

Leveraging AmeriCorps Programs as a Workforce Development Strategy in Your Community

A Toolkit for Utilizing National Service Resources



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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery, accelerating technological transformation, and climate change impacts put increasing pressure on our nation’s workforce system and workforce development stakeholders. AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism, makes funds and people available to help address these key challenges at nonprofit organizations and public entities in communities across the country. Hosting AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers can help workforce development organizations—state and local workforce boards, national nonprofit and community-based organizations, and educational institutions and training providers—meet this critical moment.

AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers bolster organizational capacity alongside existing staff. They can help key staff stay focused on their core job responsibilities by supporting or taking on non-core responsibilities. They can also provide leadership on key projects or work streams that your organization otherwise wouldn’t be able to take on. AmeriCorps can help promote equity by creating pathways to careers for program participants who have been the most underserved or hit the hardest by the pandemic or a natural disaster. Service in AmeriCorps can also inspire members and volunteers to continue serving their communities even after their official term of service is complete, including through employment in the organizations where they served. See Appendix A for examples.

In addition to hosting AmeriCorps members at your organization, you can help your community, state, or region integrate AmeriCorps service as a local workforce development strategy pillar. For a workforce board, this might mean engaging existing AmeriCorps programs and cultivating new programs where members and volunteers gain training during their service and are on a pathway leading to in-demand quality jobs in your community/area. For state and local public agencies, this might mean strategically convening partners to facilitate AmeriCorps service strategies in key public agencies and nonprofit organizations providing critical services in your community. Educational institutions and training providers can support AmeriCorps programs by providing critical training to members and volunteers during their service, which can also help strengthen your enrollment pipeline.

Whether you are a private or public entity, AmeriCorps can align with apprenticeship models. By structuring AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers service term as a registered apprenticeship program or a pre-apprenticeship program with facilitated entry into a registered apprenticeship program, you can help retain critical workers in your area after their term of service. See Appendix B for examples.

You and other employers in your area may also benefit by becoming an [Employer of National Service](#) and gaining access to a pool of highly qualified, mission-oriented candidates who have acquired unique skills as a result of their AmeriCorps or Peace Corps service.

The possibilities are endless. No matter your role in the workforce development ecosystem, you can leverage AmeriCorps to strengthen your organization’s capacity and your community’s ability to hire and retain talented individuals in critical occupations. Many AmeriCorps grants come with administrative funding to support organizations hosting and managing members. Ultimately, AmeriCorps is a high return-on-investment human capital strategy for your organization and others in your community. By partnering with AmeriCorps, you are addressing current capacity needs while building a talent pipeline for the future.



Overview of AmeriCorps

- AmeriCorps works with communities to develop and implement programs.
- Members and volunteers can provide vital services to communities from firefighting to educational support in classrooms.
- Members can bolster capacity of organizations by conducting fundraising and outreach, recruiting and managing volunteers, and assisting with the development and launch of new programs.
- AmeriCorps creates a pipeline of future professionals in education, skilled trades, and countless other fields.
- 35,000 organizations across the country, including many state, local, and tribal governments, workforce boards, local nonprofit organizations, and higher education institutions, are leveraging national service programs to assist them in advancing their mission and effectively serving their communities.
- Approximately 200,000 AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers (ages 55+) provide cost-effective, high-impact services to address organizations' most pressing needs. National service programs support all types of organizations, including those working in urban and rural areas, those operating in underserved communities, and those public agencies, nonprofit and community-based organizations serving large minority and multilingual populations
- National service programs direct hundreds of millions of dollars in resources to a wide array of initiatives nationwide annually.
- Since 1994, more than \$4.5 billion in AmeriCorps Segal Education Awards have been earned by AmeriCorps alumni to help pay for college, technical schools, or repay student loans. This is a tremendous professional development benefit to the members who serve in your organization and/or community.
- Employers of National Service builds a talent pipeline to connect AmeriCorps and Peace Corps alumni with employers from every sector to create recruitment, hiring, and advancement opportunities.

What is National Service and How Does It Support Organizations?

National service is a high return-on-investment human capital strategy to improve organizational and community outcomes. Full-time and part-time AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers may receive stipends and living allowances to serve in schools, nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, local government agencies, and other community organizations to tackle pressing problems at a local level. Most of the funding for national service participants is often provided by AmeriCorps or state service commissions, which serve single-state partners with AmeriCorps' funds. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers address immediate needs at your organization and in your community and, through vocational experience and skills developed while serving, represent an investment in our future workforce.

What are the Most Common Ways AmeriCorps Members and Volunteers Serve Organizations and Communities?

Programs support a wide array of locally identified needs. With an extensive range of programs and flexibility, AmeriCorps works closely with partners to meet local needs.

What are the Benefits of Leveraging National Service Programs?

- National service programs make a sustained investment in organizations and communities.
- AmeriCorps grants range for several years, and many AmeriCorps members serve full-time for 10-12 months, contributing up to 1,700+ hours annually. Members can also serve for shorter terms, for example, two months in summer programs.
- AmeriCorps Seniors programs mobilize older adult volunteers (55+) to support short- and long-term projects. Volunteers typically return to the host site for multiple years. The average length of service for an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer is eight years.
- Programs are cost-effective and have a significant return on investment. [A Columbia University study](#) found that every dollar invested in national service provides a two-to-one return on investment and a nearly four-to-one social return.

- National service programs deliver results. Rigorous independent evaluations have demonstrated that programs can improve educational outcomes, increase access to college and careers, benefit the environment through reduced wildfire damage and increased trail access, and more.
- Many workforce training program participants come from historically underserved communities and benefit from additional support and assistance. Many AmeriCorps programs can be replicated to provide the personalized support participant success.
- Programs are responsive to local needs and allow organizations to determine how to use resources most effectively.
- National service participants are mission driven. Participants join national service programs because they are passionate about serving the community.
- National service creates a pipeline of skilled leaders and workers. Participants gain first-hand experience working with programs and may go on to pursue careers in workforce development, education, and public service.

AmeriCorps as a Workforce Development Strategy

AmeriCorps can be a pillar of the workforce development strategy in your community. Workforce boards, state and local public agencies, educational institutions, and training providers all have different parts to play but can collaborate to support AmeriCorps as a workforce development strategy. AmeriCorps programs can be integrated with registered apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and credentialing. There are untapped opportunities for AmeriCorps programs to co-enroll and co-locate with workforce development programs and for organizations leveraging AmeriCorps grant funds to braid those funds with workforce development funds. See Appendix B for examples.

Is This Toolkit Relevant for State and Local Officials?

Yes. While the primary users of this toolkit are state and local workforce boards, nonprofit and community-based organizations implementing workforce programs, and education and training organizations, most of the information is relevant to State Departments of Labor and Workforce Development, governors, mayors, state legislators, and others interested in improving workforce development and ensuring people from all walks of life can succeed in career and life.

State and local government agencies, including State Departments of Labor and Workforce Development, are eligible recipients of AmeriCorps resources. As states implement their Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act state plans, they should consider national service as a high return-on-investment strategy to improve outcomes for employers and workers. For specific examples, please see the Idaho and Colorado profiles in Appendices A and B, respectively.

Want Help Accessing these Resources?

Most states have a governor-appointed State Service Commission that can help you leverage national service in your neighborhood, city, or state. AmeriCorps also has regional offices with staff to serve every state.

They are an excellent resource for technical assistance as well as identifying partners. In addition to this toolkit, you may want to contact your regional office or State Service Commission to discuss what program best meets your needs.



“Our AmeriCorps member helped advance registered apprenticeships as a key workforce development solution in Idaho. She supported the launch of our pre-apprenticeship program, led statewide team meetings, and even wrote a children’s book on apprenticeships. Leveraging national service was a high return-on-investment approach to helping create real solutions to address Idaho’s workforce shortage.”



Jani Revier
Department of Labor Director
Idaho



Utilizing AmeriCorps Resources

If you are an organization seeking to host AmeriCorps members or AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to bolster your organizational capacity and impact, you can use the step-by-step process in this section to determine how to do so most effectively. The next section “National Service as a Workforce Development Strategy in Your Community” speaks directly to how you can leverage AmeriCorps programs as a workforce development strategy.

Select an AmeriCorps Program that Meets Your Needs



Steps to strategically leverage AmeriCorps programs in your organization or community:

1. **Determine Your Needs:** Identify the services that your organization and community need, and the role that AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers could play in meeting those needs. National service resources must be used to address unmet needs in communities, and not by a for-profit institution.
2. **Select an AmeriCorps Program:** Match your needs to an AmeriCorps program. The types of national service activities members and volunteers can provide vary slightly by program.
3. **Find a Partnership or Apply Directly:** In many cases, organizations request AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers from an external partner like a community organization, city, or university, that is already receiving AmeriCorps resources. These intermediaries assist in the management of AmeriCorps members. Organizations can also apply directly to AmeriCorps or their appropriate State Service Commission.



Section 1: Determine Your Needs

National service is a versatile resource that can help support your organization and community in a variety of ways. Given the breadth of services provided by AmeriCorps, and in order to find the right program for your organization, it's helpful to understand what your needs are and how AmeriCorps can address those needs.

1. Review or conduct a data-driven needs assessment

The first step in the process is to identify your organizational and community needs. Gather and review existing sources of information to fully understand and prioritize your needs. Most organizations operating in the workforce development ecosystem already leverage labor market information and regularly consult with industry partners and employers to determine current and future employment needs in the community. Worker and community voices are vital to capture and better understand what types of services are needed.

