

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICORPS

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING

Washington, D.C.

Friday, May 13, 2022

PARTICIPANTS:

CATHY MCLAUGHLIN, Board Member
Executive Director
Biden Institute at the University of Delaware

FAGAN HARRIS, Board Member
Chief Executive Officer
Baltimore Corps

ALVIN WARREN, Board Member
Vice President, Career Pathways and Advocacy
LANL Foundation

MICHAEL SMITH
Chief Executive Officer
AmeriCorps

Other Speakers:

BARBARA FAULK
Senior Companion Volunteer

SHANNON SCOTT
Program Coordinator
Henry Street Settlement Senior Companion Program

RANDY SCHNEIDER
AmeriCorps Member
Wisconsin Reading Corps

SADIE O'CONNOR
Managing Director
Ampact

PARTICIPANTS, CONT'D

TERRI SHOEMAKER

Vice President, External Relations

Arizona Food Bank Network

ORLANDO REBOREDO

Senior Director, Service Programs

Community Health Care Association of New York State

* * * * *

P R O C E E D I N G S

(12:04 p.m.)

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Good afternoon. This meeting of the AmeriCorps Board of Directors will now come to order. I want to welcome everyone and thank you for joining us today. My name is Cathy McLaughlin; I'm the Executive Director of the Biden Institute at the University of Delaware. I am joined by my fellow Board members Fagan Harris and Alvin Warren, and we are thrilled to be here today. Michael is also with us, Michael Smith, who is the CEO of AmeriCorps.

So, we're excited to be here today. I'm delighted to be participating in the first AmeriCorps Board meeting since 2019. I'm sure Fagan and Alvin will join me in expressing our deep gratitude to President Biden for nominating us, and to the U.S. Senate for confirming us.

I want to acknowledge [that] Washington, D.C. borders the confluence of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, a historic center of trade and cultural exchange between several tribal nations. We begin by acknowledging with humility that we gather this week on the ancestral lands of the Anacostan, Nacotchtank, Piscataway and Pamunkey people -- people who thrived in a fortified settlement based on agriculture, hunting, and trade. We acknowledge the ravages brought on by the settler-colonial introduction of diseases, encroachment, and forced removal.

Let us be aware that while these ancestors lived according to many of the principles that influenced and shaped the formation of the American government, we remain occupying unceded land. Their presence saturates this land, these rivers, islands, and coastal plains.

First, I'd like to start by thanking the AmeriCorps staff at Headquarters and around the country for your commitment, hard work, and professionalism in carrying out AmeriCorps' vital mission. I would also like to thank -- with deep appreciation, joined by Fagan and Alvin -- the 250,000 dedicated members, volunteers, and staff that are part of the extended AmeriCorps family: those serving or working in AmeriCorps

programs including NCCC, VISTA, State and National, our AmeriCorps Seniors programs, Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP; our state service commission partners; and champions who support this extraordinary system of national service that is so important to the health and well-being of our nation. Every day you do the vital work to improve lives, expand opportunities, strengthen communities, and unite our nation. We are grateful for your service and proud to be your partners.

This is the first Board meeting of AmeriCorps since August of 2019 and we have a lot to cover in this meeting. Let me go over today's agenda.

First, the Board will elect a chair, then members will make opening comments. Second, we will consider a resolution approving AmeriCorps' five year strategic plan. After that, CEO Michael Smith will provide his report to the Board. We will then have a panel presentation on the agency's progress in implementing the \$1 billion dollar investment from the American Rescue Plan Act. We will conclude our meeting by opening the meeting for public comments. If you would like to make a comment -- and we'll go over this again at the end -- please indicate your interest by using the Zoom "raise your hand" feature. If you're joining by conference call, you will not be able to ask to make a public statement, but you do still have time to get on Zoom if you'd prefer.

Our first order of business today will be electing a chair. According to Section 3.02 of the bylaws, officers shall be elected by the Board. Would any Board member like to nominate a chair?

(Ms. McLaughlin is nominated as chair by Alvin Warren.)

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Is there a second?

(Motion is seconded by Fagan Harris.)

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: All in favor say "yes."

(All members say "yes.")

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: All opposed? The resolution is approved. Thank you for your support and I'm honored to have the opportunity to serve as chair. Let me do some introductory remarks and then we'll move on from there.

AmeriCorps is one of just a few federal agencies that has a bipartisan Board of Directors appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. I am thrilled to have my fellow colleagues serving on the Board who bring such vast experience and expertise. I'd like Alvin and Fagan to introduce themselves and share why they are excited to be joining the Board. Fagan, we'll start with you.

