



# MAINE AMERICORPS MEMBERS 2012



## A Profile Of The People And Their Experience

Issued January 2013 by the Maine Commission for Community Service



Since 2000, the Maine Commission for Community Service has conducted exit “interviews” of AmeriCorps members ending their service in Maine.

The online survey tool used gives members a chance to tell about their plans, their AmeriCorps experience, their accomplishments, and their advice about program operations. Responses are anonymous.

The Commission uses the input to assess grantee technical assistance needs and give grantee staff aggregate feedback from the members who served in their programs.

The AmeriCorps class of 2012 is the largest cohort (198) to answer the survey in its history. It is their perspective and profile that appears here.

The Commission wishes to take this opportunity to thank them for their service to communities all across the State of Maine.



# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE: WHO SERVES?



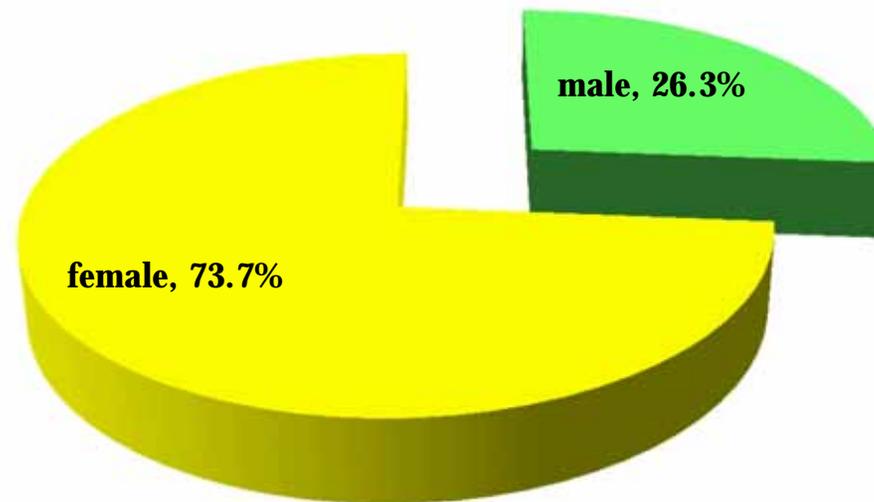
“AmeriCorps is more than a program,  
it's an opportunity to learn something  
about being your best self.”





# Most AmeriCorps Members are women.

The ratio of men to women in Maine AmeriCorps programs has been consistent over the last 10 years. The ratio below represents 2012 members.

