during 2021-22 for Covid-19 related projects covered the following specific areas:

> Performing Contact Tracing calls
>
> Performing Wellness Check calls with seniors
>
> Performing Disaster Preparedness calls
>
> Providing supporting services for Covid vaccination sites
>
> Providing support for Covid testing sites
>
> Personal protection equipment processing and distribution
>
> Scheduling or confirming vaccination appointments
>
> Planning immunization programs
>
> Answering registration and helpline calls
>
> Distributing informational documents

It is important to realized that although the AmeriCorps team members had received basic training in public health and contact tracing, they were not trained professionals in these areas and did not provide direct health care services such as performing vaccinations or providing specific advice on health care issues.

The Direct Economic Impacts and Cost Benefits

The direct economic impacts are the actual costs of the AmeriCorps team member services as compared to the costs that would have been incurred if these services were not provided by AmeriCorps and had to be supplied on either a Fair Market Value replacement cost basis or on some other governmentally subsidized basis.

The fair market value costs used in these Social Return on Investment calculations were based on the average costs for a comparable technical level of services: the hiring of outside workers for the U.S. Census Bureau efforts in 2020.

The Consequential Outcomes Economic Impacts and Cost Benefits

The process of determining and measuring the longer-term consequential results of the services provided involves several steps:

1. Mapping Outcomes: Identify the different outcomes that result from the activities or interventions of the organization or project.
2. Evidencing Outcomes: Collect data and evidence to support the identified outcomes, using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods.
3. Valuing Outcomes: Assign monetary values to the outcomes, either through market prices, willingness-to-pay estimates, or other valuation techniques.
4. Establishing Impact: Calculate the social return on investment by comparing the total value of the outcomes to the resources invested.

The determination of consequential outcomes and the valuing of these outcomes for the Covid-19 epidemic is still an evolving process. While there are many published studies on the causes and impacts of the epidemic (approximately 20,000!), there are still many factors and consequences being investigated and measured – a specific example being the impacts and outcomes of Long Covid.

The economic impacts of the outcomes are based on the body of knowledge existing at this time. The values and basis for valuations are listed in the Valuation Schedules for each activity are in this report.

The Social Impact Value Map:

The following Impact Map shows in detail the direct and consequential economic impacts for the AmeriCorps services.

Note that there is a significant difference between the "Gross" consequential impacts and the "Net" impacts. While the Gross impacts are the full value of the outcomes, there are other factors that reduce the gross impact. They are:

eight: How much of the impact would have happened regardless of the services provided

Attribution: How much of the impact is attributable to other causes.

ff How much of the impacts will not be realized due to outside causes (i.e., death).

The Net impact valuations are the economic impacts that will actually be realized and are the values used in the Social Return on Investment calculation results.

AMERICORPS SERVICES PERFORMED	Quantity	Direct Economic Impact (000's)	Net Consequential Economic Impact (000's)
Contact Tracing Calls (hours)	9,118	$191,000	N/A
Senior Wellness Check Calls (hours)	7,905	$166,000	Included in Individuals Reached
Individuals Reached (hours)	1,452	$30,000	N/A
Contact Tracing Trainings (hours)	5,529	$116,000	N/A
Public Health Trainings (hours)	18,636	$391,000	N/A
Disaster Preparedness Calls (hours)	2,449	$51,000	N/A
Vaccination Sites Supported (Hours)	88,893	$1,867,000	Included in Persons Receiving Immunizations
Testing Sites Support (sites)	106	sons Supported at Testing Sites	
People Supported at Testing Sites	876	$9,000	N/A
PPE Processing and Distribution (hours)	4,311	$91,000	$1,846,000
Vaccinations Scheduled or Confirmed (hours)	28,865	$606,000	$2,838,000
Vaccination Calls Made (hours)	3,649	$77,000	N/A
Immunization Programs Planned/Conducted (hours)	7,647	$161,000	N/A
Persons Receiving Immunization (hours)	10,288	$216,000	$23,000
Registration/Helpline Calls Answered (hours)	1,359	$29,000	N/A
Informational Documents Distributed (hours)	2,872	$60,000	N/A
TOTAL NET SOCIAL ECONOMIC IMPACTS		**$4,061,000**	**$4,707,000**
TOTAL SOCIAL ECONOMIC IMPACTS			**$8,768,000**
TOTAL AMERICORPS SERVICES COST BASIS			**$1,242,680**
TOTAL SOCIAL RETURN ON FUNDING INVESTMENT			**622%**

