



Service as a Strategy

A Guide for Public Agencies

Shirley Sagawa February 13, 2013

With the specter of fiscal austerity looming—as federal, state, and local governments face budget deficits—it is time to look for innovative and cost-effective strategies to address our most pressing problems. National and volunteer service is one tool that could be widely available to public agencies at every level of government seeking affordable sources of human capital, a mechanism to offer the hard-to-employ their first jobs, a way to find and develop new talent in fields likely to face future shortages of skilled workers, and a credible path to build and strengthen civic engagement.

There are numerous factors currently making this underutilized resource attractive. With more than two decades of experience in large-scale federal civilian-service programs, particularly AmeriCorps, we now have a well-tested understanding of the best ways to deploy volunteers and national service participants. At the same time, public resources are under significant strain and will be for the foreseeable future, and public agencies must increasingly innovate in order to find new policy strategies to achieve their goals. And even as demographic shifts and other large-scale changes leave some populations with limited workforce options, some professions and employment fields are facing looming personnel shortages. These circumstances have created the perfect storm leading us to seriously consider national and volunteer service strategies.

It is not surprising, therefore, that civic leaders are investing in service as a means to address important problems. Consider the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, which this year launched an innovative partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service to establish a unit of 1,600 service-corps members within the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps—called FEMA Corps—solely devoted to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.¹ FEMA Corps was in place when Hurricane Sandy struck in October, devastating portions of the mid-Atlantic and northeastern United States. Corps members were swiftly deployed to the New York and New Jersey areas to help in the recovery effort. When the program is at full operational capability, FEMA expects to see a savings of approximately \$60 million in an average disaster year, relative to the costs of adding part-time professional reservists, who are often unavailable for hazard duty.² By providing training, experience, and educational opportunity, the partnership will also prepare thousands of young people for careers in emergency management and related fields.

At the state level, former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R-CA) appointed the first state Secretary of Service in the nation in 2008 and made the secretary a member of his cabinet.³ By elevating service in this way, California accelerated efforts to deploy service participants to address diverse challenges facing the state such as disaster preparedness, training for Green Jobs, and veterans reintegration efforts.

Similarly, in 2009 New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg (I) decided to make New York City the first “City of Service,” creating a high-impact service plan and appointing the first municipal chief service officer in the nation—a senior city official dedicated to developing a citywide volunteer service plan that addresses priority city challenges. NYC Service,⁴ the unit of the mayor’s office charged with implementing this plan and measuring its results, engaged New Yorkers to participate in volunteer-driven initiatives that best fit their skills and talents, while strategically addressing some of the city’s most pressing priorities, including education, health, and safety. Other U.S. mayors quickly followed suit.

That same year, 16 other mayors joined Mayor Bloomberg to launch Cities of Service, a bipartisan coalition of mayors committed to using citizen service to address local challenges.⁵ Today, more than 160 mayors have joined the coalition, pledging to develop coordinated strategies to utilize volunteers to meet their cities’ most pressing needs.⁶ With support from Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Rockefeller Foundation, 20 of those mayors appointed their own chief service officers, who developed high-impact service plans for their cities. This launched a national movement, which now includes more than 30 mayors employing locally funded chief service officers in their administrations.⁷

Love Your Block

A revitalization program

Many American cities face the problem of urban blight, which is what happens when a formerly vibrant part of a city falls into disrepair. Well-tended public spaces create a better quality of life that attracts tax-paying businesses and residents to communities. Run-down litter-strewn spaces, however, signal lawlessness and a lack of community spirit and concern, which can lead to crime and other negative behaviors. Engaged communities are far less likely to let their neighborhoods fall into poor conditions and can therefore act as a powerful force in preventing crime.

In recognition of this fact, a growing number of mayors have adopted the service strategy—Love Your Block—to combat urban blight by supporting community members who come together to revitalize their neighborhoods.⁸ Initially developed in New York City by Mayor Bloomberg, Love

Your Block calls on local residents to identify volunteer community-building projects and compete for grants to purchase the supplies needed to implement these projects. The city coordinates government services as needed to support the effort. Common components of local projects include vacant-lot clean up, litter and graffiti removal, tree planting, and community garden development. To date, nine cities have implemented the program, and three more are planning to adopt it.⁹

By providing small competitive grants and coordinating city services, the mayors’ offices can achieve measurable impact in local communities. Even more importantly, the social capital that comes from community ownership can sustain the improvements and inspire additional neighborhood projects.