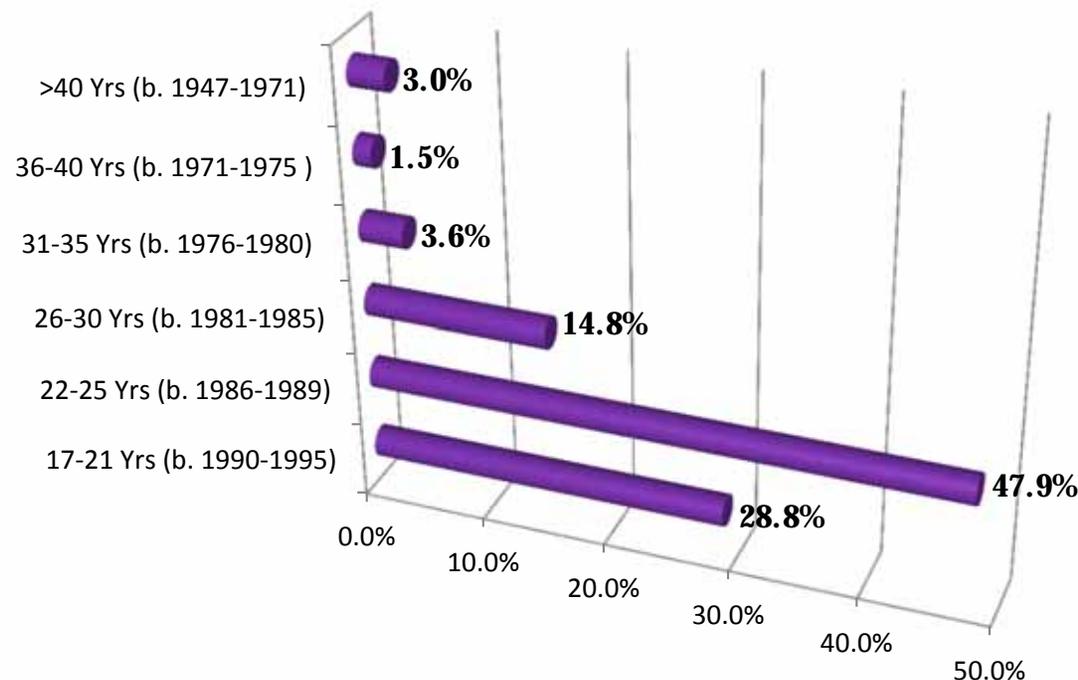




# AmeriCorps Members are usually under 30

Although there are AmeriCorps Members in many age brackets, the programs tend to recruit and select young people. **In 2012, 92% were 30 years old or younger.**

The average age for a Maine AmeriCorps Member has dropped from mid-30s to under 30 over the past 10 years.

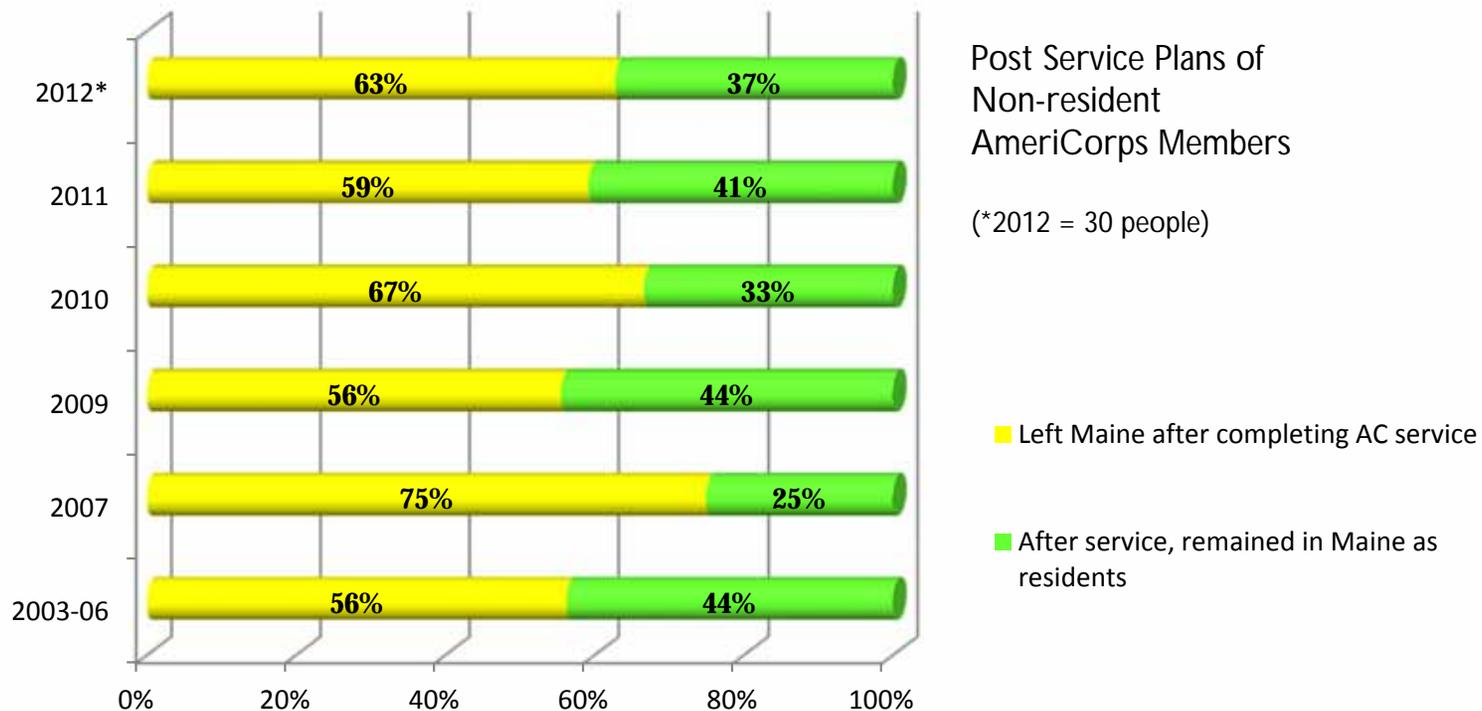




# AmeriCorps Attracts People to Maine

For 10 years, the AmeriCorps programs have been a way for young people to move to Maine, serve in communities, and “try out” life here.