SERVICE CATEGORY (ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE)	COVID-01
	CONTACT TRACING CALLS

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Hours spent making calls (Number of traces made: 983)	1	9,118	$21	Current Year

BASIS FOR VALUATION

Valuation 1	FMV replacement cost of outside services based on average US Census Bureau temporary services hourly pay during 2020 census.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	BASIS REFERENCE	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Costs	A	N/A	
Community Social Support Costs	A	N/A	
Other Community Cost Changes	A	N/A	

BASIS FOR VALUATION	A. No reasonable basis for measurement of long-term economic impact due to the relative low level (5%) of new COVID cases being from contacts known through tracing and that published contact tracing performance indicators are not well correlated with the effective transmission rates and multiple infection sources of the virus.
	National Library of Medicine "Successful Contact Tracing Systems for COVID-19 Rely on Effective Quarantine and Isolation" 2021 and NPR analysis of public COVID -A(contact tracing data from 14 states in 2020.

	Valuation	Quantity	Direct Value
DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS			
SERVICE CATEGORY			
Hours of service provided	$21	9,118	$191,478

Total Direct Values Per Category

$191,478

TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE

	VALUATION	QUANTITY
CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS		
Community Health Costs	N/A	
Community Support Costs	N/A	
Other Community Consequential Cost Effects	N/A	
Total Consequential Value Per Category	$0	

SERVICE CATEGORY (ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE)	COVID-02
	WELLNESS CHECK CALLS WITH SENIORS

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Hours spent making calls (Number of wellness checks completed: 12,079)	1	7,905	$21	Current Year

BASIS FOR VALUATION

Valuation 1	FMV replacement cost of outside services based on average US Census Bureau temporary services hourly pay during 2020 census.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	BASIS REFERENCE	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Costs	A		
Community Social Support Costs			
Other Community Cost Changes			

BASIS FOR VALUATION	A. Projected long-term economic impact is based on the number of individuals reached (Schedule 3) rather than the gross number of calls made.

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	Valuation	Quantity	Direct Value
Hours of service provided	$21	7,905	$166,005

Total Direct Values Per Category $166,005

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM	TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE
Community Health Costs	N/A	N/A	
Community Support Costs	N/A	N/A	
Other Community Consequential Cost Effects	N/A	N/A	
Total Consequential Value Per Category			**$0**

SERVICE CATEGORY (ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE)	COVID-03 **NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS REACHED**

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Hours spent making calls (Number reached: 20)	1	1,452	$21	Current Year

BASIS FOR VALUATION

Valuation 1	FMV replacement cost of outside services based on average US Census Bureau temporary services hourly pay during 2020 census.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	BASIS REFERENCE	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Economic Impacts	A	N/A	
Community Social Support Economic Impacts	A	N/A	
Other Community Cost Changes	A	N/A	

BASIS FOR VALUATION	A. No reasonable basis for projection of long-term economic impacts based on the very low quantity of individuals reached and the high rates of vaccinations (95%) among elderly and other persons with health problems.
	Centers for Disease Control COVID Data Tracker database 2023)

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	Valuation	Quantity	Direct Value
Hours of service provided	$21	1,452	$30,492

Total Direct Values Per Category $30,492

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM	TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE
Community Health Costs	N/A		
Community Support Costs	N/A		
Other Community Consequential Cost Effects	N/A		
Total Consequential Value Per Category			**$0**

SERVICE CATEGORY (ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE)	COVID-04 CONTRACT TRACING TRAININGS			

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Hours spent in training (Trainings completed : 370)	1	5,529	$21	Current Year

BASIS FOR VALUATION

Valuation 1	FMV replacement cost of outside services based on average US Census Bureau temporary services hourly pay during 2020 census.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	BASIS REFERENCE	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Costs	A	N/A	
Community Social Support Costs	A	N/A	
Other Community Cost Changes	A	N/A	

BASIS FOR VALUATION	A. No reasonable basis for measurement of long-term economic impacts due to unknown results of disaster preparedness calls and probability of experiences AmeriCorps volunteers leaving upon completion of their service period.

