



Expanding Service Years in States

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America's
Service
Commissions
American Association
of State Service Commissions

Foreword

Partnership with America's Service Commissions and the State Service Commission Network

By Kaira Esgate

CEO, America's Service Commissions

On behalf of the network of 52 state and territorial service commissions, America's Service Commissions (ASC) is delighted to join forces with the Service Year Alliance and CNCS to feature innovative strategies and promising models for expanding service year positions around the country. At their core, state service commissions model the best in public-private partnerships by leveraging public funding (federal, state, and local) in combination with private dollars to support opportunities for community members to have significant impact in their respective communities.

Over the course of the past 20 years, state service commissions have partnered with governors and other elected officials to demonstrate that service is a cost-effective strategy to address both emerging and persistent community needs in education, health and human needs, public safety, disaster preparedness and response, as well as environmental stewardship. Further, through the creation of service years via programs such as AmeriCorps, elected officials and state service commissions provide real-life educational and professional development opportunities

for the next generation of leaders in their states.

The examples shared in this toolkit serve as concrete examples of how elected officials, no matter what their political affiliation, have advanced service strategies in partnership with their state service commissions. ASC is pleased to join the Service Year Alliance in highlighting the work of our member state service commissions and their efforts to expand service years so that every young person who wishes to do so has the opportunity to serve in a meaningful and impactful manner.

AmeriCorps: Tapping the Power of Citizens to Get Things Done

By Kim Mansaray

Acting CEO, Corporation for National and Community Service

At a time of social need and fiscal constraint, governors are increasingly turning to AmeriCorps and other service year programs as a smart, cost-effective strategy to address challenges in their states.

As the federal agency for service and volunteering, the Corporation for National and Community Service is pleased to join Service Year Alliance and America's Service Commissions to share the many creative ways governors are using service years to improve lives and communities.

AmeriCorps taps our nation's greatest resource - the ingenuity and can-do spirit of our people - to get things done. Over the past quarter century, more than 1 million Americans have served in AmeriCorps - making a powerful and lasting difference in their communities while earning \$3 billion in college scholarships and gaining skills needed for 21st century jobs.

With 80,000 members serving in 20,000 locations every year, AmeriCorps is vital resource for the nation's governors and state legislators. AmeriCorps members mentor and tutor at-risk youth, rebuild communities struck by natural disasters, help seniors live independently, support veterans and military families, and recruit and manage millions of volunteers to meet pressing community needs.

When Congress created AmeriCorps, it envisioned it as a joint state-federal undertaking, giving Governors a key role in deciding where resources go. Three-quarters of AmeriCorps funding is managed by governor-appointed State Service Commissions that identify local needs, monitor grantees, carry out governor priorities, and lead citizen service efforts in their states. These State Service Commissions are invaluable partners to CNCS.

As you learn about the creative ways governors around the country are using service year programs to engage young adults in service, we encourage you to tap the wisdom and experience of your

older citizens. Our Senior Corps program engage 245,000 older Americans in high-impact service to meet state and local needs.

A Vision for Service Years in States

By Shirley Sagawa

President & CEO, Service Year Alliance

States have long played a leadership role in national service for good reasons. Engaging young adults in full-time service offers a triple bottom line -- providing human capital to solve important problems facing local communities; offering life-transforming opportunities to Americans of all backgrounds; all while building stronger communities, often across societal divides.

Despite decades of success, national service remains an underutilized strategy. This document offers examples of ways that governors and other state leaders have innovated through service, tapping a variety of funding streams to make service year experience a powerful option for young adults in their states.

Service Year Alliance stands ready to help state policymakers and other leaders who share our goal of making a year of service a common expectation and opportunity for all young Americans.

Introduction

The Expanding Service Years in States Toolkit is a joint effort between Service Year Alliance, America's Service Commissions and the Corporation for National and Community Service. This toolkit is designed to highlight ways in which governors, state legislators, and other elected officials can embrace service as a strategy to address the needs of their communities.

The toolkit outlines ways in which governors and other elected officials have leveraged federal as well as state, local, and private resources to expand full-time service opportunities, known as service years. We hope this toolkit will serve as an inspiration and guide for state leaders to to expand service opportunities through diverse funding sources to meet pressing economic and social needs.

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What is a Service Year and What are State Service Commissions?



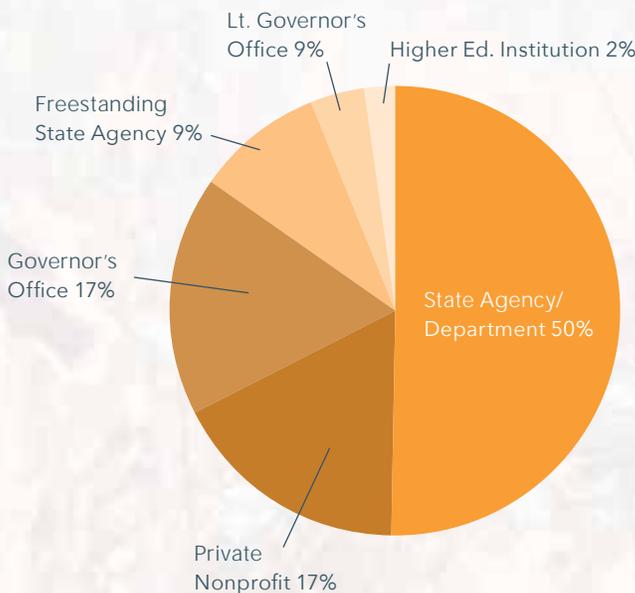
A service year is a paid opportunity to develop real-world skills through hands-on service. From fighting poverty to working with kids to responding to natural disasters – a service year is a meaningful and fulfilling way to tackle the most pressing challenges facing our nation in programs like AmeriCorps, YouthBuild, and thousands of others.

Currently, most domestic service years are funded as part of the AmeriCorps program administered by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Building on this foundation, there is tremendous opportunity for governors, state legislators and other elected officials around the nation to expand service years in their states to address pressing community needs, advance governor priorities, and provide valuable professional and educational experiences to individuals completing a service year.

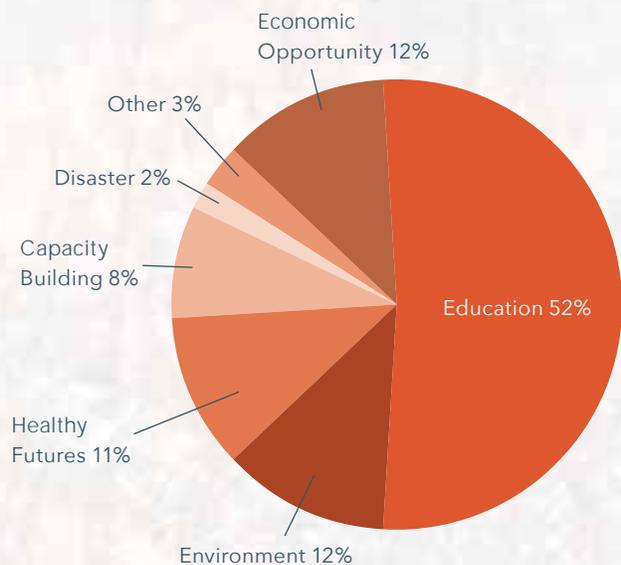
Governors and other elected officials have a powerful partner in expanding AmeriCorps and other service year opportunities within their states – state service commissions. When Congress created CNCS in 1993, it envisioned national service as a shared federal-state partnership, creating a central role for governors in designing and implementing service through state service commissions. These commissions are a vital resource that help governors and other elected officials tap the power of citizens to solve problems and strengthen communities. The nation’s 52 governor-appointed state service commissions are responsible for administering approximately three-fourths of AmeriCorps funding awarded by CNCS on an annual basis.

In addition, state service commissions play a central role in advancing service as a strategy in their respective states, through determining the needs in their state, setting policy and program priorities, competitively awarding AmeriCorps and other grants (federal and state) to local nonprofits and agencies, providing training and technical assistance, monitoring grantees to ensure quality and compliance with federal and state law, and broadly promoting service and volunteering in their states. Commissions also support key governor initiatives, such as decreasing high school dropout rates, expanding mentoring, helping veterans transition to civilian life, and managing volunteers and donations in response to disasters. In many instances, state service commissions also support service and volunteer recruitment and recognition efforts in the state in partnership with the governor, the office of the first spouse, and/or the lieutenant governor.

State Service Commissions by Organization Type



State Commission AmeriCorps Programs by Issue Area



A photograph of a man and a woman standing outdoors. The man is on the left, wearing an orange jacket over a light blue shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing an orange jacket over a white shirt. They are both smiling. The background is a blurred fence. A large orange banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text 'Why Expand Service Years?'.

Why Expand Service Years?

Despite the economic recovery that most states have experienced since the Great Recession, governors and state legislators continue to look for ways in which to address the issues facing their communities. In addition, young people throughout the country are seeking ways to make a difference in their communities, expand their professional skill sets, and fund their increasing higher education expenses. Service years provide a win-win solution for elected officials, young people, and communities alike.

State leaders are facing a variety of challenges that service years can address, including:

- Significant social challenges that require human capital;
- Racial, economic, religious, and political divisions, with trust in one another at historic lows;
- 5.5 million young adults who are not in school or working;
- Civic participation that is atrophying; and,
- A 21st century skills gap that is leaving millions of Americans behind.

Service years represent a cost-effective and outcomes-driven solution to solving challenges in states and communities nationwide. Individuals completing a service year tackle tough challenges – helping students graduate, rebuilding communities after disasters, supporting veterans and military families, reducing crime and revitalizing inner cities, helping seniors live independently, preparing students for the 21st century workforce, preventing substance abuse and more. AmeriCorps and other service year corps members expand the reach and impact of thousands of nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations through their direct service and by recruiting and supervising millions of other volunteers to serve.

Service years are a model of public-private partnership. In 2015, CNCS-supported programs generated \$1.26 billion in outside resources from private businesses, foundations, and other sources in support of service year opportunities – an amount exceeding the federal appropriation. These investments stretch the federal dollar and demonstrate confidence in the ability of service years to deliver results on America’s most pressing challenges. Further, research has documented that for every federal dollar invested in service year opportunities, there is nearly a four dollar return on investment.

Service years help young people define their career pathways and assist them in moving to the next step. Forty-three percent of AmeriCorps alumni state that their service year was aligned with their career path, and 79 percent say that their service year was a defining professional experience.

In addition, service years completed through the AmeriCorps program help individuals cover higher education expenses by providing access to education awards that can be used to pay for college tuition or to pay down student loan debt. Since 1994, AmeriCorps alumni have earned more than \$3.3 billion to assist with college expenses.



How to Expand Service Years



Leverage Existing Public Investments to Build Service Year Opportunities

Billions of public dollars are invested annually in the areas of education, public safety, health and human needs, and environmental stewardship. These federal and state investments address critical needs; however, their impact could be expanded by leveraging these investments to support service year opportunities. Education funding can support living allowances and training opportunities for individuals serving as tutors. Public safety funds can engage service year corps members in community policing and outreach efforts to reduce crime. Community health funding can support education and prevention activities in underserved communities. Funds dedicated to environmental stewardship can engage service year corps members in maintaining state parks and public lands, watershed restoration and the adoption of energy efficiency practices. With modest investments of state or state-allocated federal funds, governors can create cost-effective service year opportunities that expand the reach and impact of public dollars while also exposing service year corps members to potential career paths and building their professional skills.

Reading Corps and Math Corps

In Minnesota, education policy leaders saw a consistent gap between literacy science and the capacity of Minnesota's schools to effectively use proven research and tools to secure proficient reading skills for students in the shortest amount of time. In 2002, state legislative leader and (soon to be Commissioner of Education) Alice Seagren, who at the time was simultaneously serving as a board member for ServeMinnesota and as chair of the Minnesota House's K-12 finance committee, was charged with crafting a solution to the state's persistently high rates of early literacy failure.

