

**American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009  
Corporation for National and Community Service**

**Agency Recovery Plan**

<b>Summary of Recovery Act Appropriations</b>	
AmeriCorps State and National	\$ 89,000,000
AmeriCorps VISTA	65,000,000
National Service Trust	40,000,000
Salaries and Expenses	6,000,000
Office of Inspector General*	<u>1,000,000</u>
<b>Total Recovery Act Funding</b>	<b><u>\$201,000,000</u></b>
<small>*The Office of Inspector General's plan for expending Recovery Act funds can be information can be found at <a href="http://www.cnscsig.gov/recovery.html">http://www.cnscsig.gov/recovery.html</a>.</small>	

## ***Objectives***

The Corporation received funding in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) to put approximately 13,000 additional AmeriCorps State and National and AmeriCorps VISTA members to work through national service, meeting needs of vulnerable populations and communities during the current economic recession. Funding from the Recovery Act may also be used to provide current grantees with relief from requirements to provide matching funds. The Corporation also received funding to improve its information technology systems.

## ***Implementation***

### **AmeriCorps State and National**

The Corporation received \$89 million in Recovery Act funding to award approximately 10,000<sup>1</sup> full-time, part-time, and reduced part-time AmeriCorps State and National member positions. Grant recipients will primarily be nonprofit community organizations, but may also include local governments, Indian Tribes and institutions of higher education. Approximately 2/3 of the funds

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<sup>1</sup> This estimate assumes no transfer of funds to the National Service Trust, and would be affected in the event of such transfer.

# **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Corporation for National and Community Service**

## **Agency Recovery Plan**

will be awarded competitively to existing, proven AmeriCorps grantees either directly or via state service commissions. By statute, 1/3 of the funds will be distributed to state service commissions based on a population-based formula and the in turn, states will select the subgrant recipients.

The Corporation will apply the terms and conditions applicable to its fiscal 2008 funding, with National Direct grantees receiving a maximum of 20 percent of total funding; 100 percent of the grant funds will be awarded to non-federal recipients. Approximately \$1 million will be used to pay the childcare costs of eligible Recovery AmeriCorps full time members.

Recovery Act funding through the AmeriCorps program will be awarded as grants to current national, regional and local AmeriCorps grantees with a proven track record and demonstrate the capacity to efficiently and effectively draw upon this new resource to assist communities in need. To ensure transparency and promote competition to the greatest extent practical, the Corporation, as part of its fiscal 2009 grant process, will announce the availability of one-time funding for “Recovery Grants” to existing grantees to augment their current program. The notice of funding will include specific instructions on how to apply and explicit guidance around the match-waiver requirements, with clear instructions that Recovery Act funding is designed to mobilize more members in service.

These awards will be used to fund programs that result in the maximum, measurable impact on communities affected by the economic crisis while maintaining the integrity of AmeriCorps programming. Only expansion activities will be supported by Recovery Grants. Therefore, within a single program, recovery activities will be tracked separately from a grantee’s regular AmeriCorps activities.

Non-formula requests for Recovery Act funding will be reviewed by staff using the following criteria:

- Grantee capacity to manage the requested resources.
- Alignment of proposed activities with priorities outlined by the Corporation.
- Proposed impact
- Cost-effectiveness

## **AmeriCorps VISTA**

The Corporation received \$65 million in Recovery Act funding to award approximately 3,000 non cost share AmeriCorps VISTA member positions to new and existing sponsors. The Corporation, using it existing processes, will announce increased one-time funding for projects that result in the maximum, measurable impact on communities affected by the economic crisis.

# **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Corporation for National and Community Service**

## **Agency Recovery Plan**

The mission of the AmeriCorps VISTA program to create and expand programs that bring low-income individuals and communities out of poverty is strongly aligned with Administration and Congressional priorities in the Recovery Act. Existing VISTA projects already support job creation, the abatement of home foreclosures, credit counseling and financial asset development programs. Corporation state office staff will allocate VISTA resources based upon the critical needs of their states.

VISTA members are assigned to community organizations (e.g. non-profit, faith-based) and public agencies to help the organizations build on locally-driven solutions to both the causes of poverty as well as the problems that arise in poverty-stricken communities.

The specific objectives of the VISTA program, as outlined in the Domestic Volunteer Service Act are to: strengthen local agencies and organizations to carry out their programs; encourage volunteer service at the local level; and generate the commitment of private sector resources.