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	Valuation	Quantity	Direct Value
Hours spent in training	$21	5,529	$116,109

Total Direct Values Per Category $116,109

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM	TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE
Community Health Costs	$0	N/A	
Community Support Costs	$0	N/A	
Other Community Consequential Cost Effects	$0	N/A	
Total Consequential Value Per Category			**$0**

SERVICE CATEGORY (ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE)	COVID-05 **PUBLIC HEALTH TRAININGS**

DIRECT SOCIAL
VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Hours spent in training (Public Health Trainings Completed: 1,246)	1	18,636	$21	Current Year

BASIS FOR VALUATION

Valuation 1	FMV replacement cost of outside services based on average US Census Bureau temporary services hourly pay during 2020 census.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	BASIS REFERENCE	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Costs	A	N/A	
Community Social Support Costs	A	N/A	
Other Community Cost Changes	A	N/A	

BASIS FOR VALUATION	A. No reasonable basis for measurement of long-term impacts based on probability of persons in training leaving AmeriCorps and entering fields other than health care.

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	Valuation	Quantity
Hours spent in training	$21	18,636

Total Direct Values Per Category $391,356

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM	TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE
Community Health Costs	$0		
Community Support Costs	$0		
Other Community Consequential Cost Effects	$0		
Total Consequential Value Per Category			**$0**

SERVICE CATEGORY (ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE)	COVID-06 DISASTER PREPAREDNESS CALLS

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Hours spent making calls (Number of calls completed: 2,112)	1	2,449	$21	Current Year

BASIS FOR VALUATION

Valuation 1	FMV replacement cost of outside services based on average US Census Bureau temporary services hourly pay during 2020 census.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	BASIS REFERENCE	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Costs	A	N/A	
Community Social Support Costs	A	N/A	
Other Community Cost Changes	A	N/A	

BASIS FOR VALUATION	A. No reasonable basis for measurement of long-term economic impacts due to unknown results of disaster preparedness calls.

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	Valuation	
SERVICE CATEGORY	**Valuation**	
Hours spent making calls	$21	
	Quantity	**Direct Value**
	2,449	$51,429

Total Direct Values Per Category — $51,429

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM	TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE
Community Health Costs	N/A	N/A	
Community Support Costs	N/A	N/A	
Other Community Consequential Cost Effects	N/A	N/A	
Total Consequential Value Per Category			**$0**

SERVICE CATEGORY **(ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE)**	**COVID-07** **VACCINATION SITES SUPPORTED**

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Hours spent supporting sites (Number of vaccination sites supported: 136)	1	88,893	$21	Current Year

BASIS FOR VALUATION

Valuation 1	FMV replacement cost of outside services based on average US Census Bureau temporary services hourly pay during 2020 census.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	BASIS REFERENCE	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Costs	A	N/A	N/A
Community Social Support Costs	A	N/A	N/A
Other Community Cost Changes	A	N/A	N/A

BASIS FOR VALUATION	A. Consequential long-term social economic impacts are based on the number of people receiving vaccinations (code DIS-23). These impact values are included in Schedule 14.

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	Valuation	Quantity	Direct Value
Hours spent supporting sites	$21	88,893	$1,866,753
			$0

Total Direct Values Per Category $1,866,753

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM	TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE
Community Health Costs	See Schedule 14		
Community Support Costs	See Schedule 14		
Other Community Consequential Cost Effects	See Schedule 14		
Total Consequential Value Per Category			**$0**

| SERVICE CATEGORY (ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE) | COVID-08

TESTING SITES SUPPORTED |
|---|---|

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Testing Sites Supported	1	106	N/A	Current Year

BASIS FOR VALUATION	1. No measurement of hours spent available. See Schedule 9 (persons supported at testing sites) for hours spent and direct impacts.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	BASIS REFERENCE	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Costs	A	N/A	N/A
Community Social Support Costs	A	N/A	N/A
Other Community Cost Changes	A	N/A	N/A

BASIS FOR VALUATION	A. Consequential long-term social economic impacts are based on the number of people receiving testing services (code COV-09). These impact values are included in Schedule 9.

