



Fostering Civic Engagement and Community Development Through Service

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SUMMARY: Congress should continue to push for the preservation and expansion of **funding for The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)** to maximize opportunities for civic engagement and development through service in communities nationwide.

The CNCS, established by the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, effectively engages Americans of all socioeconomic backgrounds and ages in community-based service that improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement by providing grants to organizations that host members for specific, community-identified service projects.

Recently, Congress passed a spending bill, doing away with the White House proposal to eliminate the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), and instead delivering an increase in funding for CNCS, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. The following memo sheds light on the benefits and quantified impact of CNCS and recommends that Congress continue its great work by increasing its investment and commitment to protecting national service.

BACKGROUND: National service is a cost-effective solution that taps the talents and engagement of community members to innovate and solve community problems. The University of Texas at Austin has found national service programs strengthen the overall health of communities, as reported by citizens. CNCS creates opportunities for diverse members of the community to engage in impactful national service, and in doing so invests in the socioeconomic stability and future of communities nationwide.

CNCS supports high-impact service to meet pressing needs, from illiteracy and homelessness to hunger and disasters. Through programs such as AmeriCorps and Senior Corps, CNCS creates opportunities for Americans to improve and strengthen their communities while strengthening their civic skillset and networks. In fact, per CNCS reports*, more than 980,000 Americans have given over 1.4 billion hours of service through AmeriCorps, helping millions of the nation's most-vulnerable citizens.

* CNCS, About CNCS: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/about>

The state of Arizona alone holds 600 local service sites, 5,100 Senior Corps and AmeriCorps members, receives \$30.3 million in CNCS and local funding, and has earned \$58.9 million in AmeriCorps scholarships since 1994*. Arizona's future and civic culture, along with that of other states, is directly and positively impacted by the work of CNCS.

KEY OUTCOMES:

- Over 75,000 AmeriCorps members will continue to mobilize millions of community volunteers for the organizations they serve, increasing their reach and impact.
- Additionally, the 220,000 Senior Corps volunteers who have served more than 54 million hours per year will be empowered to continue making a difference locally.
- Altogether, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members will continue serving at more than 50,000 locations across the country to meet community needs related to education, health, energy and conservation, economic development, veterans and military families, and disaster services.

APPROACH:

1. **Members of congress should continue to express and act on their support of national service to ensure that national service continues to provide vital support to communities across the country.** Given the persisting interest of White House in doing away with CNCS, members of congress should communicate the impact of national service and advocate, not only for its preservation, but for an increase in funding in order to expand the reach and maximize the impact of the programs at hand.
2. **Join the National Service Congressional Caucus.** The National Service Congressional Caucus is a bipartisan group of legislators in the United States Congress dedicated to raising awareness of national service and expanding service opportunities in America. Join to demonstrate your leadership on this matter and to act on your commitment to national service.

CONCLUSION: If maintained and expanded through federal funding, The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) will continue to foster the development of communities and individuals alike. At this time, it is imperative that members of congress continue to be avid supporters of national service given the Trump administration's attempts to do away with its federal funding. National service plays a critical role in providing opportunities for individuals to transform themselves while transforming their communities through service-based civic engagement. The benefits, both economic and social, associated with national service provide a significant return on the investment of federal funds.

* CNCS, Service by State <https://www.nationalservice.gov/impact-our-nation/state-profiles>