From Seagren's original vision, Reading Corps was launched in a handful of Head Start sites in 2003 and has expanded to more than 2,000 AmeriCorps members providing individualized tutoring to

children age 3 to grade 3 who are not on track to read proficiently by the end of the third grade in 700 preschools and elementary schools throughout Minnesota. Building on the success of Reading Corps and using a similar model, Minnesota Math Corps was launched in 2007 to address the math needs of 4th-8th grade students. Today, Reading Corps has spread to 12 additional states and the District of Columbia. After initial one-time funding of \$150,000, the Minnesota legislature has continually increased the state appropriation for these programs from \$900,000 in 2006 to now \$5.2 million annually. Two rigorous evaluations of the Minnesota Reading Corps conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago found that AmeriCorps members produced significantly greater increases in students' literacy outcomes, and that the model is highly replicable in multiple settings.

Washington Vet Corps

In partnership with the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, Serve Washington supports 50 AmeriCorps members who serve as peer mentors/navigators to veterans, active duty military, and military families at colleges and community partner sites across the state.

The unique state-federal partnership between our state service commission and CNCS provides vital, cost-effective services to communities across Washington State by harnessing the power of our state's most valuable resource - its people.

- Governor Jay Inslee (D), Washington

Each year, AmeriCorps members – many of whom are veterans themselves – are responsible for outreach to 9,000 veterans and/or families on and off campus, connecting 400 individuals to services and benefits, as well as training 1,500 faculty,

staff, administrators, and community stakeholders on veterans' cultural competency. This support increases the success of veterans transitioning from military service to civilian life. Other states have created Veterans Corps as a cost-effective way of providing employment services, benefits counseling, transportation, housing support, and other services to veterans and military families.

Conservation and Green Corps

For the last 40 years, states around the nation have supported conservation corps efforts at both the state and local level. Today, conservation corps programming exists in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, engaging more than 24,000 young people ages 16-25 in conservation projects ranging from habitat restoration, disaster preparedness, as well as creating and maintaining parks and trails. In some states, these corps are administered by state conservation or parks agencies. Funding to support conservation corps is commonly a mixture of state funding, and funds from federal agencies including CNCS, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Forest Service. In recent years, many conservation corps programs have expanded and new Green Corps programs have been created to focus on energy conservation projects, such as weatherization, all while training corps members for future careers in conservation.

Refugee RISE AmeriCorps

The Refugee RISE (Rebuild, Integrate, Serve, Empower) AmeriCorps program in Iowa currently pairs AmeriCorps members with refugees to provide services, education, training, and self-sufficiency counseling to other newcomers. Currently, \$300,000 in state funds serve as match to support the program. Since the launch of the program in 2015, more than 400 refugees have received services to assist with access to basic human services as well as connections to education and workforce development resources. Legislation has been introduced to provide additional funding to expand the pilot program currently operating in three communities statewide.

Empire Corps

The New York State Department of State (DOS) Empire Corps places AmeriCorps members across the state to make up a core team responsible for beginning efforts to alleviate poverty in 16 communities through the provision of services relating to workforce development, housing, and health. This program is part of the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative, launched in 2016 to accelerate poverty reduction in the Bronx, Rochester, Syracuse, Binghamton, Oneonta, Buffalo, Utica, Elmira, Jamestown, Oswego, Troy, Hempstead, Newburgh, Niagara Falls, Watertown, and Albany. Empire Corps serves in City Halls and at nonprofit organizations that provide critical services, such as health care, education and mentoring, financial literacy and skills development for disadvantaged New Yorkers. For 2016-2017, approximately \$337,000 in public funding from New York State, as well as funding from local nonprofits, serves as match to support the Empire Corps.