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS SERVICE CATEGORY	Valuation		Quantity	Direct Value
				$0
				$0
				$0
				$0

Total Direct Values Per Category   **$0**

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM	**TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE (10 yrs.)**
Community Health Costs	See Schedule 9		
Community Social Support Costs	See Schedule 9		
Community Support Costs	See Schedule 9		

Total Consequential Value Per Category   **$0**

SERVICE CATEGORY (ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE)	COVID-09 PEOPLE SUPPORTED AT TESTING SITES

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
People supported at testing sites	1	876	$10	Current Year

BASIS FOR VALUATION	Estimated average of .5 hours assistance time per supported person.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	BASIS REFERENCE	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Costs	A	N/A	
Community Social Support Costs	A	N/A	
Other Community Cost Changes	A	N/A	

BASIS FOR VALUATION	A. No accurately long-term consequential economic impacts due to the unknown types of assistance provided and the results of these assistance services.

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	Valuation	Quantity	Direct Value
	$10	876	$8,760

Total Direct Values Per Category $8,760

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM	TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE (10 yrs.)
Community Health Costs	N/A	N/A	
Community Support Costs	N/A	N/A	
	N/A	N/A	$0

Total Consequential Value Per Category

SERVICE CATEGORY (ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE)	COVID-10 **PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT PROCESSING AND DISTRIBUTION**

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Hours of support provided (Pounds of PPE processed: 9,750)	1	4,311	$21	Current Year

BASIS FOR VALUATION

Valuation 1	FMV replacement cost of outside services based on average US Census Bureau temporary services hourly pay during 2020 census.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	BASIS REFERENCE	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Costs	A	$3,691,000	One Year
Community Social Support Costs			
Other Community Cost Changes			

BASIS FOR VALUATION	A. See Other Calculation worksheet
	Hospitalization costs based on National Library of Medicine "Inpatient Hospital Costs for COVID-19 Patients in the United States - 2021"

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	Valuation	Quantity	Direct Value
Hours of support provided	$21	4,311	$90,531

Total Direct Values Per Category $90,531

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM	TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE
Community Health Costs	See worksheet	1 Year	$3,691,000
Community Support Costs			
Other Community Consequential Cost Effects			
Total Consequential Value Per Category			**$3,691,000**

SERVICE CATEGORY (ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE)	COVID-11 VACCINATIONS SCHEDULED OR CONFIRMED

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Hours of support provided (Vaccinations schedules/confirmed: 65,309)	1	28,865	$21	Current Year

BASIS FOR VALUATION

Valuation 1	FMV replacement cost of outside services based on average US Census Bureau temporary services hourly pay during 2020 census.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	BASIS REFERENCE	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Costs	A	$14,942,678	1 Year
Community Social Support Costs		N/A	
Other Community Cost Changes		N/A	

BASIS FOR VALUATION	A. Effectivity of appointments scheduled and reminder calls made in having persons receive vaccinations.
	National Institute of Health "Appointment Reminder Systems are Effective But Not Optimal" 2016
	National Library of Medicine Cost of COVID Hospitalization 2021

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	Valuation	Quantity	Direct Value
SERVICE CATEGORY	$21	28,865	$606,165
Hours of support provided			

$606,165

Total Direct Values Per Category

	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM	TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE
	$14,942,678		$14,942,678

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	
Community Health Costs	
Community Support Costs	**$14,942,678**
Other Community Consequential Cost Effects	
Total Consequential Value Per Category	

SERVICE CATEGORY
(ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE)

COVID-12
VACCINATION CALLS MADE

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE
EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Hours spent making calls	1	3,649	$21	Current Year
(Number of vaccination calls completed: 2,880)				