Significant potential exists for public agencies to take advantage of the time and talent of Americans interested in helping their communities and country. This paper works to advance this effort by discussing the reasons why all levels of government should consider investing in service as a strategy to address their particular missions and then by providing a blueprint for action.

New understanding of the potential of service

This year marks the 20th anniversary of former President Bill Clinton signing the National and Community Service Trust Act. This legislation created the Corporation for National and Community Service, authorized a large-scale national service program later known as AmeriCorps, and extended funding for service learning.¹⁰ It built upon more than a half century of federal experience with service, including the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s; the Peace Corps, established in 1961; the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, which authorized Volunteers In Service To America and senior-service programs; and the National and Community Service Act of 1990, signed into law by then-President George H. W. Bush.¹¹ In the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush expanded national service and introduced the Freedom Corps to promote volunteer service.¹² In 2009 President Barack Obama signed the Serve America Act to tie service in to other important national priorities, encourage collaboration across federal agencies, and increase the number of people serving in AmeriCorps to 250,000 annually.¹³ Unfortunately, funding has been inadequate to achieve these targets.

In the 20 years since the signing of the National and Community Service Trust Act, more than 750,000 Americans have served in AmeriCorps.¹⁴ Millions more have participated in service-learning experiences and senior-corps programs funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, and tens of millions of Americans have volunteered in programs led by AmeriCorps members. Based on this experience, we now have significant understanding of when service is appropriate and what type advances specific priorities.

In general, national and volunteer service is not a replacement for professional staffing but is a human-resource supplement that helps extend the impact of professionals, increase program quality, expand the range of services provided, and improve access to assistance.

City Year keeps students in school

An estimated 1 million students drop out of school each year in America, and half of those dropouts come from just 12 percent of nation's schools.¹⁵ Recognizing the enormity and seriousness of our dropout problem, City Year—an AmeriCorps-funded full-time national-service program founded in 1989 for diverse youth ages 17 to 25—adopted a long-term impact strategy in 2011 to reduce the nation's dropout rate. After examining studies that showed that students who progress to 10th grade with their peers are four times more likely to graduate than students who fall behind, City Year adopted a long-term impact goal to ensure that 80 percent of the students in the schools City Year serves reach 10th grade on track and on time.¹⁶

Students at risk of dropping out can be identified by as early as elementary school using three early warning indicators, referred to as the ABCs:

poor Attendance, disruptive Behavior, and Course failure in math and English. In partnership with public schools, City Year provides teams of corps members, bringing in the extra human resources schools need to implement the student interventions that research has shown to be effective.¹⁷ Preliminary results are promising, and 34 school districts and charter schools have elected to fund City Year in high-need schools.¹⁸ City Year currently serves 150,000 students annually with 2,500 corps members in 24 U.S. cities.¹⁹ When implemented at scale, the organization plans to reach cities that account for two-thirds of the nation's urban dropouts.²⁰

For more information, see "Closing the Implementation Gap: Leveraging City Year and National Service as a New Human Capital Strategy to Transform Low Performing Schools."²¹

Using service to achieve scale in service delivery

By providing human capital at a reduced cost, national and volunteer service can enable organizations to increase their impact beyond what would be possible using traditional staffing models. Service can be structured to engage individuals full time (with the provision of a modest living allowance); part time on a weekly or other regular basis; intensively over a vacation or summer break; or episodically when help is needed. In addition, technology has opened up new potential for individuals to provide assistance remotely, whenever they have a few minutes to contribute.

Using service to access skilled professionals who would otherwise be unaffordable

In the pro-bono tradition, skilled professionals—whose typical fee schedule makes their services prohibitive to some—may volunteer to support a valued cause. While pro-bono assistance is most often associated with lawyers, other professionals also participate in pro-bono work, from public relations and graphic design to accounting and information technology.

Using service to engage communities in solving their own problems

Involving local residents in efforts to address challenges in their own neighborhoods can change attitudes and create sustainable solutions. When communities take leadership and are provided the resources to change their circumstances, the change can be lasting, whether in the area of improved nutrition or safer playgrounds.

Using service to connect individuals with those who can help them

“Bridging social capital” enables individuals to build cooperative connections with people from various walks of life to obtain help navigating unfamiliar systems and culture. Connecting individuals with others who have different cultural, educational, professional, or other experiences can be extremely valuable. Service can create bridges for low-income students pursuing college, veterans transitioning to civilian lives, or new immigrants integrating into American life.