Cultivate a Culture of Service in State Agencies and Departments

Governors play a critical role in directing the approach and work of state agencies and departments. By encouraging state agencies and departments to incorporate service models into their delivery systems, investing in volunteer engagement training to better understand effective practices and approaches, and conducting assessments of current service and volunteer opportunities within state government, governors can ensure that state governments embraces service as a strategy in conducting daily business. Further, this approach has many benefits including meeting state and local needs, building an ethic of civic engagement, uniting citizens from different backgrounds, and often saving tax dollars. By raising the profile of service through the creation of a Secretary of Service/Chief State Service Officer, governors can ensure that service strategies are considered at the highest levels of state government.



National Service is an essential part of the solution to many of the challenges facing our state. These AmeriCorps members will meet pressing local needs and strengthen our communities as they develop civic and leadership skills to last a lifetime. I congratulate these outstanding organizations and thank all those who serve their communities through AmeriCorps.

*- Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval (R)
announces AmeriCorps grants to Nevada organizations*



Creation of Cabinet Secretary of Service/Chief Service Officer

In 2008, then California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (R), signed an executive order creating the nation's first Cabinet-level Secretary of Service and Volunteering to lead the state service commission, CaliforniaVolunteers, and advise the Governor and other members of his Cabinet on strategies to integrate service year opportunities into state initiatives and programming. During this time, state agencies and departments, including the California Department of Veteran Affairs and California Conservation Corps, worked with CaliforniaVolunteers to leverage AmeriCorps and other funding sources to expand service year opportunities in the state.

affected by the state's drought from private property. With its increased profile in state government, CaliforniaVolunteers is able to position itself, and service strategies, as a valuable partner in solving myriad challenges throughout the state.

Governor's Council on National Service in Iowa

In 2014, via executive action, Iowa Governor Terry Branstad (R) directed Volunteer Iowa (also known as the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service) to support the creation of the Governor's Council on National Service to develop a set of recommendations to expand service and volunteering opportunities in the state of Iowa. The Council's final report included recommendations for policies and practices to expand service as well as

Service is a powerful tool for governors and mayors to leverage our people power to meet our most pressing challenges. Building the investment and ownership in our communities through civic engagement will pay enormous dividends both immediately and for generations to come. In fact, recent research has shown a direct correlation between civic engagement and the strength of local economies, as well as the physical health of our residents. To me, service is a "no brainer". I hope and encourage you to find this out for yourself.

- Governor Terry E. Branstad (R), Iowa

Building on his commitment to service which included the establishment of the California Conservation Corps in 1976, current Governor Jerry Brown (D) has continued this role, now known as the Chief Service Officer. Currently, CaliforniaVolunteers is working with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to identify suitable service and volunteer opportunities within the state's prison system. Further, by serving on the State Tree Mortality and Drought Task Forces, CaliforniaVolunteers was able to assist in developing service year opportunities to assist in removing trees

public-private partnership opportunities. To date, through implementation of the recommendations, Iowa has increased the number of national service programs and participants by approximately 20 percent.

State Employment Hiring Preferences/ Retirement Service Credits

Inspired by the Corporation for National and Community Service's Employers of National Service initiative and other similar efforts, states around the nation have joined Employers of National Service by developing hiring preferences and offering



retirement service credits for individuals completing a year or more in a domestic national service position or term as a Peace Corps volunteer. As of 2016, the states of Virginia and Montana have joined and provided hiring preferences for AmeriCorps and Peace Corps alumni. In addition, states such as California provide individuals completing a service year the opportunity to purchase retirement service credits in the state public retirement system.

Incentivize Service Years as a Path to Higher Education

With the rising costs of higher education, elected officials can incentivize individuals to serve by reducing the cost of tuition at public colleges and universities. By matching the value of the federal education award earned by AmeriCorps members, providing in-state tuition for those serving in the state, offering academic credit for service years, or offering admissions preferences for those completing a service year, elected officials can do a great deal to put students on a path of service. Further, eliminating state taxation on the value of the AmeriCorps education award stretches the impact the award has in financing post-secondary education. Finally, investments in service year opportunities in K-12 schools as well as career/guidance counseling that highlights service year opportunities exposes potential service year corps members to the various options that are available to them.