2. Prioritize needs that can be met through the people power of national service

Review the results generated by the needs assessment and consider what your priorities are for current and upcoming years. Offer stakeholders an opportunity to define priorities. Through conversations with multiple stakeholder groups, organizations can more effectively prioritize needs that can be met through additional resources and partnerships.

What are your goals? What are you hoping to accomplish that you just don't have the people or resources to do? How will you reach the goals established in your strategic plans? The following questions can help determine if national service can help:

What are the needs of your organizations and participants that can be met by national service? Here are some examples of the services provided by AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps volunteers:

- a. **Capacity building:** fundraising and outreach, recruiting and managing volunteers, assisting with the development and launch of new programs, helping build the infrastructure of the sponsoring organization, and developing collaborative relationships with other organizations working to achieve similar goals in the community.
- b. **Direct service:** tutoring and classroom support, community cleanup and neighborhood watch, disaster relief, community health, firefighting, land management and conservation.

Are you facing human capital challenges? Do your needs require one or more of the following?

- A sustained investment of time and resources that staff are not able to provide.
- Tasks that are outside the scope of staff's responsibilities or would pull them away from other activities.
- Additional support for program leaders, facilitators, liaisons, instructors, or the like.
- Development of partnerships, fundraising, or outreach.

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, your organization may benefit from AmeriCorps. Please see Appendix A for examples of AmeriCorps programs. These examples will give you an idea of how national service resources can be leveraged. Please keep in mind that, by law, AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers cannot be used to duplicate or displace staff.

3. Determine where AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are already serving in your area

To see where participants are serving in your state, refer to [AmeriCorps' state-specific national service resources](#), which include a list of service locations. For each state, the service locations show a comprehensive list of places where AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve, including specific organizations and grantees/sponsors. This will help you to identify what services are already available in your community and allow you to reach out to organizations for guidance or potential partnerships.

AmeriCorps has [regional offices](#) with staff serving every state and a [State Service Commission](#) that can be helpful in identifying existing programs and resources. Visit [our contact page](#) for additional help.



Key Questions to Ask at Each Stage of the Process

Stage of Determining Your Needs	Questions to Ask/Items to Consider
<p>1. Review or conduct a comprehensive assessment of organizational needs and assets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are your goals/priorities for this year and beyond? ● What goals are you seeing improvement in but would like to continue identifying innovative ways to accomplish? ● What services does your organization need?
<p>2. Prioritize needs that can be met through national service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which of your needs align with the people power provided by national service? ● Do any of your needs require one or more of the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A sustained investment of time and resources that staff or existing volunteers may not be able to provide. ○ Tasks that are outside the scope of staff’s responsibilities or would pull them away from other activities. ○ Additional support for program leaders, facilitators, instructors. ○ Development of partnerships, fundraising, and/or outreach.
<p>3. Determine the presence of AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in your area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are there AmeriCorps members or volunteers in my community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What services are they providing? Where? ○ Can we expand the partnership to other organizations in our community, including ours? ● Are there AmeriCorps members or volunteers in a nearby community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can we bring those programs into our community? ○ Can we gather feedback/advice from that community on how to implement AmeriCorps programs? ● Are there AmeriCorps members or volunteers in my state? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there an opportunity to leverage statewide or multi-organization national service projects? ○ Does the State Department of Labor have any opportunities for national service projects?

Determine
Your Needs

Select an AmeriCorps
Program that Meets
Your Needs

Find a Partnership
or Apply Directly

Section 2: Select an AmeriCorps Program that Meets Your Needs

Each of AmeriCorps four programs have a footprint in workforce development, but the service activities AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers typically provide vary by program. It's possible to apply for and receive services from more than one program. Use the resources in this section to help choose the right program based on your needs. Review brief descriptions of the programs, examples of the services they provide, and the project requirements and eligibility criteria.

What AmeriCorps programs can help support workforce development in your organization and community?

There are four types of AmeriCorps programs that can support workforce development in your organization and community.

AmeriCorps State and National: AmeriCorps members, 17 and older, are engaged in direct service in the community and capacity building for organizations. AmeriCorps members in the State and National program meet critical community needs in the areas of education, disaster services, health, environmental stewardship, economic opportunity, and veterans and military families.

Grantees range from small community-based organizations to national and regional nonprofit organizations.



Sample Project: PowerCorps PHL engages disconnected youth and justice-involved individuals to serve in AmeriCorps programs. PCPHL offers numerous and diverse pathways to AmeriCorps members who can develop skills required for the green jobs of the future. AmeriCorps members can enter pre-apprenticeship pathways with curriculum and hands-on service experiences co-designed with employers, including Philadelphia's Water Department, Philadelphia Energy Authority, and other private sector partners.

AmeriCorps VISTA: AmeriCorps members provide capacity-building services to strengthen and support efforts to alleviate poverty and poverty-related problems. AmeriCorps members serve as short-term resources to build long-term sustainability: projects typically last three to five years and are developed with a goal to phase out the need for members and have project activities continue.



Sample Project: Hampton Roads Workforce Council leverages AmeriCorps to better support veterans in their community and to advance research and strategic initiatives. AmeriCorps members serving with the VISTA program advance key projects to bolster organizational capacity. By leveraging national service and partnerships in their community, Hampton Roads Workforce Council deepened their community impact.

AmeriCorps NCCC: This program engages teams of 18-26 year olds in service projects that often last from six to eight weeks. Members typically provide services such as:

- land management and conservation;
- education on recycling, sustainability, and energy conservation practices;
- disaster response and relief; and
- disaster-preparedness workshops/education.



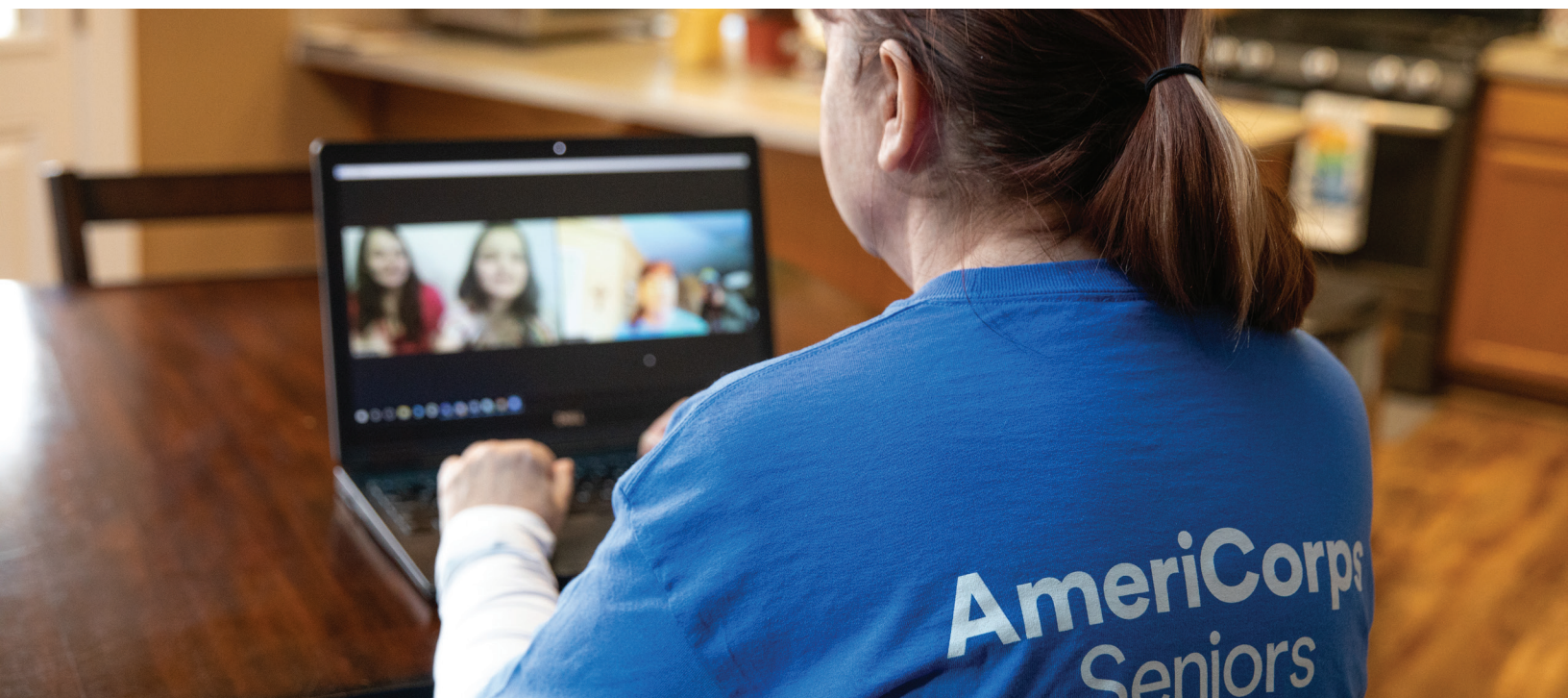
Sample Project: AmeriCorps NCCC maintains a partnership with U.S. Forest Service’s Southern Region. Through service with NCCC, AmeriCorps members receive Red Card and Chainsaw Training and related Certifications; Red Card certification means AmeriCorps members are considered Type 2 Wildland Firefighters. Some AmeriCorps NCCC members can also obtain a Utility Task Vehicle field certification.