MR. HARRIS: Thank you, Cathy, and hello, everyone. As someone who has devoted my career to expanding economic opportunities for underestimated individuals and communities, I am thrilled to serve on the AmeriCorps Board. I've been blessed and privileged to spend the last decade in my hometown of Baltimore uplifting communities that have always done the work in our community of strengthening them and advancing them, and creating service pathways for individuals in those communities to make an even bigger difference.

There are so many examples of resilience and commitment and passion that we've seen over the last ten years, especially during this pandemic. I think about all the folks who raised their hand to step up in the public health response, whether that's contact tracing or care coordination or addressing food insecurity.

AmeriCorps exemplifies that commitment, not just in Baltimore but across the nation and I've seen it up close. I'm so excited to move into this chapter to help the agency address a lot of longstanding issues and also seize a lot of compelling opportunities.

We had a chance this morning to spend some time with some members in AmeriCorps and I just thought that was such a powerful, uplifting experience. I think all of us walked away sensing that they were

transforming their passion for community service and national service, but also a lot of their pain from their lived experience and the progress for our communities at a time when we desperately need to invest and dig deep and help people recover from what has been a really difficult and traumatic several years. So I am just blown away by our Corps and I'm blown away by this community, and I'm so impressed with this agency and its leadership.

So, thank you, Michael and thank you to the entire AmeriCorps team. You all have pulled together just an outstanding Board retreat for us that's just been top notch. So, thank you for having me; I'm excited to be here, I'm excited to dig in and do the work. Thank you, Cathy.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Alvin?

MR. WARREN: Thank you, Madam Chair, Board member Harris, Michael. My name is Alvin Warren. I come from the Pueblo of Santa Clara, also known as Kha'p'oe Owingeh, "The Village of the Wild Roses," and the Tewa people of Northern New Mexico. I serve as the Vice President of Career Pathways and Advocacy for the LANL [Los Alamos National Laboratory] Foundation. I'm proud to be from my tribal nation and to be the second Native person appointed to this Board.

Service is a core value of my tribe. We've lived in the Southwest for thousands of years, since time immemorial, and we've survived because of a set of core values. Those core values include what they say in our language: [phrase in the Indigenous Tewa language], which means respect and love each other, have compassion for each other, but above all, help each other.

Throughout the centuries, our people have helped each other in any time of need, and we wouldn't be here today if it weren't for that spirit of working collaboratively, of seeing ourselves in each other, of having that empathy and of stepping forward, and being of service. I don't know if any of you who have joined this meeting are from New Mexico, but right now, our beautiful state of New Mexico is battling horrific wildfires.

More than 5,000 homes and tens of thousands of my fellow New Mexicans are under mandatory or voluntary evacuation orders, but I have to say I am very proud to see people from across our state stepping forward during this time; opening up their homes, donating food, money, supplies; providing shelter; volunteering; lending comfort and support; stepping forward as neighbors to help each other in a devastating time of need. I believe these values are more essential now than ever, not just for my tribe and state, but also for our entire country. And toward this end, I am grateful that AmeriCorps programs are supporting service and volunteerism across our entire country, and helping our American people recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, as Fagan talked about, and begin to thrive again as communities, as families, as a country.

I'm grateful to our staff -- and Michael, thank you again for organizing such a fantastic meeting. I'm grateful to our whole team, to our grantees, to our members, to our volunteers who are every day working to tackle our nation's most significant challenges. As somebody who's worked for over 26 years in public office as well as in philanthropy to support workforce development and employment equity, I'm also excited about our agency's opportunity and work to strengthen pathways to education and careers as part of our country's recovery from this ongoing pandemic.

So, during my time on the Board, I look forward to working collaboratively with Cathy and with Fagan, with Michael, with our entire staff to increase equity, to reduce barriers so that AmeriCorps can continue to play the powerful role that we know it is already playing and can play in bringing Americans of all ages and backgrounds together through service. Thank you.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Thank you very much. I've heard that AmeriCorps is often referred to as "small but mighty" and that is certainly the case with this Board. We are currently just the three of us, but President Biden has nominated four outstanding additional individuals to serve, and we are hopeful the Senate will move quickly to approve these pending nominations. I agree with both Alvin and Fagan that

this is a moment of tremendous need and opportunity, and it's an exciting time to be part of the Board.