Connecting Service Year Experiences to Academic Credit

In 2016, Governor Terry McAuliffe (D) and First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe worked with college and university presidents throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Aspen Institute's Franklin Project (now part of Service Year Alliance) to develop the Virginia Compact on National Service. The compact outlines ways in which colleges and universities will support the creation of additional service years through aligning service years to academic credit, providing admission preferences and/or enrollment deferrals to students completing a year of service, as well as raising the profile of service year opportunities through recognition programming and integrating service into other existing efforts. As a

part of the Compact, college and university leaders around the state meet regularly to highlight effective practices and identify expansion opportunities.

Waiving Taxation on the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award

Currently, AmeriCorps alumni using their Segal AmeriCorps Education Award are required to pay federal and state income tax on the value of the award. In 2009, the Iowa State Legislature passed a bill to eliminate state tax on the value of the education award. This provision took effect January 1, 2010 and since that time, a taxpayer may exclude from Iowa individual income tax any amount of the AmeriCorps Segal Education Award to the extent the education award was reported as income on the federal tax return. Since taking affect, the Education Tax Credit has assisted more than 8,000 Iowa AmeriCorps members, saving them more than \$847,500 in taxes.

Match the Education Award at Public Universities

Around the nation, 60 public colleges and universities (and 180 total) match the value of the education award earned by individuals completing an AmeriCorps term of service. AmeriCorps members earn an education award after completing a full-year term of AmeriCorps service. The value of the education award and match is approximately the equivalent to that of the average cost of one-year of tuition at a public four-year university. This incentive is powerful in encouraging young people to complete a service year as a means to fund their education and it's an excellent way for public universities to attract talented, experienced, and civic-minded students to attend their institutions.

In-state Tuition for Those Who Serve

In 2016, the Arizona Legislature enacted House Bill 2547 which allows individuals who served in AmeriCorps in Arizona for at least one year to be classified as in-state students for the purposes of public university tuition in the state. Governor Ducey (R) signed the legislation into law and it became effective on August 6, 2016. Given that Arizona State University is the largest public university in the country, this legislation has the potential to



“To build the new Virginia economy and make this Commonwealth a world-class place to live, work, and raise a family, we need to attract the best and brightest people to work in state government. AmeriCorps and Peace Corps alumni have skills, dedication, a can-do attitude, and a commitment to the greater good - and we want more of them to join our team.

*- Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe (D)
announces Virginia becoming an Employer of National Service*



incentivize individuals completing a year of service in the state of Arizona. In addition, in January 2017, the Wyoming Legislature introduced similar legislation to encourage service within the state of Wyoming.

Invest in Statewide Service Infrastructure and Programming

State service commissions play a critical role in supporting the development of high-quality service year opportunities. By providing state funding to secure the required match for federal administrative funds available to state service commissions, governors ensure that sufficient resources are available to explore and build partnerships that lead to new service year opportunities. In nearly half the states, these state service commissions are actively involved in disaster response activities, often serving as the designated lead organization for volunteer and donations management in partnership with the state emergency management agency.

Further, state service commissions are well-positioned to provide technical assistance to state agencies and departments and other statewide organizations in developing service positions in support of each organization's respective mission. For example, beyond its partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Serve Washington partners with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington State Employment Security Department, as well as the Department of Ecology and other natural resource departments to support more than 1,000 service year positions throughout the state.

Establish a State Service Corps

In 2007, the Massachusetts Governor and state legislature created the Commonwealth Corps to engage Massachusetts residents of all ages and backgrounds in direct service to rebuild communities

and address unmet community needs. Each year, the Massachusetts Service Alliance selects host sites for Commonwealth Corps members. Full-time corps members serve 10.5 months and receive a living stipend, health insurance, and a completion award (up to \$2,500). Since the inception of this fully state-funded program, more than 950 Commonwealth Corps members have served in the program. In 2016, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan (R), signed legislation creating the Maryland Corps which upon its launch will provide similar service year opportunities in the state of Maryland.

