

AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes Study Final Report Brief



Introduction

Since 1994, more than 1 million AmeriCorps members have contributed more than 1.4 billion hours of service. AmeriCorps engages more than 80,000 men and women in service each year in more than 20,000 locations including nonprofits, schools, and community and faith-based groups across the country.

A growing body of research shows this service has an effect on more than just communities served, but also on the AmeriCorps members themselves. This study looks at the effects national service has on the lives and careers of alumni from 2005, 2010, and 2013.

In 2015 and 2016, the Corporation for National and Community Service Office of Research and Evaluation contracted Abt Associates to survey a sample of AmeriCorps alumni across AmeriCorps programs, including NCCC and VISTA. Questions focused on how the national service experience influenced AmeriCorps alumni to stay civically engaged, developed life and work skills, and affected their education and career outcomes.



Key Findings

According to alumni, service through AmeriCorps creates empowered and prepared leaders who are civically engaged and committed to strengthening their communities. Alumni believe that the experience improved their ability to bridge divides and solve problems, while also developing skills and expanding opportunity to advance their careers and education. The following are some key findings from the study:

The AmeriCorps program is an influential experience in the lives of members.

- 82 percent of alumni described AmeriCorps as a personally-defining experience.

*“AmeriCorps was a defining experience for me because it not only made me more empathetic to those in need, but made me realize how much of a difference can be made by a small group of dedicated people with limited resources. I was stretched beyond my comfort zone and knowledge/ability level and **that can’t help but change you.**”*

AmeriCorps creates leaders who can bridge divides and solve problems.

- 9 out of 10 AmeriCorps alumni reported that their experience improved their ability to solve problems.
- 80 percent of alumni feel confident they can create a plan to address a community issue and get others to care about it.
- 93 percent of alumni said that after service, they felt comfortable interacting with others different than themselves, as compared to 72 percent before.
- 94 percent said that national service broadened their understanding of society and different communities.

AmeriCorps instills in members a lasting commitment to their community and civic participation.

- 79 percent of alumni are involved or plan to become actively involved in their community post-service, compared to 47 percent prior.
- 94 percent of alumni are registered to vote, well above the national average.

*“[AmeriCorps] showed me that I mattered. I made friends who I still have to this day. I still serve in a community that I started in with AmeriCorps. I trust people more. **I am willing to do what it takes in order to see a difference** rather than shrug my shoulders and walk away.”*

Serving in AmeriCorps sets up members to succeed in a 21st century economy

- 8 out of 10 alumni say AmeriCorps benefited their career path.
- 42 percent of alumni employed within six months of service found a job through a connection made in AmeriCorps.

*“AmeriCorps helped me identify the issues and beliefs I cared most about, and allowed me to inventory my professional strengths to help identify a career path where I could **put my strengths to work on issues I cared about.**”*

- 7 out of 10 alumni say that AmeriCorps helped them achieve their educational goals, in part thanks to the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award received after service. One-third of alumni were furthering their education six months after service.
- More than half of AmeriCorps alumni said the Education Award gave them the ability to pay for career-benefiting training and education that they otherwise would not have had.

“Before AmeriCorps, I had flunked out of college and was working dead-end customer service and food service jobs. After AmeriCorps, I had my choice of several colleges who were willing to overlook my early struggle in school. I developed a passion for teaching while serving in a school. When I returned to college, I studied education and soon after school, I began working with individuals with autism. I’ve now received a master’s degree in behavior analysis and therapy and specialize in autism and behavioral disorders.”

By the Numbers

1 million individuals have served in AmeriCorps since 1994.

AmeriCorps members served **1.4 billion** hours.

AmeriCorps members earned **\$3.3 billion** of Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards.

AmeriCorps programs leveraged **\$1 billion** worth of resources from other sources last year.

AmeriCorps members managed or mobilized **2.3 million** community volunteers last year.

AmeriCorps members served at **21,600** unique sites last year.



Methodology

The AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes Study Survey was developed based on the AmeriCorps Member Exit Survey, with a focus on AmeriCorps members' growth over four pathways: cultural competency, civic engagement, self-efficacy, and career skills. The survey instrument contains a total of 45 questions that were designed to help answer the study's research questions:

- Research Question #1: In what ways does participating in a national service program influence members' career pathways, civic engagement, development of career-oriented soft and hard skills, and sense of community?;
- Research Question #2: In what ways, if any, do member outcomes vary by life stage and by types of service experience?; and
- Research Question #3: What are the post-secondary and employment outcomes of AmeriCorps alumni, and does national service serve as a pathway to post-secondary and/or employment success?

A total of 3,772 complete responses were received, for an overall weighted response rate of 22 percent. This study also included a secure data match with the National Student Clearinghouse to look at educational outcomes.

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Full report and methodology: [NationalService.gov/AmeriCorpsAlumniStudy](https://nationalservice.gov/AmeriCorpsAlumniStudy)

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