Most of my career has been devoted to engaging young people in politics and public service. I spent 22 years at Harvard University's Institute of Politics and the last five at the Biden Institute at the University of Delaware. My experience with working with these young people has convinced me that young people want to use their time well and their talents to build a more just and equitable future. They are eager to serve, but many of them don't have the opportunity to serve due to lack of funding. Either they're not aware of places like AmeriCorps or they can't afford the opportunity like AmeriCorps.

We know national service works. It's a proven way to meet community needs, expand economic opportunity, and help bridge the divides between us. I'm excited about how we can bring this idea to scale, to make national service more accessible and available to meet the growing challenges we currently face. Now I'm going to move on to a brief recap of what the Board did yesterday and this morning.

We devoted most our time yesterday in the meeting with the Senior staff on the agency's five year strategic plan, which the Board will be talking about next. We had a strong focus on discussing the agency's top priorities and increasing AmeriCorps' living allowance and stipends to advance equity and ensure national service is a viable option for all people at all socioeconomic backgrounds. We also had a discussion about the challenges the programs are facing in terms of recruitment due to the current economic conditions.

We also met yesterday with the AmeriCorps Inspector General, Deb Jeffrey. The Inspector General provides important oversight of the agency's programs and operations. As a Board of Directors, ensuring federal resources are properly and effectively spent is a key priority of ours and we recognize the important role the Inspector General plays in working with the agency to strengthen fiscal management and accountability. The Board appreciates how Michael and the senior

leadership of the agency have made improving financial management and addressing audit findings a top priority, and we commend the agency for the progress it has made to develop and implement corrective action plans to address audit findings and make other key operational improvements.

The Board fully supports these plans and action steps and encourages the agency to continue to work with the Inspector General, and to prioritize resources and attention on addressing the findings and making other improvements in operations and core business practices to better serve our grantees and partners in meeting needs across the nation.

Given the importance of the financial management, this Board will be reconstituting the Oversight, Governance, and Audit Committee. The committee is charged with monitoring the agency's management and financial stewardship, and informing and advising the full Board on matters within the committee's purview. I want to thank Fagan for agreeing to chair this committee.

Our next matter of business is to discuss AmeriCorps' 2022-2026 Strategic Plan and Strategic Learning and Evidence Plan. One of the Board's primary responsibilities under the bylaws is setting overall policy for the agency, including reviewing and approving the strategic plan prepared by the CEO and the annual updates to the plan. The agency actually started working on the plan more than a year ago by engaging in extended dialogue with staff, grantees, partners, members, and volunteers. The plan, which was introduced on March 28th, provides clarity, direction, and focus on the outcomes that AmeriCorps will prioritize over the next five years. It lays out the following goals.

Partner with communities to alleviate poverty and advance racial equity. Enhance the experience of AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Senior volunteers. We will work to unite Americans by bringing them together in service. Effectively steward federal resources, and make AmeriCorps one of the best and most equitable places to work in the federal government. We're leaving that to you, Michael. These goals will guide how the agency makes investments, focuses resources, and measures success in meeting the

multiple challenges facing our communities and nation. In tandem with the Strategic Plan, the agency also released its Strategic Learning and Evidence Plan, which allows AmeriCorps to continue to respond to the nation's toughest challenges with evidence-based national service interventions.

The Board has engaged with the agency as the Strategic Plan was developed and refined, and will continue to closely be involved as it moves to the implementation stage. As a Board member, I think it is a very thoughtful, comprehensive, and bold plan.

One, it reflects a strong commitment to removing barriers to service, expanding opportunities, and focusing service on our most critical challenge. I like the plan's focus on alleviating poverty and addressing longstanding inequities, its commitment to increasing the living allowance and stipends to ensure service is a viable option for all, and the strong focus on effective stewardship of federal resources.

As someone who has spent their career encouraging young people to enter careers in politics and public service, I also appreciate the focus of the third goal: uniting Americans by bringing them together through service. At this time of enormous division and isolation, service does something very powerful. It helps to heal and unite our communities. The agency's work to strengthen the nation's volunteer sector, elevate awareness of service, and grow volunteering will not just help meet local needs; it will help build bridges and strengthen our democracy at a time when it's most needed.

With that, I'd like to turn this over to Alvin or Fagan to share any thoughts on the strategic plan that you might have. Alvin?

MR. WARREN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I also think the agency has developed a thoughtful plan that will drive greater impact by focusing resources and measuring progress in a coordinated way.