Raise the Profile of Service through Recognition Programming

Governors have a unique role and opportunity to highlight service year opportunities and recognize the efforts of those who serve. By utilizing the prestige of the governor's office, governors, first spouses, or lieutenant governors can increase understanding of the impact of service years in local communities in addition to recognizing the efforts of community members. Governors throughout the country have supported annual recognition events for their states' outstanding service year participants and volunteers in addition to daily, weekly, and/or monthly recognition programming.

During the past two years, Florida Governor Rick Scott (R) has presented the Florida Champion of Service Award to nearly 100 individuals and organizations. These awards are typically presented during Florida Cabinet meetings, providing prestige and media attention and highlighting the role of citizens in improving their communities. Award recipients must demonstrate excellence in volunteerism, community service, national service, and civic, social, or corporate responsibility. Recognition at this level helps spur interest in volunteering, demonstrates the Governor's commitment to civic engagement, and positions service as a meaningful way to address the needs of the state.

Leverage Federal Funding Sources/Models to Create Service Years

Governors have a long legacy of creating service year opportunities to target emerging state and community priorities. In recent years, governors in 13 states have partnered with the Corporation for National and Community Service as part of its Governors and Mayor Initiative to develop new AmeriCorps programs that address priority issues. Nearly \$8.7 million in federal funding provided by CNCS has been matched through a mixture of state, local, and private funding – exceeding the value of the federal investment – to create nearly 1,700 new AmeriCorps positions to address a range of issues including dropout prevention, public safety, childhood literacy, workforce readiness, environmental stewardship, mentoring, watershed protection, and more.

AmeriCorps Urban Safety Corps

In 2013, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder (R) and former Detroit Mayor Dave Bing (D) partnered to launch the Detroit Urban Safety Corps as part of CNCS' Governors Initiative. This AmeriCorps program, now known as the AmeriCorps Urban Safety Corps, is hosted by Wayne State University and engages AmeriCorps members in activities to increase public safety and decrease victimization in targeted neighborhoods. AmeriCorps members work with residents and community groups to form neighborhood block clubs and resident patrols, recruit and engage landlords and tenants in neighborhood safety and revitalization projects, and implement safe pathways for students in their daily commutes to neighborhood schools. In the neighborhoods where AmeriCorps members serve, crime has declined by 26 percent and 58 percent in Midtown, an estimated savings of \$302 million in law enforcement costs. Since the launch of the AmeriCorps Urban Safety Corps in Detroit, the program has expanded to Flint, Michigan and additional communities around the country are working on replication.

Partnerships with Other Federal Agencies

In 2013, President Barack Obama signed a Presidential Memorandum to create the Task Force for Expanding National Service to engage more Americans in results-driven service; expand economic and educational opportunities for those who serve; enhance federal agencies' capacity to achieve their missions and more efficiently use tax dollars; and build the pipeline of Americans ready to enter public service. Chaired by the CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Task Force developed strategies to expand national service in collaboration with 13 participating federal agencies and the private sector. CNCS developed funding relationships with other federal agencies in which national service funds provided by CNCS were matched by other federal agencies or the private sector to create new service year opportunities to address pressing challenges, including turning around low-performing schools, advancing STEM and computer science education, restoring public lands, and connecting at-risk youth with mentors and career opportunities. In total, more than \$194 million was invested in this approach resulting in 10,000 new AmeriCorps positions. In many instances, states have used a similar approach to develop funding relationships with other state agencies utilizing state and federal funds to create new service year opportunities that address critical state priorities.

Address the Opioid Epidemic and other Emerging Challenges

National service and service year programs are flexible and can evolve to meet emerging needs. In response to the growing prescription drug and opioid abuse crisis, CNCS has placed a funding priority for programs addressing opioid abuse in its 2017 AmeriCorps funding competition. The agency has also prioritized funding for programs addressing civil unrest and the breakdown of trust between police and community members. CNCS has also provided grants to 22 state service commissions to help them identify and develop new AmeriCorps programs to tackle these emerging issues. Governors and other elected officials are in a position to replicate such efforts by directing funding to state

service commissions and other organizations to explore and develop service-based program models that would address emerging needs and priorities. For example, in Arizona, the state service commission acted on Arizona Governor Ducey's concerns about drug abuse by making substance abuse a priority in the state AmeriCorps funding competition. After extensive outreach, two organizations became AmeriCorps grantees, including the Administrative Offices of the Arizona Supreme Court.