In 2012, 37% of the 200 people in AmeriCorps were not residents of Maine when they signed up to serve.

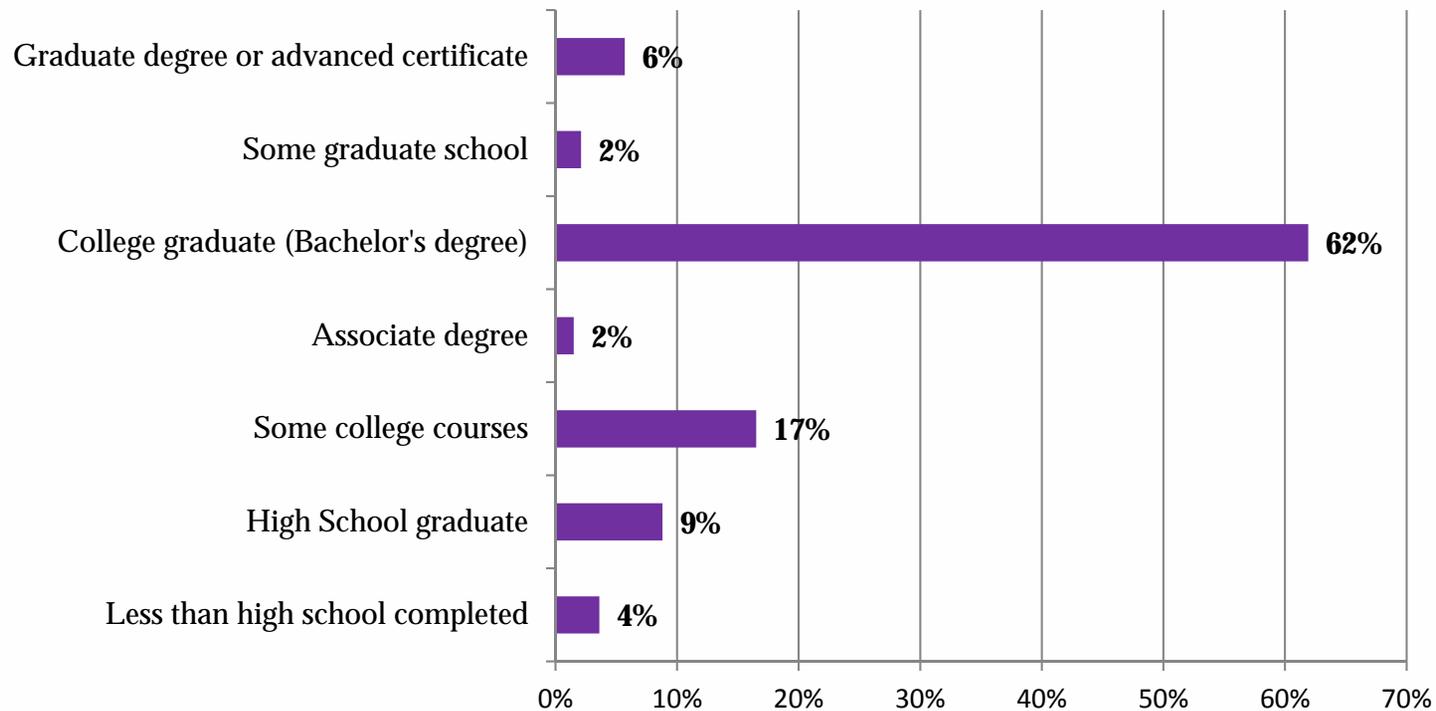




# Educational Attainment When Starting Service

AmeriCorps members in Maine are well-educated.

Maine AmeriCorps programs set qualifications for serving in their projects. Most have decided to recruit people with at least some college.





# Educational Attainment When Starting Service

One consequence is that the non-resident AmeriCorps members in Maine are well educated:

- ✓ 72% have bachelor degrees;
- ✓ 4% have graduate degrees.