Using service to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable populations

The act of serving others can give purpose to populations often thought of as clients rather than caregivers. Studies of older adults, wounded veterans, disadvantaged youth, and individuals who have experienced significant loss have documented the physical and mental health benefits of serving others.²²

Baltimore Recovery Corps gets people the help they need

When Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake (D) developed the city’s first service plan in 2010, a landscape analysis showed that city residents were most concerned with drug addiction, crime, and urban blight.²³ In response, the city launched the Baltimore Recovery Corps in partnership with Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, Inc.—a quasi-public nonprofit organization established by the Baltimore City Health Department to administer the city’s substance-abuse treatment program. The Baltimore Recovery Corps members are usually people who have at least two years of successful recovery from a substance-use disorder and seek to use their own experience to serve others.

Recovery Corps members coach and mentor people seeking treatment and help them access the services they need, find and maintain housing and employment, and connect to a community of recovering peers who can help them in their journey. By recognizing the value of those in the city who are often forgotten and still stigmatized—individuals recovering from substance dependence—Recovery Corps is transforming how Baltimore tackles addiction.²⁴

Using service to provide bridge-building work experience for populations facing high unemployment

Individuals who face barriers in the job market often benefit from the work experience that service provides. Service experiences that offer training and supervision, as well as mentoring to support the development of soft skills such as punctuality or appropriate workplace attire and behavior, provide first jobs or transitional opportunities to many individuals that can lead to future careers. YouthBuild, which engages youth in service coupled with education and job training, and VetCorps, which places veterans in institutions of higher education to help with veteran student retention, are examples of bridge-building programs.²⁵

Using service to increase the quality, diversity, or pipeline for specific fields or geographic locations

Service can start individuals on a pathway to a career they might not otherwise have chosen. Fields that are facing aging workforces, that need to diversify, or that have difficulty attracting highly educated individuals can benefit from service programs that introduce young people—or older adults looking for “encore careers”—to new opportunities. Individuals who have been exposed to specific fields through their service experiences are more knowledgeable about the field, more likely to choose related careers, and more likely to stay in the field—even those fields that have high turnover rates—because they knew what they were getting into.²⁶ Service is also a time-tested way to attract professionals to rural or urban communities facing shortages.

Using service to accelerate social innovation

As we embark upon a period of significantly constrained resources coupled with consistently high demand for assistance for vulnerable populations, the need for new ways of delivering high-quality services at a reduced cost is paramount. Social innovation to achieve more effective or efficient delivery of assistance is therefore critical. National and volunteer service has contributed to social innovation in three important ways: providing human capital for innovative initiatives; breaking down so-called silos; and exposing young innovators to pressing needs. Let’s look at each in turn.

Providing human capital for innovative initiatives

Service provides organized assistance—also called interventions—with low-cost human capital. National service participants may be available full-time to provide direct service or to build the capacity of organizations, including supervising part-time volunteers (who receive no remuneration). As a result, national service has provided essential human resources for entrepreneurial results-oriented organizations, including Citizen Schools, Harlem Children’s Zone, and Playworks—cutting edge programs that have dramatically improved the educational experience for countless children.²⁷ The Cities of Service model of engaging citizens in what has become known as “impact volunteering” has given mayors a new flexible tool to tackle pressing city issues, which can be adapted as priorities change.²⁸ This strategy provides the human capital for innovative solutions at the city level.

Breaking down “silos”

Federal funding for service provided through the Corporation for National and Community Service does not place restrictions on providers or interventions. As a result, many programs that the corporation supports cross traditional boundaries or so-called silos—such as addressing obesity through schools or combining job training with education—helping clients navigate and access services provided by a range of other community providers or breaking the boundaries of traditional service provision (for example, exposing students in underresourced schools to workforce opportunities or college options).

Exposing young innovators to pressing needs

National and volunteer service exposes individuals, particularly young people, to challenges present in their own communities and inspires them to take action. Some of these individuals become the next generation of social entrepreneurs: Kirsten Lodal, the founder of LIFT—a nonprofit combating poverty in the District of Columbia—for example, started her program to connect low-income people with jobs, housing, and other services while she was a student volunteer attending Yale University.²⁹ Likewise, Jeff Lafata came up with the idea for Empowering People for Inclusive Communities—a nonprofit organization to address the growing need for transition-aged youth with disabilities to develop their leadership skills—while a corps-member with City Year.³⁰ And the founders of the KIPP Academy—the acclaimed charter-school network—developed their concept when they were teachers with Teach For America.³¹

A blueprint for agencies

Agencies interested in exploring service to address specific challenges within their missions should be encouraged to know that service typically offers three types of benefits:

- It can be a tool to direct human capital where needed to deliver specific outcomes.
- It can impact the people performing the service by teaching them skills, providing them with new social or professional connections, increasing their sense of self-worth, or even improving their health and happiness.
- It strengthens the “civic fabric” of communities by bringing people together in common purpose.

