

# NATIONAL SERVICE TERMS AND ACRONYMS

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**RFP**

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**RSVP**

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**VISTA**

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# **NATIONAL SERVICE TERMS AND ACRONYMS**

**AmeriCorps** – An umbrella term that refers to programs that are designated by the Corporation as national service programs and the participants in them. AmeriCorps includes AmeriCorps\*State/National, AmeriCorps\*VISTA, and AmeriCorps\*NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps).

**AmeriCorps\*NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps)** – A residential AmeriCorps program in which 18-24-year-old-members are housed and trained together on military bases and deployed in teams to service sites throughout the surrounding region.

**AmeriCorps\*State and National** – Used only when referring to grants or funding. AmeriCorps\*State grants are distributed through the state commissions; AmeriCorps\*National grants are distributed to organizations directly from the national office of the Corporation for National Service.

**AmeriCorps\*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)** – Full-time, national service program for men and women ages 18 and older interested in developing lasting solutions to the problems of poverty in America. AmeriCorps\*VISTA members serve nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations and agencies to develop permanent infrastructure that aids and expands services, strengthens programs, and empowers low income individuals. AmeriCorps\*VISTA is under the AmeriCorps umbrella and is administered out of the Corporation's State Offices.

**Campus Compact** – A national organization of college and university presidents with numerous state affiliates committed to advancing service on their campuses.

**Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)** – The independent federal agency that encompasses the work and staff of two previously existing agencies, the Commission on National and Community Service and ACTION. The Corporation was created by the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993.

**Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973** – The Domestic Volunteer Service Act authorizes AmeriCorps\*VISTA, the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companion Program, and the RSVP program. The legislation was last amended in 1993 as part of the creation of the Corporation for National Service.

**Education Award** – A post-service benefit of \$4,725 (full time) or \$2,363,500 (part time) earned by all AmeriCorps successfully completing a term of service. The award is paid directly to a lending or educational institution and may be used to pay off education loans or to finance college, graduate school, or approved vocational training.

**Education Award Program** - An AmeriCorps program that receives a small administrative grant and use their own or other resources to pay the members' living allowance and support program costs

**eGrants** – Online system for submitting grant applications.

**Evaluation** – A formal external assessment of program effectiveness and outcomes at the end of a given period of time. Evaluation is primarily the responsibility of the Corporation and is conducted by the Corporation with the cooperation of state commissions and programs.

**Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)** – One of the three National Senior Service Corps programs. Foster Grandparents devote their service to children with special or exceptional needs.

**Formula Funding** – The annual allotment given to each state against which the state commissions solicits proposals for AmeriCorps funding.

**Grantee** – the direct recipient of an AmeriCorps Grant.

**Learn and Serve America** – Service-learning programs that are designed to enrich academic learning and promote growth in participants while meeting community needs. There are two categories of Learn and Serve America programs: K-12 and Higher Education. Learn and Serve America: K-12 has two main components: *school-based*, which includes formula allotment grants to State Education Agencies, and *community-based*, which are distributed on a competitive basis to state commissions, grantmaking entities, and other qualified organizations. (*See service-learning.*)

**Living Allowance** – AmeriCorps members receive a modest living allowance during their term of service. This is a benefit in addition to the education award available to members who successfully complete their term of service (*See stipend.*)

**Matching Funds** – State commissions themselves, as well as the programs they fund, are required to meet certain specified match requirements as a condition for receipt of federal funding. For every dollar of federal funds, there is a designated percentage of case of in-kind funds that the state commission or other organizations must provide (this is the “match’.)

**Members** – Participants in AmeriCorps (including AmeriCorps\*NCCC, AmeriCorps\*VISTA, and AmeriCorps\*State and National programs) are referred to as members – not volunteers.

**Mission Statement** – A mission statement expresses the program’s vision with regard to national service and indicates the ultimate impacts to be achieved. A program’s annual objectives are derived from the program’s mission statement.

**National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993** – The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 created AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National Service. The act authorizes appropriations for AmeriCorps\*State and National, AmeriCorps\*NCCC, Learn and Serve America, the National Service Trust, and the Points of Light Foundation. The 1993 legislation amended the National and Community Service Act of 1990.

**National Competitive Funding** – An annual pool of funds against which state commissions may compete to fund additional AmeriCorps programs in their states.

**National Directs (AmeriCorps\*National)** – AmeriCorps programs funded directly by the Corporation through multi-state non-profit organizations.

**National Senior Service Corps (NSSC)** – The umbrella term that encompasses the three senior service programs. Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

**National Service** – Results-oriented service by an individual or group of individuals that help meet the nation’s needs in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, and other human needs.

**NCCC** – See AmeriCorps\*NCCC

**Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)** – A legal notification, published in the Federal Register, describing the availability of funds for a new federal program.

**Participant** – The generic term used to describe any individual enrolled in a program funded by the Corporation, as opposed to the more specific term “member,” which refers to individuals enrolled in an AmeriCorps program.