AmeriCorps Seniors: As one of the largest senior volunteer organizations in the nation; AmeriCorps Seniors engages more than 145,000 people aged 55 and older in a diverse range of volunteer activities and services:

- tutoring and mentoring disadvantaged or disabled youth;
- assisting students from low-income backgrounds prepare for college and career; and
- engaging underprivileged youth in STEM projects and exposing them to STEM professionals.



Sample Project: AmeriCorps Seniors recently launched its Workforce Development Senior Demonstration Program to support projects focused on supporting older adults as they seek to secure employment in professional, skilled labor, or para-professional careers. One such project is managed by New York City’s Department for the Aging, which helps older adults develop skills and obtain healthcare-industry-recognized credentials while serving.



AmeriCorps Program Eligibility and Criteria

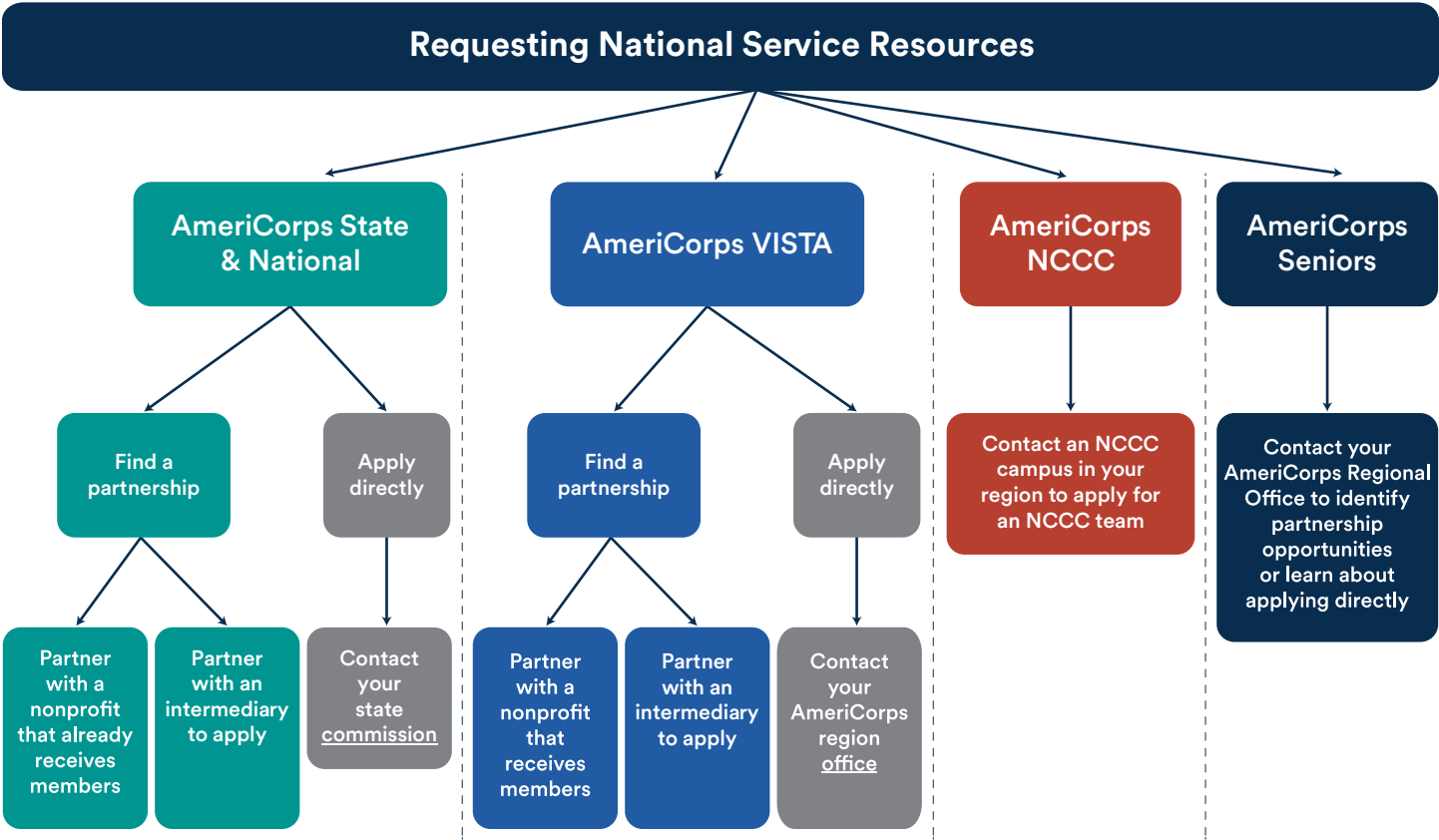
Program	Project Criteria	Length of Project	Eligibility	Other Criteria
AmeriCorps State and National	<p>Single-state applicants must meet the grant selection criteria specified by State Service Commissions.</p> <p>Some states may require applicants to include a minimum number of members per grant.</p> <p>Applicants must have the capacity to manage a grant funds and supervise members.</p> <p>Programs must address compelling needs, have demonstrable, measurable goals, and have a plan for program oversight and monitoring.</p>	<p>Grants provide funding and AmeriCorps member positions for periods of one to three years, with the option to apply for renewal.</p> <p>Members serve in terms of up to 12 months at the grantee organization or at host sites selected by the grantee.</p>	<p>Grant applications are accepted from nonprofit, community and faith-based organizations; educational institutions; and state, local, and tribal governments.</p>	<p>Programs follow state and federal regulations, terms and conditions for financial and grants management of the program, and State Commission grant requirements. Programs must report on project success and may need to participate in statewide training and service projects.</p> <p>Grantees must provide matching funds (cash or in-kind) from 24 to 50 percent to help support the program.</p> <p>Some other federal funds can help meet the matching requirements, if allowed by the program.</p>
AmeriCorps VISTA	<p>Applicants must reflect the program’s poverty mission, address one or more AmeriCorps focus areas, clearly articulate defined goals with measurable impact, show sustainability, and demonstrate organizational capacity to support AmeriCorps members.</p>	<p>AmeriCorps members serve with a sponsoring organization for a full year. Resources are normally allocated to a sponsoring organization for up to three years.</p>	<p>Project sponsors can be nonprofit, community and faith-based organizations; educational institutions; and state, local, and tribal governments.</p>	<p>Sponsoring organizations absorb most of the costs related to project supervision and logistical support.</p> <p>Investment by the sponsoring organization and community is fundamental to the program.</p> <p>States and local communities can use other federal funds to support projects.</p>

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">AmeriCorps NCCC</p>	<p>AmeriCorps NCCC projects must address a compelling community need, have clearly stated and well-planned tasks and objectives, have demonstrable measurable goals, engage members in meaningful service, provide opportunity for member development, involve community, and have a plan for sustainability.</p>	<p>Projects are normally six-to-eight weeks in duration but will vary depending on the requirements of the project.</p> <p>Projects must be capable of using at least one full team of eight-to-12 members effectively.</p>	<p>AmeriCorps NCCC teams are available to serve with nonprofit, community and faith-based organizations; educational institutions; and state, local, and tribal governments.</p>	<p>Project sponsors are required to provide materials, specialized tools, orientation, training, and technical supervision. When teams are based off campus, project sponsors work with AmeriCorps to help arrange housing, kitchen facilities, and other logistical needs.</p> <p>States and local communities can use other federal funds to support projects.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">AmeriCorps Seniors</p>	<p>AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations that engage individuals, age 55 and over, in volunteer service.</p> <p>Volunteers engage in a diverse range of volunteer activities that serve community needs.</p>	<p>Awards are normally allocated to a sponsoring organization for three years. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers may serve a few hours or as many as 40 hours per week.</p>	<p>Grant applications are accepted from nonprofit, community and faith-based organizations; educational institutions; and state, local, and tribal governments.</p>	<p>The applicant must have sufficient local presence to directly manage the proposed grant.</p> <p>The operation of a grant cannot be delegated to another organization, even if the other organization is an affiliate of the applicant.</p> <p>States and local communities can use other federal funds to support projects.</p>



Section 3: Find a Partnership or Apply Directly

The process for requesting AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors resources varies by program. In some cases, it involves an application process, while in other cases it may involve determining if your organization can be a site for an existing grantee. The best approach to take can vary based on your relationships with community partners, your ability to manage grant funding, and your capacity to recruit, train, and support AmeriCorps members and volunteers.



Finding a Partnership

Partnering with nonprofit and community organizations is a common approach taken by those looking to leverage national service. This approach removes some of the burden from your organization and should be considered if your organization may not have the infrastructure to directly manage funds, grants, and/or members.

Partners can help apply for resources, manage grants and funds, define members responsibilities, recruit and support participants, and collect data for performance measures, which, depending on the program, may be required. A partner that has already utilized AmeriCorps resources may be particularly helpful.

Nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, and cities/mayor’s offices are common partners.

When looking for a partnership, start by checking to see if you may want to partner with any of the entities in your area that already have national service resources. You can do this by referencing AmeriCorps’ [state-specific national service reports](#) to find programs in your area. If potential partners already utilize national service, have a discussion regarding the opportunity to expand their existing programming or collaborate on a new program.

It can also be helpful to identify and work with a partner that has an evidence-based approach that can be implemented in your organization, which may be simpler and more effective than creating a program from scratch.