In looking to employ innovative options to meet their missions agencies should consider three types of service:

- **National service** is civilian service involving substantial time commitments (up to full time) for a specific time period (or term of service). Participants in full-time national service typically receive a modest living allowance (at least equal to minimum wage) and may receive other benefits, including health insurance and an education award or other benefit at the end of their term of service. Part-time national service participants generally receive reduced benefits. City Year, Teach For America, and Volunteers in Service to America—all part of AmeriCorps—are examples of full-time national-service programs.
- **Service-learning** is a teaching and learning strategy aimed at students that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Business-school students who do class projects to benefit nonprofit organizations, language students who practice their skills by volunteering with immigrants who are native speakers, and science students who measure local pollution levels and take remedial action are all engaged in service-learning.

- **Impact-volunteering** is a volunteer strategy that targets community needs, uses best practices, and sets clear outcomes and measures to gauge progress. Volunteers typically receive no remuneration for their service. Volunteer tax-preparation programs in low-income communities, volunteer tutors working to improve early literacy, and community playground building efforts organized by the nonprofit KaBOOM! may all be examples of impact volunteering, provided they are consistent with the above definition.

Tulane University's Center for Public Service

When Hurricane Katrina ravaged New Orleans, 70 percent of Tulane University's main campus and 100 percent of its health sciences campus (located in downtown New Orleans) were flooded due to the failure of federally built levees.³² In the aftermath of the storm, the university chose to commit itself not just to rebuilding its own campus but also helping the city, its people, and its institutions. Tulane established the Center for Public Service in 2006 as part of the university's renewal plan, which integrated community engagement into its core curriculum and created a public service requirement for graduation.³³ Example of partnerships from the university's course catalogue include:

- **Economics 3330: Environmental and Natural Resources**, which involves working with a local organization—Greenlight New Orleans—to install compact fluorescent light bulbs in a New Orleans neighborhood. Students also study and quantify other environmental organizations' economic impact.
- **English 3650: Aristotle in New Orleans**, a classical rhetoric course that challenges students to think about ancient conceptions of virtue and rhetoric. Students also coach four New Orleans middle-school debate teams, which form the foundation of a new citywide league.
- **Education 2000: Education in a Diverse Society**, an introductory teaching certification course examining the history of American education, as well as contemporary education issues. Students are provided with opportunities to serve in New Orleans public schools as classroom assistants, reading buddies, or tutors.
- **Biomedical Engineering 4040: Team Design Project II**, which allows biomedical engineering students to meet with clients with disabilities and construct devices tailored to their needs after learning about the design process and improving their project management and technical skills.

Service, including the engagement of volunteers who receive no remuneration, requires an infrastructure and therefore a modest investment of resources. Such investments, however, are typically far less than the value of the human resources provided. In fact, one study found that organizations that engage 10 or more volunteers are equally as effective as those with no volunteers, but the organizations with volunteers operate at about half the cost.³⁴

Any agency interested in service as a strategy should determine whether national service, impact volunteering, or service-learning best fits its goals. Appendix A provides examples of each.

Let's now explore each service program option noted above in greater detail.

National service

National service participants, similar to volunteers, should receive a clear position description, orientation, training, supervision, and recognition. But with national service typically being full time, individuals also may require financial supports to enable their participation.

The Corporation for National and Community Service provides resources for national-service programs through AmeriCorps. The corporation offers a variety of program options through AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps members may serve full or part time. Members receive Segal Education Awards (roughly equal to a Pell Grant). Full-time members also receive living allowances (at a minimum, roughly equal to the poverty line for a single individual) and health care and child care benefits. AmeriCorps funding streams include:

- **Grant-funded AmeriCorps.** The Corporation for National and Community Service awards grants to states and nonprofit organizations to operate AmeriCorps programs.
- **Education award-only AmeriCorps.** Nonprofits and public agencies may compete to receive Segal Education Awards for program participants. Education awards are equal to the maximum Pell Grant for full-time service and prorated for part-time service.
- **Volunteers in Service to America.** The Corporation for National and Community Service directly allocates positions in this program either through its state office structure or at the national level. Projects must focus on building permanent infrastructure in organizations to help them more effectively bring individuals and communities out of poverty.
- **Volunteers in Service to America cost-shares.** Cost-shares are Volunteers in Service to America positions that are paid for in full or in part by a source other than the Corporation for National and Community Service, such as foundations or other government agencies.
- **National Civilian Community Corps.** This is the only AmeriCorps program directly operated by the Corporation for National and Community Service. A residential program, it provides housing, living allowances, benefits, and education awards to members, who may be deployed on projects throughout the country.