Among the 30 who decided to remain in Maine as residents,

- ✓ 89% completed bachelor degrees
- ✓ 8% have graduate degrees





# AMERICORPS STRENGTHENS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



# AmeriCorps builds on volunteer experience

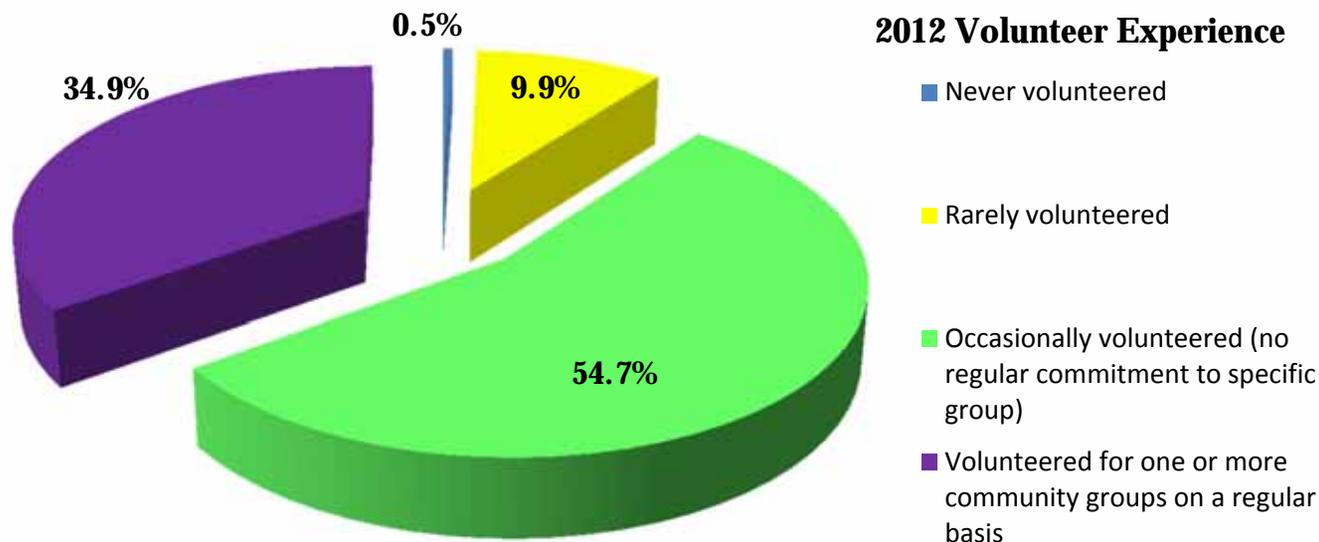
- "It's important to work with others. So much more can be done as a team."
- "There is such a thing as a 'Professional Volunteer.'"
- "Volunteer recruitment and management is very difficult."
- "Never underestimate the willingness of volunteers to perform difficult work."
- "AmeriCorps has shown me how much I can influence my community. It has been an amazing opportunity."



# AmeriCorps Builds On Volunteer Experience

People who commit to serving in AmeriCorps generally have been volunteers. The data below is from the 2012 profile of members.

Over the prior 9 years, only 1% of Maine AmeriCorps members begin service with no prior volunteer experience. 51% volunteered regularly.





# AmeriCorps builds on volunteer experience

AmeriCorps members reflect the research finding that volunteering is a habit established early in life.

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When did AmeriCorps members first volunteer?

	<b>2009-2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Before teenage years	41%	<b>40%</b>
During teen years	41%	<b>49%</b>
As a young adult (20-30)	12%	<b>8%</b>
As an adult (+30)	6%	<b>3%</b>