VISTA members funded through the Recovery Act will augment the ongoing work of the program through activities such as fundraising, establishment of volunteer recruitment and management systems, community outreach and partnership development. These activities will help non-profit and other community organizations to build greater capacity and to be a sustainable local resource to their communities as they work to increase economic opportunity for Americans living in poverty or who are in danger of falling into poverty. To create worthwhile volunteer positions for the additional VISTA members, we will expand existing projects and accelerate the development of new ones.

## **National Service Trust**

The Corporation received \$40 million for the National Service Trust Fund (the Trust) to fund education awards and interest forbearance for AmeriCorps State and National and VISTA members serving in Recovery Act funded programs. In addition, the Recovery Act authorizes the transfer of program funds provided under the Act to the Trust upon a determination that such transfer is necessary to support the activities of national service participants and after notice to Congress.

The Trust was established by the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (42 USC 12601, et seq.) to repay qualified student loans; pay educational expenses at a qualified institution of higher education; and repay eligible interest expense on student loans for eligible participants who complete AmeriCorps service. Trust funds are obligated at the time a slot is awarded to an AmeriCorps grantee or at the time of enrollment of a VISTA member. Education awards earned by AmeriCorps members are available to be used for seven years from the completion of the service. Payments from the Trust are made directly to the educational institutions and the loan holders as directed by the members and by the institutions. Trust funds are not used to pay member stipends or other grant costs.

# **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Corporation for National and Community Service**

## **Agency Recovery Plan**

As discussed above, the Recovery Act provided the Corporation a total of \$154 million in funding to support additional members in the State and National and VISTA programs. Concurrent with the award of Recovery Grants and execution of enforceable agreements with VISTA members, Trust funds provided under the Recovery Act will be obligated to cover the associated education award benefits. Participants in Recovery Act supported programs will be separately identified and the awards earned and used will be tracked and reported over time (members have seven years after earning an award to use it, therefore related outlays from the Trust could be made as late as 2020).

## **Salaries and Expenses**

The Corporation received \$6 million for information technology upgrades in its salaries and expenses account, of which \$800,000 can be used to administer the program funds appropriated under the Recovery Act. The Corporation will award several contracts to private sector firms to upgrade its information technology hardware and software.

The Corporation will use a competitive procurement process to move its computer and network operations centers out of its Washington, DC, headquarters facility. The Corporation needs these functions to be cost effectively managed and operated in a stable and secure facility with appropriate safeguards and back-up plans. This will ensure the continual availability of its systems across the country. The move will allow the Corporation to adequately support current grantees, AmeriCorps members and others requiring access to the systems, as well as preparing for the anticipated growth in Corporation programs. The Corporation estimates an award will be made in the May - June 2009 time frame.

In addition, following the implementation in the third quarter of 2009 the AmeriCorps Portal Release 3 (the public web based interface to AmeriCorps members and potential applicants), the Corporation will begin system upgrades that will raise the capacity of the system to handle increased numbers of members, applicants and grantees. Estimated award dates for these system upgrades will be in the August - December 2009 time frame.

The Corporation will also use up to \$800,000 to hire temporary administrative staff and perform monitoring and site visits of Recovery Act grantees.

## ***Monitoring***

The Corporation maintains a comprehensive approach to conducting oversight and monitoring of the full award portfolio. The Corporation routinely monitors all awards/grants and provides training and technical assistance, as necessary. Monitoring activities vary in length, scope, and intensity and may be on-site or office-based in nature. While routine monitoring is conducted for all awards, additional and more intensive monitoring is conducted as deemed necessary and

# **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Corporation for National and Community Service**

## **Agency Recovery Plan**

appropriate. The Corporation's monitoring program includes an annual assessment process to determine monitoring priority levels for all active awards. These monitoring priority levels are a primary determinant in establishing the Corporation's annual monitoring plan which identifies the additional and more intensive monitoring activities that are targeted for select grantees each fiscal year.

The Corporation will monitor all awards made with Recovery Act funding following the established policies and protocols for the oversight and monitoring of Corporation awards. Monitoring will include routine activities for all awards (e.g., reviews of program performance and financial status information) and will conduct additional monitoring as deemed necessary through the annual monitoring planning assessment process and any issues identified through the course of routine grants management activities.

## ***Reporting***

The Corporation has established a public web site to post major communications and other information (see: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/recovery/index.asp>, on the Recovery Act to ensure that the public is fully aware of its actions and activities. The site is also linked to the government-wide web page at [www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov).