

DECEMBER 2019

READING PARTNERS AMERICORPS ALUMNI STUDY

A report series:

REPORT 1: Alumni reflections on their service year (s)

REPORT 2: Influencing the academic and career pathways of
Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni

REPORT 3: Influencing the civic experiences of Reading Partners
AmeriCorps alumni

Leslie M. Anderson

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COMMISSIONED BY:



THE READING PARTNERS EXPERIENCE

REPORT 1: Alumni reflections on their service year(s)

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THE READING PARTNERS EXPERIENCE: Alumni Reflections on their Service Year(s)

Program & Study Overview

Reading Partners is a national literacy nonprofit that partners with under-resourced schools and engages community volunteers as tutors. Trained volunteers work one-on-one with students for 45 minutes twice a week, following a structured, research-based curriculum. AmeriCorps and VISTA (Volunteers In Service to America) members are instrumental in delivering the Reading Partners program and serve in five different roles in the organization:

- **AmeriCorps Site Coordinators (SCs) & AmeriCorps Regional Site Coordinators (RSCs)** coordinate and lead all site-based activities of the program at reading centers.
 - SCs manage all site-based operations, administer literacy assessments, and provide individualized coaching to volunteer tutors.
 - RSCs, unlike SCs, are not assigned to a particular school but instead rotate among larger schools with the greatest need and provide additional direct service support.
- **AmeriCorps Volunteer Coordinators (VCs)** recruit volunteers to provide individualized instruction to students who are struggling with reading. VCs prepare volunteers for tutoring by providing orientations, managing background checks, and setting expectations.
- **AmeriCorps Literacy Leads (LL)** are placed at schools where it is more challenging to recruit volunteers and deliver tutoring sessions in tandem with volunteers.
- **AmeriCorps VISTA** members build organizational capacity toward the ultimate goal of ending poverty. VISTA members serve in various contexts at the national and regional levels to build systems and strengthen Reading Partners' ability to serve students and communities.

Reading Partners' theory of change asserts that, as members serve in these roles, they develop important professional and leadership skills. Moreover, Reading Partners believes that member experiences in the communities where they serve will influence their educational and career

pathways as well as their attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs related to civic engagement. Reading Partners' AmeriCorps program is designed to impact members during and after their service terms. While in service, members cultivate in-depth relationships and witness the impact they have on students, while also engaging in a year-long training schedule that provides opportunity for civic reflection and exposure to other national service networks. In spring 2018, Reading Partners contracted with Policy Studies Associates (PSA) to design and conduct the Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni Study, intended to deepen the organization's understanding of the quality of the Reading Partners AmeriCorps service experience and its effects on the civic engagement and educational and career pathways of their AmeriCorps and VISTA alumni. The outcome areas of interest are summarized in the figure below.

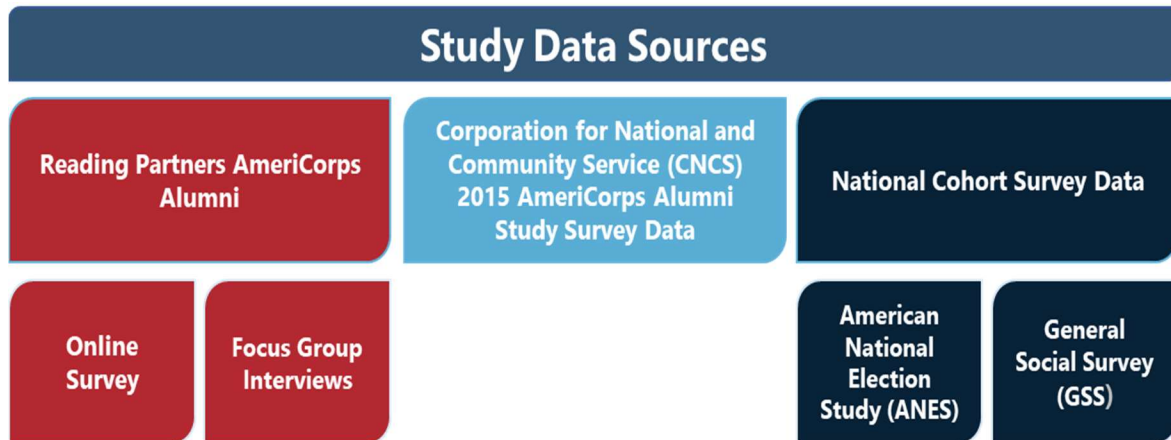


Specifically, the study sought to address the following research questions:

1. What outcomes do Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni attribute to their Reading Partners experience? Do these alumni perceive that serving as a Reading Partners AmeriCorps member helped them develop professional and interpersonal skills or influenced or change their career and/or academic pathways?
 - a. *In what ways, if any, do perceived member outcomes vary by member characteristics, including age, race/ethnicity, educational background, years of service with Reading Partners, role with Reading Partners, geographic region where they served, prior service with another AmeriCorps program, cohort year, or early vs. late cohorts?*
2. Controlling for other factors, do Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni demonstrate stronger professional and interpersonal skills and/or greater levels of civic engagement than similarly situated members of the national population?

The study analyzed patterns among respondents overall, as well as by key characteristics, including race/ethnicity, educational attainment, age when RP AmeriCorps alumni began their service, number of service years completed, or region of the country (i.e., east coast, west coast, central U.S.). Where differences by subgroup were observed, they are highlighted throughout.

The study used a two-part mixed-methods design that included surveys and focus groups conducted with Reading Partners AmeriCorps and VISTA alumni.¹ We also conducted comparative analyses using data from (1) a 2015 AmeriCorps alumni survey conducted for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) (Cardazone et al., 2015), and (2) a statistically matched comparison group of similarly situated members of the national population. (See the text box on the following page and Appendix A for additional details about the study methodology.)



Findings from the study are described in a series of three reports, plus a technical appendix. This report, the first in the series, focuses on describing alumni experiences and reflections on their service year. It begins by providing a profile of the common characteristics of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni and then describes the extent to which alumni believed that their Reading Partners experience affected their attitudes, beliefs, skills, and abilities. In particular, this report uses the focus group interviews to provide illustrative examples of the influence their service experiences had on their overall life perspective.

Where possible, responses from Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni are placed in context with results from a 2015 Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) AmeriCorps alumni study.

¹ Throughout this report, the term “Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni” includes alumni who were members of VISTA.

Methodology

Survey: 526 alumni responses/ 59 percent response rate

The study surveyed 898 Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni who completed their service term between 2010 and 2018. The survey asked Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni about their service experiences and whether they believed those experiences influenced their subsequent educational and career pathways as well as their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors toward community and civic engagement.

Focus groups: 50 respondents

To collect illustrative examples of the experiences, attitudes, and behaviors of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni, the study team conducted 12 focus group interviews with a sample of 50 such alumni (i.e., on average, each focus group included 4-5 participants) who represent the variation in alumni characteristics and experiences. Interviewers asked Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni to elaborate on their services experiences, as well as their educational, employment, and civic experiences in the years following their completion of the program.

Comparison groups: To put the Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni findings into context, the study compared the survey responses of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni with those of the following similar groups:

CNCS alumni. The study compared the responses of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni with responses of AmeriCorps alumni who participated in the 2015 CNCS AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes study. CNCS surveyed a nationally representative sample of AmeriCorps alumni whose service experience ended in 2012, 2009, or 2004.

National cohorts. To better understand what Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni's experiences, attitudes, and behaviors would have been had they not participated in the Reading Partners program, the study used publicly available, national data sets, including the American National Election Study (ANES) and the General Social Survey (GSS) to create a synthetic comparison group very similar to the Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni population in terms of age, race/ethnicity, income, marital status, educational background, and other factors associated with their propensity to serve (e.g., volunteerism and religiosity). The extent to which there are measurable differences in the attitudes, behaviors, and life experiences of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni compared with those of a statistically matched comparison group is one indicator of the program's impact.

Limitations: Key limitations of the study design are (1) the data collected through the Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni survey and focus group interviews reflect only the perspectives of individuals who served in the Reading Partners program and who were willing to participate in the study, so the results may not represent the views of all Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni; (2) the results of the quasi-experimental design comparing the career pathways and civic engagement of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni with a "statistically matched" comparison group should be interpreted with caution because the design does not include a baseline equivalency measure nor is it a true random assignment and thereby does not allow us to infer with certainty what would have happened to Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni had they not participated in the Reading Partners program. Nevertheless, this analytic strategy provides a useful comparison with similar non-participants, puts their career pathways and civic engagement in useful comparative perspective, and provides insight into the potential impact of the Reading Partners program.

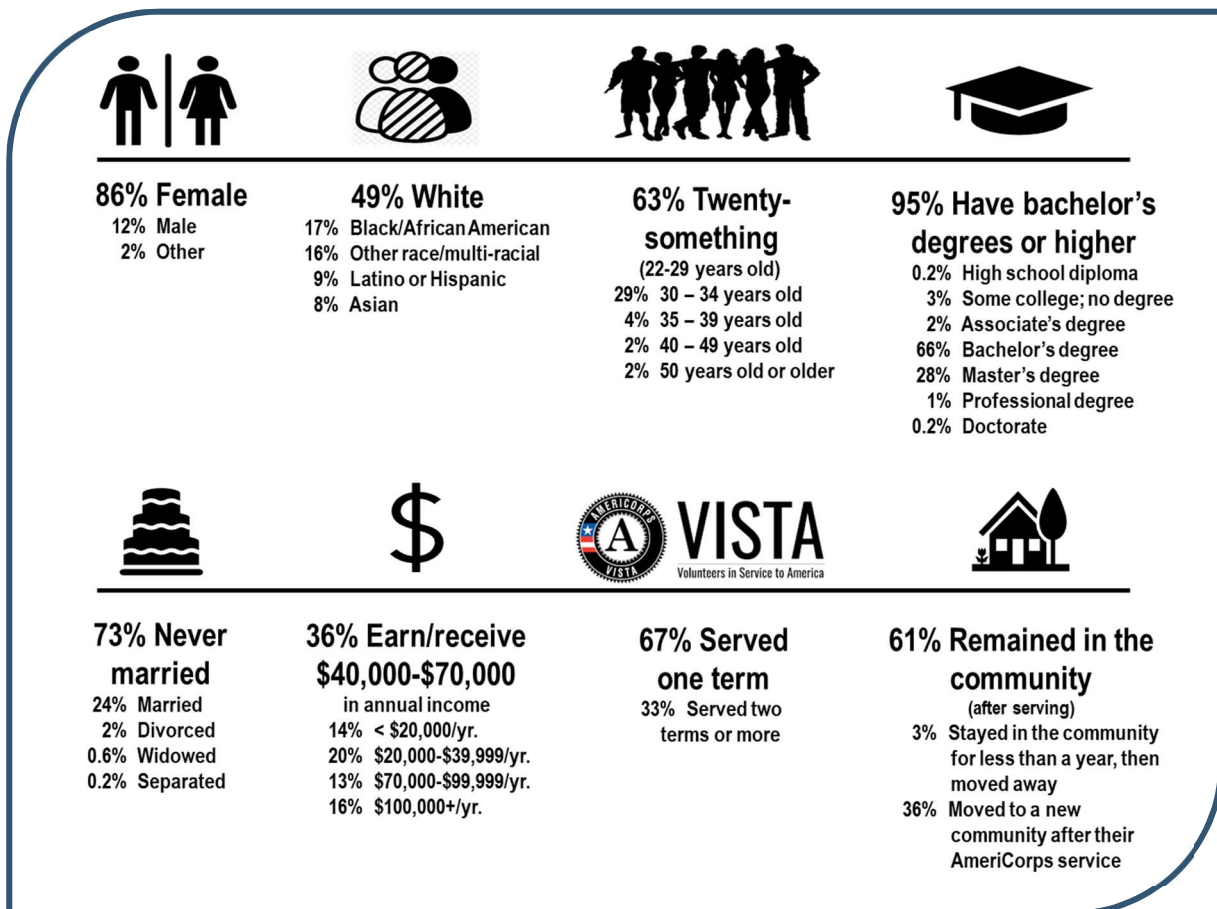
Key findings:

- Almost all (87 percent) Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni were satisfied with their Reading Partners service experience and were more likely to report their service as a satisfying or very satisfying than were AmeriCorps alumni who participated in the 2015 CNCS study.
- A majority (>60 percent) of alumni agreed that their Reading Partners AmeriCorps service experience caused them to re-examine their beliefs about themselves or about other people (65 percent); about two-thirds reported that they did things during their service year(s) that they never thought they could do.
- At least 90 percent of alumni agreed that their Reading Partners AmeriCorps service experience helped them feel as though they made a contribution to the community where they served, and that they made a difference in the life of at least one person (95 percent); Reading Partners alumni were more likely to agree with these statements than were AmeriCorps alumni who participated in the 2015 CNCS study.
- At least 80 percent of alumni agreed that their service experience helped them gain an understanding of the community where they served and exposed them to new ideas and ways of seeing the world.
- Most (>50 percent) Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni said that their service experience helped them figure out their next steps in terms of their career and professional goals; slightly more than half said the same about their educational goals.

Reading Partners Alumni Profile

Most of the 526 Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni who responded to the survey were female; about half were persons of color; and the vast majority were between the ages of 22 and 34. As of early 2019 when the survey was administered, almost all responding alumni reported having a bachelor's degree or higher (95 percent). Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) had never married; 36 percent reported annual income between \$40,000 and \$70,000; and 61 percent reported having remained in the community in which they served after completing their service (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1: Characteristics of Reading Partners AmeriCorps and VISTA alumni



Based on 526 of 898 completed or partially completed surveys administered to Reading Partners alumni (response rate: 59 percent). Source: Reading Partners Alumni Survey (2019).

Alumni who responded to the online survey were well-distributed across Reading Partners region and service year (from 2010-11 to 2017-18), as shown in Exhibits 2A and 2B. Further, the distribution of survey respondents by sites and service years was very similar to that of the overall population of Reading Partners alumni, as described in detail in the Appendix.

Exhibit 2A. RP AmeriCorps Alumni, by region

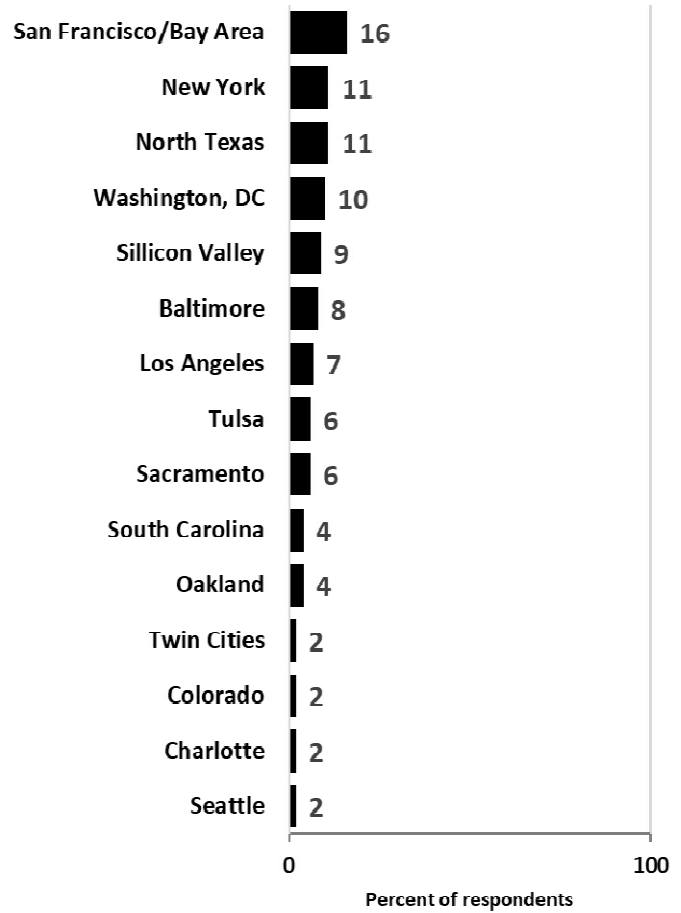
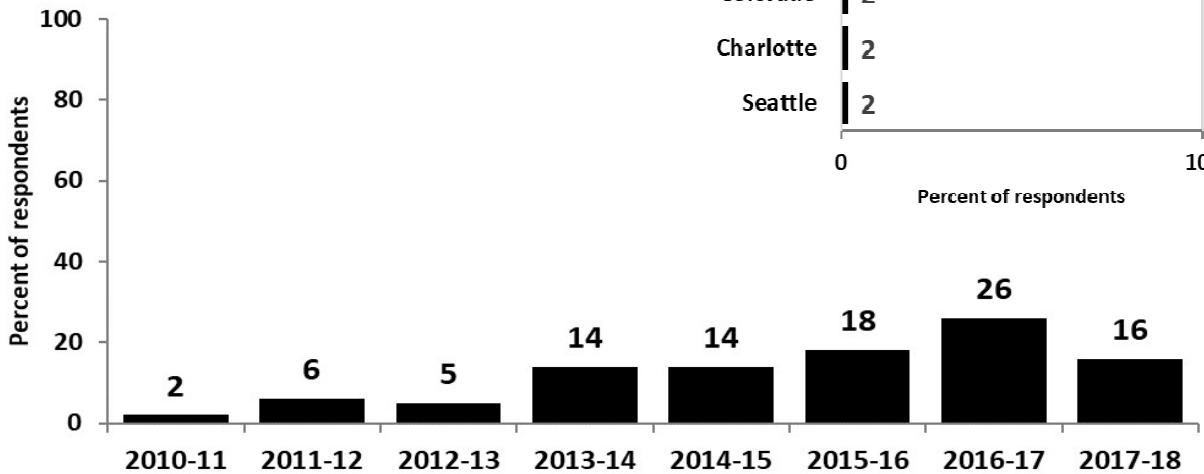


Exhibit 2B. RP AmeriCorps Alumni, by service year



Based on 526 of 898 completed or partially completed surveys administered to Reading Partners alumni (response rate: 59 percent). Source: Reading Partners Alumni Survey (2019).

The Reading Partners Service Experience

Almost all (87percent) Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni were satisfied with their Reading Partners service experience.

The vast majority of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their service experience. Moreover, Reading Partners alumni were more likely to report their service as satisfying than were AmeriCorps alumni who participated in the 2015 CNCS alumni study (87percent versus 84percent), and this difference was statistically significant.

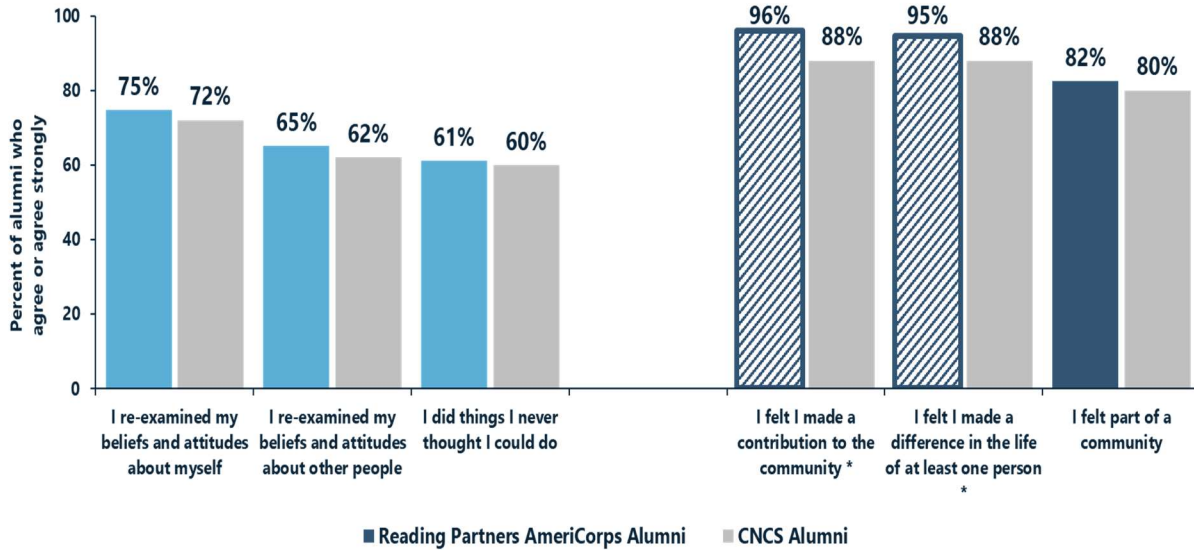
Alumni agreed that their service experience caused them to re-examine their beliefs and attitudes about themselves and others.