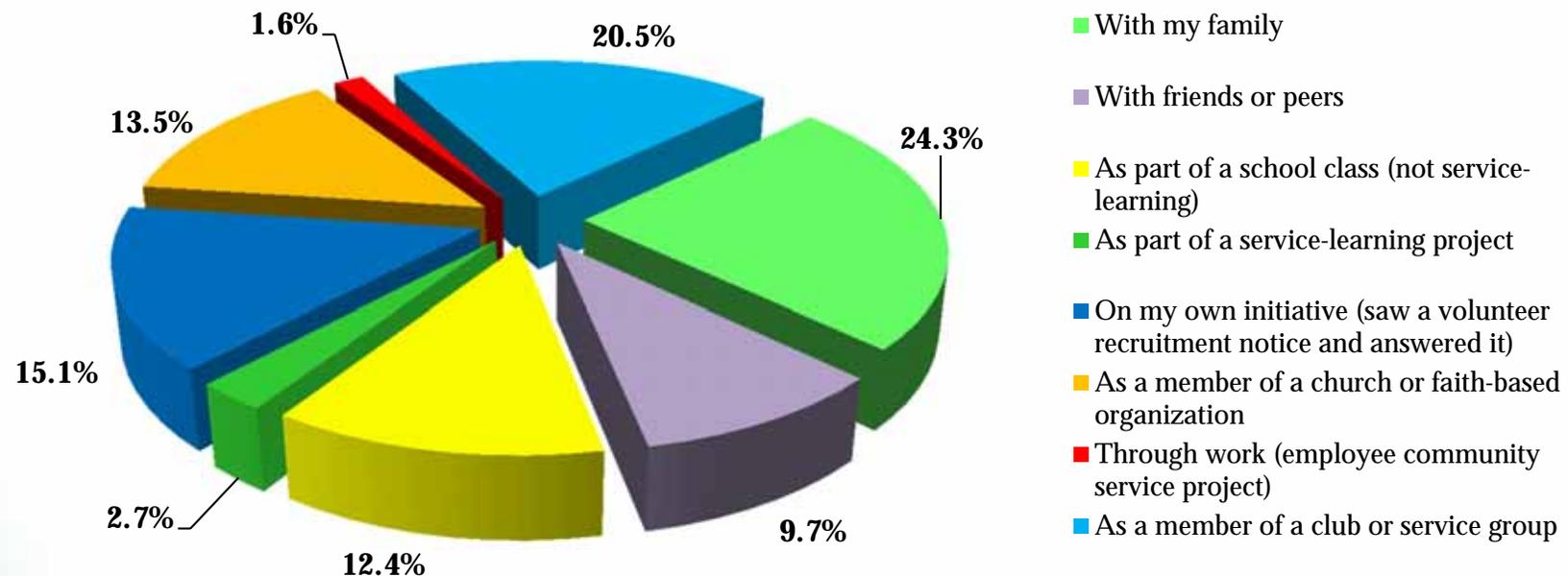


# AmeriCorps Builds On Volunteer Experience

85% of 2012 Maine AmeriCorps members started volunteering as part of a social or educational group.

This is consistent with profiles from the previous 9 years.

With whom did you first volunteer?





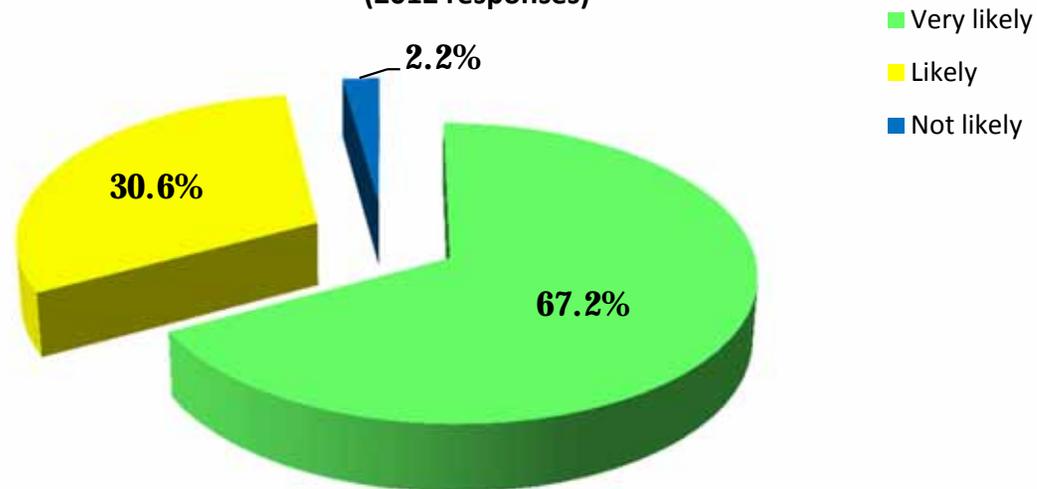
# AmeriCorps Deepens Civic Engagement

In 2012, 56% of Maine AmeriCorps members volunteered with a community program that was unrelated to their service assignment.

Between 2003-2011, 54% volunteered “above and beyond” what AmeriCorps required.

## How likely are you to volunteer in your community in the future?

(2012 responses)





# AMERICORPS SERVICE CREATES OPPORTUNITIES



"This was my second year with AmeriCorps and it has meant a lot to me.

Following my first year and the discovery of my passion, I was seeking a way to make the translation from volunteer to career in the field of my choice. This opportunity has been crucial in that translation.

Without the training offered to me, the ability to defer my student loans while in the program, and the generous offer from my host site to let me live at their station, I would not be able to make my dreams a reality.