For more information see [AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange](#) and for evaluation results, see our research brief on [Return on Investment Studies](#).

Applying Directly

Depending on the program, applying directly to AmeriCorps requires you to take full ownership of managing funds, defining member and volunteer responsibilities, training and supervising participants, and handling compliance and reporting requirements. While this approach allows you to bypass the process of finding and working with a partner, it also means additional responsibilities for your organization. As a grantee, you will be solely responsible for meeting all grantee requirements and expectations pertaining to the program you choose to apply for.

If you choose to apply directly, address these questions prior to applying:

- Do you have the organizational and staff capacity to train, manage, and supervise members and volunteers?
- Do you have the adequate policies and procedures in place to manage federal funds and grant requirements?
- Do you have sufficient cash or in-kind resources to meet match requirements, if applicable?
- Do you have the necessary systems and processes to capture and report on performance measure data?

Applying for AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps Seniors grants

- Applying for AmeriCorps State and National – Contact your [State Service Commission](#) or [AmeriCorps Regional Office](#)
- Applying for AmeriCorps VISTA or AmeriCorps Seniors – Contact your [AmeriCorps Regional Office](#)
- Applying for AmeriCorps NCCC support – Contact your [AmeriCorps NCCC Regional Contact](#)

What's the difference between an AmeriCorps Regional Office and a State Service Commission?

AmeriCorps Regional Offices are federal offices staffed by federal employees. They are directly responsible for overseeing all AmeriCorps Seniors and AmeriCorps VISTA projects within their jurisdiction. Each AmeriCorps Regional Office works closely with the governor-appointed State Service Commission in their state.

State Service Commissions are governor-supported entities that provide AmeriCorps funding to programs in their states through annual grant competitions. In addition, the commissions oversee and support these programs. Grants are made either directly to an organization or through an intermediary that handles the distribution of grant funding. State Service Commissions are also charged with encouraging volunteerism in their states, and often administer special volunteer initiatives.

Additional Information on AmeriCorps Programs:

- [AmeriCorps State and National](#)
- [AmeriCorps VISTA](#)
- [AmeriCorps NCCC](#)
- [AmeriCorps Seniors](#)

For additional information on leveraging national service to strengthen workforce development at your organization and in your community:

- The Corps Network's Guide [Corps to Careers: How Service and Conservation Corps Help Build Tomorrow's Workforce – The Corps Network](#)
- Serve Colorado's [Guide for Combining AmeriCorps and Registered Apprenticeships](#)

Please note that examples provided throughout the document are included as illustrations of national service programs. Information may be from prior years, may not include impact or results, and is not intended to provide full details of programs.

National Service as a Workforce Development Strategy in Your Community

The previous section of the toolkit focused on how your organization and organizations you partner with in your community can leverage AmeriCorps programs. This section concentrates on why AmeriCorps programs are well-designed and perfectly positioned to serve as a pillar of your community's workforce development strategy by strengthening the pipeline of skilled workers in your area. Several of these examples are explored in further detail in Appendix B.

AmeriCorps as a Pathway to Good Jobs

AmeriCorps service can be a pathway to jobs. This can happen in a variety of ways:

- AmeriCorps grantees and sponsors can incorporate registered apprenticeship programs or quality pre-apprenticeship programs.
- AmeriCorps can help members and volunteers earn quality credentials.
- AmeriCorps offers members and volunteers professional development opportunities.
- AmeriCorps programs include opportunities for career exploration and navigation, mentorship, networking, resume development, and developing interviewing skills.

Research and surveys of AmeriCorps alumni have found positive effects on future employment:

- 80 percent of AmeriCorps alumni say AmeriCorps benefited their career path.
- 82 percent of alumni report that AmeriCorps was a defining professional experience.
- 42 percent of alumni employed within six months of service found a job through a connection made in AmeriCorps.
- Research from Arizona State University found that 82.7 percent of AmeriCorps host organizations hired at least one alumni, and more than half the jobs were newly created.

Workforce Development Models and AmeriCorps Programs

AmeriCorps programs are compatible with a wide array of strong workforce development models including registered apprenticeship and quality pre-apprenticeship. Many AmeriCorps programs offer members and volunteers the opportunities to obtain quality, industry-recognized, and stackable credentials. Below are examples of how the combined power of national service and workforce development can strengthen the pipeline of skilled workers in your area.

- A. Pre-Apprenticeship Pathways (including with Union Partners):** Many AmeriCorps programs are incorporating pre-apprenticeship pathways to good jobs, benefiting their members and employers in their communities. Programs are partnering with employers and unions to ensure the AmeriCorps service experience and related training curriculum prepare AmeriCorps members to enter a registered apprenticeship after their term of service (and leave them qualified for other excellent career pathways).
 - a. AmeriCorps State and National and AmeriCorps Digital Service Fellows Pre-Apprenticeship,** engages recent Philadelphia high school graduates interested in information technology careers in a full year of service supporting student and school technology needs and learning about the information technology field. AmeriCorps members serve directly with school district IT professionals and their experience is supplemented with training toward industry standard certifications including Dell Technician Certification, Apple Certified Macintosh Technician, CompTIA A+, Google Apps for Education Certification, and more.
 - b. Civic Corps partners with Teamsters Local 70 and Machinists Local 1546** to place graduates of their Waste Management and Recycling Program into Registered Apprenticeships with the Teamsters and Machinists. Those who enter the Teamsters union following their service with Civic Corps can pursue a union truck driving role with a starting salary of \$75,000 a year plus a pension.

- B. AmeriCorps Programs Can Be Fully Integrated with Registered Apprenticeship:** In addition to positioning AmeriCorps programs as quality pre-apprenticeships, they can also fully integrate registered apprenticeship programs. This approach takes time and effort to identify needs, develop partnerships, and build a program, but the benefits to communities, employers, and AmeriCorps programs and members can be significant. For example, the following AmeriCorps grantees have implemented apprenticeships in the following ways:
- a. **Colorado Public Health Works** works with a registered apprenticeship program to address the urgent public health workforce needs of local agencies/clinics. Program sponsors, led by the Colorado State Service Commission, developed this helpful [Guide for Combining AmeriCorps and Registered Apprenticeships](#).
 - b. **Mount Adams Institute** helps military veterans simultaneously participate in national service through AmeriCorps and access pathways to conservation careers through a registered apprenticeship program. AmeriCorps members are offered the opportunity to serve and network with potential future employers.
 - c. **PowerCorps PHL** recently established a Youth Development Registered Apprenticeship in response to organic interest among AmeriCorps members who saw PCPHL staff working with young people. A lot of members don't have a college degree or other typical qualifications, but they do possess incredibly valuable lived experience. Registered apprenticeship is a model that helped them gain experience, qualifications, and credentials. Community College of Philadelphia is the program's training partner.
- C. Co-enrollment Partner (e.g. Braiding Funds):** AmeriCorps provides the funding for AmeriCorps members' living allowance, member post-service education award, and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer stipend, if applicable, during their term of service. Some AmeriCorps funding can be braided with other public and private dollars to provide competitive compensation, wrap around benefits, and training opportunities to AmeriCorps members while they serve to. Contact your regional office to determine what additional benefits you can provide.
- a. American YouthWorks braids AmeriCorps and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act YouthBuild grant funds to ensure participants from diverse backgrounds receive the benefits and support they need to be able to serve. They co-enroll participants in AmeriCorps and WIOA YouthBuild, affording AmeriCorps members the opportunity to develop skills, while addressing workforce needs in key local industries identified by American YouthWorks in partnership with the local workforce board based on local labor market information.
 - b. Mt Adams Institute's AmeriCorps-Apprenticeship program (see above) allows veterans who serve in the program to access GI Bill funds to help pay for housing during their term of service. This benefit braided with the AmeriCorps living allowance and other benefits is critical to ensuring AmeriCorps members can simultaneously serve, earn, and learn.
- D. Quality Credentials:** Since all AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers develop skills while they serve, there is tremendous opportunity to ensure members gain access to quality credentials that recognize skills gained through service. There are additional opportunities, which many AmeriCorps programs are capitalizing on, to shape the training and skill development of AmeriCorps members and volunteers, so they can earn industry-recognized and stackable credentials that will help launch them into a career post-service.
- a. The Colorado Teacher Pipeline program is a partnership between the Colorado Service Commission and the Colorado Department of Education. This program engages second year AmeriCorps members as they complete an alternative licensure teacher preparation program. AmeriCorps members serving in the Teacher Pipeline program address critical classroom needs while attaining a teaching license during their second year of AmeriCorps service.
 - b. Through service with AmeriCorps NCCC, in partnership with the US Forest Service, AmeriCorps members receive Red Card and Chainsaw Training and related certifications; Red Card certification means AmeriCorps members are considered Type Two Wildland Firefighters. Some AmeriCorps members can also obtain a Utility Task Vehicle field certification.