A majority of alumni agreed or agreed strongly that their service experience caused them to re-examine their beliefs about themselves (75 percent) or about other people (65 percent). In addition, around two-thirds (61 percent) said they did things during their service year(s) that they never thought they could do, suggesting that their courage and sense of self-efficacy was enhanced through their service experience with Reading Partners (Exhibit 3).

Alumni felt that they made a difference through their service experience.

A majority of alumni agreed or agreed strongly that their Reading Partners AmeriCorps service experience helped them feel as though they made a contribution to the community where they served (96 percent), and that they made a difference in the life of at least one person (95 percent). In addition, 82 percent of alumni reported that their service experience made them feel as though they were part of a community (Exhibit 3). Moreover, survey results suggest that the Reading Partners service experience may have been more rewarding than other AmeriCorps service experiences. That is, compared to AmeriCorps alumni included in the 2015 CNCS study, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni were more likely to agree that they felt they made a contribution to the community and that they made a difference in the life of at least one person (Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3: Whether alumni experienced personal growth and felt they made a difference through service, by Reading Partners AmeriCorps vs. CNCS AmeriCorps alumni



*Difference is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.05$.
Sources: 2019 Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni survey; CNCS 2015 alumni survey.

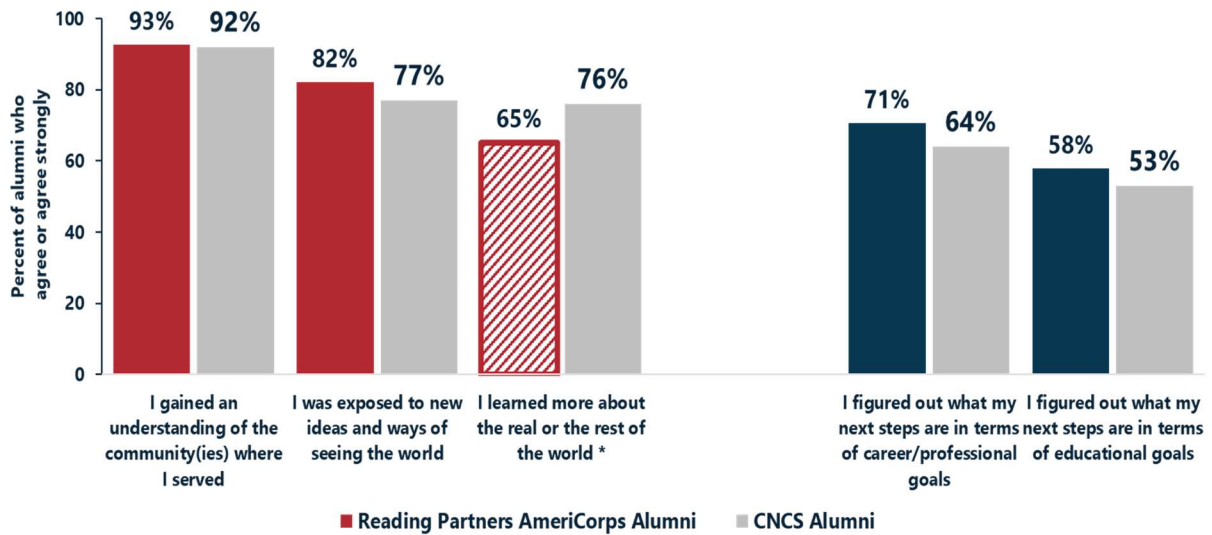
Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni agreed that their service experience had helped broaden their perspective on their community and the world.

Most Reading Partners alumni agreed that their service experience helped them gain an understanding of the community where they served (93 percent), and exposed them to new ideas and ways of seeing the world (82 percent). In addition, about two-thirds of alumni (65 percent) reported that their service experience helped them learn more about the “real” world or “the rest” of the world. When compared with alumni in the 2015 CNCS study, Reading Partners alumni were less likely to agree that they had learned more about the “real” world or the rest of the world from their service experience (76 percent vs. 65 percent) and the difference was statistically significant (Exhibit 4).

Most alumni reported that their service experience helped them figure out their next steps in terms of their career and professional goals; slightly more than half said the same about their educational goals.

Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni generally agreed that their service experience had helped them identify next steps in terms of their career or professional goals (71 percent). Slightly more than half the alumni reported that their service experience had helped them determine next steps in terms of their educational goals (Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4: Alumni who believed service helped them broaden their perspective and plot their future course, by Reading Partners AmeriCorps vs. CNCS AmeriCorps alumni



In their Own Words

What alumni say about their service experience

In focus group interviews and open-ended survey responses, alumni described an overall satisfying service experience that provided valuable training, as well as significant opportunities to develop leadership and professional skills and chart a course for their future. The following quotes illustrate some of the Reading Partners service experiences AmeriCorps alumni valued:

- *I liked the fact that once the school year started, we just had to do it; there wasn't anyone holding our hand along the way, which I appreciated. I definitely stumbled a lot at first, but at the same time, the support was always there.*
- *I had an opportunity through Reading Partners to work one-on-one with students, write behavior plans, work with community members, and do progress monitoring to help students improve. All these very specific things directly translated to the counseling profession that I'm going into now.*
- *I oversee a team of AmeriCorps members with a different non-profit [now] and I had such a great experience with Reading Partners; that helped me lead the team I'm currently leading now.*
- *I learned that I really had to be proactive and intentional about building relationships and establish goodwill. I think those [skills] are really important in various job settings. If I see something coming down the pipeline that could be a problem, rather than just waiting for something to happen—I [try] to get out ahead of it.*

Reading Partners made me feel more empowered to act; [to know] what I could do as an individual. Reading Partners showed me that I could be a real part of the action being taken.

Summary

Most Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported that they were satisfied with their service experience. In addition, most alumni agreed that their service experience caused them to re-examine their beliefs and attitudes about themselves and others; a majority felt that they made a difference in the life of at least one person as well as contributed to the community where they served. In addition, most alumni agreed that their service experience helped broaden their perspective on their community and the world. Finally, most Reading Partners alumni reported that their Reading Partners service experience helped them decide on next steps for their career and professional goals. In focus group interviews and open-ended survey responses, alumni described an overall satisfying service experience that provided valuable training, significant opportunities for leadership and professional skills development, and that helped them chart a course for their future.

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THE READING PARTNERS EFFECT

REPORT 2: Influencing the academic and career pathways of Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni

Leslie M. Anderson

Julie Meredith

Jeanine Hildreth

THE READING PARTNERS EFFECT: Influencing the Academic and Career Pathways of Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni

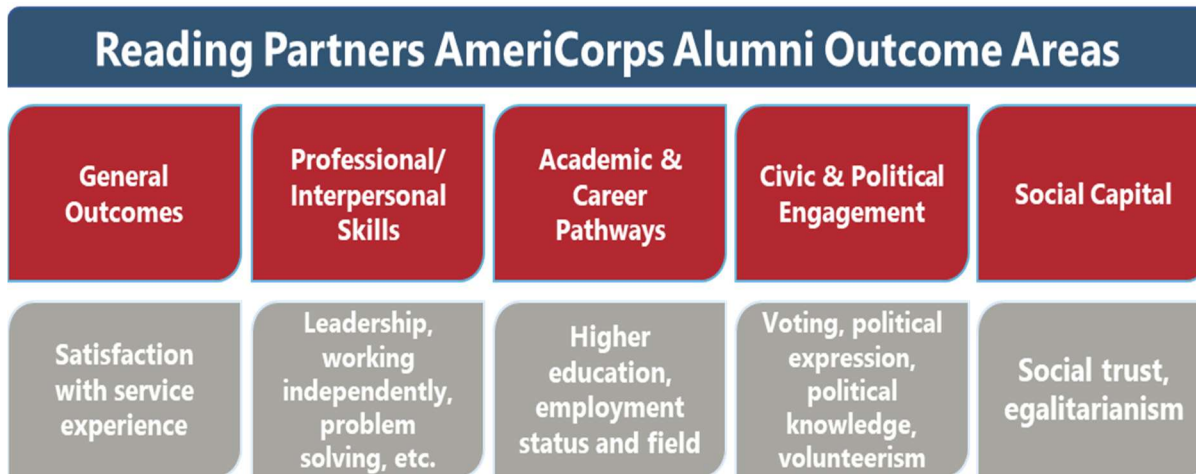
Program & Study Overview

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In spring 2018, Reading Partners contracted with Policy Studies Associates (PSA) to design and conduct the Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni Study, intended to deepen the organization’s understanding of the quality of the Reading Partners AmeriCorps service experience and its effects on the civic engagement and educational and career pathways of their AmeriCorps and VISTA alumni. The outcome areas of interest are summarized in the figure below.



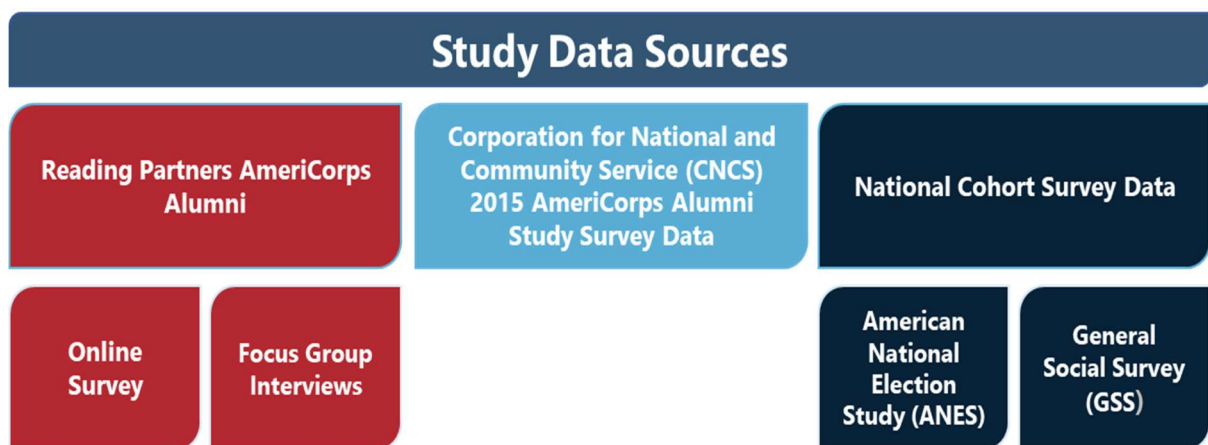
Specifically, the study sought to address the following research questions:

1. What outcomes do Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni attribute to their Reading Partners experience? Do these alumni perceive that serving as a Reading Partners AmeriCorps member helped them develop professional and interpersonal skills or influenced or change their career and/or academic pathways?
 - a. *In what ways, if any, do perceived member outcomes vary by member characteristics, including age, race/ethnicity, educational background, years of service with Reading Partners, role with Reading Partners, geographic region where they served, prior service with another AmeriCorps program, cohort year, or early vs. late cohorts?*
2. Controlling for other factors, do Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni demonstrate stronger professional and interpersonal skills and/or greater levels of civic engagement than similarly situated members of the national population?

The study analyzed patterns among respondents overall, as well as by key characteristics, including race/ethnicity, educational attainment, age when RP AmeriCorps alumni began their

service, number of service years completed, or region of the country (i.e., east coast, west coast, central U.S.). Where differences by subgroup were observed, they are highlighted throughout.

The study used a two-part mixed-methods design that included surveys and focus groups conducted with Reading Partners AmeriCorps and VISTA alumni.¹ We also conducted comparative analyses using data from (1) a 2015 AmeriCorps alumni survey conducted for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) (Cardazone et al., 2015), and (2) a statistically matched comparison group of similarly situated members of the national population. (See the text box on the following page and Appendix A for additional details about the study methodology.)



Findings from the study are described in a series of three reports, plus a technical appendix. This report, the second in the series, focuses on describing Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni education and career pathways. It begins with a profile of the common characteristics of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni and then describes the educational and career pathways that alumni pursued upon completing their service year(s) at Reading Partners; and alumni perceptions of their career preparedness.

Throughout the report, we summarize alumni perspectives about their educational and career pathways, and career preparedness, along with their reflections about the extent to which their service with Reading Partners influenced their outcomes in these areas.

Where possible, responses from Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni are placed in context with results from a 2015 study of AmeriCorps alumni by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). In addition, the report also measures Reading Partners’ impact on members’ career paths by comparing the survey responses of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni with those of similarly situated members of the national population.² The extent to which there are measurable differences in the chosen career paths of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni compared with those of a statistically matched comparison group reflects the program’s potential impact on members themselves.

¹ Throughout this report, the term “Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni” includes alumni who were members of VISTA.

² National data sets include the American National Election Study (ANES) and the General Social Survey (GSS).

Methodology

Survey: 526 alumni responses/59 percent response rate

The study surveyed 898 Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni who completed their service term between 2010 and 2018. The survey asked Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni about their service experiences and whether they believed those experiences influenced their subsequent educational and career pathways as well as their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors toward community and civic engagement.

Focus groups: 50 respondents

To collect illustrative examples of the experiences, attitudes, and behaviors of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni, the study team conducted 12 focus group interviews with a sample of 50 such alumni (i.e., on average, each focus group included 4-5 participants) who represent the variation in alumni characteristics and experiences. Interviewers asked Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni to elaborate on their service experiences, as well as their educational, employment, and civic experiences in the years following their completion of the program.

Comparison groups: To put the Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni findings into context, the study compared the survey responses of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni with those of the following similar groups:

CNCS alumni. The study compared the responses of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni with responses of AmeriCorps alumni who participated in the 2015 CNCS AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes study. CNCS surveyed a nationally representative sample of AmeriCorps alumni whose service experience ended in 2012, 2009, or 2004.

National cohorts. To better understand what Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni's experiences, attitudes, and behaviors would have been had they not participated in the Reading Partners program, the study used publicly available, national data sets, including the American National Election Study (ANES) and the General Social Survey (GSS) to create a synthetic comparison group very similar to the Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni population in terms of age, race/ethnicity, income, marital status, educational background, and other factors associated with their propensity to serve (e.g., volunteerism and religiosity). The extent to which there are measurable differences in the attitudes, behaviors, and life experiences of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni compared with those of a statistically matched comparison group is one indicator of the program's impact.

Limitations: Key limitations of the study design are (1) the data collected through the Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni survey and focus group interviews reflect only the perspectives of individuals who served in the Reading Partners program and who were willing to participate in the study, so the results may not represent the views of all Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni; (2) the results of the quasi-experimental design comparing the career pathways and civic engagement of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni with a "statistically matched" comparison group should be interpreted with caution because the design does not include a baseline equivalency measure nor is it a true random assignment and thereby does not allow us to infer with certainty what would have happened to Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni had they not participated in the Reading Partners program. Nevertheless, this analytic strategy provides a useful comparison with similar non-participants, puts their career pathways and civic engagement in useful comparative perspective, and provides insight into the potential impact of the Reading Partners program.

Key Findings

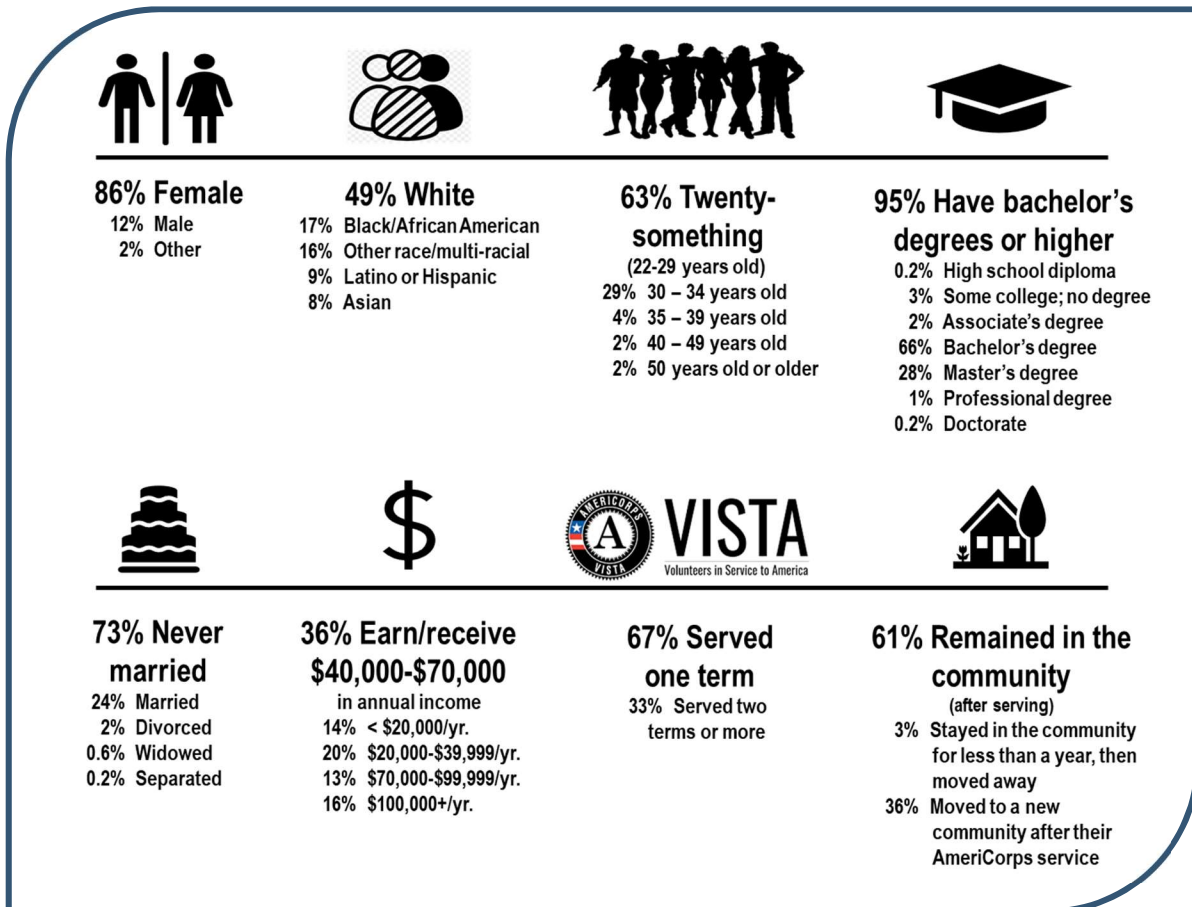
The study revealed the following key findings about the education and career pathways of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni:

- Taken together, study results suggest that AmeriCorps service with Reading Partners influenced the educational and career pathways of alumni and equipped them with numerous professional and leadership skills that prepared them well for future jobs or careers.
- About two-thirds of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni (66 percent) reported that they plan to pursue more education in the future and, of those, 62 percent credited their Reading Partners service experience as influencing those plans.
- Eighty-four percent of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni agreed that their service confirmed or informed their professional goals and Reading Partners alumni were more likely to describe their service as a defining professional experience than were alumni in the 2015 CNCS study.
 - Members who served multiple service terms were more likely to describe the experience as defining than were members who served a single year; and
 - White alumni were more likely to believe their service experience was a defining professional experience than were their black/African American peers.
- Most Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni (77 percent) reported that their service experience influenced their chosen career path somewhat or a great deal.
- Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni were approximately 1.3 times more likely to report currently working in the non-profit, public, or government sectors—the type of sector in which they worked while serving—than were their matched peers from the national cohort.
- Most Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni (85 percent) reported that their service experience prepared them for their current job and/or service activity somewhat or a great deal.
- Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni were more likely than alumni in the 2015 CNCS study to report that their service experience enhanced their skills in over ten areas of leadership and professionalism.

Reading Partners Alumni Profile

Most of the 526 Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni who responded to the survey were female; about half were persons of color; and the vast majority were between the ages of 22 and 34. As of early 2019 when the survey was administered, almost all responding alumni reported having a bachelor's degree or higher (95 percent). Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) had never married; 36 percent reported annual income between \$40,000 and \$70,000; and 61 percent reported having remained in the community in which they served after completing their service (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1: Characteristics of Reading Partners AmeriCorps and VISTA alumni



Based on 526 of 898 completed or partially completed surveys administered to Reading Partners alumni (response rate: 59 percent). Source: Reading Partners Alumni Survey (2019).