This training and experience has allowed me to pursue my career path and, much more than that, has given me an advantage over the competition. "



# AmeriCorps Service Creates Opportunities

When 2012 Members started service, 72% owed money on educational loans.

- ✓ Annually for past 10 years, AmeriCorps Alums have used Segal Education awards to pay Maine education loan institutions (regional banks, credit unions, et al) over \$300,000.
- ✓ Since AmeriCorps was launched in 1994, Maine education loan institutions have been paid more than \$4.7 million for student loans from Segal Education Awards earned by Mainers.

Upon service completion,

- ✓ 97% qualified for a Segal Education Award\*
  - 55% said they'd use it to repay student loans
  - 41% planned to use it for future post secondary education
  - 1% intended to pass the award to a child or grandchild
- ✓ 26% were going directly to college or graduate school



# AmeriCorps Service Creates Opportunities

Exit survey asks:

- ✓ “If your AmeriCorps experience influenced your educational plans, please tell us how.”

The responses:

- ✓ 28% -- service experience clarified personal educational goals
- ✓ 34% -- service clarified personal career goals and choices
- ✓ 27% -- service made their desire for additional education financially possible



"Before the award, I had limited options for what educational program I could afford."

"I have a better idea about what work environments are a good fit for me and this will influence my education plans."

"I did not know I was interested in health/wellness- I am now going to grad school for health policy."

"I realized that I need further higher education to get a permanent job in this field. At this job, I was doing what I love and I want to continue."

"It allowed me to see a great need in the community and encouraged me to continue toward my Paramedic License."



# AMERICORPS MEMBER DEVELOPMENT



# AmeriCorps Develops Skills, Knowledge, Abilities

"My AmeriCorps experience has been wonderful.

I love how AmeriCorps offered me free training and really helped me build my resume.

AmeriCorps has helped me stand out from my competitors in my future job search."



# AmeriCorps Develops Skills, Knowledge, Abilities

The “Exit Survey” for Maine AmeriCorps members asks a series of questions about a set of 48 competencies (skills, knowledge, and abilities).

Each person is asked if they had the opportunity to learn or develop a particular competency given their service assignment.

The follow-up question for those who answer “yes,” is what degree of growth or change did they experience in those competencies as a result of the AmeriCorps experience.

The 48 competencies are taken from a national standards-based framework for educating adults and workforce development.

They can be grouped into categories that describe **what effective adult citizens/community members, workers, and team or family members do.**