BASIS FOR VALUATION
Valuation 1

FMV replacement cost of outside services based on average US Census Bureau temporary services hourly pay during 2020 census.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	BASIS REFERENCE	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Costs	A	N/A	N/A
Community Social Support Costs	A	N/A	N/A
Other Community Cost Changes	A	N/A	N/A

BASIS FOR VALUATION

A. No accurately measurable long-term economic impact due to the unknown immediate and consequential results of making vaccination calls. A more accurate measurement are the impact results of accomplishment code COV-11 (Number of vaccinations scheduled or confirmed), which are covered in Schedule 11.

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	Valuation	Quantity	Direct Value
Hours spent making calls	$21	3,649	$76,629

Total Direct Values Per Category $76,629

TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Costs	See Schedule 11	
Community Support Costs	See Schedule 11	
Other Community Consequential Cost Effects	See Schedule 11	

Total Consequential Value Per Category $0

SERVICE CATEGORY
(ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE)

DIS-22
IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMS PLANNED OR CONDUCTED

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Hours of service provided (Immunization programs planned/conducted: 8)	1	7,647	$21	Current Year

BASIS FOR VALUATION

Valuation 1

FMV replacement cost of outside services based on average US Census Bureau temporary services hourly pay during 2020 census.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	BASIS REFERENCE	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Costs	A	N/A	
Community Social Support Costs	A	N/A	
Other Community Cost Changes	A	N/A	

BASIS FOR VALUATION

A. No valid basis for consequential impacts due to the low number of immunization programs planned or conducted and lack of information on completion of programs.

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	Valuation	Quantity
Hours of service provided	$21	7,647

Total Direct Values Per Category $160,587

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM	TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE
Community Health Costs	N/A		
Community Support Costs	N/A		
Other Community Consequential Cost Effects	N/A		
Total Consequential Value Per Category			**$0**

SERVICE CATEGORY (ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE)	**DIS-23**
	PERSONS RECEIVING IMMUNIZATIONS

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Hours of service provided	1	10,288	$21	Current Year

(Number of persons receiving immunizations: 50,240)

BASIS FOR VALUATION

Valuation 1	FMV replacement cost of outside services based on average US Census Bureau temporary services hourly pay during 2020 census.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	**BASIS REFERENCE**	**VALUATION**	**SOCIAL EFFECT TERM**
Community Health Costs	A	$22,534	1 Year
Community Social Support Costs			
Other Community Cost Changes			

BASIS FOR VALUATION	A. Impact of AmeriCorps general services at vaccination sites including crowd control, parking assistance, information services, and general assistance.
	See Other Calculation Schedules for calculation detail

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS
SERVICE CATEGORY
Hours of service provided

Valuation	Quantity	Direct Value
$21	10,288	$216,048

Total Direct Values Per Category $216,048

	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM	TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE
CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	$22,534	1 Year	$22,534
Community Health Costs			
Community Support Costs			
Other Community Consequential Cost Effects			
Total Consequential Value Per Category			**$22,534**

SERVICE CATEGORY (ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE)	DIS-52 REGISTRATION OR HELPLINE CALLS ANSWERED

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Hours spent receiving calls (Registration or helpline calls answered: 2,675)	1	1,359	$21	Current Year

BASIS FOR VALUATION

Valuation 1	FMV replacement cost of outside services based on average US Census Bureau temporary services hourly pay during 2020 census.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	BASIS REFERENCE	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Costs	A	N/A	N/A
Community Social Support Costs	A	N/A	N/A
Other Community Cost Changes	A	N/A	N/A

BASIS FOR VALUATION	A. No reasonable measurement of long-term economic impact of registration and helpline calls due to the unknown results of any call. *Note: This as also based on the impact evaluations of over 100,000 legal helpline calls covering 100 different legal problem areas investigated by CSACO for nationwide legal aid organizations.*

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	Valuation	Quantity	Direct Value
Hours spent receiving calls	$21	1,359	$28,539

Total Direct Values Per Category

$28,539

	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM	TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE
	N/A	N/A	
	N/A	N/A	
CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	N/A	N/A	
Community Health Costs			
Community Support Costs			
Other Community Consequential Cost Effects			
Total Consequential Value Per Category			

SERVICE CATEGORY (ACCOMPLISHMENT CODE)	DIS-60 INFORMATIONAL DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	VALUATION BASIS	QUANTITY	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Hours of service provided (Number of information documents distributed: 7,636)	1	2,872	$21	Current Year

BASIS FOR VALUATION

Valuation 1	FMV replacement cost of outside services based on average US Census Bureau temporary services hourly pay during 2020 census.