Alumni who responded to the online survey were well-distributed across Reading Partners region and service year (from 2010-11 to 2017-18), as shown in Exhibits 2A and 2B. Further, the distribution of survey respondents by sites and service years was very similar to that of the overall population of Reading Partners alumni, as described in detail in the Appendix.

Exhibit 2A. Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni, by region

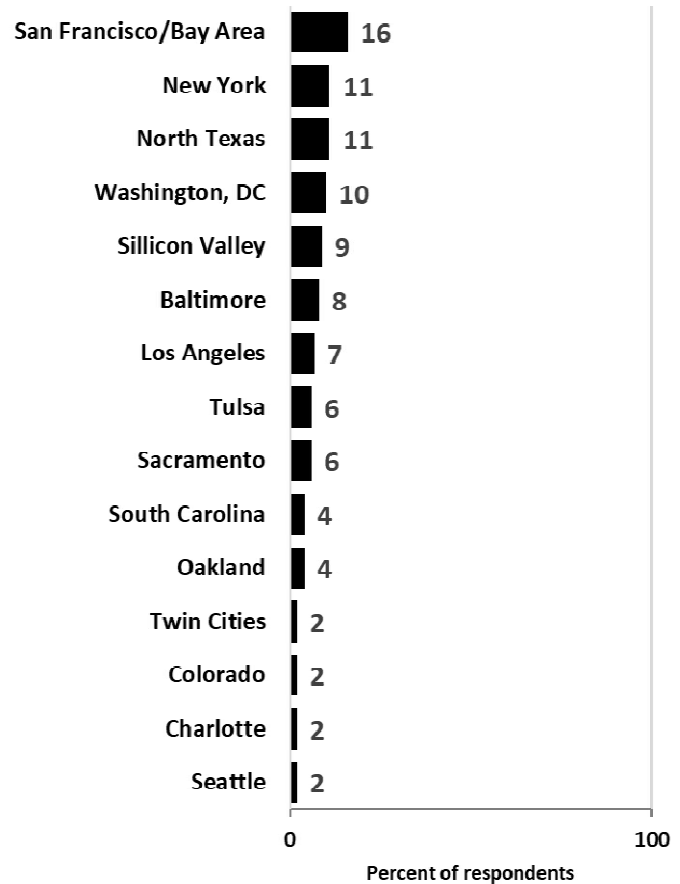
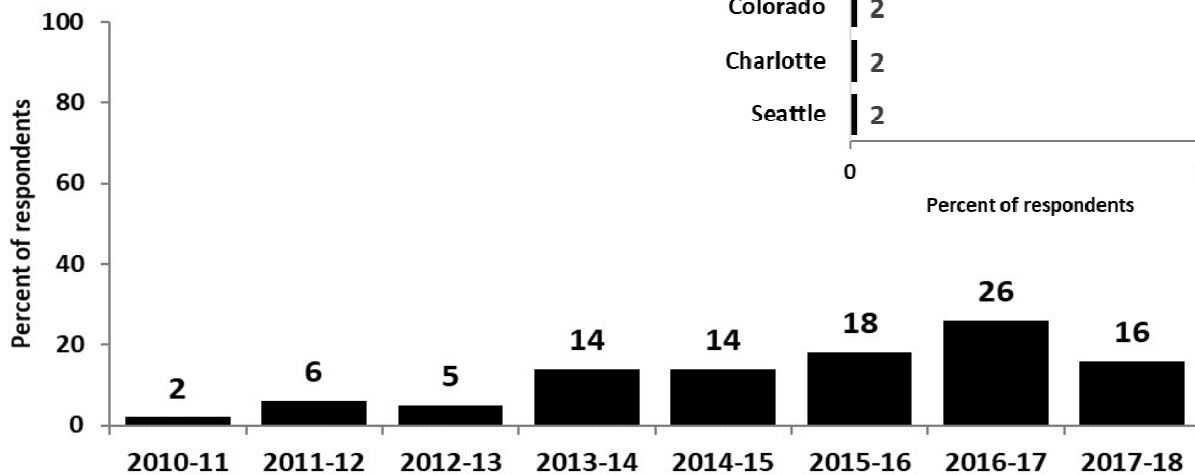


Exhibit 2B. Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni, by service year



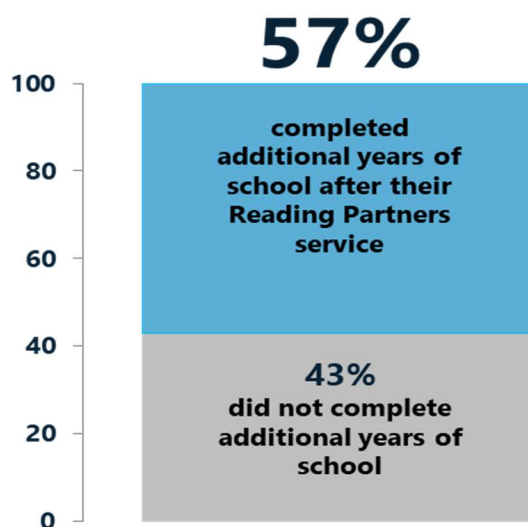
Based on 526 of 898 completed or partially completed surveys administered to Reading Partners alumni (response rate: 59 percent).
Source: Reading Partners Alumni Survey (2019).

Educational Pathways

A majority of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported completing additional years of school after completing their service.

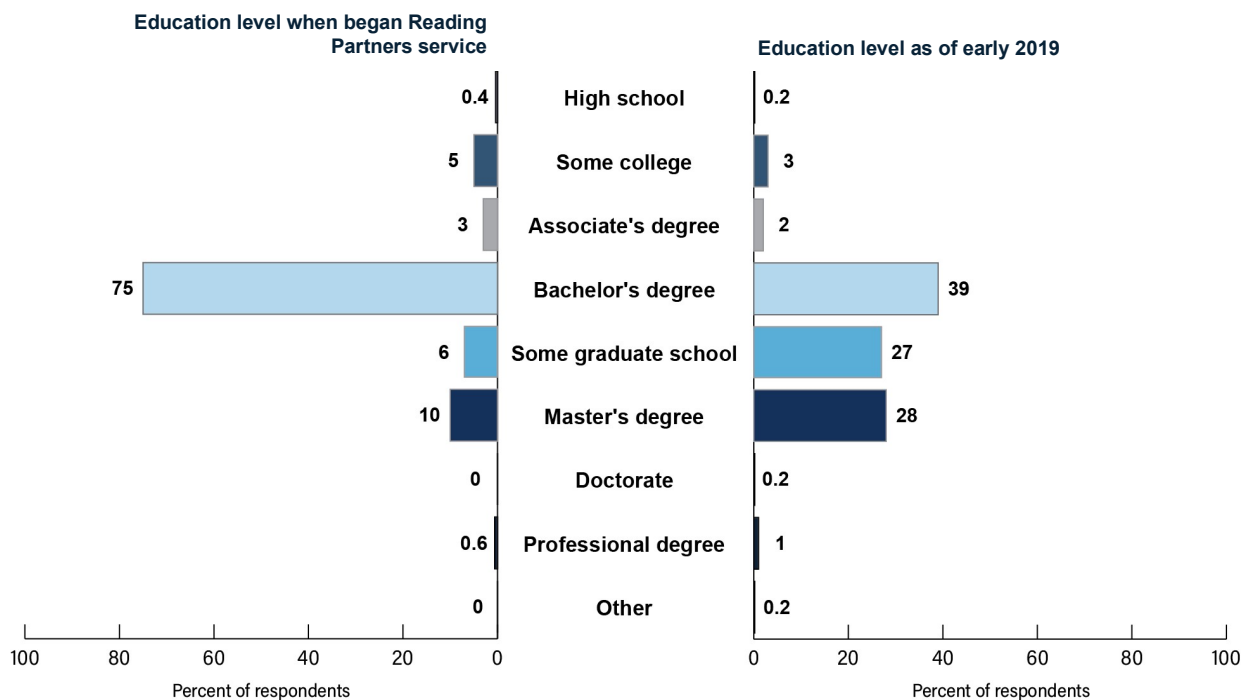
Fifty-seven percent of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported completing additional years of school after completing their Reading Partners service year(s) (Exhibit 3). As a result, the percentage of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni who reported having completed some graduate school grew from six percent when they started their service with Reading Partners to 27 percent by winter/spring 2019. Similarly, the distribution of alumni who reported having a master's degree grew from 10 percent when they started their service with Reading Partners to 28 percent by winter/spring 2019 (Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 3. Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni's educational attainment following their service year



Source: Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); N=512.

Exhibit 4. Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni's current education level vs. when they began their Reading Partners service year



Source: Reading Partners Alumni Survey (2019).

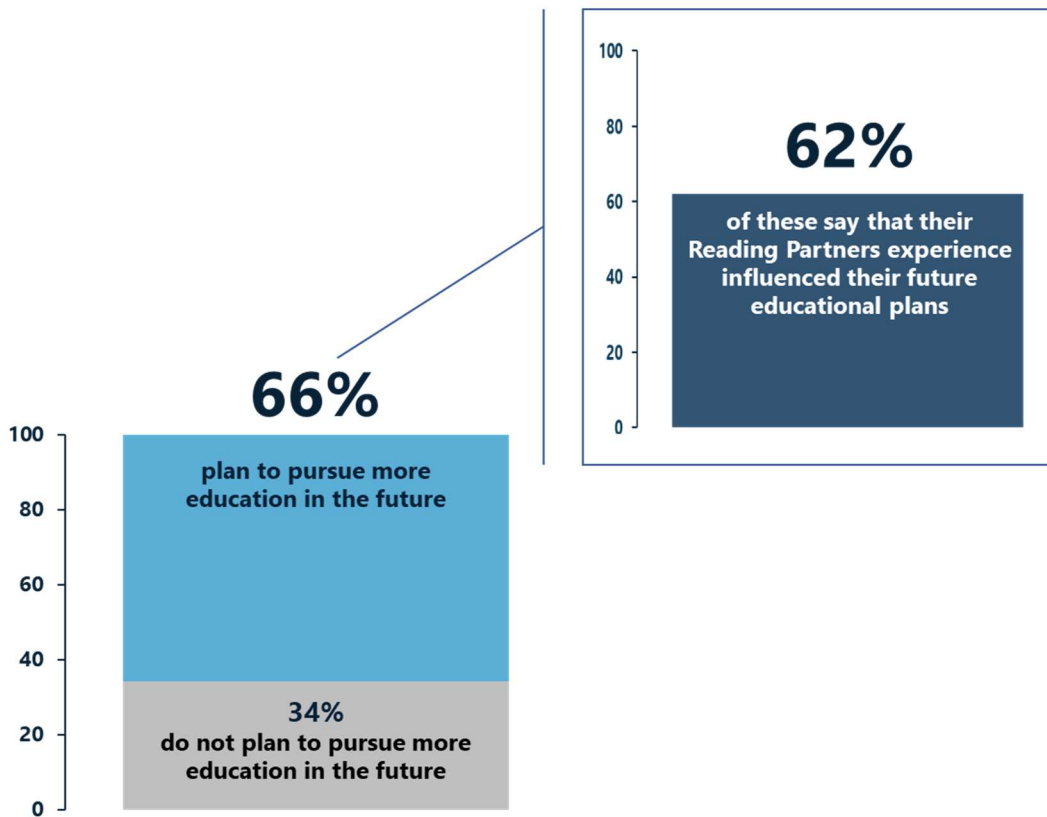
Note: This analysis references the 290 alumni who reported both their current education level and their educational level when they began their Reading Partners service year. Consequently, the distribution of alumni by education level is slightly different from the distribution reported in Exhibit 1 of the Alumni Profile.

More specifically, of the Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni who had bachelor's degrees when they began their service with Reading Partners, about half (49 percent) reported completing some graduate school and 41 percent reported completing a master's degree after completing their service. No discernable differences in Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni educational attainment were evident by race/ethnicity, education, or other explanatory variables.

AmeriCorps service with Reading Partners influenced the future educational plans of alumni.

About two-thirds of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni (66 percent) reported that they did have plans to pursue more education in the future and, of those, 62 percent credited their Reading Partners service experience as influencing those plans (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5. Reading Partners' influence on alumni's future educational plans



Source: Reading Partners Alumni Survey (2019); N=512 and 338.

In their Own Words

Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported that their service experiences influenced their educational plans and aspirations.

In focus group interviews and open-ended survey responses, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni said that their service experiences influenced their thinking about their educational goals and aspirations, helping them not only to decide to continue their education but also to determine—or at least narrow—the educational pathway best suited for them. The following quotes shed light on some of the ways in which the service with Reading Partners influenced the educational pathways of alumni:

- *Reading Partners helped me to see where I wanted to go professionally, and I needed to continue to pursue my education to achieve my goal.*
- *The education award...helped me feel that additional schooling was within my reach. My experience also gave me more food for thought, which helped me narrow down what path to pursue.*
- *I knew I wanted to do literacy research and think about how literacy is influenced by the cultures we are part of. Reading Partners and the curriculum made me want to know more about how these decisions are made, who gets to make them, why, and how we can make the curriculum more relevant to the diverse population that we serve.*

I decided I wanted to keep working with people and in communities, and I went back to school for the degree that allowed me to get more jobs doing that.

In open-ended responses and in focus group interviews, several Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni described wanting to pursue teaching, but that their service experience helped them recognize that they needed to return to school to achieve that goal.

- *Reading Partners has shown me that advanced training and specialization in reading is highly recommended to equitably serve in underserved communities.*
- *I observed a lack of diversity in positions of influence, so I decided to work towards equipping myself with the degrees needed to explore ways to address it on a policy level.*
- *I knew I wanted to continue working in education and to open up more opportunities for myself, it was necessary to go to grad school and get a master's [degree].*
- *I discovered my passion for working in education and supporting school staff with instructional decision making. This made me decide that I needed to pursue a degree in school psychology.*

It helped me discover that management is not something I get really excited about, but that one-on-one connection, which I first got with RP.

Almost as important as determining what field of study to pursue was what field—or what profession—to not pursue. As one Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumnus explained in an open-ended survey response, Reading Partners helped him “rule things out.” In focus group interviews, several alumni credited the Reading Partners service experience with helping them to decide what they did not want to pursue professionally:

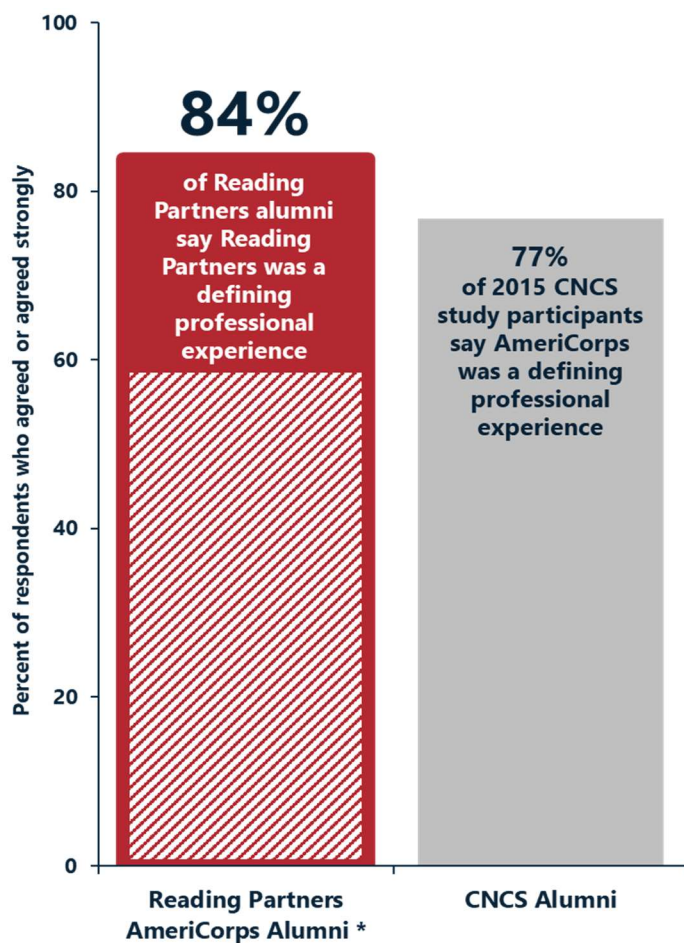
- *I'm a [high school biology] teacher now, but I hadn't anticipated becoming a teacher until I did my two AmeriCorps service years. Prior to that I had planned on going to medical school, but I just loved working with kids so much that I decided to pursue education instead. So, I got a master's in education as well.*
- *My previous plans were to pursue a career in the national security arena, but I now want to pursue my MBA and possibly work for a non-profit in the future.*

Career Pathways

Reading Partners AmeriCorps service was a defining professional experience for most alumni.

Eighty-four percent of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni agreed or strongly agreed that their service with Reading Partners had confirmed or informed their professional goals. In addition, Reading Partners alumni were more likely than alumni who participated in the 2015 CNCS study to describe their service as a defining professional experience. That is, 84 percent of Reading Partners alumni agreed or strongly agreed that their service experience confirmed or helped them define their professional goals, compared with 77 percent of CNCS alumni who agreed with this statement (Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6: Service was a defining professional experience for Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni, by Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni versus 2015 CNCS study participants



*Difference is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.05$.

Sources: 2019 Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni survey; CNCS 2015 alumni survey.

The percentage of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni who considered their service experience to be a defining professional experience varied by two alumni characteristics:

- (1) Members who served multiple service terms were more likely to describe the experience as defining than were members who served a single year (93 percent versus 79 percent); and
- (2) White alumni were more likely to believe their service experience was a defining professional experience than were their black/African American peers (88 percent versus 74 percent).

Both of these differences were statistically significant.

The Reading Partners service experience influenced the chosen career path of most alumni.

Most Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni (77 percent) reported that their service experience influenced their chosen career path somewhat or a great deal (Exhibit 7). Moreover, the percentage of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reporting that the Reading Partners program influenced their chosen career path did not vary in any discernable way by alumni demographic characteristics or by their background and experience.

Exhibit 7. Reading Partners' influence on alumni's chosen career paths



Source: Reading Partner AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); N=512.

In Their Own Words

In open-ended survey responses and in focus group interviews, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported that their service experiences helped shape their career paths.

- *Because of my time with Reading Partners, I discovered my passion for supporting language and literacy skills for struggling students. As a result, I pursued a career in speech-language pathology and am very happy with my career choice.*
- *After Reading Partners, I ended up adjusting my career path and went into teaching. I am now in my eighth year as an educator and earned my master's in education a few years ago.*
- *I had an opportunity through Reading Partners to work one-on-one with students, write behavior plans, work with community members, and do progress monitoring to help students improve. All these very specific things directly translated to the counseling profession that I'm going into now.*

The different tasks that we had [in RP] really helped me [decide] to stay in the non-profit sector, which I didn't know [I wanted to do] coming out of college.

I was encouraged to use student and program data to find ways to improve student and program outcomes; that was something that I never really thought of before, but it just really interested me. So, right after Reading Partners, I went into education research and evaluation, which I don't think I would have [done] had I not had that experience at Reading Partners.

- *Reading Partners showed me how to use evidence-based practices to improve literacy in vulnerable communities; this is a driving force for my next career move to ensure that education practices are effective.*
- *I pursued my master's degree in education as well as my teaching certification. I will be a Teacher of Record this upcoming school year. Joining Reading Partners was one of the best decisions I have made! I would recommend the program to anyone.*
- *It very much helped me to determine what I wanted to do and also what [I] did not want to do. Because I was able to experience both of those things, I found how much I enjoyed being in a school and engaging in direct service more so than the office work associated with being a volunteer coordinator.*

Finally, in focus group interviews, some Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reporting using their AmeriCorps educational award to pursue further education, whereas others reported using their educational award to pay off their student loans. As one Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumnus explained: “I [*used the award to pay off my student loans*], which really helped me because it meant that I had a little more financial security to take risks with jobs.” Another alumnus reported using the educational award to take some certificate courses related to a current job.

