

AmeriCorps

State Commission Performance Report

August 2006



Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 



Our Mission:

*Improve lives, strengthen
communities, and foster
civic engagement through
service and volunteering*



The **Corporation for National and Community Service** (“the Corporation”) provides opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities through three programs: Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America. Together with the USA Freedom Corps, the Corporation is working to build a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in America.

This report was prepared by the Corporation in collaboration with Westat. Westat team members have been responsible for enlisting feedback from users of the 2002-2003 report, gathering member and program data, and designing and incorporating data into the report.

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The report is also available on the Corporation’s website at: <http://www.nationalservice.gov>.

The report meets the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** compliance standards. Upon request this report will be made available in alternate forms for persons with disabilities.

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I. Overview



Introduction

Under the auspices of the **Corporation for National and Community Service** (“the Corporation”), the first AmeriCorps State Commission Performance Report was released in December 2004. That report, titled *State Profiles and Performance Report, Program Year 2002-2003*,¹ summarized AmeriCorps State Commission data on performance indicators such as completion rates and fill rates. Descriptive performance highlights were also included. The effort fostered the sharing of data among State Commissions in a way that spotlighted successes, as well as provided opportunities to benchmark activities and share effective strategies with peers.

Building upon the first Performance Report, this current effort represents an improved document based on the valuable yearlong feedback provided by our Executive Director Advisory Group. Their contributions helped to create this new format and to make this report stronger. This document consists of program results of AmeriCorps State Commissions for the years² 2003-2004 and 2004-2005, as well as trends reflecting prior years. Data reported are related to service activities, performance highlights,³ member completion/fill rates,⁴ state financial data,⁵ and Education Award usage rates.⁶

¹ Report prepared for the Corporation by Westat of Rockville, Maryland under Contract No. CNSHQCO3003.

² AmeriCorps programs vary in their start and end dates, and not all programs operate during the same timeframe. During any given year the time period of activity reported is between October 1st through September 30th. Any program activity that may have occurred after September 30, 2005 is not captured in this report.

³ All performance highlights are based on Formula, Competitive and Education Award subgrantees' self-reports. State Commissions review these reports, and then submit approved information to AmeriCorps through the Grantee Progress Reports (GPRs). The performance highlights are not inclusive of all the activities conducted by AmeriCorps teams but are just selected illustrations suggesting the range of service encompassed by AmeriCorps.

⁴ Member completion/fill rate information represents all final awarded slots and member enrollments. All member data are from eSPAN, as of September 30, 2005.

⁵ State financial data, such as awarded Corporation and matching funds, are from budgets as found in Grantsbase and eGrants, as of September 30, 2005. Programs whose funds were de-obligated before the end of the grant year are not included in these calculations.

⁶ Education Award information stems from eSPAN, as of September 14, 2005.

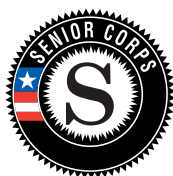


Who We Are

Established in 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service engages Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities and country through three major service programs: AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America. Participants of Corporation programs contribute approximately 200 million service hours domestically each year. These programs, each with its own purpose and structure, are united for a common purpose—engaging citizens dedicated to making their communities better.



AmeriCorps is a network of national service programs—AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps), and AmeriCorps VISTA—that meet critical needs in areas such as education, public safety, health, and the environment through partnerships with public agencies, non-profits, faith-based and other local organizations. More than 70,000 AmeriCorps members, and the 600,000 volunteers that they recruit and supervise, tutor and mentor youth, build affordable housing, teach computer skills, clean parks and streams, operate after-school programs, and help communities respond to disasters.



Senior Corps is a network of programs—RSVP, the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), and the Senior Companion Program (SCP)—that uses the experience, skills, and talents of more than 500,000 volunteers age 55 and older to meet community needs. Senior Corps volunteers serve in more than 65,000 local non-profits, public agencies, and faith-based and other community organizations through the three Senior Corps programs.



Learn and Serve America is a network of programs – Learn and Serve School-Based, Community-Based, and Higher Education programs – providing resources to support service-learning in schools and community organizations. Programs in more than 2,000 schools, colleges and community organizations involve more than one million students from kindergarten through graduate school in meeting community needs while improving their academic and civic skills. This is often where a lifetime commitment to service can begin. All Learn and Serve America programs provide training to staff, faculty, and volunteers to ensure that service-learning becomes an ongoing feature of funded organizations and schools.



