

United We Serve Talking Points

- United We Serve is President Obama's call to service challenging all Americans to engage in sustained, meaningful service to meet growing social needs resulting from the economic downturn. Confident that ordinary people can achieve extraordinary things when given the proper tools, President Obama is asking all of us to come together to help lay a new foundation for growth.
- United We Serve initially runs from June 22 through a new National Day of Service on September 11, but will grow into a sustained, collaborative and focused effort to promote service as a way of life for all Americans.
- This initiative, led by the Corporation for National and Community Service, aims to both expand the impact of existing organizations by engaging new volunteers in their work and encourage volunteers to develop their own "do-it-yourself" projects with friends, family, and neighbors.
- America faces tough challenges -- 37 million Americans live in poverty, half of the students in our 50 biggest cities don't graduate, 15 million kids need mentors, and the economic downturn puts more people and communities at risk.
- Service is a powerful and effective way to address many of these tough challenges. The most effective intervention in a troubled child's life is a mentor; tutors help children read and graduate from high school; and volunteers help reduce violence, restore hope after disasters, and much more.
- Each year more than 61 million Americans volunteer in our communities, providing vital support to our schools and shelters, hospitals and hotlines, and other neighborhood efforts. But to meet our nation's challenges, we need more Americans to mentor and tutor at-risk youth, care for seniors, respond to disasters, support veterans and military families, and meet other social needs.
- The purpose of United We Serve is three-fold: (1) To bolster civic engagement nationwide (2) To better our communities in priority issue areas – health, energy and environment, education, community renewal, and safety and security (ie supporting veterans and military families and preparing for disasters) and (3) To develop lasting partnerships with nonprofits, faith based groups, issue groups, educational institutions, businesses, foundations, and all levels of government.
- To make it easy for Americans to get involved, the President is urging Americans to visit Serve.gov, a website managed by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Visitors to Serve.gov can type in their zip code to find local volunteer opportunities, recruit volunteers by posting their organization's projects, or get ideas for creating their own projects with friends, families, and neighbors.
- There are as many ways to participate in United We Serve as there are needs in our communities. If you're already involved in service, post your opportunities or share your story at Serve.gov so others can join your efforts. If you're new to service, search for volunteer opportunities in your area or download one of the easy-to-use toolkits and develop your own project with friends, family, and neighbors.

United We Serve

SERVE.GOV

- United We Serve comes at a time of strong need and momentum for service, as the economic downturn puts more Americans at risk and increases the demand for social services. At the same time, many nonprofit groups are experiencing a 'compassion boom' of increasing volunteers as Americans reach out to help their neighbors. Leaders in every sector –from corporate CEOs and college presidents to Governors and grantmakers – recognize that service is a proven strategy to tackle tough challenges. United We Serve aims to tap this growing interest and focus it on addressing specific community needs.
- While the initial phase of United We Serve runs through this summer and culminates in a National Day of Service and Remembrance on September 11, this call to service will grow into a sustained, collaborative and focused effort to promote service as a way of life for all Americans.
- United We Serve is a sweeping call to action. It is based on the simple but profound idea that every one of us has the power to make a difference – and that all of us should try. As President Obama said in launching United We Serve, “The challenges we face are unprecedented in their size and scope, and we cannot rely on quick fixes or easy answers to put us on the road to recovery. Economic recovery is as much about what you're doing in your communities as what we're doing in Washington – and it's going to take all of us, working together.”