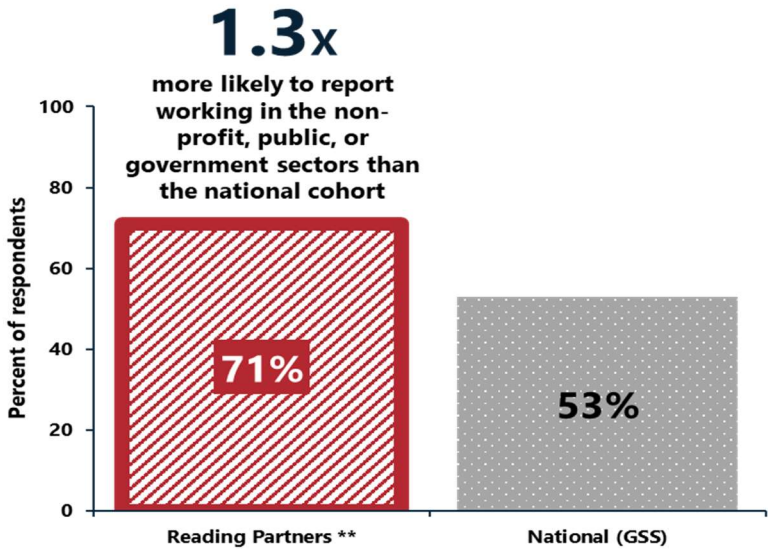
Comparative Analyses

In an effort to understand what the career pathways of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni might have been had they not served with Reading Partners, we compared survey data describing the employment sector in which Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported working—i.e., whether they worked in the non-profit, public, or government sectors—to survey data collected from a matched comparison group of similarly situated members of a national cohort.

Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni were approximately 1.3 times more likely to report that they currently work in the non-profit, public, or government sectors than do their matched peers from a national cohort.

That is, 71 percent of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported that they worked in the public sector, compared with 53 percent in the national cohort, controlling for other characteristics such as race, gender, and age (Exhibit 8).

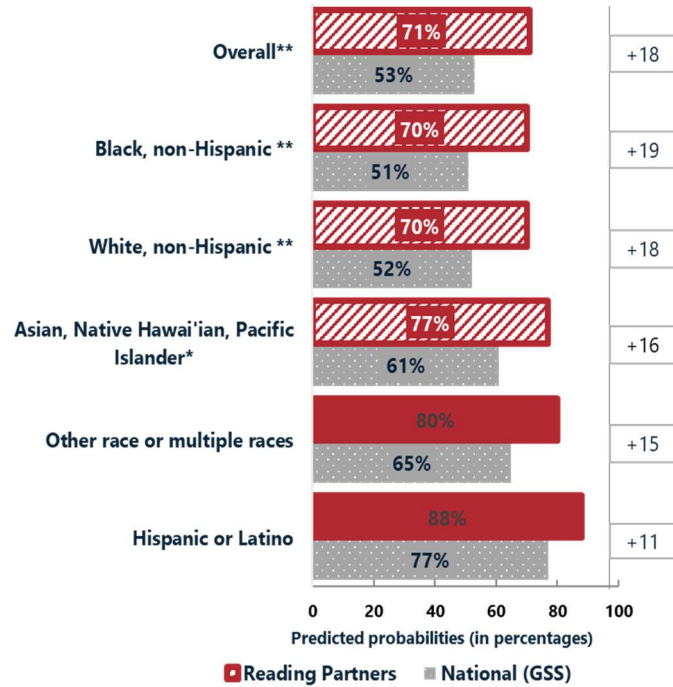
Exhibit 8. Career pathway, by Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni versus national cohort



 ** Difference is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.01$.
Sources: Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); GSS (2017).

Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni across racial/ethnic groups were more likely to report that they worked in the non-profit, public, or government sectors than did similarly situated members of the national cohort. That is, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni identifying as Asian, Black/African American, and white were significantly more likely to report that they worked in the non-profit, public, or government sectors than did their peers in the national cohort. Although Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni who identified as Hispanic/Latino or other/multi-racial identity reported working in these sectors at higher rates than did their counterparts in the national cohort, these differences were not significant (Exhibit 9).

Exhibit 9. Employment sector, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni vs. national cohort, by race/ethnicity



NOTE: Background shading indicates that differences are statistically significant.

* Difference is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.05$;

** Difference is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.01$

Sources: Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); GSS (2017).

Career Preparedness

The Reading Partners service experience prepared most alumni for their current job or service activity.

Most Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni (85 percent) reported that their service experience prepared them for their current job and/or service activity somewhat or a great deal (Exhibit 10). Moreover, the percentage of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reporting that their service experience prepared them for their current job and/or service activity did not vary in any discernable way by alumni demographic characteristics or by their background and experience.

Exhibit 10. The Reading Partners program experience as preparation for alumni's current job or service



Source: Reading Partners Alumni Survey (2019); N=512.

Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni rated their professional and leadership skills highly.

Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 7 their professional and leadership skills compared to those of “other people.” For example, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni were asked how they would compare their skill at “helping others solve their problems,” to the skills of other people, where 1 means that their skills compared “not at all well” to 7, which means their skills compare “extremely well.”

Almost all Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni (91 percent) rated their skill at helping others solve their problems highly (i.e., they selected 5, 6, or 7 on the 1-7 scale). Most alumni also rated themselves highly on their ability to engage in “logical, analytical thinking” (81 percent), on “being a leader” (77 percent), or “supervising others” (72 percent) (Exhibit 11).

Exhibit 11. Whether Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni perceive that their leadership and professional skills compare well to other people’s skills



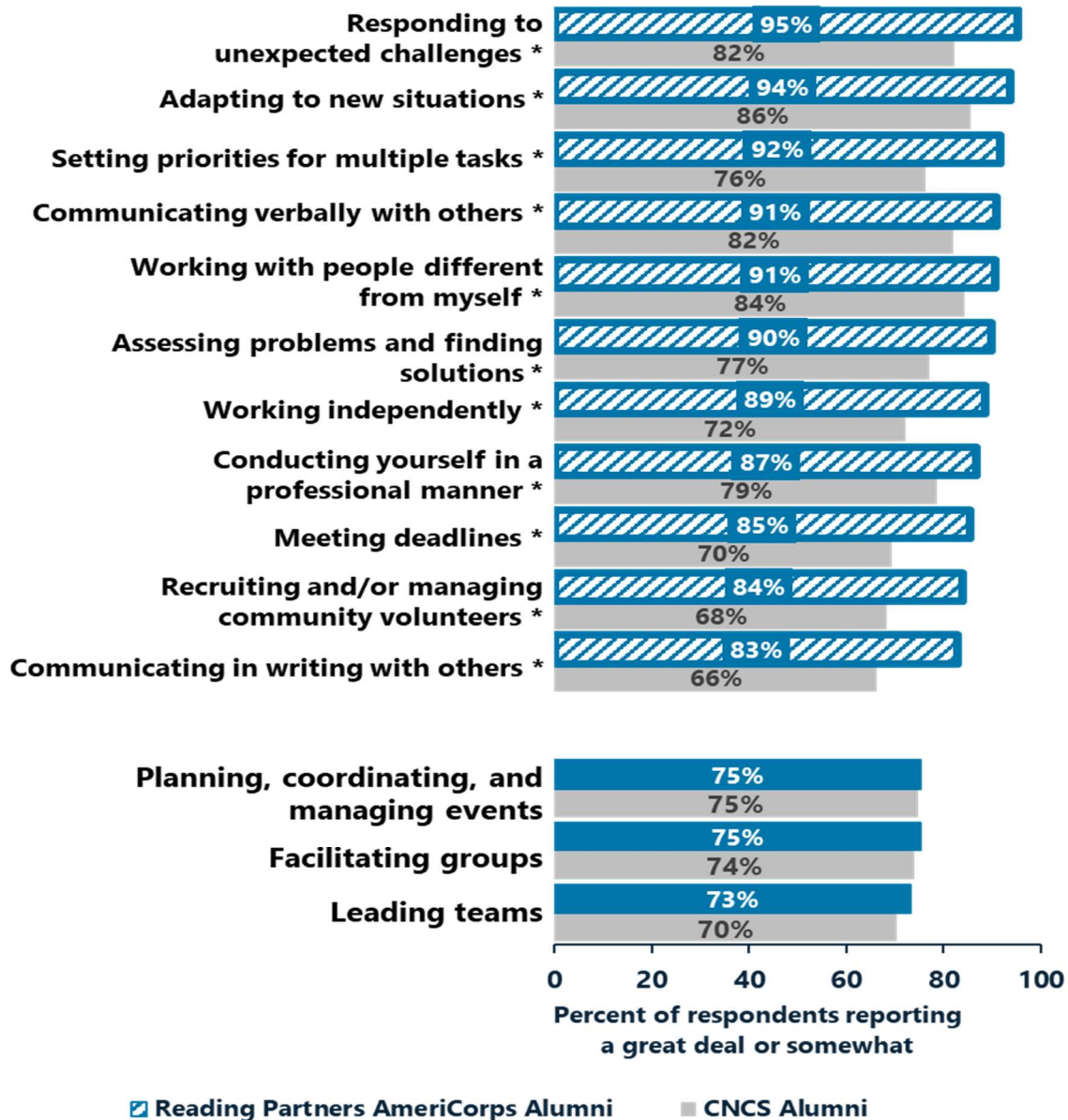
Source: Reading Partners Alumni Survey (2019); N=512.

Compared with alumni who participated in the 2015 CNCS study, Reading Partners’ AmeriCorps alumni were more likely to credit their service experience as helping them increase their professional and leadership skills.

Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni were more likely than alumni in the 2015 CNCS alumni study to report that their service experience helped them to increase their skills in over ten areas of leadership and professionalism. For example, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni were more likely than alumni who participated in the 2015 CNCS study to report that their AmeriCorps experience increased their ability to “respond to unexpected challenges” (95 percent of Reading Partners alumni vs. 82 percent of CNCS study alumni); “adapt to new situations” (94 percent vs. 86 percent); and “set priorities for multiple tasks” (92 percent vs. 76 percent).

The only skills in which Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni did not significantly exceed their peers who participated in the 2015 CNCS study were with respect to “planning, coordinating and managing events” (75 percent vs. 75 percent); “facilitating groups” (75 vs. 74 percent); and “leading teams” (73 percent vs. 70 percent). However, where there were differences, they were small and not statistically significant (Exhibit 12).

Exhibit 12. Extent to which the Reading Partners service experience increased alumni’s professional and leadership skills, by Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni versus 2015 CNCS study participants



*Difference is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.05$.
Sources: 2019 Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni survey; (N=512); CNCS 2015 alumni survey.

In Their Own Words

Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni described how their service experience prepared them well for their jobs and/or careers.

In focus group interviews, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported that the skills they had developed during their service with Reading Partners helped them in their subsequent jobs or careers. Specifically, they reported that they had developed or enhanced their leadership, organizational, problem-solving, and communication skills while serving in the Reading Partners program.

A big part of my experience was handling challenging relational dynamics...how to build goodwill over time as well as [having] difficult, more confrontational conversations that need to happen. [I learned how] to handle conflict and work alongside people who may not always be 100 percent excited that [I'm] there.

I think being a part of Reading Partners, and the transferrable skills, you do learn a lot. You don't realize that you're learning them in the moment, but when you reflect back, you have a lot of skills under your belt.

Leadership/project management:

- *I definitely honed my **organizational and scheduling skills** by [having to communicate] with all of our volunteers and teachers and figuring out how to schedule students.*
- *I learned a lot about **managing people**. Not only students, but also adults, which has helped me in the different roles that I've had at [my current job]. I learned a lot about myself and how to advocate for myself... I can't just assume that people will know what I need.*
- ***How to ask for help** was definitely something big because I'm the kind of person that tries to do everything by myself. In that kind of position, you can't do that. You need all the support that you can get from your program managers, from the other site coordinators, from everyone around you.*
- *I grew in my ability to **problem solve** and coordinate because we had to schedule sessions for tutors and students, and there were sometimes unexpected changes and so [I learned] how to solve problems in the moment and be solution oriented.*

Communication skills:

- *I think my **communication skills** definitely grew while at Reading Partners. We had so many people on campus that we had to constantly communicate with, whether it be the teachers, or the principal, or after school program directors.*
- *I can't even count the number of meetings I facilitated, so, just being able to **speak more confidently** with professionals has helped me tremendously.... I definitely learned to hone and cater my vocabulary and adjust my presentation style to a more professional environment and audience.*
- ***Public speaking skills** definitely were exercised a lot when I was at Reading Partners...s[because] I was recruiting volunteers and would often have to go to club meetings, neighborhood association meetings, other nonprofit meetings, to talk about Reading Partners, our impact, and how they could help us.*

Summary

That a majority of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported that their Reading Partners AmeriCorps service experience influenced—and in some cases, altered—some of their most significant life choices is noteworthy. In survey responses, a majority of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported that their service experience influenced their future educational plans (66 percent) and their chosen career path (77 percent); moreover, serving with Reading Partners was frequently described as a defining professional experience (84 percent). In addition, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni were more likely than alumni in a 2015 CNCS study to credit their AmeriCorps service experience as helping them increase their professional and leadership skills, including responding to unexpected challenges, adapting to new situations, and setting priorities for multiple tasks.

In focus group interviews, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni said that their service experience influenced their thinking about their educational goals and aspirations, helping them decide not only to continue their education but also to determine and pursue the best educational pathway for them. Similarly, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni stated that their service had helped shape their career paths by giving them real-world experiences that helped them discover their passion or at least know what type of career interested them. Perhaps most importantly, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni described their service as excellent preparation for their future jobs and/or careers.

Finally, as further evidence that their service experience with Reading Partners impacted their life choices, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni were more likely to report that they currently work in the non-profit, public, or government sectors—the type of sector in which they worked while serving with Reading Partners—than their similarly situated peers from a national cohort.

These effects, taken together, suggest that Reading Partners influenced the educational and career pathways of their corps members and equipped them with numerous professional and leadership skills that prepared them well for their future jobs or careers.

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THE READING PARTNERS EFFECT

REPORT 3: Influencing the civic engagement of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni

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THE READING PARTNERS EFFECT:

Influencing the Civic Engagement of Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni

Program & Study Overview

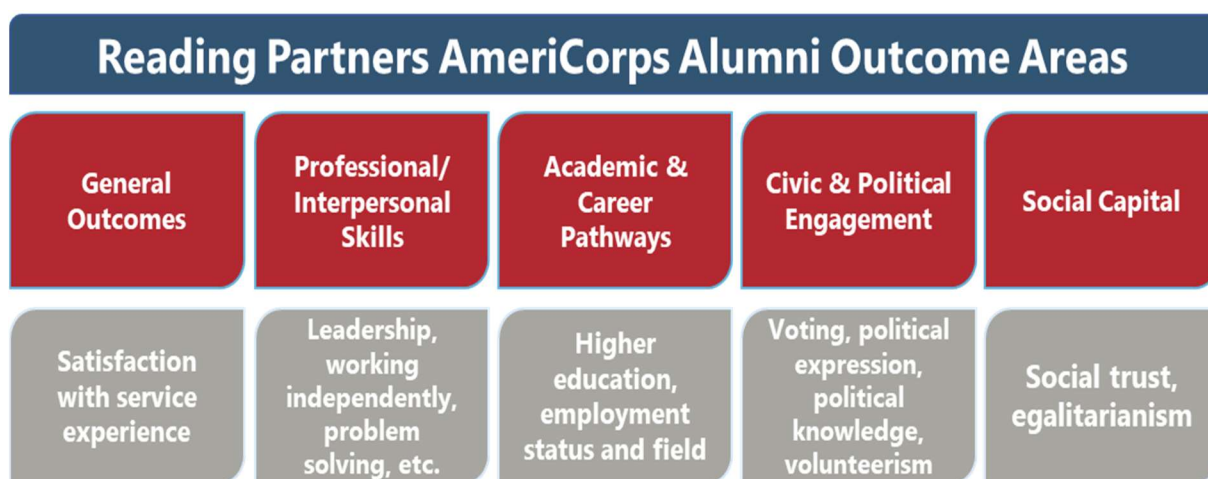
Reading Partners is a national literacy nonprofit that partners with under-resourced schools and engages community volunteers as tutors. Trained volunteers work one-on-one with students for 45 minutes twice a week, following a structured, research-based curriculum. AmeriCorps and VISTA (Volunteers In Service to America) members are instrumental in delivering the Reading Partners program and serve in five different roles in the organization:

- **AmeriCorps Site Coordinators (SCs) & AmeriCorps Regional Site Coordinators (RSCs)** coordinate and lead all site-based activities of the program at reading centers.
 - SCs manage all site-based operations, administer literacy assessments, and provide individualized coaching to volunteer tutors.
 - RSCs, unlike SCs, are not assigned to a particular school but instead rotate among larger schools with the greatest need and provide additional direct service support.
- **AmeriCorps Volunteer Coordinators (VCs)** recruit volunteers to provide individualized instruction to students who are struggling with reading. VCs prepare volunteers for tutoring by providing orientations, managing background checks, and setting expectations.
- **AmeriCorps Literacy Leads (LL)** are placed at schools where it is more challenging to recruit volunteers and deliver tutoring sessions in tandem with volunteers.
- **AmeriCorps VISTA** members build organizational capacity toward the ultimate goal of ending poverty. VISTA members serve in various contexts at the national and regional levels to build systems and strengthen Reading Partners' ability to serve students and communities.

Reading Partners' theory of change asserts that, as members serve in these roles, they develop important professional and leadership skills. Moreover, Reading Partners believes that member experiences in the communities where they serve will influence their educational and career

pathways as well as their attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs related to civic engagement. Reading Partners' AmeriCorps program is designed to impact members during and after their service terms. While in service, members cultivate in-depth relationships and witness the impact they have on students, while also engaging in a year-long training schedule that provides opportunity for civic reflection and exposure to other national service networks.

In spring 2018, Reading Partners contracted with Policy Studies Associates (PSA) to design and conduct the Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni Study, intended to deepen the organization's understanding of the quality of the Reading Partners AmeriCorps service experience and its effects on the civic engagement and educational and career pathways of their AmeriCorps and VISTA alumni. The outcome areas of interest are summarized in the figure below.

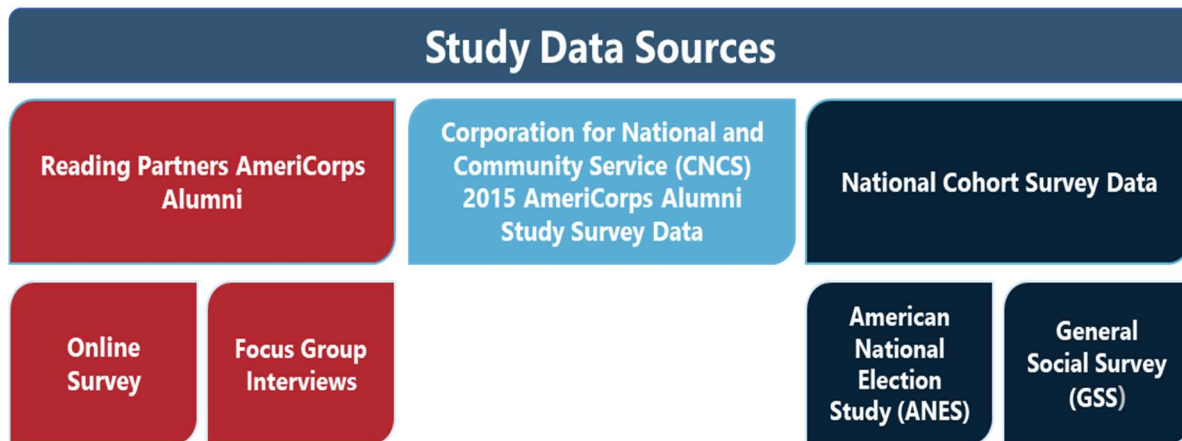


Specifically, the study sought to address the following research questions:

1. What outcomes do Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni attribute to their Reading Partners experience? Do these alumni perceive that serving as a Reading Partners AmeriCorps member helped them develop professional and interpersonal skills or influenced or change their career and/or academic pathways?
 - a. *In what ways, if any, do perceived member outcomes vary by member characteristics, including age, race/ethnicity, educational background, years of service with Reading Partners, role with Reading Partners, geographic region where they served, prior service with another AmeriCorps program, cohort year, or early vs. late cohorts?*
2. Controlling for other factors, do Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni demonstrate stronger professional and interpersonal skills and/or greater levels of civic engagement than similarly situated members of the national population?