Other Key Programs and Initiatives of the Corporation

In addition to the three programs mentioned on the previous page, the Corporation supports the following programs and initiatives:

Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. An annual effort to promote community service activities to honor the legacy of the deceased civil rights leader.

President's Council on Service and Civic Participation. A blue-ribbon panel of leading citizens from all walks of life dedicated to spreading the message of service across America.

President's Volunteer Service Award. An initiative of the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation and the top recognition program for individuals of all ages who devote a significant amount of time to serving others in their community.

Presidential Freedom Scholarships. A program to honor high school juniors and seniors who demonstrate an extraordinary commitment to service with money to pay for their college education.

Challenge Grants, Next Generation Grants, and Disability Grants. A series of special grant initiatives designed to leverage public-private partnerships, support new and innovative programs, and encourage service by all Americans.

Faith-Based and Community Initiative. An agency- and administration-wide initiative to break down barriers for faith-based and small community organizations to become involved in national service programs.

National Conference on Volunteering and Service. The premier annual gathering of leaders of the volunteering and national service world.



Terms and Definitions

Terms used specifically in this report describing performance in the AmeriCorps State program are defined below.

AmeriCorps State. Created in 1993, AmeriCorps State works with Governor-appointed State Service Commissions to provide financial support through grants to public and non-profit organizations that sponsor local service programs around the country, including hundreds of faith-based and community organizations, higher education institutions, and public agencies. The organizations receiving funding are responsible for the design of service activities for a team of members serving full- or part-time for one year or during the summer. Sample activities include, but are not limited to: tutoring and mentoring youth, helping communities respond to disasters, building homes, teaching computer and literacy skills, and restoring parks and natural habitats. AmeriCorps members also mobilize community volunteers and strengthen the capacity of the organizations where they serve.

Budgeted Funding Levels. All Corporation and matching funds for Formula and Competitive programs are taken from the most recent Corporation-approved program budgets in eGrants (or Grantsbase, for the earliest years). It should be noted that State Commissions occasionally make minor changes to program budgets, using the Web Based Reporting System (WBRS); larger changes to program budgets require an amendment to the grant award, which must be approved via eGrants. As a result, within a given year, actual program expenditures may differ from the approved budgeted amounts.

Competitive Funding. This type of grant award is made to commissions on a competitive basis to fund local non-profit and public entities operating local community service projects. For each state, the competitive funds total is calculated from program budgets for the given year. It should be noted that in comparing this report's amounts with the previous version of the report, the totals calculated from awarded amounts to the state's competitive programs may differ due to carryover from one grant year to another. Programs whose funds were de-obligated before the end of the grant year are not included in these calculations.

Completion Rates. The number of members who earned either a full or a partial education award (i.e., successfully completed their term of service) divided by the total number of members who completed service, as of September 30, 2005. For a given year, completion rates may differ from those reported last year as more members complete their assignments. Programs whose funds were de-obligated before the end of the grant year are not included in these calculations.

Data Sources. All AmeriCorps State program data were drawn from Corporation data base management systems, which include: eGrants and Grantsbase, the Web Based Reporting System (WBRS), and other administrative data systems. It should be noted that Performance Highlights are based on subgrantees' self-reports of service activities. These reports were then compiled by State Commissions, and subsequently submitted to the Corporation in the annual Grantee Progress Reports (GPRs). Then, using the performance narratives of the GPRs, information for the Performance Highlights section was culled. Because of the length of the GPRs, the original narratives have not been included in the Appendix. Other



information contained in each state profile, however, such as the fill rate, completion rate, and funding details, have been compiled in the Appendix. Details for the state maps depicting where AmeriCorps members were serving during the specified year were obtained from state commissions, which provided information regarding program names, locations (by zip codes), the numbers of members serving at each location, and the capacity (type of service performed) in which members were serving.

Education Award. After successfully completing a term of service, AmeriCorps members who are enrolled in the National Service Trust are eligible to receive an education award. The education award can be used to pay education costs at qualified institutions of higher education or training, or to repay qualified student loans. The award currently is \$4,725 for a year of full-time service, with correspondingly smaller awards for less than full-time service. A member has up to seven years after his or her term of service has ended to use the award.

Education Award Usage. Education award usage is generated from eSpan. For education award usage rates, we examined awards in which members have had three or more years to access the award. This decision was based on evidence that most members use the education award within three years of earning it.

For this report, we have identified members who served in the years 1994-1995 through 2001-2002 to examine usage rates for education awards.