Other Strategies

Encourage Companies and Philanthropy to Support Service Years

Through their interactions with corporate and philanthropic leaders, governors can encourage private investment to expand service year opportunities, especially in areas of critical importance for the state. Corporate and philanthropic dollars can fund the required federal match for AmeriCorps positions. In addition, such investments can create and/or match state funding to develop new service year opportunities that align with the giving priorities of companies and foundations alike. Further, companies can leverage their corporate engagement efforts by engaging employees in the development of new service year opportunities and/or creating service year opportunities to more effectively leverage the skills and interests of employees donating their time to local nonprofit organizations. Finally, foundations can prioritize grant funds to organizations that identify and commit a portion of their grant funds to support service years and other volunteer opportunities.

Make a Call to Service

Governors can generate interest and share a vision for increased civic engagement for their states through a call to service. By challenging community members to serve, and providing incentives for doing so, including reduced tuition at public colleges and universities, governors make a powerful statement regarding the importance of service years to address community needs. Governors can leverage all of the tools at their disposal, including speeches, social media, and special events, to ask and inspire community members to make a commitment to service. In addition, governors, first spouses, or lieutenant governors participation in national days of service, such as the MLK Day of Service, as well as AmeriCorps swearing ins and graduation ceremonies, provides another venue to model the call to service.

Host a Statewide Service and Volunteering Conference

Governors and state service commissions around the country host statewide service and volunteering conferences as a way to highlight best practices, encourage growth and innovation strategies, and raise the profile of programs and activities that are achieving demonstrable impact in local communities. These events are often coupled with statewide recognition activities that further bolster the impact of service year programming and initiatives throughout the states. By bringing together thought leaders and practitioners around the latest in research and effective practices, governors and other elected officials can encourage the expansion of service year positions.

NOTE:

This toolkit focuses on opportunities for governors and state legislators to expand service year opportunities targeted for individuals ages 18-28. However, many of the same strategies outlined can apply to K-12 and senior service opportunities and/or expanding volunteer opportunities for everyday community members. Currently, several states provide state funding to support service opportunities for K-12 youth as well as seniors through the Senior Corps programs.

Text for legislation referenced in this toolkit can be accessed on the ASC website www.statecommissions.org.





Background on Partner Organizations



Service Year Alliance

Service Year Alliance is committed to making a year of full-time service - a service year - a common expectation and opportunity for young Americans of all backgrounds. Expanding service years has the power to address our country's most pressing challenges, change the lives of those who serve, and unite our nation. Service Year Alliance is the result of a merger between the Franklin Project, ServiceNation, and the Service Year Exchange, and is a joint venture between Be The Change, Inc., and The Aspen Institute. General (retired) Stanley McChrystal serves as the founding Chairman of our board.



@serviceyear



/ServiceYear



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America's Service Commissions (ASC)

America's Service Commissions (ASC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing and promoting the 52 Governor-appointed state service commissions across the United States and its territories. ASC's mission is to lead, support, and elevate the state service commission network. State service commissions are Governor-appointed public agencies or nonprofit organizations made up of more than 1,000 commissioners - Americans engaged in leading the nation's service movement.



statecommissions.org



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The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. CNCS engages millions of Americans in results-driven service to meet local needs through AmeriCorps and Senior Corps, invests in evidence-based community solutions through the Social Innovation Fund, and leads volunteer initiatives across the nation. CNCS works closely with the nation's governors and State Service Commissions to tap the power of citizens to solve problems, expand opportunity, and advance governor priorities for citizen service. To learn more visit NationalService.gov, Serve.gov, or call 202-606-5000.



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