The study analyzed patterns among respondents overall, as well as by key characteristics, including race/ethnicity, educational attainment, age when RP AmeriCorps alumni began their service, number of service years completed, or region of the country (i.e., east coast, west coast, central U.S.). Where differences by subgroup were observed, they are highlighted throughout.

The study used a two-part mixed-methods design that included surveys and focus groups conducted with Reading Partners AmeriCorps and VISTA alumni.¹ We also conducted comparative analyses using data from (1) a 2015 AmeriCorps alumni survey conducted for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) (Cardazone et al., 2015), and (2) a statistically matched comparison group of similarly situated members of the national population. (See the text box on the following page and Appendix A for additional details about the study methodology.)



Findings from the study are described in a series of three reports, plus a technical appendix. This report, the third in the series, focuses on alumni civic engagement. It begins with a profile of the common characteristics of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni and then describes the extent to which alumni are politically engaged, are civically engaged, and have social trust and a sense of egalitarianism.

The study analyzed patterns among respondents overall, as well as by key characteristics, including race/ethnicity, educational attainment, age when Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni began their service, number of service years completed, or region of the country (i.e., East Coast, West Coast, and central U.S.). Where differences by subgroup were observed, they are highlighted throughout.

Where possible, responses from Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni are placed in context with results from a 2015 study of AmeriCorps alumni by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). In addition, the report also measures the impact of Reading Partners service on alumni’s civic engagement by comparing the survey responses of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni with those of similarly situated members of the national population.² The extent to which there are measurable differences in the civic behaviors of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni compared with the statistically matched comparison group is an indicator of the program’s impact.

¹ Throughout this report, the term “Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni” includes alumni who were members of VISTA.

² National data sets include the American National Election Study (ANES) and the General Social Survey (GSS).

Methodology

Survey: 526 alumni responses/59 percent response rate

The study surveyed 898 Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni who completed their service term between 2010 and 2018. The survey asked Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni about their service experiences and whether they believed those experiences influenced their subsequent educational and career pathways as well as their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors toward community and civic engagement.

Focus groups: 50 respondents

To collect illustrative examples of the experiences, attitudes, and behaviors of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni, the study team conducted 12 focus group interviews with a sample of 50 such alumni (i.e., on average, each focus group included 4-5 participants) who represent the variation in alumni characteristics and experiences. Interviewers asked Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni to elaborate on their services experiences, as well as their educational, employment, and civic experiences in the years following their completion of the program.

Comparison groups: To put the Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni findings into context, the study compared the survey responses of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni with those of the following similar groups:

CNCS alumni. The study compared the responses of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni with responses of AmeriCorps alumni who participated in the 2015 CNCS AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes study. CNCS surveyed a nationally representative sample of AmeriCorps alumni whose service experience ended in 2012, 2009, or 2004.

National cohorts. To better understand what Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni's experiences, attitudes, and behaviors would have been had they not participated in the Reading Partners program, the study used publicly available, national data sets, including the American National Election Study (ANES) and the General Social Survey (GSS) to create a synthetic comparison group very similar to the Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni population in terms of age, race/ethnicity, income, marital status, educational background, and other factors associated with their propensity to serve (e.g., volunteerism and religiosity). To the extent that there are measurable differences in the attitudes, behaviors, and life experiences of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni compared with those of a statistically matched comparison group is one indicator of the program's impact.

Limitations: Key limitations of the study design are (1) the data collected through the Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni survey and focus group interviews reflect only the perspectives of individuals who served in the Reading Partners program and who were willing to participate in the study, so the results may not represent the views of all Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni; (2) the results of the quasi-experimental design comparing the career pathways and civic engagement of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni with a "statistically matched" comparison group should be interpreted with caution because the design does not include a baseline equivalency measure nor is it a true random assignment and thereby does not allow us to infer with certainty what would have happened to Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni had they not participated in the Reading Partners program. Nevertheless, this analytic strategy provides a useful comparison with similar non-participants, puts their career pathways and civic engagement in useful comparative perspective, and provides insight into the potential impact of the Reading Partners program.

Key Findings

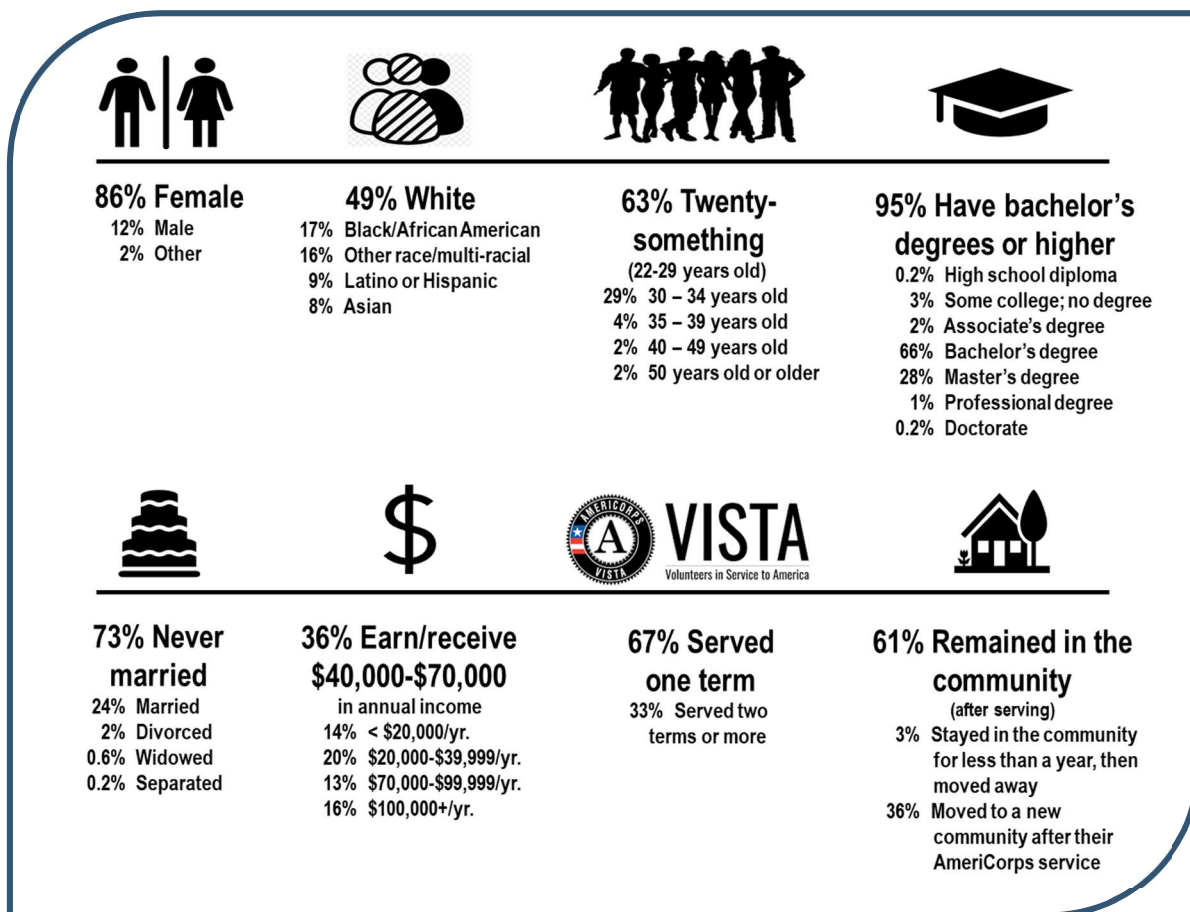
The study revealed the following key findings about the civic engagement outcomes of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni:

- The vast majority of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported that they had engaged in at least one act of political expression in the past 12 months and consider themselves to have a good understanding of the political questions facing our country. Very large majorities said they voted in the 2016 presidential and 2018 mid-term elections and that they volunteer at least a few times a month or more for at least one organization or issue that they care about.
- Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni took more actions to express themselves politically than did similarly situated members of a national cohort, and this pattern holds regardless of respondents' race/ethnicity.
- The Reading Partners program generated increased levels of civic engagement in their Corps members than would have been expected among similarly situated members of the national population. Specifically, compared to a similarly situated national cohort, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni are more likely to:
 - Express themselves politically
 - Understand the important political questions facing our country
 - Volunteer in more activities for organizations or issue that they care about

Reading Partners Alumni Profile

Most of the 526 Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni who responded to the survey were female; about half were persons of color; and the vast majority were between the ages of 22 and 34. As of early 2019 when the survey was administered, almost all responding alumni reported having a bachelor's degree or higher (95 percent). Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) had never married; 36 percent reported annual income between \$40,000 and \$70,000; and 61 percent reported having remained in the community in which they served after completing their service (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1: Characteristics of Reading Partners AmeriCorps and VISTA alumni



Based on 526 of 898 completed or partially completed surveys administered to Reading Partners alumni (response rate: 59 percent).
Source: Reading Partners Alumni Survey (2019).

Alumni who responded to the online survey were well-distributed across Reading Partners region and service year (from 2010-11 to 2017-18), as shown in Exhibits 2A and 2B. Further, the distribution of survey respondents by sites and service years was very similar to that of the overall population of Reading Partners alumni, as described in detail in the Appendix.

Exhibit 2A. Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni, by region

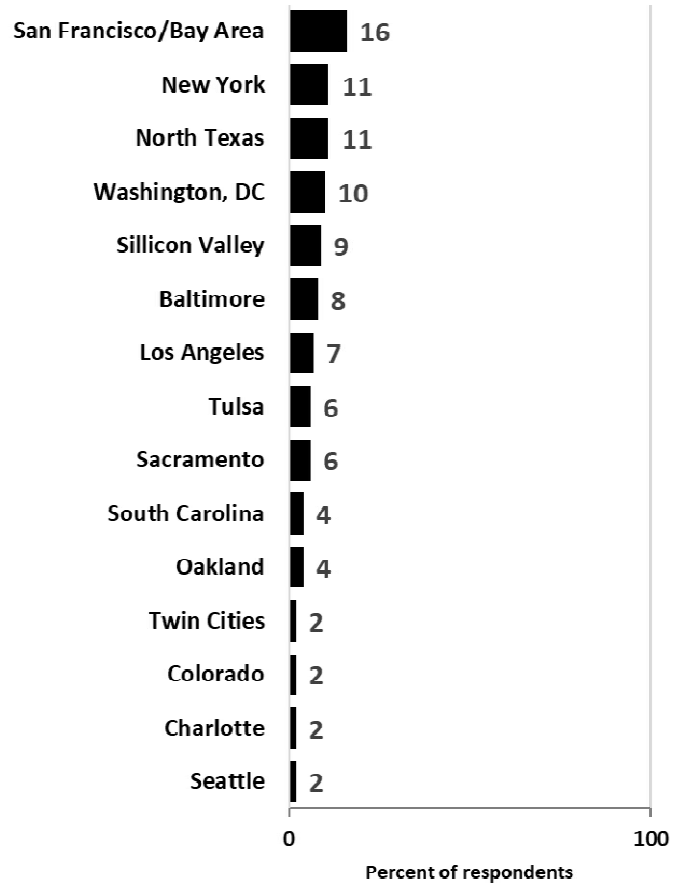
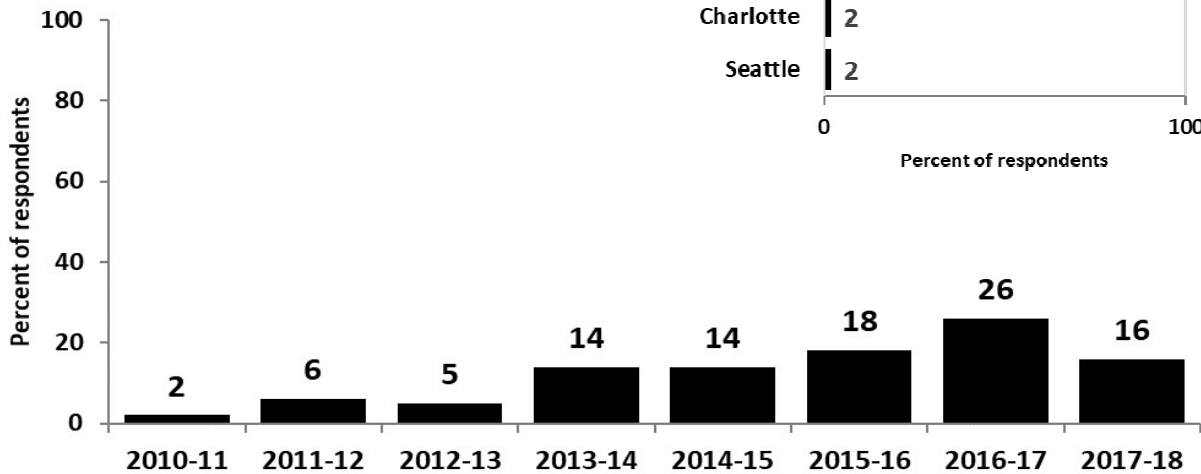


Exhibit 2B. Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni, by service year



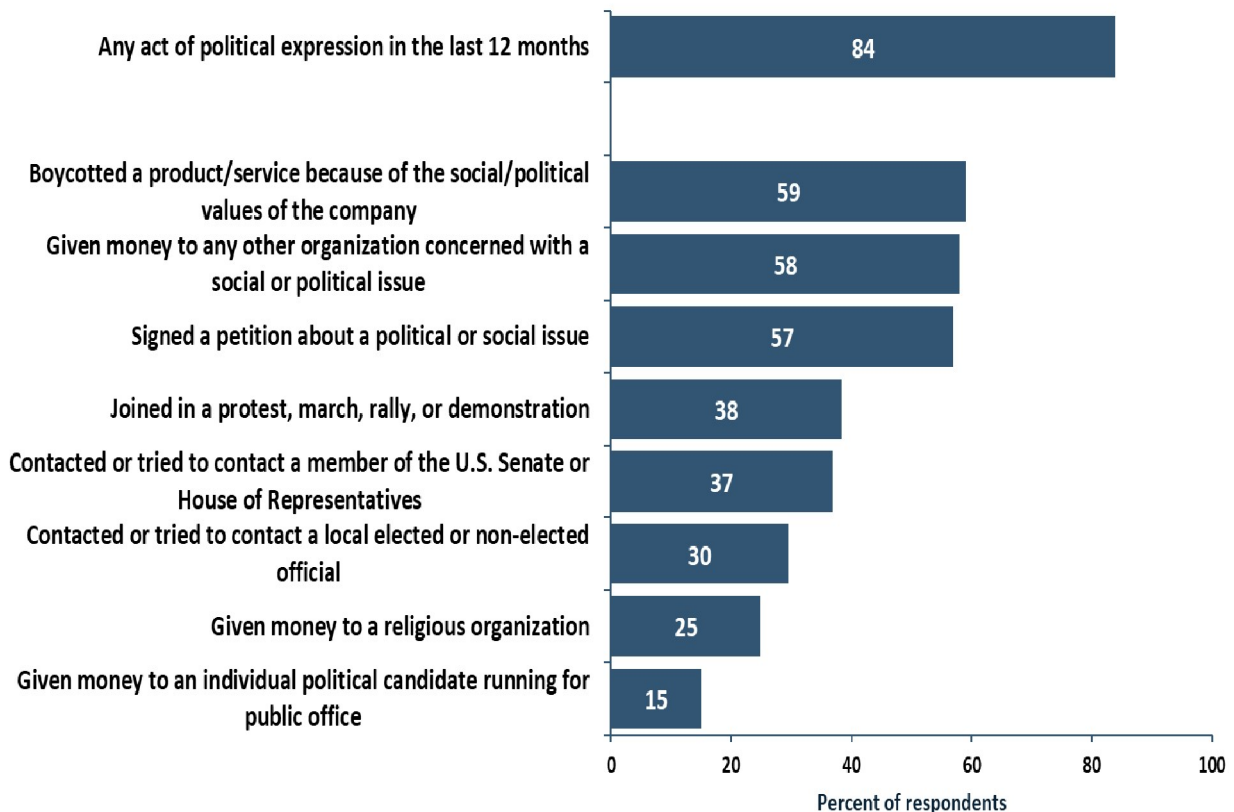
Based on 526 of 898 completed or partially completed surveys administered to Reading Partners alumni (response rate: 59 percent). Source: Reading Partners Alumni Survey (2019).

Political Expression

Most Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni (84 percent) said they engaged in at least one act of political expression in the last 12 months.

As shown in Exhibit 3, the majority of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni have expressed their political views in the last 12 months in a variety of ways: boycotting a product/service because of the company’s values (59 percent); giving money to a non-religious organization concerned with a social or political issue (58 percent); signing a petition (57 percent); or joining in a protest, march, rally, or demonstration (38 percent). Few of the responding alumni said they gave money to an individual political candidate running for public office (15 percent).

Exhibit 3. RP AmeriCorps alumni’s acts of political expression in the last 12 months



Source: RP AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); N=507

In Their Own Words

In focus group interviews, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni described their involvement in protests, letter-writing, and other types of political expression. Some attributed their advocacy efforts to their Reading Partners experience.

- *Each year I'm writing letters to make sure that AmeriCorps funding stays in the budget. I guess that's a direct action politically related to my year of service with Reading Partners.*
- *I've been to protests or community events at least a couple of times a month related to all the border/immigration issues.*
- *There's a group of politicians that really like to criticize SNAP and food stamps and serving as a part of AmeriCorps has given me a perspective into that and has made me really quite passionate about it...We can't get rid of SNAP. This is not people begging for money. These are necessary services that I have seen impact people in really positive ways."*
- *I have dug deeper into issues of education, health, transportation, housing, etc. From there, I was able to connect with other individuals—not political campaigns but organizing around writing to members of Congress and getting involved in other ways.*

Reading Partners made me feel more empowered to act; [to know] what I could do as an individual. Reading Partners showed me that I could be a real part of the action being taken.

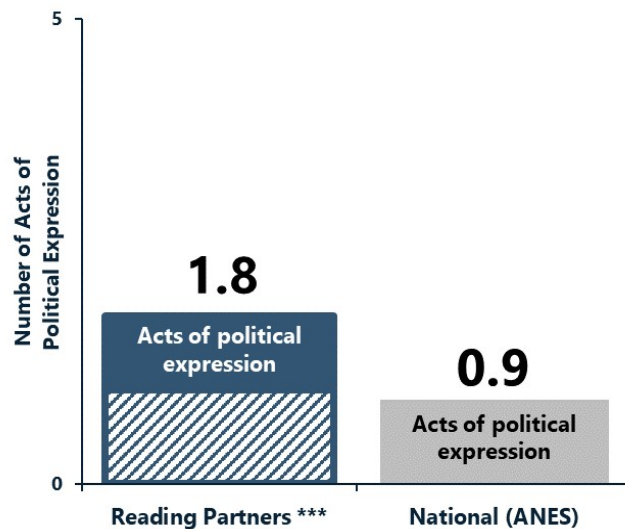
Comparative Analyses

In an effort to understand what Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni’s level of political expression might have been had they not served with Reading Partners, we compared their self-described levels of political expression to survey responses from a group of similarly situated members of the national population using publicly available data from the American National Election Study (ANES). We created a five-point scale from individuals’ responses to five questions, assigning one point to each activity in which they reported having participated in the last year. These activities included joining in a protest, march, rally, or demonstration; signing a petition about a political or social issue; giving money to [an] organization concerned with a social or political issue; contacting or trying to contact a member of the U.S. Senate or U.S. House of Representatives; and giving money to an individual candidate running for political office.

Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni took significantly more actions to express themselves politically than did similarly situated members of a national cohort.