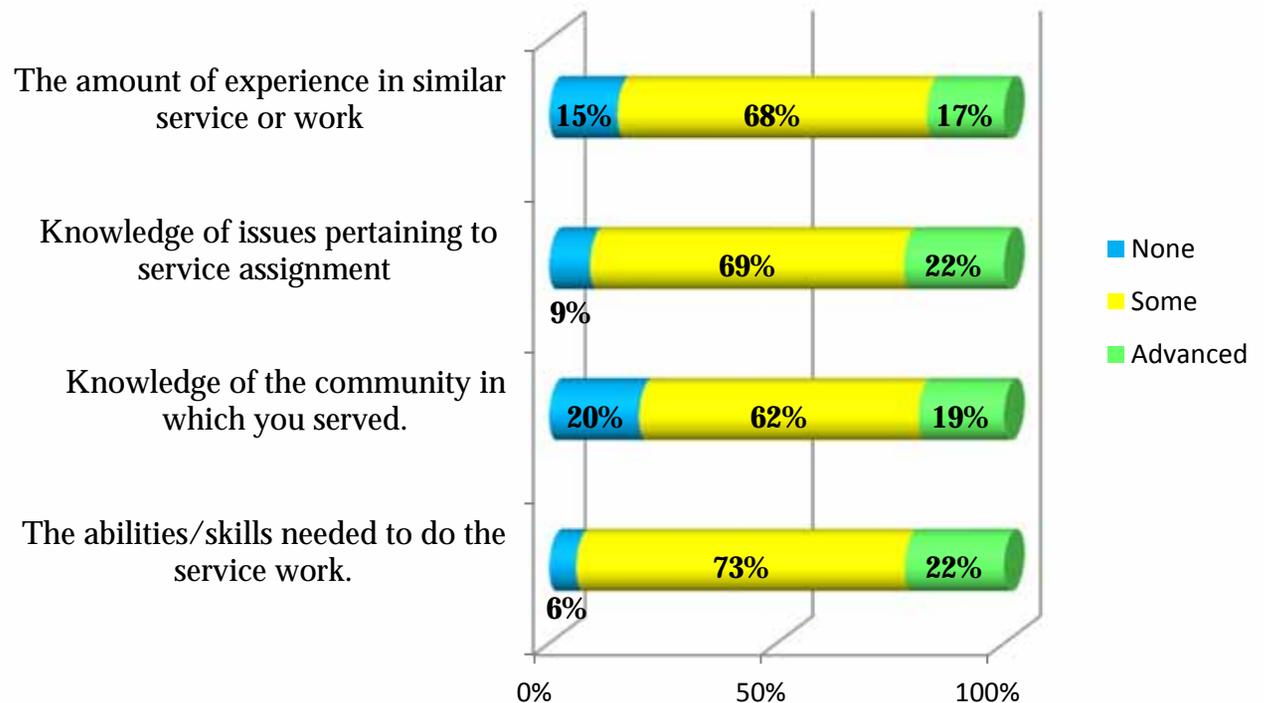


# AmeriCorps Develops Skills, Knowledge, Abilities

Given the significant number of college educated Maine AmeriCorps members, most have the basic competencies when they start service.

The 2012 AmeriCorps members self-assessment results are shown here.

Level of skill or knowledge at the time person applied to AmeriCorps





# AmeriCorps Develops Skills, Knowledge, Abilities

AmeriCorps service assignments give individuals opportunities to hone skills, expand their knowledge, and increase their abilities.

The next 6 pages list the standardized measures for which:

- ✓ 90% or more AmeriCorps members said they had an opportunity to grow or change; and
- ✓ 67% or more report they experienced measureable growth or change as a result of their service

67% was selected as the point of significance in light of the fact 62% of the members are college graduates and 6% have graduate degrees.

The complete list of data and results is available from MCCS staff.



# AmeriCorps Member Development

Criteria for appearing on this list:

- 90%+ of the members report there was an opportunity to grow or change.
- 67% of those members indicate they experienced measurable growth/change.

## Personal and Professional Growth

(5 out of 5)

- Learned to balance service work, personal needs, and learning/training activities
- Pursued service tasks that provided personal satisfaction and meaning
- Learned to plan, revise, and pursue personal and career goals
- Learned new technical skills related to my service area (e.g., environment, public safety, human needs, education)
- Gained detailed understanding of issues related to my service area



# AmeriCorps Member Development

Criteria for appearing on this list:

- 90%+ of the members report there was an opportunity to grow or change.
- 67% of those members indicate they experienced measurable growth/change.

## Service assignment tasks/responsibilities

(5 out of 9)

- Learned to organize, plan, and prioritize work
- Explored areas of interest that could lead to work or future education
- Made professional connections
- Developed ability to respond to and meet new challenges
- Took responsibility for assuring work quality, safety, and results



# AmeriCorps Member Development

Criteria for appearing on this list:

- 90%+ of the members report there was an opportunity to grow or change.
- 67% of those members indicate they experienced measurable growth/change.

## Work with others and within the big picture of the program and/or host site

(4 out of 9)

- Learned to communicate with others inside and outside the organization
- Learned to give assistance, motivation, and direction to others
- Learned to seek and receive assistance, direction, and motivation for myself
- Learned to balance my individual role with the needs of the others in the organization



# AmeriCorps Member Development

Criteria for appearing on this list:

- 90%+ of the members report there was an opportunity to grow or change.
- 67% of those members indicate they experienced measurable growth/change.

## Become and stay an informed citizen/community member

(0 out of 5 meet criteria. Elements are provided as FYI.)

- Learned to identify problems, community needs, strengths, and resources useful to myself and others.
- Learned to recognize and understand human, legal, and civic rights and responsibilities for myself and others
- Figured out how community and political systems impact issues
- Learned how to have impact on a situation
- Learned to find, analyze, and use diverse sources of information -- including personal experience

Note: 75% of the members said there was an opportunity to grow/change on all of these. 60% of them experienced measurable growth/change.



# AmeriCorps Member Development

Criteria for appearing on this list:

- 90%+ of the members report there was an opportunity to grow or change.
- 67% of those members indicate they experienced measurable growth/change.

As a citizen/community member,  
form and express opinions and ideas.

(3 out of 4 meet criteria.)