- E. **AmeriCorps Programs and Recruiting Individuals from Underserved Communities:** AmeriCorps programs are deeply connected to communities. Programs address community-identified needs and are well-positioned to recruit individuals from underserved communities. When employers connect with, recruit, and hire from AmeriCorps programs like the examples below, they can strengthen their ability to hire individuals from underserved communities.
- a. Green City Force engages young adults living in public housing as AmeriCorps members to weatherize buildings, maintain urban farms to grow organic produce for the community, and educate residents on sustainability and energy efficiency. Post-service, AmeriCorps members go on to green economy apprenticeships and other career opportunities.
 - b. PowerCorpsPHL engages at-risk youth and formerly incarcerated individuals as AmeriCorps members to carry out climate and environmental projects through city agencies. Service activities include improving stormwater management, increasing tree coverage, and revitalizing city parks. Members develop technical skills, become civically engaged, and go directly into good jobs or an apprenticeship program run by the Philadelphia Water Department, leading to employment in a variety of trades including grounds and facilities maintenance, electronic technician, engineering aides, and HVAC mechanics.
 - c. The California Justice Leaders AmeriCorps program engages individuals who were formerly incarcerated to provide re-entry coaching and mentorship to young adults who are facing many of the same challenges they once did. Serving through 20 community-based organizations in seven California counties, Justice Leaders receive training as re-entry navigators, which expands their own future employment opportunities.

AmeriCorps Areas of Impact, Sectors, and Occupational Pathways

AmeriCorps programs operate across a wide array of sectors and occupational pathways. AmeriCorps has six key areas of impact:

- A. **Economic Opportunity** – AmeriCorps programs serve as a pathway to employment opportunities and help develop vital work skills. AmeriCorps members and volunteers build and rehabilitate affordable housing, provide financial literacy training, and connect people to jobs.
- B. **Education** – In addition to the thousands of AmeriCorps members serving youth in afterschool and summer programs, more than 35,000 AmeriCorps members and volunteers support students in nearly 9,500 schools across the country. Through AmeriCorps’ work we improve attendance and engagement, increase high-school graduation rates, and expand college enrollment.
- C. **Environmental Stewardship** – AmeriCorps members serve on projects that cover thousands of acres of public lands across America—including many with the National Park Service. AmeriCorps members help conserve natural habitats, protect clean air and water, and reduce utility bills by improving home energy efficiency.
- D. **Healthy Futures** – AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers provide independent living services to 365,000 elderly Americans. AmeriCorps also builds the capacity of food banks, combats the opioid crisis, tackles homelessness, and addresses food insecurity.
- E. **Disaster Services** – When disaster strikes, AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers repair homes, assist survivors, and help restore communities when it matters most. AmeriCorps has deployed thousands of members and volunteers to areas affected by hurricanes, wildfires, floods, and tornadoes.
- F. **Veterans and Military Families** – AmeriCorps members and volunteers provide assistance to nearly 245,000 veterans and military families by connecting them to education opportunities, jobs, and the benefits they have earned. Many veterans also become AmeriCorps members or AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, so they can continue to serve their country.

AmeriCorps members develop needed skills for in-demand occupations in critical sectors during their service. Through service, significant numbers of AmeriCorps members develop sector-focused and cross-cutting skills, including in IT, public administration, skilled trades, and more. New AmeriCorps programs can be developed to address community-identified needs related to the areas of impact.

Please revisit the previous section “Utilizing National Service Resources” for more details on how you might start an AmeriCorps program or partner with an existing one. Several of the AmeriCorps programs mentioned in this section are discussed in further detail in Appendix B.

There are eligibility requirements to serve in an AmeriCorps program, including citizenship and a minimum age, which varies slightly based on the program, but is generally at least 17+ years of age. For more information, visit [AmeriCorps.gov/Serve](https://www.americorps.gov/serve) or contact the National Service Hotline at **1-800-942-2677**.



Career coaches, guidance counselors, families of students, classroom teachers, and others guiding and supporting people who are entering and reentering the workforce should consider sharing the following link with information about AmeriCorps programs with individuals who may be looking for ways to help their communities while earning a living allowance, pay for higher education, and gain work experience: [AmeriCorps.gov/Serve](https://www.americorps.gov/serve)



Appendix A: Workforce Development Organizations and National Service Examples

Below are historical and current examples of how workforce development organizations utilize AmeriCorps programs to increase their organizational capacity, deepen their impact, and better serve their community.

Hampton Roads Workforce Council *A Local Workforce Board in Virginia*



Overview of Hampton Roads Workforce Council

- Hampton Roads Workforce Council is an AmeriCorps VISTA sponsor serving 15 localities in Virginia.
- The program serves more than 14,800 adults and 3,000 youths annually.
- Seventy percent of those served by the council are individuals of color and a majority are from low-income backgrounds.
- Seventy-Five percent of adults involved in council programming entered post-secondary education or began employment after receiving services.

How AmeriCorps Supports Hampton Roads Workforce Council

Hampton Roads Workforce Council leverages AmeriCorps to better support veterans in their community and to advance research and strategic initiatives. The program utilizes two AmeriCorps members to advance key projects that bolster organizational capacity. One AmeriCorps member supported veterans and the other AmeriCorps member conducted research on key issues impacting workforce development in the region and led outreach to multiple stakeholders, including employers and other community-based organizations. By leveraging national service and partnerships in their community, Hampton Roads Workforce Council deepened their community impact.

Some program highlights include:

Serving Veterans

One AmeriCorps member advanced key veteran-serving projects. Since the Hampton Roads region is home to several military bases, including the largest naval base in the world, veterans make up a significant proportion of the population. A disproportionate number of veterans face housing insecurity, which can be both a cause and result of employment challenges. Hampton Roads Workforce Council plays a major role in supporting veterans seeking training and employment opportunities in the region; this often includes helping veterans gain access to affordable and secure housing. The AmeriCorps member led outreach to veterans in the region and helped refine communication to the veteran community, helping military families access comprehensive workforce development services.

Research and Strategic Initiatives

Another AmeriCorps member advanced research and strategic initiatives for Hampton Roads Workforce Council during their term of service. The AmeriCorps member's goal was to help the council develop its understanding of what the workforce development system looks like in their region, identify best practices around the country, propose ways those best practices could be replicated in Hampton Roads, and conduct outreach that led to connections between employers and jobseekers. One research project focused on housing since the region is facing unprecedented outward migration due to high housing costs—high housing costs and outward migration negatively impact the workforce system in the region, making it difficult for both workers

and employers to thrive. The AmeriCorps member met with housing experts in the region and developed a report for Hampton Roads Workforce Council. The report informed the council's approach to incorporating housing market navigation into their programs and materials, as well as other efforts to connect jobseekers with affordable housing. It also informed conversations with employer partners, with research on hand, the council could help employers understand the difficulties jobseekers and employees face and encourage them to consider ways to support their staff. The AmeriCorps member was interviewed by the local news station about the project, making the community more aware of Hampton Roads Workforce Council services and resources.

Note: Hampton Roads Workforce Council proposed hosting six AmeriCorps members serving in the VISTA program for three years, but due to pandemic disruptions, they were only able to host two members. One member served for one year and the other member served two one-year terms. Hampton Roads Workforce Council had to change gears, like so many other organizations and individuals, due to the pandemic.

Hampton Roads Workforce Council's original proposal included AmeriCorps members who would focus on:

- conducting a large-scale inventory of work-based learning programs in their region;
- promoting work-based learning opportunities for high school seniors; and
- grassroots recruiting efforts to help identify and recruit underserved individuals in their region.

What Leaders are Saying About AmeriCorps

“Partnerships are key to our success as a local workforce board. Our AmeriCorps members helped us build stronger partnerships with employers and other community-based organizations. AmeriCorps members also led outreach to underserved individuals in our region. Leveraging national service was a high return-on-investment strategy to strengthen our organization's capacity to build partnerships and carry out important strategic initiatives.”

– **Shawn Avery, President and CEO**

Hampton Roads Workforce Council

“Our AmeriCorps member who focused on serving veterans really helped us move the needle in better serving this critical underserved population in our region. As an AmeriCorps alumnus who served in the VISTA program, I know the impact an AmeriCorps member can have on a community and the impact that service has on you as an AmeriCorps member. I lean on my experience as an AmeriCorps member every day in my work at Hampton Roads Workforce Council, and I strive to make the service experience meaningful for the AmeriCorps members we host.”

– **Christina Brooks, Senior Director for Special Projects**

HRWC AmeriCorps Program Manager

“HRWC's AmeriCorps members conducted meaningful engagement with us that helped advance our shared goals. We were able to glean key insights about housing insecurity in our region and how we can be the best employer possible for veterans. Our relationship with HRWC is stronger as a result of the AmeriCorps members' service in our community.”

– **Employer Partner**

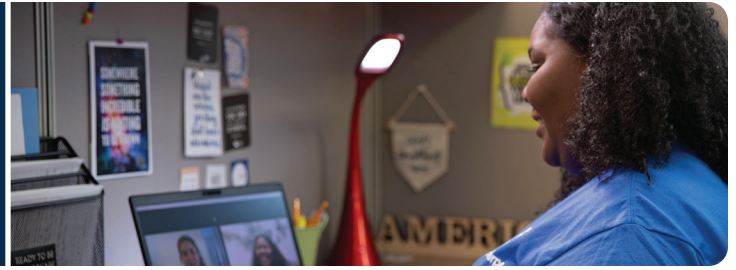
Takeaways for Other Local Workforce Boards

Local workforce boards interested in leveraging AmeriCorps can learn the following from HRWC's approach:

- AmeriCorps members can serve on various teams, working on diverse projects.
- Workforce boards can utilize national service programs to conduct outreach to underserved populations.
- AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers can help strengthen collaboration within your organization and partnerships with external stakeholders.
- National service programs can provide a high return-on-investment in your organization and in your community.