In particular, our analyses show that Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni were significantly more likely to have expressed themselves politically during the previous 12 months than their counterparts in the national survey. Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni, on average, took nearly two of the five actions listed above, compared with less than one action for the national cohort (1.8 actions versus 0.9 action) (Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4. Political expression, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni vs. national cohort

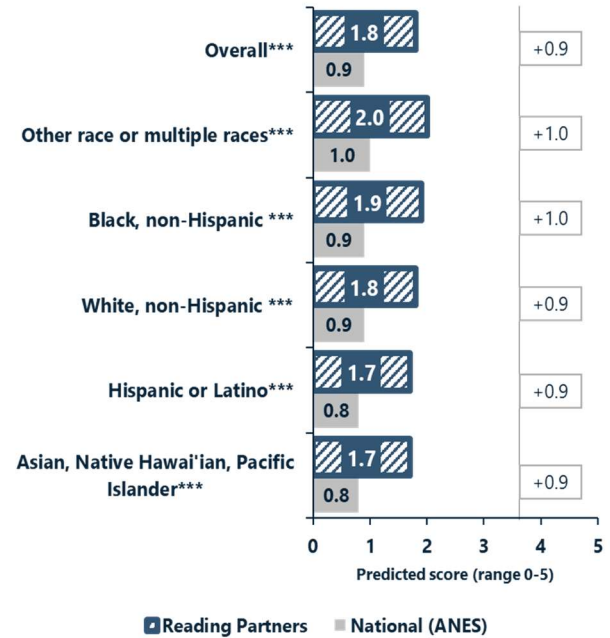


*** Difference is statistically significant, $p < 0.001$
Sources: RP AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); ANES (2017).

These significant differences between Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni and the matched comparison group hold across racial/ethnic groups and levels of educational attainment. Regardless of respondents' race/ethnicity, RP AmeriCorps alumni, on average, reported significantly more political likely than the national cohort to have taken more acts of political expression in the last year (Exhibit 5). For example, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni who identify as other or multi-racial or Black/non-Hispanic engaged in one more act of political expression than did their matched peers in the national cohort.

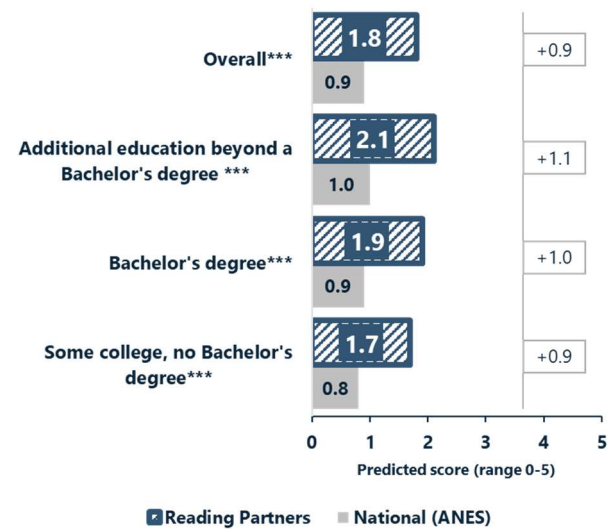
Similarly, regardless of educational attainment, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni, on average, engaged in one more act of political expression than did their matched peers (Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 5. Political expression, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni vs. national cohort, by race/ethnicity



*** Difference is statistically significant, $p < 0.001$
Sources: RP Alumni Survey (2019); ANES (2017).

Exhibit 6. Political expression, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni vs. national cohort, by educational attainment



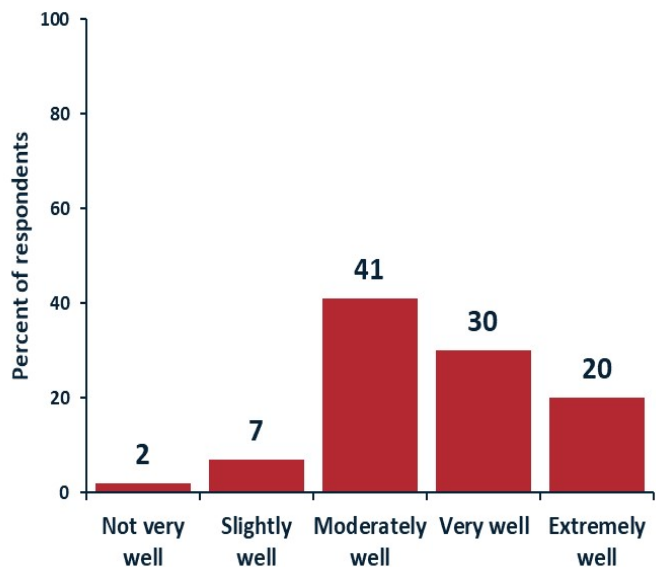
*** Difference is statistically significant, $p < 0.001$
Sources: RP AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); ANES (2017).

Political Knowledge

Most Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni (91 percent) believe they have a good understanding of political issues.

When asked how well they understood the important political questions facing our country, 41 percent of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni responded “moderately well,” 30 percent responded “very well,” and 20 percent chose “extremely well” (Exhibit 7). The remainder said they understood political issues only slightly well (7 percent) or not at all (2 percent).

Exhibit 7. Extent to which Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni report understanding



Source: RP AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); N=507

In Their Own Words

In focus groups, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni described how their service experiences raised their awareness of important political and social issues.

- *I think my awareness has definitely gone up in terms of what is happening, what ideally would change, and ways to be more involved. I also just have a [broader] understanding of what's going on in public education and how to be more of an advocate in different ways.*
- *I think that doing the service with [RP]s...opened my eyes to how much need there is in so many different industries and in so many ways.*

I'm starting to get a better idea of policy and how it impacts education, which is something I really didn't think about at all [before] Reading Partners.

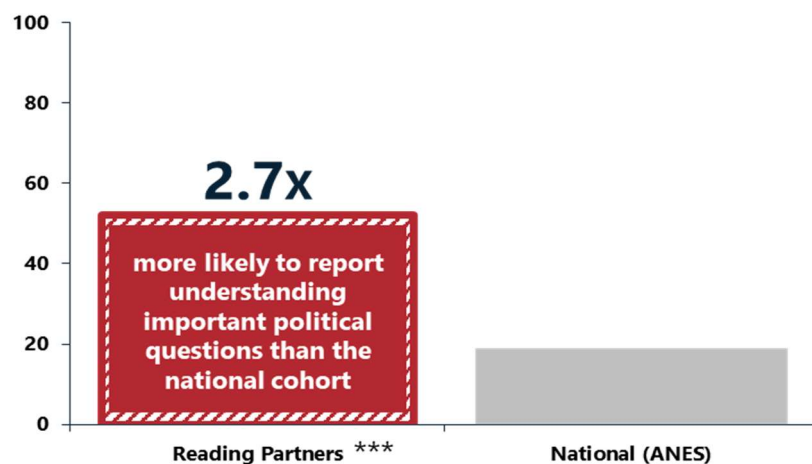
Comparative Analyses

To better understand the impact of Reading Partners service, we compared the political knowledge reported by RP AmeriCorps alumni with responses from a matched comparison group of similarly situated members of a national cohort. In particular, we looked at the percentages of respondents in each group who said they had moderate to high understanding of the important political questions facing our country

Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni were approximately 2.7 times more likely than similarly situated members of a national cohort to report that they understood the important political questions facing our country.

Specifically, an average of 52 percent of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported moderate to high political knowledge compared with an average of 19 percent of respondents in the national cohort—a 33 percentage-point difference (Exhibit 8)

Exhibit 8. Political knowledge, RP AmeriCorps alumni versus national cohort

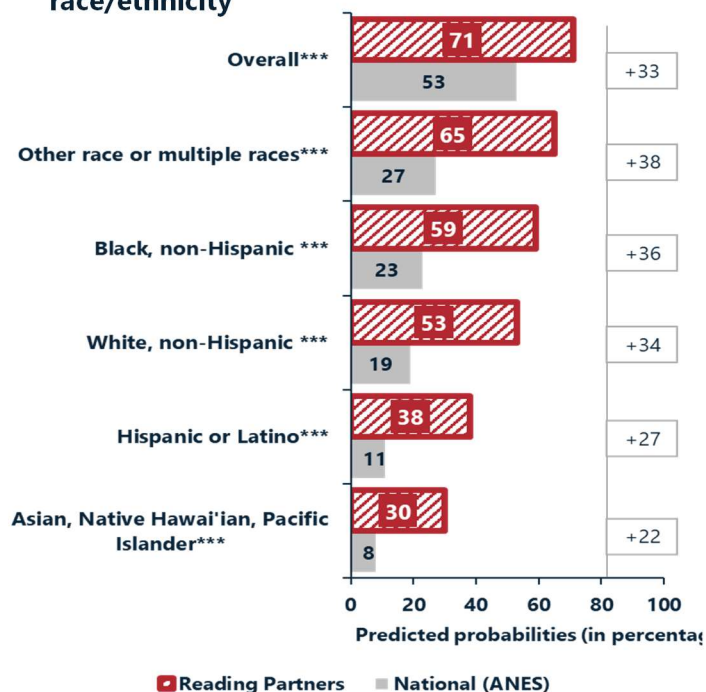


*** Difference is statistically significant, $p < 0.001$
Sources: RP AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); ANES (2017).

Differences by race/ethnicity. Across racial and ethnic groups, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported significantly greater understanding of important political issues than did their matched peers in the national cohort. The size of the differences varied by racial/ethnic group, however. For example, among respondents who identified as “other or multi-racial” 65 percent of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported moderate to high understanding of important political issues, versus 27 percent of the matched cohort, a difference of 38 percentage points (Exhibit 9). For those who identified as Asian, the difference between the RP alumni and the matched group was 22 percentage points (53 percent vs. 19 percent).

In both the Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni and national cohorts, respondents who identified as Asian reported significantly lower political knowledge than did their white, black/African American, other/multi-racial, and Latino/Hispanic peers.

Exhibit 9. Political knowledge, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni vs. national cohort, by race/ethnicity

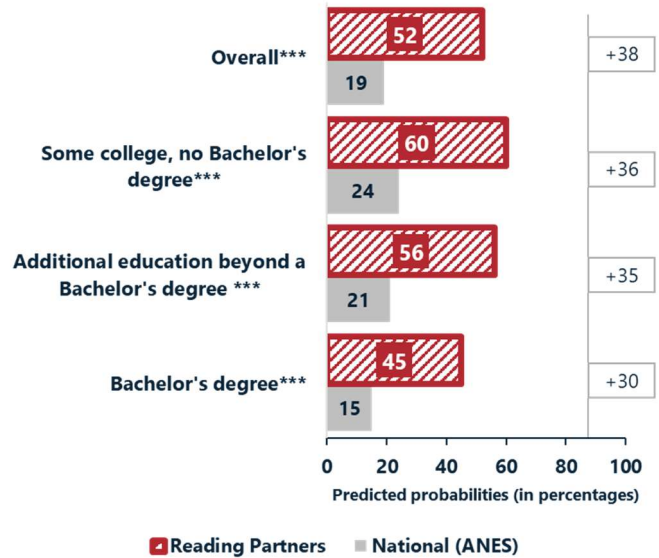


*** Difference is statistically significant, $p < 0.001$
Sources: RP AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); ANES (2017).

Differences by educational background.

Differences in political knowledge between Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni and the national comparison group also hold regardless of level of education (Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10. Political knowledge, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni vs. national cohort, by education



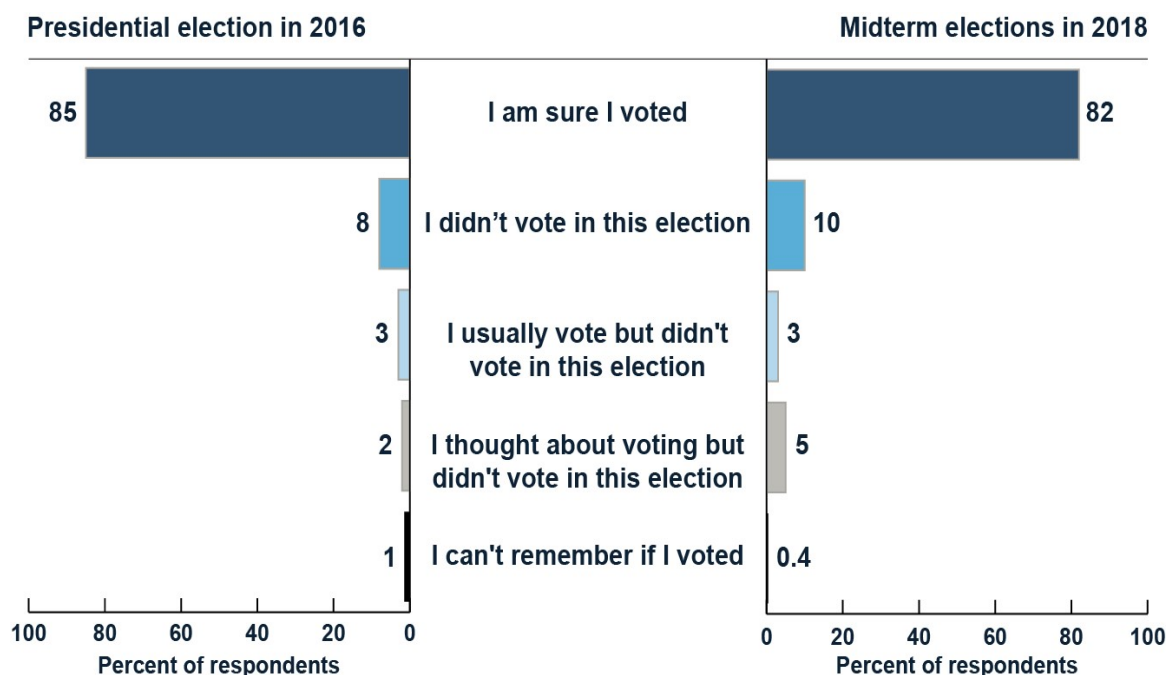
*** Difference is statistically significant, $p < 0.001$
Sources: RP AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); ANES (2017).

Voting

Almost all Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni (85 percent) reported voting in the 2016 presidential election.

Perhaps more significantly, however, almost as many Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni (82 percent) reported voting in the mid-term elections, which historically result in lower voter turnout than presidential elections (Exhibit 11). Indeed, although overall voter turnout in the 2018 mid-term election was 11-percentage points higher than in the mid-term election of 2014 (53 percent vs. 42 percent),³ the percentage of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni who reported voting in 2018 was still significantly higher than overall voter turnout in the national population (82 percent vs. 53 percent), as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau (Misra, 2019).

Exhibit 11. Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni who voted in the 2016 presidential and the 2018 mid-term elections



Source: Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019).

³ <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/04/behind-2018-united-states-midterm-election-turnout.html>

In Their Own Words

Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni expressed strong commitment to voting.

In focus group interviews, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni usually acknowledged their commitment to voting, but without elaboration. Several alumni emphasized that “voting is definitely a must,” or said they were “active voters” who track elections and support political candidates financially. One Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumna described how her political engagement has intensified: “I find myself reading more and more about presidential candidates and being involved in voter information sessions.”

Comparative Analyses

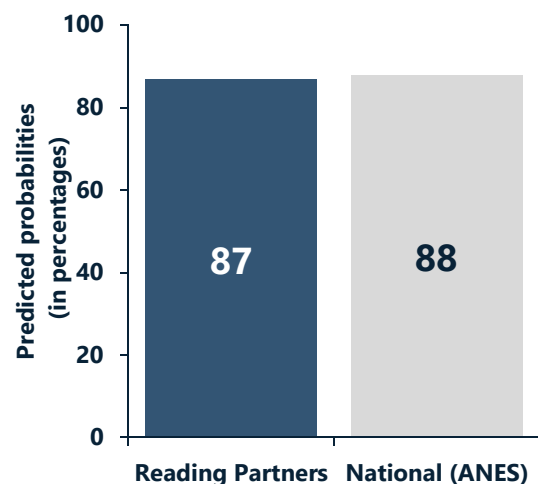
To gauge the influence of Reading Partners on voting behavior on AmeriCorps alumni—what their voting behavior might have been had they not served with Reading Partners—we compared the voting rates of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni in the 2016 presidential election with those of a matched comparison group of similarly situated members of a national cohort.

Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni voted in the 2016 Presidential election at about the same rate as similarly situated members of the national cohort.

The vast majority of respondents in both groups reported that they had voted in the 2016 Presidential election—87 percent of RP AmeriCorps alumni vs. 88 percent of the national cohort (Exhibit 12).

Given these high rates of voting, there were also no significant differences among Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni and the national cohort by educational attainment, race, gender, income, religion, volunteerism, and length of time living in their community.

Exhibit 12. Voting, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni versus national cohort



Difference is not significant.
Sources: RP AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); ANES (2017).

Volunteerism

Almost all Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni (96 percent) reported volunteering a few times a month or more for at least one organization or issue they cared about.

Among the many activities to which Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni might volunteer their time, 59 percent reported participating in a community organization a few times a month or more frequently; 45 percent reported working with other people to deal with some issue facing their community; and 39 percent reported helping to keep the community safe and clean (Exhibit 13). No differences in these alumni’s reported volunteerism were discernable based on characteristics or background, including race/ethnicity, age when they began their Reading Partners service, number of service years completed, or region of the country.

The percentages of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni engaging in volunteerism were similar to those of alumni in the 2015 CNCS study for certain activities, including participating in community organizations a few times a month or more frequently (59 percent of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni and 63 percent of CNCS alumni), and volunteering for a cause (45 percent and 40 percent). The apparent slight differences between the two groups for these activities

Exhibit 13. Volunteerism, by Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni vs. CNCS alumni



*Difference is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.05$.

N/A: Item not included in the CNCS alumni survey.

Sources: Reading Partners AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019) (N=510); CNCS Alumni Survey (2015) (N=971)

were not statistically significant. The two groups did differ, however, in that alumni who participated in the 2015 CNCS study were more likely than Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni to report that they helped “to keep the community safe and clean.” This disparity may be attributable to differences in the service experiences of the two groups. Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni focus heavily on literacy, while the broader population of CNCS alumni includes some AmeriCorps members who focused on environmental clean-up during their service year and therefore may be more inclined to engage in environmental volunteerism after completing their service.

In Their Own Words

In focus group interviews, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni said their Reading Partners program experience inspired them to either start volunteering or to volunteer more than they had before completing their Reading Partners service.

- *I never volunteered before but now I've been volunteering nonstop since I left, and I've also convinced many of my colleagues to become Reading Partners volunteers. I highlighted that they would have a one-on-one relationship with a student and that the materials made everything easy for them...and that they would find it rewarding, and they do, so it's great.*
- *Right after Reading Partners I started working with Meals on Wheels... Also, I volunteer here in my city with Keep [CITY] Beautiful, for which we do cleanup and beautification initiatives around the city and I also serve on the Keep [CITY] Beautiful commission, which tries to increase civic engagement around the city and people are starting to take more of an active part in our different cleanup events.*
- *It inspired me to try to volunteer more in the community.... I do try to find ways to stay engaged.*

I don't know if that fire was there before, but I have a willingness to give back and it's selfish, but volunteering makes me feel good.... If that fire was already lit, [Reading Partners] certainly made it bigger within my heart to give back.

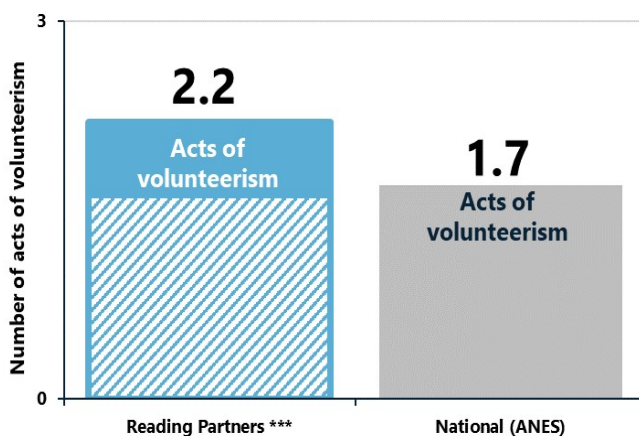
Comparative Analyses

We compared the level of volunteerism among Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni to that of a matched comparison group of individuals in the national cohort. We created a three-point volunteerism index by assigning one point for each volunteer activity that an individual reported participating in during the last year, out of three listed. These activities included working with other people to deal with some issue facing their community; attending a meeting about an issue facing their community or schools; and volunteering for a cause or issue they cared about.

Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni participated in more volunteer activities than did comparable individuals in a national cohort.

Controlling for individual characteristics, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni, on average, reported significantly more volunteer activities than their matched peers in the national cohort (2.2 acts of volunteerism vs. 1.7, respectively). Thus, on average, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni would be expected to have engaged in 0.5 more volunteer-related actions in the past year (Exhibit 14).