First and foremost, I appreciate the plan's strong focus on alleviating poverty, advancing racial equity, and reducing systemic barriers to full and equal participation in AmeriCorps programs. The plan boldly expresses this commitment and lays out a number of strategies to advance this goal.

One of those is increasing the living allowance and stipends for AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, which I know the Board as a whole supports wholeheartedly. We heard from members this morning about the [low] living allowance and stipends, and how they serve not just to reduce the quality of the experience of our current members and volunteers, but as a barrier to recruitment and to participation. We are losing out on very good individuals who would be perfect members and volunteers, and the Board and our staff and leadership are working to address that.

Also, to meet today's complex social and economic challenges, we need full participation from people of diverse backgrounds that actually represent the full spectrum of our country, especially those from underserved populations. So, increasing the living allowance will help [us] recruit and retain more diverse members and volunteers that reflect the communities we serve and support a meaningful, positive, and equitable service experience.

I also appreciate the focus on prioritizing investments in the most underserved individuals and communities. National service has a presence in Indigenous and rural communities, but the opportunities and needs are both great. I look forward to working with my colleagues here on the Board and on staff, and Michael, to ensure that more resources and service opportunities flow to these and other underserved communities where they can have a powerful impact -- particularly to tribal nations to which our federal government has a trust responsibility.

The Board also recognizes that national service is built on partnerships and appreciates how the agency has actively sought input from state commission agencies, grantees, and project sponsors around the country in developing the plan. After all, you all are the ones who will be turning

this plan into action and your voices are very important. So, we encourage this dialogue to continue as we all work to implement the plan.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Fagan?

MR. HARRIS: I agree with the great points that Alvin and Cathy have made and would like to add one more. I strongly support the focus of the second goal on enhancing the experience of AmeriCorps members and volunteers by providing the resources they need to complete their service, including raising the living allowance and stipends, and by strengthening pathways to education and employment. Service should be an on-ramp for a career, it should be an on-ramp for education, it should be an on-ramp for training, it should be an on-ramp to advancement.

When speaking about national service, we most often talk about the positive impact on the beneficiaries and communities, and this is important -- the improvement in student reading levels, the disaster survivors served, the seniors who are now able to live independently -- but to me, what's equally important about national service is its impact on the members themselves. And we need to continue to point this out. And we need to walk the walk. And that's why increasing the living allowance and the stipend is so important, that's why strengthening the tie to education and employment is so important. These young people have so much idealism, passion, and grit for their community, and we can't let them down. This is our moment to step up and to serve them as they continue to serve our communities and serve our country.

I do a lot of work to re-imagine recruiting, hiring, and career advancement for underestimated communities. It's what we do at Baltimore Corps. I have seen how the skills and hands-on experience that AmeriCorps members gain during their service can prepare them for jobs and careers. Those skills are both specific to their service and the general skills of leadership, grit, and problem solving that are what all employers are looking for.

You don't need to look far to understand that there are a record ten million unfilled jobs in this country, the highest in our history. The barrier to filling these jobs is often a mismatch between what's available and the prospective employee's job skills. National service can and should help us close that skills gap, including in especially high job growth sectors such as education, health services, construction, logistics. This strategy is especially critical for young people from low income backgrounds who face the toughest prospects for employment. This country has such opportunity, and service really should be the bridge to help more individuals and communities connect to that opportunity. That's vitally important.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Thank you both, that was great, and I would like to entertain a motion to approve the strategic plan. Do I have a motion?

MR. HARRIS: So moved.

MR. WARREN: Second.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Okay. All in favor say "yes."

(All members say "yes.")

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: All opposed? The resolution is approved. Now it's my great pleasure to introduce our CEO, Michael Smith. Michael has done an extraordinary job since taking the helm of the agency in January, bringing his decades of experience in the public and nonprofit sectors to help AmeriCorps increase its impact and effectiveness. Since arriving, Michael has made it a top priority to drive greater impact on community problems, make service more equitable and inclusive, and use service to help bridge the divides and bring people together. Michael, the floor is yours.

MR. SMITH: Cathy, thank you so much and greetings to all who have joined us today. Let me start off by sharing how excited and grateful we are to

have such outstanding leaders serving on the AmeriCorps Board of Directors. Cathy, Alvin, and Fagan bring an extraordinary breadth of knowledge and experience in workforce development, indigenous communities, K-12 and higher education, rural economic development, philanthropy, social innovation, and more. We are very fortunate to have all of you serving on our Board and we have already benefitted from your insights and wisdom, and I think everyone who's watching today got a glimpse of that already.