1994-1995 through 1997-1998: Members who served in 1994-1995 through 1997-1998 have completed their seven-year education award eligibility period; because the eligibility period for using the education award is completed, we have aggregated the usage rate for these members.

1998-1999 through 2001-2002: Members who served in the years 1998-1999 through 2001-2002 have at least one year of eligibility left. As former members of these years access their education awards, these data will fluctuate as the awards remain active.

We will continue to track AmeriCorps member education award usage by year, adding an additional year in the “eligibility remaining” portion of the graph that appears in the state profile. Usage rates may differ from year to year as more earned education award money is withdrawn from members’ Trust accounts. As members end their seven-year period of eligibility they will be added to the “eligibility completed” group.

Enrollment. Enrollment data were taken from the National Service Trust and represent the number of enrolled AmeriCorps members who began their term of service during a given year, and who have completed service as of September 30, 2005. For a given year, enrollment counts may differ from those reported last year as more members enroll in AmeriCorps programs. Programs whose funds were de-obligated before the end of the grant year are not included in these calculations.

Enrollment Pause. During fiscal year 2002, the Corporation approved national service positions in excess of the number of budgeted slots. In November 2002 the Corporation temporarily suspended the ability of its grantees to enroll members into national service positions until final Congressional action on the Corporation’s appropriations for fiscal 2003.



This suspension is referred to as the “enrollment pause,” and it prevented AmeriCorps-sponsored projects and programs from enrolling any members for a period of four months.

Fill Rate. The fill rate reflects the grantees’ ability to fill their awarded “slots” with AmeriCorps members. Fill rates are calculated as the number of members enrolled in a year within a state divided by the total number of slots awarded within that state. Administrative records keep track of every member who enrolled in a program, regardless whether these members leave prior to completing their term of service. Since the system does not un-enroll members, and may refill a slot if a member leaves during his or her term of service, a fill rate can eventually go above 100%. For example, Program X is allocated 100 slots, and fills them. Its fill rate is currently 100%. Two months later, 10 members leave Program X. The program refills their slots with 10 new members. Program X’s fill rate is now 110%. Prior to 2003, programs had considerable latitude (up to 20%) in filling vacated slots; however, the Trust is not obligated to pay the education award of members who leave prior to the end of their term of service without cause. During the enrollment pause of 2003, the Corporation instituted a new policy in which programs could not refill program slots. The Corporation is currently considering several methods to calculate fill rates.

Formula Funding. Formula funds are distributed according to population-based formula to Governor-appointed State Service Commissions, which in turn make grants to local and public agencies. For each state, the formula funds total is calculated from program budgets for the given year. It should be noted that in the previous version of the report, the totals calculated from awarded amounts to the state’s formula programs may differ due to carryover from one grant year to another. Programs whose funds were de-obligated before the end of the grant year are not included in these calculations.

Grantee Progress Report (GPR). Accomplishment data are submitted by individual programs to State Commissions. State Commissions then analyze the data and prepare a GPR, which is submitted to the Corporation annually.¹

Matching Funds. By statute, all AmeriCorps State programs (except for education award only programs) are required to raise a minimum of a 15% non-federal cash match for AmeriCorps members’ living allowances and other member support costs, and at least 33% for all other operating costs. The match for operating costs can be either cash or in-kind and can be from private, local, state, or other non-Corporation federal resources (if the rules governing those other federal funds permit it). The match percentage reported here is the total of budgeted match amounts for all of the state’s programs (competitive and formula), divided by (total program budgeted match amounts + total program budgeted Corporation amounts).

¹ The information presented in the performance highlights section comes from the GPRs. Highlights shown in the state profiles represent only a sampling of the efforts by each State Commission to meet local community needs. Performance Highlights were chosen based on a desire to convey an idea of the range and scope of AmeriCorps service in a state.



Member. “Member” is a term used to describe AmeriCorps participants. Most members receive a living allowance or other benefits as part of their enrollment in AmeriCorps. Upon successful completion of a term of service, members are eligible to receive an education award. In AmeriCorps, “members” are distinct from “volunteers,” the latter of whom do not receive financial compensation for participating in service programs.