**Presidents' Summit for America's Future** – This historic gathering in Philadelphia in April 1997 at which former Presidents Clinton, Bush, Carter, and Ford, and Secretary of State Colin Powell called for all Americans to find ways to ensure that all children have access to the fundamental resources they need:

- caring adults in their lives, as parents, mentors, tutors, and coaches;
- safe places with structured activities in which to learn and grow;
- a healthy start and healthy future;
- an effective education that equips them with marketable skills; and
- an opportunity to give back through their communities through their own service.

**Program** – A coordinated group of activities linked by common elements such as recruitment, selection, and training of participants, and staff, regular group activities, and assignment to projects organized for the purpose of achieving the mission and goals of national service, and carried out with the assistance provided under the Act.

**Program Development Assistance and Training (PDAT)** – Funds provided to state commissions to enable them to provide training and technical assistance support to their programs.

**Program Sponsor** – An entity responsible for recruiting, selecting and training members, providing them benefits and support services, engaging them in regular group activities and placing them in projects.

**Project** – An activity, or set of activities, carried out through a program that receives assistance under the Act, that results in a specific identifiable service or improvement that otherwise would not be done with existing funds, and that does not duplicate the routine services or functions of the employer to whom participants are assigned.

**Project Sponsor** – An organization, or other entity, that has been selected to provide a placement for a participant or participants.

**Request for Proposals (RFP)** – A term which some states or organizations use to describe the document which they solicit proposals from other organizations. Others may call such a document a grant application or bid. State commissions will use RFP's for AmeriCorps programs from non-profit organizations, local governments, higher education institutions, Indian Tribes, and state agencies.

**Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)** - One of the three National Senior Service Corps programs that was created 1972.

**SEA** – State Education Agency. (*See Learn and Serve America.*)

**Senior Companion Program (SCP)** - One of three National Senior Service Corps programs. Senior Companions help other seniors live independently in their own homes and receive a stipend.

**Service-Learning** – A method by which students improve academic learning and develop personal skills through structured service projects that meet community needs. Service-learning builds upon students' service activities by providing them with opportunities to learn by preparing, leading, and reflecting upon their service experiences. (*See Learn and Serve America.*)

**Service Recipient** – a community beneficiary who receives a service or benefit from the service of AmeriCorps members.

**Signature Service** – A project undertaken by a large group of participants often from many different programs and usually in conjunction with a special day to highlight service programs and their participants, such as Martin Luther King Day or National Youth Service Day.

**State Commission** – A 15-25 member, independent, bipartisan body appointed by a Governor to implement service programs. Duties of a State Commission include development of a comprehensive Unified State Plan for service and volunteering in the state; submission of the state's application to the Corporation for AmeriCorps and community-based Learn and Serve funding; administration of the competition for AmeriCorps\*State programs; oversight and monitoring of funded AmeriCorps and community-based Learn and Serve programs, and reporting accomplishments to the Corporation.

**State Service Plan (SSP)** – A three-year plan developed by each state commission in partnership with the Corporation State Office, the State Education Agency, and other appropriate organizations in the state. The State Service Plan should describe the broad vision for promoting national service and volunteering and for building a solid infrastructure of high quality programs and support services in the state.

**Stipend** – A cash benefit that is an alternative to the education award – an option only for AmeriCorps\*VISTA members. The term is not synonymous with living allowance. (*See living allowance.*)

**Streams of Service** – A term used to refer to the many types of service programs, for example, the “K-12 service stream,” or the “full time service stream.”

**Student Ownership** – The notion that students can make important contributions to their schools and communities.

**VISTA** – See AmeriCorps\*VISTA.

**Youth Civic Engagement** – The process of engaging youth in affecting policy and taking action on issues in their communities.

**Youth Service** – The involvement of young people in providing services to their schools and/or communities. This term should not be confused with “youth services,” which typically refers to programs where youth are the recipients of service.

## **Other Useful Terms**

**Audit** – To examine with intent to verify, usually regarding financial accounts.

**Citizen** – A person who owes allegiance to and is entitled to the enjoyment of full rights in the United State, either by birth or naturalization.

**Community-based Organization (CBO)** – Any private non-profit organization (including a church or other religious entity) that is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community; and is engaged in meeting, human, environmental, or public safety community needs.

**Consortia** – A group of organizations whose purpose is to collectively facilitate and support the work of a service program in ways that add material and human resources beyond those available to each organization individually.

**Fiscal Year** – A period of 12 months during which a particular budget is to be spent and accounted for. The “government” year begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. Another commonly used period is July 1 to June 30.

**In-kind** – Contributions and donations made in services and projects, not cash.

**Partnership** – Two or more entities that have entered into a written agreement specifying the goals and activities of the relationship as well as the responsibilities, goals, and activities of each partner.

**PSA** – Public Service Announcement.