Boston's Office of Workforce Development

A Local Government Workforce Agency



Overview of Boston's Office of Workforce Development

- Works toward the full participation of all Boston residents in the city's economic vitality and future.
- Administers Boston's portion of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act formula funds with oversight from the local workforce board as well as providing its own workforce training and financial wellness programs.
- Serves more than 45,000 individuals per year.
- 80 percent of individuals served are from low-income backgrounds.

How AmeriCorps Supports Boston's Office of Workforce Development

Boston's Office of Workforce Development utilizes AmeriCorps to connect low-income residents with training, educational pathways, and employment opportunities. They leverage three AmeriCorps members per year who support programs that create pathways to educational and employment opportunities. The AmeriCorps members develop partnerships with key stakeholders, conduct community outreach, and strengthen data systems.

Some program highlights include:

Strengthening Partnerships with Public Schools, Community Colleges, and Other Key Stakeholders

AmeriCorps members help Boston's Office of Workforce Development strengthen critical partnerships with Boston's public schools and community colleges. Between 2019-2023, AmeriCorps members led or supported presentations and meetings with all 81 public elementary schools, many of the 30+ high schools as well as numerous community-based organizations. They also supported engagements with Boston Public Schools' central office, including departments focused on career and technical education, post-secondary transitions, and financial empowerment. With AmeriCorps members providing additional capacity, the program was able to double the number of community college partnerships in 2023 and secured \$3 million in American Rescue Plan funds for an expansion of the program to serve additional categories of students within the Tuition Free Community College program. AmeriCorps members also supported engagements with community-based organizations, One-Stop Career Centers, and faith-based institutions.

Capacity, Innovation, and Outreach During the Pandemic

AmeriCorps members provided critical capacity at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, helping to conduct outreach as people were disconnected due to public health precautions. AmeriCorps members were instrumental in assisting with and recruiting for an earn and learn program for youth with remote options. AmeriCorps members conducted outreach to public school students during the pandemic to ensure they were aware of Boston's 'Tuition Free Community College' program. One AmeriCorps member used his background in graphic design to help develop materials for a 'Tuition Free Community College' digital outreach campaign.

Continuous Improvement through Data Management and Evaluation

Another AmeriCorps member focuses on data management and evaluation, helping Boston's Office of Workforce Development organize key information and delivering insights that improve outreach and programs, as well as buy-in from partners. They partner with the City of Boston and the Boston public school system to support 'Boston Saves', a children's savings account program that helps families of students save and plan for their children's college or career training. The AmeriCorps member dedicated to data and evaluation supported this program through database management, updating weekly dashboards, and evaluating the effectiveness of a 'Family Champions' outreach strategy. Data developed by the AmeriCorps member has been used in every presentation that has been given this year. The program reports are provided directly to the mayor, school superintendent, and other city leaders.

What Program and Local Leaders are Saying About National Service

“Our AmeriCorps members helped unlock economic potential and increase the opportunities for all residents to participate in our city’s prosperity. They helped the Office of Workforce Development build and strengthen partnerships, develop new programs and outreach strategies during the pandemic, and rigorously evaluate what we’re doing so we know what’s working and how we can improve our services. Leveraging national service was a high return-on-investment approach to helping our city build and strengthen partnerships between the educational and workforce development institutions.”

– **Trinh Nguyen, Chief**
Worker Empowerment Cabinet

“Our AmeriCorps member who focused on outreach and recruitment helped us reach underserved youth in our community, which is always important, but was absolutely essential during the pandemic. As the onset of the pandemic quickly necessitated dramatic changes to our outreach strategies, our AmeriCorps member was able to provide critical capacity and innovative thinking that allowed us to adapt and effectively deliver information and services to city residents.”

– **Sasha Abby VanDerzee, OWD AmeriCorps Program Manager**

“OWD’s AmeriCorps members led meaningful engagements with us, delivered thoughtful presentations to our team, and conducted outreach to our students that advanced our shared goals with OWD. Thousands of families learned about Boston Saves and the financial opportunities that have been created for their children. We have a stronger partnership with OWD thanks to the AmeriCorps members’ service in our community.”

– **Katherine Hughes, Countdown to Kindergarten Program Manager**
Boston Public Schools

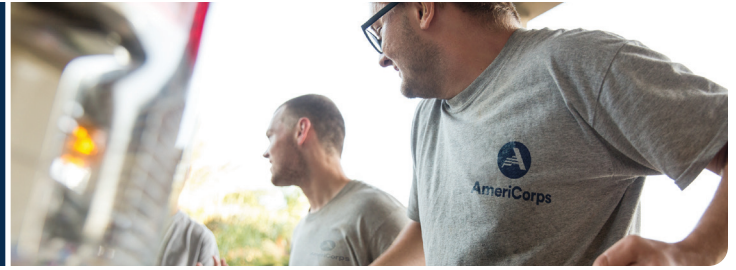
Takeaways for Other Local Workforce Agencies

Local workforce agencies interested in leveraging national service resources can learn the following from Boston’s Office of Workforce Development’s approach:

- AmeriCorps members can serve in functional areas that align with their interests and organizational needs.
- Local workforce development agencies can leverage national service to conduct data management and program evaluation that provides decision-useful insights.
- AmeriCorps members can help organizations be flexible and innovative in the face of unexpected crises, like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hawkeye Community College

A Local Community College
(and Career One-Stop Center Site)



Overview of Hawkeye Community College

- Focuses on meeting the needs of the community, providing quality, affordable training for learners at all stages of life.
- Since opening in 1966, the college has graduated more than 50,000 students, with 94 percent staying in Iowa.
- In FY 2019-20, Hawkeye’s economic impact supported 6,343 jobs in their service area. (Equivalent to one out of every 19 jobs in the Hawkeye Service Area).

How National Service Supported Hawkeye Community College

- Hawkeye Community College utilized AmeriCorps to connect low-income residents with training, educational pathways, and employment opportunities through an on-campus CareerOneStop Center with American Job Center. Hawkeye leveraged AmeriCorps members who served as ‘Workforce Board Specialists.’ The AmeriCorps members developed partnerships with key stakeholders and advanced sector-based strategies.
- AmeriCorps members helped Hawkeye strengthen critical partnerships with employers by supporting ‘sector boards.’ Each of Hawkeye’s AmeriCorps members were focused on a key sector with significant hiring needs, such as transportation/logistics, healthcare, and manufacturing. As a Community College, these sector-based strategies and partnerships helped Hawkeye be responsive to evolving industry needs for talent development.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, Hawkeye was unable to facilitate site visits to logistics, healthcare, and manufacturing facilities for the sector boards. AmeriCorps members were able to support a creative response by leading virtual site visits. The members entered facilities equipped with Go-Pro cameras and streamed footage for virtual audiences.
- AmeriCorps members also formed a talent pipeline for Hawkeye and its partners. Hawkeye hired one of their AmeriCorps members after their term of service because the member demonstrated excellent administrative skills and became very familiar with Hawkeye and its programs. Another AmeriCorps member was hired into the manufacturing sector after supporting the manufacturing sector board during their term of service.

What Leaders are Saying About AmeriCorps

“Our AmeriCorps members helped unlock economic potential and increase the opportunities for all residents to participate in our region’s prosperity. They helped Hawkeye build and strengthen partnerships, including during the pandemic. Leveraging national service was a high return-on-investment approach to helping our region build and strengthen partnerships between our college and employers.”

– **Chris Hannan, Director, Workforce Training and Community Development**
Hawkeye Community College

“Our AmeriCorps member who focused on sector partnerships helped us strengthen relationships with employers in our community, which is always important, but was absolutely essential during the pandemic. As the onset of the pandemic quickly necessitated dramatic changes to our partnership strategies, our AmeriCorps member was able to provide critical capacity and innovative thinking that allowed us to adapt and effectively deliver services to employers and jobseekers.”

– Celia Even, Business & Industry Training Coordinator and VISTA Site Supervisor
Hawkeye Community College

“Hawkeye’s AmeriCorps members led meaningful engagements with us and delivered thoughtful presentations to our team that advanced our shared goals with Hawkeye. Our organization was able to co-develop industry-recognized training with Hawkeye that led to better-prepared job seekers graduating from Hawkeye. We have a stronger partnership with Hawkeye thanks to the AmeriCorps members’ service in our community.”

– Constance Grimm, Director of Grants & Resource Development and VISTA Program Director
Hawkeye Community College

Takeaways for Other Local Workforce Agencies

Community colleges interested in leveraging national service resources can learn the following from Hawkeye’s approach:

- AmeriCorps members can strengthen the capacity of your organization and close partners and affiliates, like local workforce boards.
- Community Colleges can leverage national service to advance sector-based strategies and strengthen employer partnerships.
- AmeriCorps members can lead the development of new partnerships.
- Community colleges and partners can hire AmeriCorps members as full-time staff after their term of service; AmeriCorps members serving at your organization (or with your partners) make up a pipeline of talented, dedicated individuals who are familiar with your organization and mission through their service.

Idaho State Government

A Partnership Between the State Service Commission and the State Department of Labor



Overview of Serve Idaho (State Service Commission)

- Governor’s Commission on Service and Volunteerism.
- Administers and oversees Idaho’s portion of AmeriCorps formula grant funds and helps mobilize volunteers and promote community service.
- Engages more than 900 individuals per year as AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.
- AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are serving in all 44 of Idaho’s counties, including in Idaho’s most rural and underserved communities.