National Service Trust (The Trust). Established by the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (42 USC 12601, et. seq.), the National Service Trust provides funds for education awards for eligible participants who complete service under AmeriCorps. The Trust consists of amounts appropriated to the Corporation, interest earned, and the proceeds for the sale or redemption of Trust investments. Under the Trust Act, funds are available to:

- Repay qualified student loans
- Pay educational expenses at an institution of higher education
- Pay expenses incurred through an approved school-to-work program
- Repay eligible interest expense

The value of any education award depends upon the length of service performed by an AmeriCorps member. A full term of service constitutes at least 1,700 hours of service per year and entitles the member to the full education award of \$4,725. Completion of a part-time term, requiring a minimum of 900 hours of service, entitles the member to exactly half of the full education award. Reduced part-time, minimum-time, and quarter-time terms are also offered. Education awards earned by AmeriCorps members are available to be used for seven years from the end of the term of service.

Number of Volunteers Leveraged by AmeriCorps State Members. In each state, AmeriCorps programs recruit non-paid community volunteers to serve with enrolled members or the sponsoring organization in conjunction with their program. Number of volunteers leveraged comes from the GPRs.

Performance Highlights. Performance highlight information for AmeriCorps State was reported by State Commissions on their Grantee Progress Reports (GPR) via the Corporation’s Web Based Reporting System (WBRS). Accomplishment data are submitted by individual programs to State Commissions in Annual Progress Reports (APR). State Commissions analyze the APR data and prepare a GPR, which is submitted to the Corporation annually. The performance data presented highlight only a sampling of the efforts by each State Commission to meet local community needs. Performance highlights are not inclusive of all the activities conducted by AmeriCorps teams but are just selected illustrations suggesting the range of service encompassed by AmeriCorps.

State Projected Amounts. The chart displaying budgeted Corporation funding levels for each state contains actual and projected funding amounts for both Competitive and Formula programs. Projected funding amounts reflect how much a state would receive if the total national amount of (competitive or formula) funds were proportionally distributed among the



states, according to state population. Since this is how AmeriCorps State formula money is actually apportioned, projected and actual amounts are always equal for a state's formula programs. For a state's competitive portfolio, when the actual funding level exceeds the projected funding level, the state receives a disproportionately large share of State competitive funds, and vice versa.

Trust Service Award Liability. The Trust service award liability represents unpaid earned, and expected to be earned education awards and eligible interest forbearance costs, which are expected to be used. These amounts relate to participants who have completed service or are currently enrolled in the program and are expected to earn an award.

Web Based Reporting System (WBRS). An online data system that is used to report member enrollment and end-of-term data for the majority of State Service Commissions. Both grantees and their subgrantees have access to WBRS for reporting on their performance. The performance data from WBRS used in this report are self-reported to AmeriCorps by State Commissions.



Organization of This Report

The aim of this report is to provide the reader with a summary of all the AmeriCorps State Commissions' performance for 2003-2004 through 2004-2005, as well as trends reflecting prior years. In the pages that follow, the reader can find performance profiles of programs grouped by state for all states with operating Commissions.

Each profile begins with a Performance Highlights section that illustrates the range of service performed by AmeriCorps members. Highlights are samples extracted from Grantee Progress Reports. They are not all-inclusive or meant to be added or compared. They just provide an idea of how wide-ranging AmeriCorps service is across the state.

Next, the profile shows key information at a glance, such as enrollment and funding information and an estimate of how many community volunteers became engaged in service as a result of the efforts of AmeriCorps members. Special state maps illustrate where AmeriCorps members served in the years 2003-2004 and 2004-2005. The backdrop delineates the state's counties. Location of member service was based on zip code information provided by AmeriCorps programs. In a number of cases, the zip code of the main program was provided, while individual members' service actually reached far and wide. Thus, these maps give a general idea of the concentration and reach of AmeriCorps service.

The state profile continues with a bar chart showing AmeriCorps State budgeted funding levels by the year, from 2001-2002 through 2004-2005. For each state, formula and competitive funding levels were compared with amounts that had been projected for the state.

A separate bar chart shows overall match funding by the year, from 2001-2002 through 2004-2005. The state's match funding percent is compared to the AmeriCorps State average match funding percent.

The profile concludes with a bar chart showing Education Award usage by members in the state, from earliest eligibility to use the award (that is, those members who served in 1994-1995) up through those members who served in 2001-2002. The state's usage rates were compared with AmeriCorps State average usage rates.

Following the profiles is the Appendix section of the report, comprising four appendices. The first appendix is a statement on data quality in the context of the Corporation's efforts to achieve the most accurate data possible through its data systems. Next, a U.S. map portrays overall rates of volunteerism in the United States, state by state. Data tables follow in Appendix 3, showing more detailed AmeriCorps State data, state by state, over the years 2000-2001 through 2004-2005. The last appendix lists State Commission contact information.