Exhibit 14. Volunteerism, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni vs. national cohort



*** Difference is statistically significant, $p < 0.001$ Sources: RP AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); ANES (2017).

About the comparative analyses on volunteerism:

The analyses we conducted on volunteerism varied by comparison group and therefore the results are slightly different:

For Exhibit 13, we looked at both the frequency and type of volunteerism Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported participating in during the last year, comparing it to the frequency and type of volunteerism reported by AmeriCorps alumni who participated in the 2015 CNCS survey. Because individual-level survey data were not available for CNCS AmeriCorps alumni, this analysis could not control for alumni characteristics that might impact the frequency and type of volunteerism (e.g., age, income).

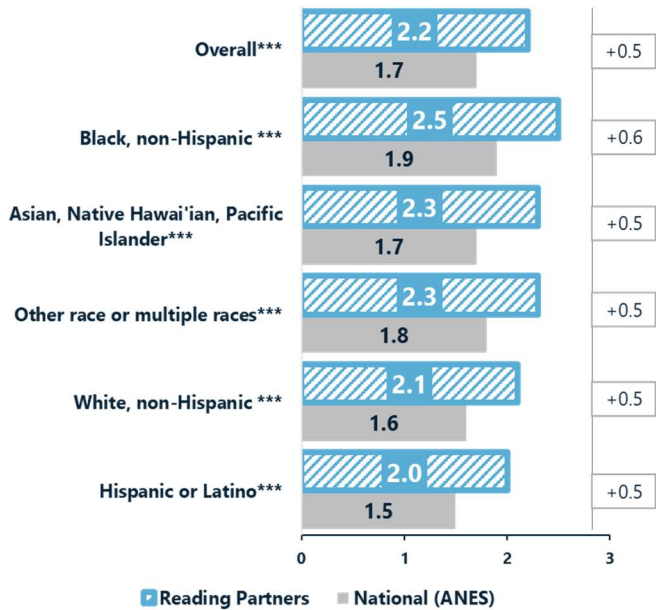
For Exhibit 14, we calculated index scores of the average number of volunteer-related activities (out of a total of three) that Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported participating in during the last year. We used a Poisson model to compare alumni index scores to their matched peers in the national cohort, controlling for age, race, income, gender, religiosity, work status, length of time living in present community, and volunteerism.

These differences in volunteerism remained when we disaggregated the data by race/ethnicity and by levels of education (Exhibits 15 and 16). That is, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni scored significantly higher than their matched peers in the national cohort across racial/ethnic categories. For example, Black/non-Hispanic and Asian RP AmeriCorps alumni scored 0.6 points higher on the volunteerism index than did their similarly situated Black/non-Hispanic and Asian peers in the national cohort. Similarly, White, non-Hispanic RP AmeriCorps alumni scored 0.5 points higher on the volunteerism index than did their white peers in the national cohort (Exhibit 15).

Our analyses also revealed that Reading Partners alumni scored significantly higher on the volunteerism index than their matched peers in the national cohort across educational levels. For example, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni who had additional education beyond a bachelor’s degree scored 0.6 points higher than did members of the national cohort with similar educational backgrounds (Exhibit 16). Significant differences between the two groups were also observed for those with some college but no bachelor’s degree and those with only a bachelor’s degree (0.5 point difference).

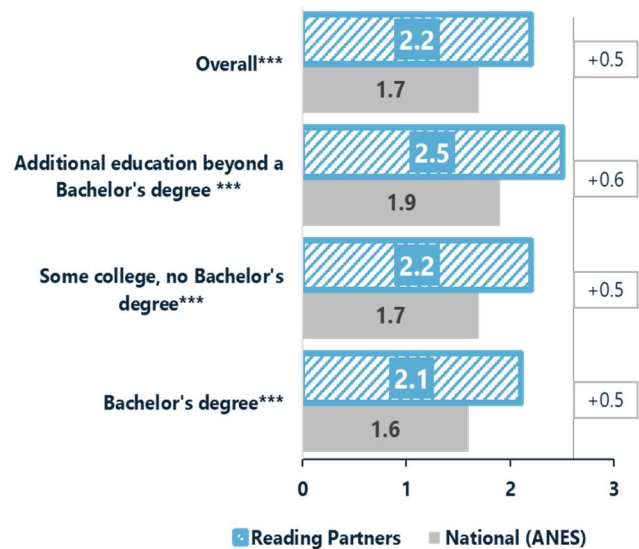
Finally, although there are slight differences among Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni by race/ethnicity and by education level, these differences were not statistically significant.

Exhibit 15. Volunteerism, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni vs. national cohort, by race/ethnicity



*** Difference is statistically significant, $p < 0.001$
Sources: RP AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); ANES (2017).

Exhibit 16. Volunteerism, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni vs. national cohort, by education



*** Difference is statistically significant, $p < 0.001$
Sources: RP AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); ANES (2017).

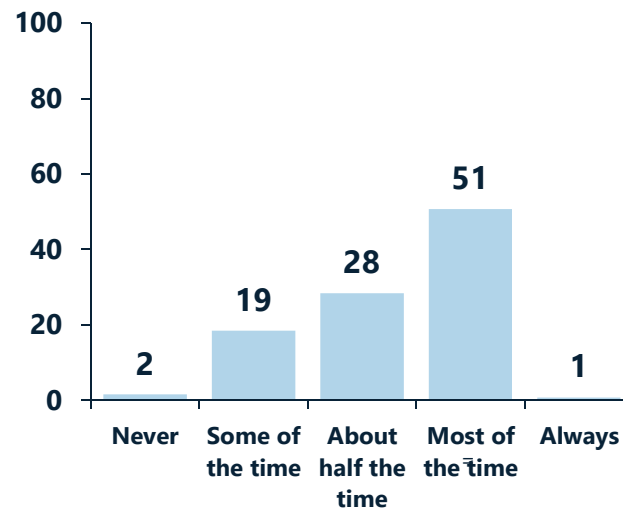
Social Trust/Egalitarianism

About half of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported generally trusting other people.

Specifically, 51 percent of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni said they trusted other people “most of the time” and 1 percent said they “always” trust other people. Among the remaining half, 28 percent reported trusting people “about half the time,” and 19 percent “some of the time.” Very few Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni reported that they “never” trusted people (2 percent) (Exhibit 17).

Almost all Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni expressed a strong sense of egalitarianism.

Exhibit 17. Extent to which Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni trust other people

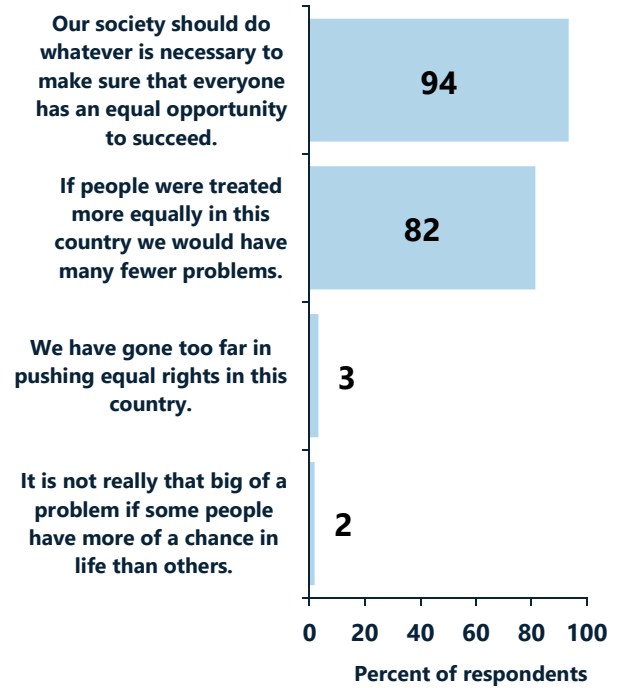


Source: RP AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); N=507.

The vast majority of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni (94 percent) agreed with the statement that society should “do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed,” and 82 percent agreed that “if people were treated more equally in this country we would have many fewer problems.” By contrast, very few agreed that society had “gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country” (3 percent). And only two percent of alumni agreed that it was “not really that big of a problem if some people have more of a chance in life than others” (Exhibit 18).

The sense of egalitarianism among alumni did not vary in any discernable way by alumni demographic characteristics or by their background and experience.

Exhibit 18. Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni’s sense of egalitarianism



Source: RP AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); N=507.

In Their Own Words

In focus group interviews, several Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni credited their service experience with helping to deepen their understanding of and interest in social justice issues by giving them first-hand exposure to social inequities.

- *There were things that I sort of knew but didn't really understand until I was in [Reading Partners] and that's [an issue] that I want to keep fighting for as a counselor and beyond.*
- *What I think Reading Partners did—obviously I was aware of the problems with inequities and injustices that we had—but [unless] you actually see it on a day-to-day basis and the people and especially students that it's impacting, it's kind of hard to really grasp what it's like.*
- *I had students that came from very broken homes, and it's one thing to read about it as a statistic and to do research on it and write papers on it, but once you're actually in the community and you're talking to these kids about what their home life is like, it really hits you in a different way because you really see the humanity behind those numbers.*
- *Just seeing how inequality in so many forums affected the lives of the students we worked with, I think I was kind of interested in taking the tools that I learned for nonprofit development and fundraising; you can apply them to different issue areas. So, I worked in criminal justice and I'm [now] working for a legal aid organization. So, I've stayed within the realm of serving people that are dealing with a lot of things in their lives but trying to ameliorate that through [the criminal justice system].*

[Reading Partners] definitely helped me check a lot of my privilege, and it was humbling because some of these kids that showed up, they were the happiest-go-lucky kids that I've ever met, but their home life was not the greatest, [and yet] they still found a way to come to school with [a good] attitude... that really put things into perspective for me.

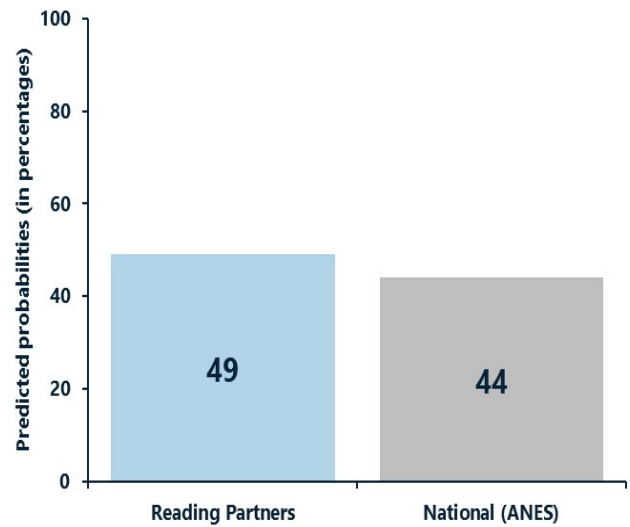
Comparative Analyses

We compared the social trust expressed by Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni to that of a matched comparison group of similarly situated members of a national cohort.

There were no statistically significant differences in levels of social trust between Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni and the national comparison group.

On average, 49 percent of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni would be expected to report that, generally, they felt that they could trust people “always” or “most of the time,” compared with 44 percent of the national cohort, when demographic and background characteristics are controlled for, including race/ethnicity, work status, income, gender, religion, and volunteering. The percentage point difference between the two groups was not statistically significant. There were no significant differences by alumni demographic or background characteristics.

Exhibit 19. Trust, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni vs. national cohort



Differences were not significant.
Sources: RP AmeriCorps Alumni Survey (2019); ANES (2017).

Summary

The service experiences of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni appear to have affected their civic engagement. In survey responses, the vast majority of these alumni reported that they had engaged in at least one act of political expression in the past 12 months, have a good understanding of the political questions facing our country, voted in the 2016 presidential and 2018 mid-term elections. A large majority volunteer at least a few times a month or more for at least one organization or issue that they care about strongly believe that society should do whatever is necessary to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.

In focus group interviews, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni said that their service experience affected their interest in and willingness to express themselves politically and helped raise their awareness of important political and social issues. Many spoke of how their service inspired them to start volunteering or to volunteer more than they had before they joined Reading Partners.

Finally, compared to similarly situated members of the national population, Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni are more likely to express themselves politically; understand the important political questions; and volunteer for organizations or issues they care about. In other respects, the two groups were very similar. Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni and their matched peers were equally likely to vote and showed similar levels of social trust.

Together, these effects suggest that the Reading Partners program generated increased levels of civic engagement in AmeriCorps members than would otherwise have been expected of similarly situated members of the national population.

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APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

Reading Partners Alumni Survey

Between January 2019 and March 2019, Policy Studies Associates (PSA) conducted a survey of 898 Reading Partners alumni who had completed their service between FY2010 and FY2018. This number reflects all alumni who had fully completed their service term by the end of 2018, had not opted-out of email communication, and for whom Reading Partners could find a working email address.

Based on response rates for previous surveys of AmeriCorps alumni conducted by PSA¹ and by Abt Associates², we anticipated a response rate of 30 percent; we received completed or partial surveys from 526 individuals, for a response rate of 59 percent. After analyzing partially completed surveys, we determined that 12 individuals had completed enough of the survey (approximately 50 percent) to be included in the analyses—500 completed surveys and 12 partial surveys were included in the final analyses.

Design. The survey asked respondents questions to understand the extent to which participation in Reading Partners impacted alumni's educational, career, and civic experiences following their participation in Reading Partners. To construct the survey, we drew questions from existing studies with strong validity and reliability, including the American National Election Study (ANES), the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, and the Alumni Outcomes Study of the Corporation for National and Community Service. Including these questions in the survey also facilitated the comparative analyses discussed below.

Pilot test. We conducted two rounds of survey review and revision in consultation with Reading Partners staff prior to pilot testing the instrument with six members of the Reading Partners Alumni Advisory Group. Working with Reading Partners staff, we invited alumni to participate in the pilot test of the online draft survey instrument, which involved taking the online survey and responding to follow-up questions regarding the survey's relevance, clarity, logic, and relative burden. Once pilot testers submitted their online feedback, a PSA interviewer followed up (by phone or email) to discuss their feedback and the overall strengths and weaknesses of the survey. The results of the pilot test informed final revisions to the instrument.

Administration. For four months prior to the January launch of the online survey, Reading Partners engaged in an alumni outreach campaign intended to raise awareness about the impending survey and encourage robust participation. The campaign included announcements in the bi-monthly READING PARTNERS alumni newsletter, as well as postings on the Reading Partners Facebook as well as regular references to the study on the blog hosted on the Reading Partners website.

In January 2019, PSA launched the online alumni survey, sending email invitations to the group of potential respondents with a personal link to the online survey. The email explained the purpose of

¹ Anderson, L.M., and Fabiano, L. "The City Year Experience: Putting Alumni on a Path to Lifelong Civic Engagement." Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates, 2007. <http://www.cityyear.org/about/pressroom/studies.cfm>

² Friedman, E., et al. (2016). *New Methods for Assessing AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes: Final Survey Technical Report*. (Prepared for the Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Evaluation). Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates, Inc.

the survey and informed respondents that they would receive a \$10 Amazon gift card as a thank you for completing the survey. Over the next three months, PSA sent out periodic reminders to encourage alumni to complete the survey. Reading Partners also continued their follow-up efforts through email and Facebook and blog posts.

Data collection ended in May 2019. A review of the distributions of respondents and non-respondents on known characteristics (service year and the region in which they served) did not suggest non-response weighting was necessary for the analysis (Exhibits A-1 and A-2). As an additional check, we generated non-response weights and found little to no differences between the results from the weighted and non-weighted data. Therefore, we opted to analyze the data without weights.

Exhibit A-1. Survey respondents and survey population, by first year of service

First year of service	Survey respondents		Reading Partners alumni population	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
2010-11	12	2.3	26	2.9
2011-12	29	5.7	51	5.6
2012-13	25	4.9	54	6.0
2013-14	69	13.5	117	12.9
2014-15	71	13.9	131	14.4
2015-16	93	18.1	155	17.1
2016-17	134	26.2	218	24.0
2017-18	79	15.4	156	17.2

Exhibit A-2. Reading Partners Survey respondents and survey population, by region in which alumni served

Region	Survey respondents		Reading Partners alumni population	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Baltimore	39	8.0	73	8.0
Charlotte	8	1.6	13	1.4
Colorado	11	2.3	14	1.5
Los Angeles	34	7.0	55	6.1
New York	56	11.5	87	9.6
North Texas	54	11.1	97	10.7
Oakland	16	3.3	20	2.2
Sacramento	30	6.2	48	5.3
San Francisco Bay Area	76	15.6	150	16.5
Seattle	9	1.9	14	1.5
Silicon Valley	46	9.5	115	12.7
South Carolina	21	4.3	57	6.3
Tulsa	28	5.8	51	5.6
Twin Cities	11	2.3	19	2.1
Washington DC	47	9.7	95	10.5

Focus Group Interviews

To collect illustrative examples of the experiences, attitudes, and behaviors of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni, PSA conducted focus group interviews with a sample of Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni. To identify the focus group sample, we used the database of survey respondents to craft a sampling framework, stratifying the alumni focus group sample by age, gender, race/ethnicity, Reading Partners site, and cohort year. The sample of 100 alumni was based, in part, on the number of stratifying variables used to draw the sample as well as on the assumption that approximately 50 percent of the alumni sample would agree to participate. While not intended to be representative of the alumni population, the sample of 100 alumni generated good cross-site variation.

Once the focus group sample was selected, PSA staff contacted alumni via email and invited their participation in the virtual focus group discussions. In June and July 2019, PSA staff conducted 12 focus group interviews (averaging approximately 4-5 Reading Partners AmeriCorps alumni per group), with a total of 50 alumni. To the extent possible, we organized the interview groups by alumni cohort, with groups of alumni from the earlier cohort years (2010-2015) and groups from the later cohort years (2016-2018). Each focus group interview was conducted virtually using Zoom and required approximately 60-75 minutes to complete. During the focus group discussions, respondents were asked to elaborate on their experiences as participants in the Reading Partners program, as well as their educational, employment, and civic experiences in the years following their completion of the program.

American National Election Studies survey (ANES)

ANES is a nationally representative survey administered by researchers at the University of Michigan and Stanford University. The survey, conducted in presidential election years, consists of interviews of individuals once prior to the election and again after the election. Questions collect individual-level demographic information about respondents, which allowed us to match ANES respondents to Reading Partners alumni to create the comparison group. The survey asks about voting behavior, the election, and attitudes and opinions about public issues. We downloaded the March 2019 release of the 2016 Time Series Study data file in April 2019 from the ANES website.

General Social Survey (GSS)

The GSS is a nationally representative survey conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago. Conducted every two years, the survey covers topics core demographic, behavioral, and attitudinal questions. Data from the survey are individual-level, which allowed us to match GSS respondents to Reading Partners alumni to create a comparison group. We used the March 2019 release of 2018 data, which we downloaded from the GSS website in September 2019.

CNCS-AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes Study Survey (CNCS)

Conducted in 2015, this survey asked AmeriCorps alumni whose service term ended in 2012, 2009, or 2004 questions about their service experience. Aggregate level numbers of respondents and point estimates were available in the appendix of the October 2015 Summary Report. These data were used to generate confidence intervals used in our comparative analyses.

Matching

We used a coarsened exact matching (CEM) strategy to construct the comparison groups for Reading Partners alumni. CEM is a monotonic imbalance-reducing method that allows for identification of a comparison group that controls for potentially confounding variables (e.g., race, gender, age) by pruning observations, primarily from the pool of potential matches, to achieve an acceptable level multivariate balance on the potentially confounding variables between the treatment group (i.e., Reading Partners alumni) and the control group (i.e., ANES respondents or GSS respondents). CEM, like other monotonic imbalance reducing or bounding methods, has advantages over methods such as propensity score matching and Mahalanobis matching (Iacus, King, & Porro, 2011; 2012; Herman, Epstein, & Leon, 2016; Steedle & Grochowalski, 2017). These advantages include allowing us to adjust the closeness of matches on one variable without impacting the balance on other matching variables, reducing the amount of dependence on the matching model, and reducing issues related to common empirical support. Reading Partners alumni are highly educated relative to the national population; while over 90 percent of Reading Partners alumni have earned a Bachelor's degree or higher, 32 percent of the U.S. population over 18 have done so. This discrepancy requires particular attention when matching to a nationally representative sample.