Overview of Idaho Department of Labor and Apprenticeship Idaho

- Idaho's home for job seekers and employers.
- Oversees the administration of Idaho's portion of WIOA formula funds and other state funds for workforce development.
- Apprenticeship Idaho is a division within the Idaho Department of Labor focused on scaling Registered Apprenticeship and Quality Pre-apprenticeship programs.

How National Service Supports Workforce Development in Idaho

- The Idaho State Service Commission placed an AmeriCorps member serving in the VISTA program with the Idaho Department of Labor's Apprenticeship Division, "Apprenticeship Idaho." The AmeriCorps member successfully led efforts to build Apprenticeship Idaho's pre-apprenticeship program. With leadership and support from the AmeriCorps member, Apprenticeship Idaho launched training systems for mentors and mentees engaged in registered apprenticeship programs.
- The Apprenticeship Idaho AmeriCorps member designed and authored a children's book about Registered Apprenticeship as a career pathway. The book is the first part of Apprenticeship Idaho's K-12 Initiative to expand apprenticeship awareness to school students and promote career planning as a lifelong habit. In November 2022, Idaho's [First Lady read the book](#) to a classroom full of elementary school students to kick off and promote National Apprenticeship Week. The book is linked at the top of Apprenticeship Idaho's website to help visitors learn more about Apprenticeship.
- The AmeriCorps member who authored the book was born and raised in Idaho and brought a professional background in landscape architecture to her AmeriCorps service. While she never expected to write a book as a part of her service, her time in AmeriCorps taught her that some of life's best opportunities are unexpected.
- Serve Idaho and the Idaho Department of Labor had such a positive experience partnering through the AmeriCorps program that they are exploring opportunities in 2024 and beyond to place AmeriCorps members at the state workforce board, at nonprofit workforce development intermediaries around the state, and back at Apprenticeship Idaho.

What State and Program Leaders are Saying About National Service

"Our AmeriCorps member helped advance Registered Apprenticeships as a key workforce development solution in Idaho. She supported the launch of our pre-apprenticeship program, led statewide team meetings, and even wrote a children's book on apprenticeships. Leveraging national service was a high return-on-investment approach to helping create real solutions to address Idaho's workforce shortage."

– Jani Revier, Director
Idaho Department of Labor

"Our AmeriCorps member provided capacity to our team at a critical juncture. We were trying to accomplish a wide array of objectives to advance apprenticeship as a workforce development solution in our state. We would not have been able to advance programs and raise the public's awareness of apprenticeship as effectively as we did without the tremendous service of our AmeriCorps member."

– Gina Robison, Program Supervisor
Idaho Apprenticeship Program

“We are so pleased to partner with our state’s Department of Labor to leverage national service and advance key workforce development strategies. We are one team in Idaho state government and our collaboration benefits people across the state. We are excited to continue collaborating with DOL to help them and other key workforce development partners leverage AmeriCorps to bolster their organizational capacity.”

– Renee Bade, Executive Director
Serve Idaho

Takeaways for Other Local Workforce Agencies

- Align national service with your state’s workforce development priorities and challenges. Governors, state labor officials, and state legislators can work with their State Service Commissions and AmeriCorps Regional Office to determine how national service can be leveraged to help address critical workforce needs in the state.
- Utilizing national service as a statewide solution can benefit multiple stakeholders:
 - State Labor Agencies can leverage programs to advance their policy and programmatic objectives;
 - Legislators can use national service as a high return-on-investment solution to challenges they have identified; and
 - State Service Commissions can expand the reach and impact of their programs.
- Projects that would benefit from an infusion of energy may be a good fit for national service. National service programs provide additional support for state, local, and tribal government agencies and nonprofit organizations without displacing staff.
- Encourage participation by your state’s workforce development and policy experts when developing solutions. Bringing together knowledgeable experts and national service resources can lead to more sustainable, replicable, and impactful solutions.
- Look for workforce development opportunities that are scalable by using an existing evidence-based approach/model, like Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship.
- Match the people power of national service programs with your scalable solution. Apprenticeship Idaho leveraged an AmeriCorps member to advance their pre-apprenticeship program and creatively raise the visibility of apprenticeship in the state through the children’s book authored by their AmeriCorps member.
- State Service Commissions and AmeriCorps Regional Offices can serve as a bridge between government agencies, nonprofit organizations, workforce development policy experts, and legislators and other public officials. When designing a national service solution, State Commissions and AmeriCorps Regional Offices can act as an intermediary to convene multiple stakeholders while providing a depth of knowledge of national service programs.

Appendix B: AmeriCorps and Workforce Development Strategy in Communities

Below are examples of AmeriCorps programs that serve as a pillar of their communities' workforce development strategy by strengthening the pipeline of skilled workers.

PowerCorpsPHL

A Nonprofit Operating AmeriCorps Programs in Partnership with the City of Philadelphia



Overview of PowerCorpsPHL

- PowerCorpsPHL is a cross-sector collaborative model that engages disconnected young adults and returning citizens to enter and succeed in career pathways through national service.
- It provides career-connected education and service experiences in collaboration with the City of Philadelphia, including Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, Philadelphia Water, and Philadelphia Works, the local workforce board.
- Members can serve, earn, and learn through numerous pathways leading to careers.
- 95 percent of individuals serving are from low-income backgrounds.
- 92 percent of all AmeriCorps member graduates are employed or pursuing higher education six months after their term of service.

How PowerCorpsPHL Strengthens Workforce Development in Philadelphia

PowerCorpsPHL engages disconnected youth and court-involved individuals to serve in AmeriCorps programs. PCPHL offers numerous and diverse pathways to AmeriCorps members who can develop skills required for the green jobs of the future. AmeriCorps members can enter pre-apprenticeship pathways with curriculum and hands-on service experiences co-designed with employers, including Philadelphia's Water Department, Philadelphia Energy Authority, and other private sector partners.

Some program highlights include:

Recruitment of Disconnected Youth and Court-Involved Individuals

PCPHL recruits AmeriCorps members that experience heightened barriers to economic opportunity. Without this AmeriCorps program, they might not have access to service and future career opportunities. PCPHL's AmeriCorps members are primarily young adults of color from historically underserved zip codes. A significant proportion of members are involved in the justice system. These AmeriCorps members—who serve together, learn new skills, and position themselves for a successful career through their service—are an integral part of the future workforce in Philadelphia.

Pre-Apprenticeship Pathways to Green Jobs

AmeriCorps members serving with PCPHL can enter pre-apprenticeship pathways leading to apprenticeships. One pre-apprenticeship pathway is a partnership with Philadelphia's Water Department where AmeriCorps members gain skills while doing work for the city that helps improve water quality for residents. Upon successful completion of their service, they can enter Philadelphia Water's Apprenticeship Program. PCPHL partnered with the city to co-design their service experience and to grant successful program completers points on their civil service exam. This partnership strengthens the pathway to the civil service with Philadelphia's Water Department.

Youth Development Registered Apprenticeship

PCPHL recently established a Youth Development Registered Apprenticeship Program. This program was developed in response to organic interest among AmeriCorps members who saw PCPHL staff working with young people. A lot of members don't have college degree or other typical qualifications, but they do possess incredibly valuable lived experience. Registered Apprenticeship is a model that helped them gain experience, qualifications, and credentials. PCPHL serves as the program sponsor and Community College of Philadelphia is the training partner. AmeriCorps members on this track are now a part of a robust talent pipeline of professionals ready to serve youth in a variety of critical capacities.

What Leaders are Saying About AmeriCorps

“Every day PowerCorpsPHL crews are operating independently in the field and responding to critical needs in the Philadelphia park system. The staff at PowerCorpsPHL lead their corps members, develop them as young stewards of the environment and the City, and have even put many of them on the path to permanent employment with the City of Philadelphia. Philadelphia Parks & Recreation will continue to invest in PowerCorpsPHL as a valuable asset due to the service provided that accomplishes what the Department cannot hope to accomplish alone.”

– Sue Buck, Deputy Commissioner of Operations
Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

“As a partner of PowerCorpsPHL, we value the paid training opportunities that are offered to our clients, the access to real and meaningful to employment for graduates, and the active engagement from staff advocating for our young people to stay home, be engaged, and be developed as young leaders and valued community members.”

– Mary Henin, Public Defender
Defender Association of Philadelphia

“It is mission critical for our city to raise its residents out of poverty and recruit the next generation of professionals. In many cases, we are seeking talent for industries that have never existed before. Our AmeriCorps members have tremendous real-world experience applying the skills of innovation, resilience, resourcefulness, and problem-solving. It's an honor and a privilege to build connections between citywide economic and environmental needs and individuals with immense untapped talent to offer.”

– Julia Hillengas, Co-founder & Executive Director,
PowerCorpsPHL

Takeaways for Workforce Development Organizations

Workforce development organizations interested in leveraging national service as a workforce development strategy can learn the following from PCPHL's approach and support of the workforce system:

- AmeriCorps programs can be a direct partner with local workforce boards and other local government entities to inform and develop workforce development strategies that meet the needs of employers in your community.
- Communities and employers can leverage AmeriCorps programs to help them recruit talented and well-prepared individuals from underserved communities and populations.

- AmeriCorps members can receive critical wrap around supports during their term of service that help them overcome obstacles and develop the skills they need for future success in the workforce.
- AmeriCorps members can, in some instances, serve a second term that allows them to continue learning and developing new skills, as well as receive supportive services that better prepare them for the workforce.
- Community colleges can partner with AmeriCorps programs and provide training to AmeriCorps members, as a part of the Registered Apprenticeship Program, pre-apprenticeship programs, and other work-based learning models.