- Learned from other's experiences and ideas
- Learned to communicate so that others understand my opinions, instructions, questions, or needs.
- Learned to reflect upon and re-evaluate my own opinions and ideas



# AmeriCorps Member Development

Criteria for appearing on this list:

- 90%+ of the members report there was an opportunity to grow or change.
- 67% of those members indicate they experienced measurable growth/change.

Promote growth and development of myself and team members or community volunteers.

(1 out of 7 meet criteria.)

- Learned to balance multiple needs and responsibilities



# AmeriCorps Member Development

Maine AmeriCorps programs received strong ratings from members in the areas of technical training.

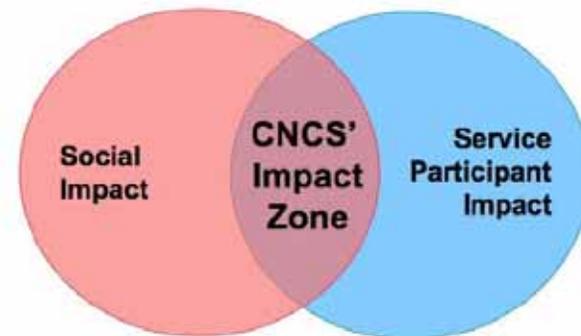
Some of the historic strengths of Member Development need revitalization:

- ✓ Structured reflection on relationship between service assignment, community need, and personal learning
- ✓ Civic awareness and citizenship development

The CNCS re-emphasis of balancing impact on the community need and impact on the AmeriCorps member is one to which Maine programs need to pay attention.

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## Impact Zone





# AmeriCorps Member Development

AmeriCorps Members' greatest satisfaction comes from performing the service activities.

Members report  
"satisfied" or  
"very satisfied"

<b>89%</b>	Training you received from your AmeriCorps program
<b>77%</b>	Training you received from your host organization (if applicable)
<b>87%</b>	Support you received to do your assignments
<b>94%</b>	Service activities you performed
<b>94%</b>	Progress you made on your work plan or objectives
<b>93%</b>	Understanding of your program's overall purpose and objectives
<b>91%</b>	Guidance you received from your AmeriCorps program staff
<b>91%</b>	Guidance from your site supervisor
<b>91%</b>	Impact your work had on the community you served
<b>84%</b>	Recognition you received from your site and program for your service
<b>81%</b>	Community's recognition and understanding of AmeriCorps



# BEYOND THE PROGRAM OUTCOMES: WHAT MEMBERS SEE AS THEIR LEGACY

(Highlights of 139 responses)



# AmeriCorps Member, what is your legacy?

"A survey of road-stream crossings in four rivers in York County."

"Getting the kids to all write 3+ page lab reports."

"Helping the Machias Food Pantry transition to a new director."

"Our rescue service has made a huge impact over the past year. [It] has applied for ISO Public Protection Classification 9."

"Deployment of 1:1 laptop initiative at a rural, K-12 school, and the implementation of the school-wide Google Apps for Education system."

"The basis for developing a state-wide policy regarding use of mobility devices on public recreational trails."



# AmeriCorps Member, what is your legacy?

"Setting up systems within LifeFlight to help track and develop donors."

"Instilling self-confidence in academically capable but previously insecure students."

"I helped students with a better understanding of the tools they need to be successful readers."

"Creating the Good Prospects Digital Literacy Volunteer Program -- volunteers provide basic computer courses to job-seekers."

"The students I worked with on the college application process were successful and are going off to college."

"Helping my host site achieve a 93% student attendance rate. These were students who skipped months at other schools."



# AmeriCorps Member, what is your legacy?

"3 stone staircases on the Scraggly Lake land unit"

"A plan for town-owned land so that 20 lots can be used for affordable housing"

"Helping bring access to public trails for people with disabilities"

"An experiential education program at Telstar HS, focused on getting students outside the classroom, doing work that is hands-on and practical"

"Taught 500 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders about macro-invertebrates and their significance."

"Getting seniors who have never tried kale to eat kale chips and like them!"



## One final word...

"Thank you. I have truly benefited from my experience with AmeriCorps. The experiences I have had as a volunteer are invaluable and I know that I have positively effected the futures of young learners in our state.

The AmeriCorps education award is just an added incentive that really helps put a dent in my student loan debt, and I am so very grateful for that assistance in exchange for the work that I so loved doing.

I cannot say enough about how fortunate I feel to have been a volunteer, and to have benefited from my association with such a great organization.."



# FMI about Maine AmeriCorps programs...

Contact the

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