AmeriCorps grant funding is limited, and most grants are awarded based on competition through governor-appointed state commissions or national nonprofit organizations. But federal agencies—such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service—have in the past developed partnerships with the Corporation for National and Community Service to secure Volunteers in Service to America positions or to use their own resources to pay the costs of AmeriCorps programs. The Corporation for National Community Service,

for example, operates FEMA Corps with resources provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. State and local public agencies may access AmeriCorps through their state commissions, which receive some funding based on a formula and may apply for additional funds on a competitive basis.

Service learning

Service learning typically involves a combination of preparation (learning that offers context for the service and training for the specific activities to be conducted); action (the actual service); and reflection (what can be learned from the experience). Service-learning programs may be operated by schools or by higher-education institutions, or by other youth-serving organizations interested in youth development. Because service learning is often embedded in an education or community program that is already staffed, costs related to program development typically include training, curriculum development, and marketing rather than full-time staffing. Other supports and incentives may include “mini-grants” for teachers and or prizes. If additional staffing is needed, AmeriCorps members (including Volunteers in Service to America) or adult volunteers may provide assistance. Summer is often an opportune time for service-learning programs, when students are free from more rigid curricula demands and may participate in more intensive full-time service.

The Learn and Serve America program administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service provided support for service learning through grants to state education agencies, school districts, nonprofit organizations, and higher-education institutions; the program, however, has not received funding since 2010.³⁵

Resources for service learning may be found through the service-learning clearinghouse previously funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service or through organizations such as the National Youth Leadership Council, Youth Service America, and Innovations in Civic Participation (summer programs).³⁶

Impact volunteering

Whether they serve for a single day or regularly every week or month, volunteers need to be managed. The management structure depends on the skills that volunteers bring, the service they will perform, and the benefits that volunteers hope to gain (such as learning a new skill). Good volunteer management includes development of a position description (what are the volunteers’ responsibilities); orientation (how their service fits into a program’s overall purpose); what is expected of the volunteers (including rules for interacting with clients, time commitments, and dress codes); training (instructing on the specific tasks to be performed); supervision (overseeing the performance and its effectiveness); and recognition (thanking volunteers and encouraging them to continue to serve).

Impact volunteering also includes these additional elements: identifying a clear challenge that can be addressed by volunteers; operating in accordance with known effective practices; a clear articulation of desired outcomes (ideally outcomes that are measurable); and a system to track progress toward achieving these outcomes. Attention must also be paid to volunteer identification and recruitment. A call to action by an agency head is often part of successful volunteer initiatives but typically is not sufficient to draw the volunteers necessary.

While traditional volunteering occurs on site and in person, technology has opened up new opportunities. With the right platform, volunteers can identify or receive assignments remotely and carry out their service in alternative locations—for instance, their own workplace, their homes, or in another site related to the activity.

Volunteer management may be provided by professional staff, by experienced volunteers, or by national service participants, such as AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America. In addition, Senior Corps programs, administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, support volunteer programs for adults ages 55 or older. Organizations such as Cities of Service, the Points of Light Institute, and Reimagining Service also offer resources to guide agencies interested in developing volunteer programs.³⁷

A step-by-step approach

Agencies interested in addressing pressing challenges—including shrinking budgets, staffing shortages, and effective outreach and engagement—can do the following to implement a service strategy to work toward their goals.

Assess needs

Agencies should begin the process by assembling a planning team that will conduct a needs assessment of the human-resource challenges in their fields, identifying areas where service could scale the delivery of needed assistance; where pro-bono resources are appropriate; where behavior change or community ownership would be beneficial; where bridging social capital would improve outcomes; where workforce gaps exist; where a hard-to-employ population would benefit from service such as a “bridge-building”; or where innovative approaches are needed.

Develop goals and outcomes

Based on the needs assessment, the agency should then identify specific goals for the effort. Goals may list challenges to be addressed, the level of engagement, and the outcomes to be achieved. Goals should, where possible, include measures along with systems for tracking progress toward outcomes. Goals should be approved by agency leadership.

Identify models

Early in the process, it may be useful to identify model programs already in operation. At the federal level, the Corporation for National and Community Service may provide advice regarding ways that service could address identified needs. At the state level, state service commissions may provide such assistance.³⁸ At the local level, Cities of Service can offer linkages to existing mayor-led service initiatives, as well as tools outlining best practices in municipal-led volunteer solutions.