American YouthWorks

A Nonprofit Operating AmeriCorps Programs in Central Texas and Louisiana



Overview of American YouthWorks

- The mission of American YouthWorks is to provide young people with opportunities to build careers, strengthen communities, and improve the environment through education, on-the-job training, and service to others.
- Through American YouthWorks' AmeriCorps programs, AYW provides the building blocks for learning and engagement that young people can build upon as they grow into adulthood.
- 72 percent of individuals serving with American YouthWorks have incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty income level.
- 79 percent of 2022 AmeriCorps members successfully exiting members are employed or pursuing higher education six months after their term of service with American YouthWorks.

How American YouthWorks Strengthens Workforce Development in Central Texas and Louisiana

American YouthWorks hosts more than 200 AmeriCorps members per year who provide disaster relief, Gulf Coast restoration, and conservation of public lands through their Conservation Corps program. American YouthWorks' other primary program, YouthBuild Austin, offers national service opportunities focused on preparing opportunity youth for in-demand careers in Central Texas.

Some program highlights include:

Conservation Corps

The AYW Conservation Corps engages 200 young adults as full-time AmeriCorps members, focusing on conservation, public lands management and disaster response and resilience, through hands-on, skill-based projects on public lands, coastal regions, and disaster areas across the nation. While successfully educating and training the next generation of leaders in the field, this program engages young people as a powerful resource in the conservation of natural landscapes in Texas and Louisiana. Participants from local communities join national recruits for a once-in-a-lifetime experience to learn new job skills, develop leadership qualities, and improve their community through service.

YouthBuild Austin

Part-time AmeriCorps members are co-enrolled in YouthBuild Austin to combine the power of national service and workforce development for opportunity youth. Program participants are trained in one of three in-demand fields: construction, healthcare, and media/information technology. American YouthWorks examines how planned AmeriCorps service activities align with local labor market information and has designed their AmeriCorps programs to reflect those industry needs in the local economy. YouthBuild Austin's AmeriCorps alumni have stepped into careers as community health workers, IT support staff, and apprentices with the Plumbers Union.

What Leaders Are Saying About AmeriCorps

“Workforce Solutions and American YouthWorks have a long and successful history of collaboration in delivering workforce development services to Opportunity Youth, who are 16 to 24 years old and insufficiently connected to education or employment. AYW-YouthBuild has a documented record of increasing employment, earnings and enrollment in post-secondary education while reducing recidivism. [They] help put youth on a path to success, yielding the State of Texas and our local community a positive return on their investment. At the same time, the program will enhance our region’s economic competitiveness and growing skill sets for the next generation of productive workers.”

– **Tamara Atkinson, CEO**

Workforce Solutions Capital Area Workforce Board

“We are thankful for our partnerships with both local workforce boards in our region and numerous industry and employer partners. These partners are essential to positioning American YouthWorks and our members as an integral part of the workforce development system in our community.”

– **Parc Smith, CEO**

American YouthWorks

“We work closely with our local workforce boards to align our training and service with both labor-market information and community needs. In areas such as affordable housing, homelessness, the digital divide, and healthcare equity, we create partnerships and service activities where AmeriCorps members can address these issues while preparing for their next step.”

– **David Clauss, Director of Workforce Development**

American YouthWorks

Takeaways for Workforce Development Organizations

Workforce development organizations interested in leveraging national service as a workforce development strategy can learn the following from American YouthWorks’ approach and support of the workforce system:

- AmeriCorps programs can recruit individuals from the local community who have been disconnected from school and work and offer training and support services so they can confidently enter the workforce.
- Through comprehensive training, AmeriCorps members can develop a wide range of skills through classroom instruction combined with extensive service-learning activities. These training opportunities can be designed to align community needs with the local labor market and prepare AmeriCorps members for in-demand occupations following their term of service.
- Through national service, AmeriCorps members develop their soft skills, such as effective communication, teamwork, and leadership abilities.
- AmeriCorps programs can focus on service that relates to in-demand occupations in critical industries, allowing members to develop relevant skills and secure industry-recognized credentials while addressing unmet needs in their communities.

Serve Colorado

The Colorado State Service Commission



Overview of Serve Colorado (State Service Commission)

- Housed in Colorado’s Lt. Governor’s Office, Serve Colorado empowers community-based organizations to meet locally identified needs and statewide challenges through service and volunteerism.
- Administers and oversees Colorado’s portion of AmeriCorps formula grant funds and helps mobilize volunteers and promotes community service.
- Engages more than 1,200 individuals per year as AmeriCorps members at more than 270 sites.
- Advocates for national service and workforce development through participation in the Colorado Cabinet Workforce Development Working Group.

Colorado Public Health Works

A Public Health AmeriCorps program in Colorado successfully integrated a Community Health Worker Registered Apprenticeship Program into their AmeriCorps program model. The program is meeting a critical public health workforce need in communities around Colorado. AmeriCorps members simultaneously serve, earn, and learn, setting themselves up for a meaningful and successful career in public health after their term of service.

CPHW demonstrates how AmeriCorps programs can be fully integrated with Registered Apprenticeship programs. Serve Colorado collaborated with the grantee leading CPHW, their state Department of Labor, philanthropic partners, and Public Health AmeriCorps to develop this program. Serve Colorado worked with partners to publish a guide on combining AmeriCorps programs and Registered Apprenticeship programs to share key insights from their experience developing the program.

Some program highlights include:

The Farmer in Training program

The Farmer in Training program is a partnership between United Way of Southwest Colorado and The Old Fort at Fort Lewis College that gives AmeriCorps members hands-on experience growing vegetables at high elevation while they complete six farming courses and 240 hours of service in the fields in a program that also addresses food security issues in southwestern Colorado.

The Colorado Teacher Pipeline program

The Colorado Teacher Pipeline program is a partnership with the Colorado Department of Education which engages second year AmeriCorps members as they complete an alternative licensure teacher preparation program. AmeriCorps members serving in the Teacher Pipeline program address critical classroom needs while attaining a teaching license during their second year of AmeriCorps service.

State Engagement

Serve Colorado is partnering with the state workforce cabinet to develop opportunities for AmeriCorps members to obtain quality, industry-recognized credentials through their service. The commission has created partnerships with the Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Colorado National Guard, and Governor’s office to expand service and to develop targeted career pathways for AmeriCorps members to meet workforce needs. In addition, Serve Colorado and state agencies are aligning and copromoting AmeriCorps planning grants and workforce development funding opportunities to support organizations interested in creating new workforce programming. “Developing the Future Workforce” is one of the guiding pillars in Serve Colorado’s current state service plan and the commission continuously reinforces their commitment to workforce development and engaging key partners across the state to position service in AmeriCorps.

What Leaders Are Saying About AmeriCorps

“Here in Colorado, we are taking bold action to build the workforce for the future and our hardworking, dedicated AmeriCorps members are a key part of this work. Members protect communities from fire, educate children, and much more through their service and build lifelong career skills.”

– **Governor Jared Polis**

“Throughout their service, Colorado AmeriCorps members develop real world experience and technical skills which will be invaluable to their next job or service opportunity. I truly believe in the transformational impact of national service and the significant benefits it affords AmeriCorps members serving across the state.”

– **Lt. Governor Dianne Primavera**

“We are committed to engaging partners across our state to position AmeriCorps programs as a workforce development strategy. We are excited to continue collaborating with Colorado’s state workforce cabinet and other partners to ensure AmeriCorps members can access targeted career pathways and industry-recognized credentials, setting up our members and our state for success.”

– **John Kelly, Executive Director**

Serve Colorado

“Trailhead Institute has convened partners statewide around innovative workforce development strategies. Hosting the blended AmeriCorps and apprenticeships program, Colorado Public Health Works, has allowed us to support focus areas around career pathways in public health and increasing awareness about professions in public health.”

– **Jennifer Edwards, PhD, Director**

Workforce Programs and Initiatives at Trailhead Institute

Align national service with your state’s workforce development priorities.

Governors, State labor officials, and state legislators can work with their State Service Commissions and AmeriCorps Regional Office to determine how national service can be leveraged to help address critical workforce.

State Labor Agencies can leverage programs to advance their policy and programmatic objectives. Legislators can use national service as a high return-on-investment solution to challenges they have identified. State Service Commissions can expand the reach and impact of their programs. To get involved:

- Identify projects that would benefit from an infusion of energy from AmeriCorps programs which provide additional support for state, local, and tribal government agencies and nonprofits without displacing staff.
- Encourage participation by your state’s workforce development and policy experts when developing solutions. Bringing together knowledgeable experts and AmeriCorps resources can lead to more sustainable, replicable, and impactful solutions.

- Look for workforce development opportunities that are scalable by using an existing evidence-based approach/model, like Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-apprenticeship.
- AmeriCorps programs can be compatible with Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-apprenticeship. For example, see [Serve Colorado's Workforce Development Page](#) and [Guide for Combining AmeriCorps and Registered Apprenticeships](#).
- State Service Commissions and AmeriCorps Regional Offices can serve as a bridge between government agencies, nonprofit organizations, workforce development policy experts, and legislators and other public officials. When designing a national service solution, State Commissions and AmeriCorps Regional Offices can act as an intermediary to convene multiple stakeholders while providing a depth of knowledge of national service programs.



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