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	BASIS REFERENCE	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM
Community Health Costs	A	$0	N/A
Community Social Support Costs	A	$0	N/A
Other Community Cost Changes	A	$0	N/A

BASIS FOR VALUATION	A. No reasonable basis for a measurement long-term economic impact projections based on lack of knowledge on use of distributed information plus the relative importance of this source vs. the other sources (T.V., newspapers, social media, radio, Internet, etc.).

DIRECT SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS

SERVICE CATEGORY	Valuation	Quantity	Direct Value
Hours of service provided	$21	2,872	$60,312

Total Direct Values Per Category   **$60,312**

CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE EFFECTS	VALUATION	SOCIAL EFFECT TERM	TOTAL CONSEQUENTIAL SOCIAL VALUE
Community Health Costs	N/A	N/A	
Community Support Costs	N/A	N/A	
Other Community Consequential Cost Effects	N/A	N/A	
Total Consequential Value Per Category			

DAILY ACCRUED CASH STIPEND EXPENSES

Total number of AmeriCorps COVID service hours:	169,823
Number of service hours/day:	8
Number of service day equivalents:	21,228
Daily End of Service Cash Stipend Accrual*	

Source: AmeriCorps Website

TRAVEL and LIVING EXPENSES

Number of service day equivalents:	21,228
Daily AmeriCorps Lodging Reimbursement Rate:	$37.50
Daily AmeriCorps Meals Reimbursement Rate:	$6.10
Supplemental travel/supplies (actual)	$10.00
Total Daily T&E Expense Rate:	$53.60

SCHEDULE 10 - PPE EQUIPMENT CONSEQUENTIAL IMPACTS:

Lbs of PPE processed:	9,750	
% of PPE that were Masks	80%	*Note: No impact from gowns or gloves*
Average weight of N-95 Mask	1 oz.	
Projected number of masks	124,800	*Assumption: 1 mask per person*
% of persons who caught COVID	50%	*COVID States Project nationwide survey*
% who consistently wore masks	25%	*COVID States Project nationwide survey*
% of persons hospitalized	2.10%	*National Library of Medicine 2021*
Average cost of hospitalization	$11,267	*National Library of Medicine 2021*
TOTAL PPE COST PREVENTION		
	#######	

SCHEDULE 11 - APPOINTMENTS MADE OR CONFIRMED
CONSEQUENTIAL IMPACTS:

Appointments made or confirmed		65,309	
Anticipated rate of no-shows	5%	-3,265	NIH Appt. Reminder" study 2016
Anticipated completions		62,044	
Reminder effectivity	34%	34%	NIH Appt. Reminder" study 2016
Net completions		63,154	
% of persons hospitalized	2.10%	1,326	*National Library of Medicine 2021*
Average cost of hospitalization	$11,267		*National Library of Medicine 2021*

TOTAL APPOINTMENTS MADE/CONFIRMED COST PREVENTION $14,942,678

SCHEDULE 14 - PERSONS RECEIVING IMMUNIZATIONS CONSEQUENTIAL IMPACTS

Persons receiving immunizations			50,240	
Projected crowd flow throughput increase due to AmeriCorps crowd control, information services, and general assistance (10%).			500	
Effectivity rate of vaccinations	82%		Average rate of Moderna and J&J Alpha and Ancestral Infection Rates Healthdata.org 2022	
Infection impact of AmeriCorps services		90		
% of persons hospitalized	2.10%	2	1,326	*National Library of Medicine 2021*
Average cost of hospitalization	$11,267			*National Library of Medicine 2021*

TOTAL PERSONS RECEIVING VACCINATIONS COST PREVENTION $22,534

NEGATIVE FACTORS WORKSHEET

Definitions

Deadweight: How much of the impact would have happened any regardless of the efforts.