Identify resources

Creating a program takes resources, ranging from modest outlays to more significant funding. Some agencies have used discretionary money for this purpose or have identified private-sector sources to support program costs. Agencies might also identify funding streams that are in their control that could support national service either through current law or with minor legislative or regulatory changes. Agencies may use the bully pulpit and lift up model programs in order to spur the field to consider national-service strategies.

Design the program

In designing the service program, the agency should consider effective methods to reach and attract individuals; orient and train them; supervise their work; and assess the impact of the service program. It should also determine whether the program should be operated through a grant structure or other model and should identify natural partners such as universities, national associations, or existing service programs.

Assess costs and benefits

Agencies may want to assess the cost effectiveness of service strategies as a way to justify their pursuit to stakeholders, who might see such strategies as outside the mainstream. At a minimum, agencies should be able to provide the expected value of the service to be provided based on the outcome goals, and a comparison between the costs of the service program and the same program if delivered through traditional means.

Connect to the larger national service network

Finally, agencies should consider whether their program would benefit from being part of a larger national-service network. At the federal level, agencies should look to the Corporation for National and Community Service—in some cases, the corporation may

be able to provide Segal Educational Awards to individual national-service participants, which may help with their recruitment. State agencies should connect with the state-service commission, and, at the local level, mayors can connect with Cities of Service.

Conclusion

At a time when resources are limited and civic groups and public sector agencies need innovative approaches to meet community needs, national and volunteer service offers a cost-effective strategy to address pressing problems facing these entities. Such efforts are likely to pay additional long-term dividends by increasing civic participation, building community, and inspiring Americans of all ages and backgrounds to take action.

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Types of service and the ways each can positively impact communities

Need	Strategy	Program examples
<p>Increase access to programs and services</p>	<p>National service</p>	<p>Vet Corps</p> <p>Founded in 2009, the Vet Corps is an AmeriCorps program developed by the Washington state Department of Veterans Affairs and the Washington Commission for National and Community Service. It helps veterans navigate Washington state’s college and university campuses. Vet Corps members act as on-campus guides for student veterans and provide practical advice and assistance to resources both on- and off-campus.³⁹</p> <p>National Anti-Hunger and Opportunity Corps</p> <p>Launched in 2010, the National Anti-Hunger and Opportunity Corps is a 48-member AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America program sponsored by the New York City Coalition Against Hunger and funded by a public-private partnership of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the WalMart Foundation, and Trinity Church Wall Street. The main focus is to increase participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Members also serve to increase the capacity of antihunger community organizations to provide comprehensive benefit assistance and outreach to low-income constituents—particularly to seniors, working families, and Latino populations. Members develop a comprehensive plan to increase participation in their communities; recruit, manage, and train unpaid community volunteers to conduct screening and application assistance; identify and apply for nonfederal sources of funds; increase utilization of benefits at farmers markets; and support local community gardening and agriculture and nutrition-education efforts.⁴⁰</p>
	<p>Provide direct service to meet identified needs</p>	<p>Impact volunteering</p>
<p>National service</p>		<p>College Possible</p> <p>College Possible makes college admission and success possible for low-income students through an intensive two-year curriculum of coaching and support. Coaches, serving as AmeriCorps members, guide students through all of the key aspects of preparing for college during after-school sessions for two hours twice a week. Over the course of their junior and senior years, students complete 320 hours of curriculum in a supportive group of college-bound peers.⁴³</p>

