



AmeriCorps Longitudinal Study: Impact of Service After 8 Years

"Still Serving: Measuring the Eight-Year Impact of AmeriCorps on Alumni" is a continuation of the AmeriCorps Longitudinal Study, which was begun in 1999 to evaluate the long-term impact of AmeriCorps on former members' career choices, life skills, level of volunteering, educational attainment, voting, and other behaviors and attitudes related to civic engagement. For the study, a nationally representative sample of more than 2,000 full-time AmeriCorps State and National and AmeriCorps NCCC members are compared periodically over time with a group of individuals who expressed an interest in AmeriCorps but did not enroll in the program. The most recent survey, conducted eight years after the initial survey, demonstrates for the first time that a year of service in AmeriCorps creates long-term positive impacts on the civic attitudes and behaviors of the program's alumni.



KEY FINDINGS

AmeriCorps is a pipeline to careers in public service.

- AmeriCorps makes people more likely to enter into public service careers.
- 60 percent of alumni work with a nonprofit organization or with the government.
- 46 percent of State and National members are employed in a public service-related job, such as education, social work, and public safety, compared to 33 percent of their comparison group.

AmeriCorps generates civic leaders who remain actively engaged in their communities.

- AmeriCorps alumni feel more empowered to work for the betterment of their community, and even feel that they are able to work with local governments and others to make positive changes in their communities.
- 59 percent of State and National members and 60 percent of NCCC members believe they would definitely be able to collaborate with others in their community to start an after-school program for children, compared to 52 percent in both of their respective comparison groups.

- AmeriCorps State and National members are more likely than their comparison group to be active in community activities such as public meetings (69% versus 63%).
- NCCC alumni are more likely to volunteer in their communities as a result of their service (64% compared to 51% of the comparison group).

Members who served in AmeriCorps are more satisfied with their lives eight years later than individuals who did not end up serving in AmeriCorps.

- 94 percent of NCCC and 86 percent of State and National alumni, for example, are satisfied with their careers.

AmeriCorps exposes members to new career opportunities.

- About 80 percent of members reported that their service exposed them to new career options (83% of NCCC members and 79% of State and National members).

AmeriCorps has an even greater impact on the career choices of minority members and those individuals from disadvantaged circumstances.

- Minority AmeriCorps members (State and National) are significantly more likely

(Continued)

to choose a career in public service than members of the comparison group (44% compared to 26%). AmeriCorps members from disadvantaged circumstances are 20 percentage points more likely to be employed in a public service field (46% compared to 26%).

IMPLICATIONS

- AmeriCorps presents opportunities for young adults to get on the pathway to a lifetime of service.
- AmeriCorps offers alumni an opportunity to reinvest their time, talent, and leadership into their communities through their work and/or other community activities.
- Members develop the kind of leadership and other skills that the public sector needs in order to overcome workforce shortages in fields such as teaching and nursing.
- For those interested in public service careers, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, AmeriCorps can open doors to public service job options.

RESEARCH DESIGN

- The study was designed to address the following questions:
 - What is the impact of AmeriCorps on members' civic engagement?
 - What is the impact of AmeriCorps on members' careers?
 - What is the impact of AmeriCorps on members' educational attainment?
 - What is the impact of AmeriCorps on members' life satisfaction?
- The study includes a nationally representative sample of more than 2,000 full-time AmeriCorps members from more than 100 AmeriCorps State and National programs and three NCCC regional campuses. The members enrolled for the 1999-2000 program year.
- The evaluation compares these AmeriCorps members with a group of like individuals who

were interested in serving in AmeriCorps but did not serve (the comparison group) and have also been tracked and surveyed since 1999.

- To assess longer-term impacts, the data were collected eight years after members served in AmeriCorps (2007). Previous waves of data were collected from study participants at baseline program entry (1999-2000), the completion of the year of AmeriCorps service (2000-2001), and three years after baseline (2002-2003).
- The study was conducted in partnership with Abt Associates Inc., an independent social policy and research firm.

AMERICORPS

AmeriCorps provides opportunities for 75,000 Americans each year to give intensive service to their communities and country through three programs: AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC).

AmeriCorps members recruit, train, and supervise community volunteers, tutor and mentor youth, build affordable housing, teach computer skills, clean parks and streams, run after-school programs, help communities respond to disasters, and build the capacity of nonprofit groups to become self-sustaining, among many other activities. Since 1994 more than 540,000 Americans have served in AmeriCorps.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Corporation for National and Community Service improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. Each year the Corporation engages more than four million Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service to meet local needs through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs.

May 2008