American National Election Studies (ANES)

We first dropped ANES respondents who had not completed high school, as all Reading Partners alumni had received at least a high school diploma. In the matching model, we included individuals' age, race, gender, volunteering in the last 12 months, and education which yielded matches for 497 of the 507 Reading Partners alumni who responded to the survey. We coarsened educational attainment and age in the CEM model, allowing for wider variance in the matches on those two variables. Educational attainment was included as a binary variable (received a bachelor's degree or higher, had not received a bachelor's degree), and we allowed for age matches within ten years (e.g., 20 years old to 30 years old). The final ANES comparison group included 1,511 of the 3,419 ANES respondents, with each individual in the comparison group assigned a weight to ensure multivariate balance across the treatment and control groups. (Multivariate distance of the treatment and control groups was 0.2; distributions for the matching variables are shown in Exhibits A-3 through A-7). The matches were not perfectly balanced across the Reading Partners alumni and ANES comparison groups, and, therefore, we include all of the variables used or tested in the matching analyses in our logistic and Poisson regression models.

Exhibit A-3. Age, ANES and Reading Partners alumni comparison groups

	ANES comparison group	Reading Partners alumni
Average age	29.8	29.8

Exhibit A-4. Race, ANES and Reading Partners comparison groups

	ANES	Reading Partners
White, non-Hispanic	52.6%	52.6%
Black, non-Hispanic	18.2	18.2
Asian, Native Hawai`ian, Pacific Islander	9.2	9.2
Hispanic or Latino	10.1	10.1
Other race/multi-racial	9.9	9.9

Exhibit A-5. Gender, ANES and Reading Partners alumni comparison groups

	ANES	Reading Partners
Male	13.1%	13.1%
Female	86.9	86.9

Exhibit A-6. Volunteering, ANES and Reading Partners alumni comparison groups

	ANES	Reading Partners
Did not volunteer in the last 12 months	12.5%	12.5%
Volunteered in the last 12 months	87.5	87.5

Exhibit A-7. Educational attainment, ANES and Reading Partners comparison groups

	ANES	Reading Partners
High school diploma	1.2%	0.21%
Some college, but less than a Bachelor's degree	23.4	5.2
Bachelor's degree	54.1	65.0
Additional degree beyond Bachelor's degree	21.3	29.6

General Social Survey (GSS)

We took a similar approach and used the same matching variables to construct the comparison group from the GSS data. Unfortunately, we were not able to find a large number of matches across the two survey respondent groups. Our final groups retained 375 of the Reading Partners alumni and 382 of the 2,349 respondents to the GSS, with a multivariate distance of less than 0.0001 (distributions for the variables used in the matching routine are shown in Exhibits A-8 through A-12. We include all of the matching variables in our regression models to account for the coarsening of the variables.

Exhibit A-8. Age, GSS and Reading Partners comparison groups

	GSS	Reading Partners
Average age	30.1	31.1

Exhibit A-9. Race, GSS and Reading Partners comparison groups

	GSS	Reading Partners
White, non-Hispanic	65.3%	65.3%
Black, non-Hispanic	22.4	22.4
Asian, Native Hawai'ian, Pacific Islander	7.5	7.5
Hispanic or Latino	3.5	3.5
Other race/multi-racial	4.3	4.3

Exhibit A-10. Gender, GSS and Reading Partners comparison groups

	GSS	Reading Partners
Male	12.5%	12.5%
Female	87.5%	87.5%

Exhibit A-11. Volunteering, GSS and Reading Partners comparison groups

	GSS	Reading Partners
Did not volunteer in the last 12 months	4.8%	4.8%
Volunteered in the last 12 months	95.2	95.2

Exhibit A-12. Educational attainment, GSS and Reading Partners comparison groups

	GSS	Reading Partners
High school diploma	2.5%	0.3%
Some college, but no degree	0.4	2.7
College degree	97.5	97.0

Comparative Analyses

We conducted two types of analyses to compare findings presented in the report.

For CNCS data, we used the data reported for AmeriCorps and VISTA respondents in the AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes survey to construct confidence intervals for the point estimates; we then compared the point estimates and calculated confidence intervals to the point estimates and confidence intervals for Reading Partners alumni.

To compare the responses of Reading Partners alumni to those from the two national surveys (ANES and GSS), we used weighted logistic and Poisson regression analyses. We analyzed individual variables using weighted logistic models appropriate for binary dependent variables, collapsing multiple response options into two categories. For example, the original form of the question asking respondents to judge their understanding of important political issues gave respondents five response options ranging from “Not very well” to “Extremely well,” into two categories: “Not very, slightly, or moderately well” and “Extremely or very well.” We then ran weighted logistic regressions, including the original forms of the variables included in the matching routine (individuals’ age, race, education, gender, and volunteering behavior over the last 12 months) as well as other variables that may relate to individuals’ political and civic engagement (marital status, religiosity, length of time living in their community, current employment status, and income).

For the analysis of each variable or index, we tested independent variables in the models independently, evaluating appropriate fit statistics with attention to multicollinearity issues, given that many of our independent variables are, for instance, often strongly correlated with age (e.g., income, marital status). The constructs, comparison group, question text, independent variables included in the final models used for reporting results, and the type of analysis we used are listed in Exhibit A-13.

Exhibit A-13. Analytic Models

Construct	Comparison group	Question(s)	Independent variables	Type of analysis
Employment sector	GSS	What are you doing now/for whom do you work?	Gender, race, age, marital status, educational attainment, current work status, income, religiosity.	Weighted logistic regression
Political knowledge	ANES	How well do you understand the important political questions facing our country? (1=Extremely or very well; 0=Moderately well, Slightly well, or Not at all well)	Gender, race, age, marital status, educational attainment, current work status, income, volunteerism, religiosity, community tenure.	Weighted logistic regression
Political expression	ANES	The following is a list of ways in which people have expressed their views. For each, select whether or not you have done this in the last 12 months (Range 0-5, 1 point for every action taken in the last 12 months): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joined a protest, march, rally, or demonstration; 2. Signed a petition about a political or social issue; 3. Given money to any organization concerned with a social or political cause (other than religious); 4. Contacted or tried to contact a member of Congress; 5. Given money to an individual political candidate. 	Gender, race, age, marital status, educational attainment, current work status, income, volunteerism, religiosity, community tenure.	Weighted Poisson regression
Voting behavior	ANES	Did you vote in the 2016 Presidential election? (1=Voted; 0=Did not vote)	Gender, race, age, marital status, educational attainment, current work status, income, volunteerism, religiosity, community tenure.	Weighted logistic regression
Volunteerism	ANES	In the last 12 months, did you (range 0-3; 1 point for each “yes” response): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with other people to deal with some issue facing your community; 2. Attend a meeting about an issue facing your community or schools; 3. Volunteer for a cause or issue that you care about. 	Gender, race, age, marital status, educational attainment, current work status, income, religiosity, community tenure.	Weighted Poisson regression
Social trust	ANES	Generally speaking, how well can you trust other people?	Gender, race, age, marital status, educational attainment, current work status, income, volunteerism, religiosity, community tenure.	Weighted logistic regression

**APPENDIX B:
READING PARTNERS
ALUMNI SURVEY**

Experience and Perceived Outcomes

The following questions ask about your Reading Partners AmeriCorps service experiences and the extent to which those experiences may have affected your attitudes and beliefs, as well as helped you to develop particular skills and abilities.

Q1. Thinking about your Reading Partners AmeriCorps experience, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

[Select one response in each row]

[Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree]

Question	Question source
a I felt I made a contribution to the community	CNCS
b I re-examined my beliefs and attitudes about myself	CNCS
c I was exposed to new ideas and ways of seeing the world	CNCS
d I felt part of a community	CNCS
e I developed a social network	
f I learned more about the "real" world or "the rest" of the world	CNCS
g I gained an understanding of the community(ies) where I served	CNCS
h I spent a lot of time doing meaningless "make work" tasks	CNCS
i The majority of my work did not make a difference in the community	CNCS
j I felt I made a difference in the life of at least one person	CNCS
k I did things I never thought I could do	CNCS
l I did not get along well with my supervisor and/or my teammates	CNCS
m I figured out what my next steps are in terms of educational goals	CNCS
n I figured out what my next steps are in terms of career/professional goals	CNCS
o I felt defeated by the scope of the problems I worked on	CNCS
p I re-examined my beliefs and attitudes about other people	CNCS

Q2. All things considered, how do you feel about your overall Reading Partners AmeriCorps service experience?

[Select one response]

[Very satisfied; Satisfied; Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; Dissatisfied; Very dissatisfied]

Source: CNCS

Q3. To what extent did your Reading Partners AmeriCorps experience help you increase each of the following skills?

[Select one response for each row]

[A great deal; Somewhat; Very little; Not at all; Not sure]

Question

- a Conducting yourself in a professional manner
- b Working independently
- c Meeting deadlines
- d Setting priorities for multiple tasks
- e Communicating verbally with others
- f Communicating in writing with others
- g Adapting to new situations
- h Responding to unexpected challenges
- i Working with people different from myself
- j Facilitating groups
- k Leading teams
- l Recruiting and/or managing community volunteers
- m Assessing problems and finding solutions
- n Planning, coordinating, and managing events
- o Exercising public responsibility and community service
- p Understanding politics and government
- q Working as part of a team
- r Working to solve problems in your community
- s Engaging in political activities after completing your AmeriCorps service
- t Developing relationships with others

Question

source

- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS
- CNCS

Q4. How much do you agree or disagree that your Reading Partners AmeriCorps service was a *defining professional experience*?

A defining experience is one that confirmed your professional goals or one that resulted in a change or shift in your professional goals.

[Select one response for each row]

[Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree]

Source: CNCS

Q5. Please elaborate on your response. How, if at all, did your Reading Partners AmeriCorps service affect your professional goals?

[Open-ended response]

Q6. After your Reading Partners AmeriCorps service, did you stay in the community in which you were serving?

Source: CNCS

- Yes, I was not originally from that community, but I stayed there after AmeriCorps for ***less than a year*** and then moved away
- Yes, I was not originally from that community, but I stayed there after AmeriCorps ***for a year or more*** and then moved away
- Yes, I was not originally from that community, but ***I still reside in the same community***
- Yes, I was originally from that community and I stayed there after AmeriCorps
- No, I was originally from that community but moved to a new community after AmeriCorps
- No, I moved back to where I was living before AmeriCorps
- No, I moved to a new community

Q7. Did you serve with another AmeriCorps program (either before or after your Reading Partners AmeriCorps experience)?

[Select one]

- Yes, I served with another AmeriCorps program **before** serving with Reading Partners
- Yes, I served with another AmeriCorps program **after** serving with Reading Partners
- No, I did not serve with another AmeriCorps program other than with Reading Partners

Education

The next set of questions ask about your education and career pathways and future plans.

Q8. What was the highest level of school that you had completed or the highest degree that you had received at the time you began your service with Reading Partners?

[Select one]

- High school diploma
- Some college, but no degree earned
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Some graduate school (e.g., coursework toward earning a Master's, Doctoral, or Professional Degree)
- Master's degree
- Doctorate (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D.)
- Professional degree (e.g., M.D., D.D.S., J.D., D.V.M.)
- Other [please specify]
- Don't know or can't remember

Q9. Did you complete additional years of schooling after you served with Reading Partners?

[Yes; No]

Display next 2 questions if respondent answered "Yes" to Q9:

Q10. Why did you decide to continue your education after your Reading Partners service experience?

[Open ended]

Q11. As of today, what is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

[Select one]

- High school diploma
- Some college, but no degree
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D.)
- Professional degree (e.g., M.D., D.D.S., J.D., D.V.M.)
- Other [please specify]

Q12. Do you plan to pursue more education in the future?

[Yes; No]

Display next question if respondent answered "Yes" to Q12:

Q13. What additional education do you plan to pursue?

[Open ended]

Q14. Did your Reading Partners experience influence your future educational plans?

[Yes; No]

Display next question if respondent answered "Yes" to Q14:

Q15. In what ways has your Reading Partners experience influenced your future educational plans?

[Open ended]

Career

Q15. We'd like to know if you are working now, temporarily laid off, or are you unemployed, retired, permanently disabled, a homemaker, a student, or what?

[Select one]

[Source: ANES]

- Working now
- In another service program (e.g., another AmeriCorps program; a VISTA project; Peace Corps) or other volunteering
- Temporarily laid off
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Permanently disabled
- Homemaker
- Student (not working)
- Student (also working)
- Other [please specify]

Display next 2 questions if q15 "Working now" OR "Student (also working)":

Q16. What are you doing now?

[Select all that apply]

[Source: CNCS]

- Working in the non-profit sector
- Working in the private sector
- Working in government or in the public sector
- Serving in the military
- Self-employed
- Working as a supervisor or in a management capacity

Q17. Which of the following best describes the field in which you currently work?

[Select all that apply].

Architecture and Engineering	Arts (Visual or Performing)
Business and Financial Services	Community, Social Services, or Non-Profit sector
Education (Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary)	Education (Post-secondary)
Healthcare	Law Enforcement or Security Services
Legal Services	Library or Information Science
Office and Administrative Support	Physical or Life Sciences
Public Sector or Politics	Research and Evaluation
Restaurant or Food Service	Sales or Retail
Technology	Other [please specify]

Display next questions if q15 "Temporarily laid off" OR "Unemployed" OR "Retired" OR

Q18. What are you doing now?

[Select all that apply]

[Source: CNCS]

Looking for work

- Engaging in other volunteer service
- Making plans to attend school
- Attending undergraduate, graduate, or a professional school (e.g., law school)
- Enrolled in a certificate, technical, or vocational program
- None of the above
- Other [please specify]

Display next questions if q15 "In another service program":

Q19. What are you doing now?

[Select all that apply]

[Source: CNCS]

- Looking for work
- Making plans to attend school
- Attending undergraduate, graduate, or a professional school (e.g., law school)
- Enrolled in a certificate, technical, or vocational program
- Other [please specify]

Q20. To what extent did your Reading Partners AmeriCorps experience prepare you for your current job/service activity?

[Not at all; Very little; Somewhat; Very much]

[Select one]

Q21. To what extent did your Reading Partners AmeriCorps experience influence your chosen career path?

[Not at all; Very little; Somewhat; Very much]

[Select one]

Q22. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means "not at all well" and 7 means "extremely well," please rate your skills in several areas.

Compared to other people, how good are you at:

- Supervising others
- Being a leader
- Logical, analytical thinking
- Helping others solve their problems

Civic Engagement

Q23. Prior to serving as a Reading Partners AmeriCorps member, how many years of experience did you have working or volunteering in social services, youth services, or community organizations?

[Select one]

- None
- Less than a year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

**Q24. In the last 12 months, how often did you participate in the following activities?
[Select one response in each row]**

[Basically every day; A few times a week; A few times a month; Once a month; Less than once a month; Not at all]

Question	Source
a Participate in community organizations (school; religious; issue-based; recreational)	CNCS
b Keep informed about news and public issues	CNCS
c Help to keep the community safe and clean	CNCS
d Volunteer for a cause or issue that I care about	CNCS, ANES
e Donate money or goods to a cause or issue that I care about	CNCS
f Work with other people to deal with some issue facing your community	ANES
g Attend a meeting about an issue facing your community or schools	ANES

Q25. If you found out about a problem in your community that you wanted to do something about, how well do you think you would be able to do in each of the following?

[Select one response in each row]

[I definitely could do this; I could probably do this; Not sure; I probably could not do this; I definitely could not do this]

Question	Source
a Create a plan to address a problem	CNCS
b Get other people to care about the problem	CNCS
c Organize and run a meeting	CNCS
d Express your views in front of a group of people	CNCS
e Identify individuals or groups who could help you with the problem	CNCS
f Express your views on the internet or through social media	CNCS
g Call someone on the phone you had never met before to get their help with the problem	CNCS
h Contact an elected official about the problem	CNCS
i Run for public office	

In talking to people about elections, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote because they weren't registered, they were sick, or they didn't have time. Which of the following statements best describes you?

Q26. Regarding the 2016 presidential election? *[Select one]*

- I did not vote (in the presidential election in 2016)
- I thought about voting, but didn't
- I usually vote, but didn't vote in 2016
- I am sure I voted
- I can't remember if I voted
- Other [please specify]

Q27. Regarding the most recent mid-term election in November 2018? *[Select one]*

- I did not vote in the most recent election (in November 2016)
- I thought about voting, but didn't
- I usually vote, but didn't vote in 2018
- I am sure I voted
- I can't remember if I voted
- Other [please specify]

Q28. Think about your activities in the last 12 months when answering the following questions.

[Select one response for each row]

[Basically every day; A few times a week; A few times a month; Once a month; Less than once a month; Not at all]

Question	Source
a How often did you discuss politics with friends or family?	CNCS
b How often did you use the Internet to express your opinions about political or community issues (e.g., posted on Facebook or Twitter; Commented on a news story)	CNCS
c How often did you try to encourage others to participate in the community?	CNCS
d How often did you are your neighbors do favors for one another?	CNCS

Q29. The following is a list of some other ways in which people have expressed their views. For each one listed, select whether or not you have done this in the past 12 months.

[No, I have never done this; Yes, I have done this but not in the last 12 months; Yes, I have done this in the last 12 months; Prefer not to respond]

Question	Source
a Joined in a protest march, rally, or demonstration	ANES
b Signed a petition about a political or social issue	ANES
c Given money to a religious organization	ANES
d Given money to any other organization concerned with a social or political issue—other than a religious organization	ANES
e Boycotted a product or service because of the social or political values of the company that provides it	CNCS
f Contacted or tried to contact a member of the US Senate or US House of Representatives	ANES
g Contacted or tried to contact a local elected or non-elected official	
h Given money to an individual candidate running for public office	ANES

Q30. How well do you understand the important political questions facing our country?

[Extremely well; Very well; Moderately well; Slightly well; Not at all well]

[Source: ANES]

Q31. Generally speaking, how often can you trust other people?

[Always; Most of the time; About half the time; Some of the time; Never]

[Source: ANES]

Q32. The following statements are about equal rights. For each statement, indicate whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly.

[Select one response for each row]

[Disagree strongly; Disagree somewhat; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree somewhat; Agree strongly]

Question

- a Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed
- b We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country
- c It is not really that big of a problem if some people have more of a chance in life than others
- d If people were treated more equally in this country we would have many fewer problems

**Q33. All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?
Would you say that you are?**

[Extremely satisfied; Very satisfied; Moderately satisfied; Slightly satisfied; Not at all satisfied]

[Source: ANES]

Demographics and Background

Q34. What is your gender?

[Select one]

[Male; Female; Other]

Q35. Please choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be.

[Select all that apply]

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African-American
- Latino or Hispanic
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other

Q36. What is your marital status?

[Select one]

- Married
- Divorced
- Separated
- Widowed
- Never married

Q37. How long have you lived in your present community?

[Select one]

- Less than 6 months
- More than 6 months, but less than a year
- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- 5 years
- 6 years
- 7 years
- 8 years
- 9 years
- 10 years
- More than 10 years

We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. The next questions are about the total income of all members of your family living in your house in 2018, before taxes. This figure should include income from all sources, including salaries, wages, pensions, Social Security, dividends, interest, and all other income.

Q38. Is your household income less than \$40,000, more than \$40,000, about \$40,000, or don't you know?

[Select one]

- Less than \$40,000
- More than \$40,000
- About \$40,000
- Don't know

Display next question if Q38="Less than \$40,000"

Q39. Which category best describes your total household income?

[Select one]

- \$20,000 or more
- Less than \$20,000

Display next question if Q38="More than \$40,000"

Q40. Which category best describes your total household income?

[Select one]

- \$70,000 or more
- Less than \$70,000

Display next question if Q38="More than \$40,000" AND Q40 "\$70,000 or more"

Q41. Which category best describes your total household income?

[Select one]

- \$100,000 or more
- Less than \$100,000

Q42. Is religion an important part of your life?

[Select one]

- Yes, religion is an important part of my life
- No, religion is not an important part of my life

Display next question if Q42="Yes, religion is an important part of my life"

Q43. Lots of things come up that keep people from attending religious services even if they want to.

Thinking about your life these days, do you ever attend religious services, apart from occasional weddings or funerals?

[Select one]

[Yes; No]

Q44. Do you go to religious services...

[Select one]

[Never; A few times a year; Once or twice a month; Almost every week; Every week]