Need	Strategy	Program examples
Collect data of importance to address problems	Impact volunteering	<p>Invasive Species</p> <p>In 2012 the Austin, Texas, city council unanimously adopted a 30-year comprehensive plan to “sustainably manage water, energy and other environmental resources.” The city’s Invasive Species Management Plan—the second of its kind among major U.S. cities—establishes five-year goals, including volunteer participation. One volunteer activity will be to conduct an assessment of city-owned properties to identify and characterize non-native invasive-plant-species infestations and the ecosystem services that are threatened. This information will enable Austin to prioritize sites on city lands for treatment or removal of invasive plant species—and ultimately result in these species being reduced within the city limits. Similar efforts have been carried out by “citizen scientist” volunteers working with the Invaders of Texas Program.⁴⁴</p>
Support large-scale labor-intensive projects that address important problems	Impact volunteering	<p>Waste Watcher Project</p> <p>Each year the Philadelphia Marathon attracts more than 85,000 runners and spectators, who come from every state in the nation and more than 40 countries around the world.⁴⁵ To reduce waste from the event by at least 75 percent, the marathon is partnering with the mayor’s Office of Sustainability and the mayor’s Office of Civic Engagement and Volunteer Service to create a team of Waste Watcher volunteers to help separate trash, recycling, and compost into the correct containers at the race start and finish line, spectator areas, and at various water stops along the route.⁴⁶</p> <p>For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology</p> <p>Volunteer mentors, coaches, and event-day volunteers make possible the Robotics competitions designed to inspire youth to pursue careers in science and technology.⁴⁷</p>
Strengthen organizations addressing key challenges in a specific field	National service	<p>AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America Re-entry Initiative</p> <p>In 2005 the Corporation for National and Community Service signed an agreement with the Department of Justice to reduce ex-offender recidivism and promote successful re-entry into society by connecting them with existing programs and leveraging public and private resources for housing, employment, education, life skills, and mentoring. The Justice Department’s Community Capacity Development Office supported members. Volunteers in Service to America continues to build the capacity of ex-offender re-entry programs across the country.⁴⁸</p>
	Impact volunteering	<p>Code for America Brigade</p> <p>Code for America Brigade is an organizing force for local civic engagement—a national network of volunteer “civic hackers,” who contribute their skills toward using the web as a platform for local government and community service. The national Code for America Brigade team helps “civic hackers” find projects and form teams to address important problems identified by cities and communities. Projects include developing civic apps; writing code, graphics, and copy; building digital libraries; and encouraging open government. Code for America projects often result in technology platforms that enable other citizens to volunteer in their communities. Brigades exist in more than two-dozen cities.⁴⁹</p>
Increase awareness or change behavior to achieve measurable change	Service learning	<p>Project Ignition</p> <p>With funding from State Farm, Project Ignition students and their advisors have been meeting classroom objectives while creating awareness and engagement campaigns to address teen-driver safety issues.⁵⁰</p>
	Impact volunteering	<p>Love Your School</p> <p>Love Your School, a high-impact service initiative that is part of the Cities of Service plan in Little Rock, Arkansas, reduces childhood obesity using several volunteer activities in concert: A grade-/age-appropriate nutrition instruction program supported by volunteers at local elementary schools, combined with a garden-enhancement program (as part of the nutrition curriculum) that employs a series of on-campus raised-bed gardens provided to the school for use in the classes receiving the nutrition instruction; the Garden-At-Home program in which students participating in the nutrition curriculum have the option to receive a five-foot-by-five-foot raised garden at their home; a volunteer coordinated walking program titled WALK IT OUT!, where volunteers supervise and escort students for one hour per day four days per week of intense physical exercise; and parental cooking classes held at the Sponsor Elementary School conducted by local chefs and Pulaski County Cooperative Extension Service staff.⁵¹</p>

Ways that performing service can impact the server

Need	Strategy	Program examples
Improve student outcomes (i.e., motivation and attendance)	Service learning	<p>Teen Outreach Program</p> <p>In operation since 1976, Teen Outreach Program operates in schools most frequently during school hours as part of a health education curriculum or other core-course programs, as well as after school and in community-based settings. The Teen Outreach Program is a broad developmental intervention that attempts to help teens understand and evaluate their life options and prevent problem behaviors in adolescents. Evaluations document that the program leads to a variety of positive outcomes—primarily scholastic success as measured by reduced course failure and suspension rates and a decrease in pregnancy rates. While the particular formats may vary among the different sites, local programs offer participants at least one to two group discussions per week and a minimum of 20 hours of community service per program year in order to realize the level of outcomes found in the Teen Outreach Evaluation. The program is currently being administered at approximately 400 locations across the United States, the Virgin Islands, and the United Kingdom, reaching an estimated 20,000 youth.⁵²</p>
		<p>Peer and Cross-Age Tutoring</p> <p>Peer and Cross-age Tutoring involves students tutoring other students. An extensive research base documents that such programs typically improve educational outcomes for both tutors and tutees.⁵³</p>
Improved health and well-being	National service	<p>Experience Corps</p> <p>Some 2,000 American Association of Retired Persons, or AARP, Experience Corps volunteer members tutor and mentor in 19 cities across the country, providing literacy coaching, homework help, consistent role models, and committed, caring attention. Independent research shows that AARP Experience Corps boosts student academic performance, helps schools and youth-serving organizations become more successful, and enhances the physical and mental health of 50-plus adults in the process.⁵⁴</p>
	Impact volunteering	<p>Mission Continues</p> <p>The Mission Continues program awards community service fellowships to post-9/11 veterans, empowering them to transform their lives by serving others and directly impacting their communities. Mission Continues fellows serve for six months at local nonprofit organizations addressing key educational, environmental, or social issues. In addition to the immediate value that the fellows provide through their daily service, each fellow works to achieve one of three outcomes at the conclusion of the fellowship: full-time employment, pursuit of higher education, or a permanent role of service. At the culmination of the fellowship, each fellow leads a service project bringing veterans and civilians together in days of service. These projects are bridging the military-civilian divide, allowing veterans to feel more connected to their communities and helping civilians gain a better understanding of and appreciation for men and women in uniform.⁵⁵</p>
A pipeline of students interested in pursuing careers in specific fields	National service	<p>FEMA Corps</p> <p>In 2012 the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Corporation for National and Community Service established a FEMA-devoted unit of 1,600 service corps members within AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps solely devoted to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. In addition—to provide a trained and reliable resource dedicated to support disaster operations, while enhancing the entire emergency management workforce by providing training, experience, and educational opportunities—the partnership will prepare thousands of young people for careers in emergency management and related fields. When the program is at full operational capability, FEMA expects to see a savings of approximately \$60 million in an average disaster year.⁵⁶</p>
	Service learning	<p>Youth Health Service Corps</p> <p>As a means to encourage diverse students to pursue health-related careers, the Youth Health Service Corps engages high school students in quality service learning that addresses community health care needs. Students acquire real-life experience working with underserved populations in health care settings. The corps has become a national program replicated by 33 Area Health Education Centers in 20 states.⁵⁷</p>