Attribution: How much of the impact is attributable to other cau

Drop-Off: How much of the impact will not be realized due to causes (i.e. death).

Service Category:	Deadweight:	Attribution:	Drop-Off:
PPE processing and distribution	0%	50%	0%

Source: Average of Surveys from Pew Research, the New York Times, and the CDC on continued participation in PPE usage.

Vaccinations scheduled or confirmed	81%	0%	0%

Source:

Covid States report (Harvard, Northwestern, and Rutgers combined national study) on immunization, PPE usage, and immunity 2022.

COMPARISON OF AMERICORPS NCCC SERVICES COSTS TO FEMA COSTS

For the basic level services provided by AmeriCorps NCCC personnel during COVID-19, the projected expenses that would have been incurred by using FEMA personnel are significantly greater.

The FEMA wage cost category most closely aligned with the level of expertise needed for the services provided would be that of a basic Customer Service representative. Based on the prevailing national wage rates for that category, the comparative daily direct wage costs would be:

AmeriCorps personnel   **FEMA personnel**

$4.94 Daily Stipend $167.16 Daily Wage

In addition, FEMA personnel are entitled to a range of full employment benefits, including Health, Dental, and Life insurance, Retirement and Survivor payments, and Vacation/Holiday/Sick Leave payments, while AmeriCorps volunteers are offered either a limited Healthcare Allowance or enrollment is the VISTA Health Care Plan, which covers restricted eligible benefits. This plan does not include any dependent coverage.

There is also a significant difference is the costs for housing and travel expenses while on assignments:

AmeriCorps personnel   FEMA personnel

$54/day allowance $191/day allowance

Note: AmeriCorps personnel are frequently quartered in local homes, while FEMA employees typically are not. The number of days where this happened is not available.

Given these costs and the total of 21,228 days of AmeriCorps service provided the cost differential between these two alternatives would be (in 000's):

	Wage Costs	**Travel Costs**	**Total Costs**
AmeriCorps NCCC personnel	$105,000	$1,146,000	$1,251,000
FEMA personnel	$3,548,000	$4,055,000	$7,603,000

The total cost savings from using AmeriCorps NCCC personnel was $6,352,000.

COMPARISON OF AMERICORPS NCCC SERVICES COSTS TO USING DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PERSONNEL COSTS

For the basic level services provided by AmeriCorps NCCC personnel during COVID-19, the projected expenses that would have been incurred by using DoD personnel are significantly greater.

The DoD wage cost category most closely aligned with the level of expertise needed for the services provided would be that of a basic E-2 Private Second Class. Based on the prevailing national wage rates for that category, the comparative daily direct wage costs would be:

AmeriCorps personnel   DOD personnel

$4.94 Daily Stipend $70.65 Daily Wage

In addition, DOD personnel are entitled to a range of full benefits coverage, including Health, Dental, and Life insurance, Retirement and Survivor payments, and Vacation/Holiday/Sick Leave payments, while AmeriCorps volunteers are offered either a limited Healthcare Allowance or enrollment is the VISTA Health Care Plan, which covers restricted eligible benefits. This plan does not include any dependent coverage.

There is also a significant difference is the costs for housing and travel expenses while on assignments:

AmeriCorps personnel   DOD personnel

$54/day allowance $151/day allowance

Note: AmeriCorps personnel are frequently quartered in local homes, while DOD employees typically are not. The number of days where this happened is not available.

Given these costs and the total of 21,228 days of AmeriCorps service provided the cost differential between these two alternatives would be (in 000's):

	Wage Costs	**Travel Costs**	**Total Costs**
AmeriCorps NCCC personnel	$105,000	$1,146,000	$1,251,000
DOD personnel	$1,500,000	$3,205,000	$4,705,000

The total cost savings from using AmeriCorps NCCC personnel was $3,454,000.

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