Need	Strategy	Program examples
Job experience for populations facing workforce barriers	National service	<p>Youthbuild</p> <p>In YouthBuild programs funded by the Department of Labor Workforce Investment Act and other sources, low-income young people ages 16 to 24 work full time for 6 to 24 months toward their GEDs or high school diplomas, while learning job skills by building affordable housing in their communities. Emphasis is placed on leadership development, community service, and the creation of a positive mini-community of adults and youth committed to each other's success. Students may earn AmeriCorps education awards through their homebuilding and other community service. Upon exiting the program, they are placed in colleges, jobs, or both. There are currently 273 YouthBuild programs in 46 states, Washington, D.C., and the Virgin Islands, engaging approximately 10,000 young adults per year.⁵⁸</p> <p>Home Energy Affordability Loan AmeriCorps program</p> <p>The Home Energy Affordability Loan, or HEAL, program is designed to decrease the utility cost burden of low- to moderate-income people by providing residential energy efficient audits while resourcing and training community service members to perform the audits. Once audits are performed, grants and loan programs are explained, and qualified participants receive residential energy efficiency retrofit assistance from AmeriCorps members. In addition to receiving AmeriCorps basic training, the AmeriCorps members serving in the program learn basic building science, skills and theory of energy efficient retrofits, and the operation of specialized equipment (blower doors, duct blasters, and more). After training is complete, trainees are deployed to Home Energy Affordability Loan homes to complete specified energy efficiency measures, including insulation installation, air sealing, and lighting retrofits. This valuable labor significantly reduces the cost of energy-efficient home improvements for low-to moderate-income homeowners.⁵⁹</p>
Increased civic responsibility	Service learning	<p>Earth Force</p> <p>Educators use the Earth Force curriculum to incorporate service-learning and civic action into the classroom. Students identify environmental issues and strengths within their own communities, learn democratic decision-making processes to select the issue they will be researching, and identify and analyze policies and practices related to their issue. They research the issue from all sides and identify key stakeholders they can engage in their research and action. Students then identify a policy or practice related to the issue that they want to affect, set a project goal to determine a course of action, and develop and implement a well-organized plan of action to ensure project reaches completion. Earth Force reaches more than 18,000 youth each year. Evaluation data shows that 86 percent of participants increased the civic skills needed to change their community such as problem-solving, civic action, and decision making and the ability to work for changes to policies or community practices to improve the environment.⁶⁰</p>
Leadership development	National service	<p>New Sector Alliance</p> <p>With support from AmeriCorps, the New Sector Alliance's Residency in Social Enterprise program is an intensive 11-month leadership development program for emerging professionals and recent graduates interested in the social-impact sector. Residents are selected from a highly competitive pool to provide support to Boston- and San Francisco-based organizations that enhances the organizations' service to their constituents. Throughout the program, residents receive rigorous training and exclusive one-on-one mentorship from a diverse selection of leaders involved in the social-impact sector—from for-profit consultants to nonprofit professionals. A similar summer program engages undergraduates and recent college graduates for 11 weeks.⁶¹</p>

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