Since becoming CEO four months ago -- I can't believe it's been four months -- I have had the opportunity to meet hundreds of AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, as well as our state commissioners, grantees, project sponsors, partners, and others who carry out our vital mission on the ground. I've seen the great work our programs do, especially in critical areas of need, like addressing the COVID-19 crisis, tutoring and mentoring youth, preserving public land, supporting food banks, strengthening workforce preparedness, and much more.

With every project I visit and every member or volunteer I meet, I am more convinced of the power and the potential of national service. It is a privilege to lead this agency and I share the Board's gratitude for the extraordinary passion, commitment, and dedication of our staff, our grantees, our members, our volunteers, and everyone that is a part of what we like to call our AmeriFamily.

Over the past two years, our country has faced a series of unprecedented challenges -- a once-in-a-century global pandemic, the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, a national reckoning on racial inequity that has been centuries in the making, and the growing and existential threat of climate change. In the face of these challenges, the work our members and volunteers do has become even more important. This is a moment of tremendous need and opportunity for national service. We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to not just return to the way things were before, but to build a stronger and more united nation.

I came into office with three core themes in my vision for this agency. That was based on conversations that I've had with people all over this country -- AmeriCorps volunteers, AmeriCorps members, staff, and many of you that are with us today. These priorities continue to shape the work as I look ahead to my next one hundred days and beyond.

The first thing we have to do is ensure that Americans see the critical importance and impact of national service to our democracy. My priority is making sure that when people think of AmeriCorps, they think about its impact. Not about a thousand flowers blooming. And I am proud to say that last year, nearly 70 percent of our AmeriCorps grantees had strong or moderate levels of impact. We will not be satisfied as an agency by simply celebrating how many AmeriCorps members or senior volunteers are serving. We will be celebrating the measurable, tangible impact that they have on the toughest challenges that we're facing.

Second, AmeriCorps must reflect the rich diversity of our country and the communities that we serve. I am proud of the fact that AmeriCorps members are more racially diverse than the nation as a whole. We will build on the strong diversity we see in our programs today with a focus on recruiting from communities we serve. I think in just the couple days that we've been together, we've been able to meet so many AmeriCorps members right here in D.C. who are from D.C., serving in D.C. -- and I've seen that all over the country, and it makes me so happy. But to sustain the positive outcomes we've seen from recent years, we must act to ensure national service is accessible by reducing barriers to serve and funding organizations of all shapes and sizes, with diverse, homegrown leadership, that are meeting urgent community needs.

And my third priority is to unite Americans in service, which has been a topic of our time together. For decades, AmeriCorps has played a meaningful role in bringing people together across differences, from all walks of life. There is something that is powerful about service, about rolling up our sleeves together to respond to disaster, to help children stay in school and on track, to improve the health outcomes of underserved communities. There's something about service that allows us

to see each other's humanity, that building bridges together creates bonds that strengthen communities and leads to lasting change. This is what AmeriCorps is and we can play an even more central role to overcome polarization and division.

So, as we look ahead -- in addition to these priorities -- after four months on the job and hearing from many partners, three areas have come into more focus, which we've discussed extensively with the Board.

First, we are facing an unprecedented challenge coming out of the pandemic in recruiting and retaining a strong, diverse Corps that we know we can have, and we have to do something about that. We must continue to raise living allowances and stipends to make service more accessible for those who want to serve. And what's so important to me on that is, this is not just about ensuring that we meet our recruitment goals, it's not just about making sure that we have a diverse Corps that represents the diversity of our nation, but it also is about saying that if we are asking you to serve your country and your community, that you can have a full stomach and that you can have a roof over your head and not have to worry while you are serving your community and country.

And finally, we must continue to make the operational improvements necessary to support the vital work of our grantees, members, and volunteers in the field, which is why I was so grateful to hear about the reestablishment of the Oversight Committee, because that is work that is a clear priority for me and I look forward to working with all of you on it.

I want to talk a little bit about the dedication of our members and the support of our partners that are allowing us to make some pretty excellent progress against these priorities. If I could, I'd just like to share a few.

One, we continue to implement the historic \$1 billion investment through the American Rescue Plan to expand service opportunities, increase grantee sustainability, increase living allowances, and reach underserved

communities and individuals. The agency is implementing these funds quickly and responsibly, and you will be hearing from some of our AmeriCorps members that represent this extraordinary work in just a few minutes -- our AmeriCorps members and our Senior volunteers.

Last month we launched Public Health AmeriCorps. I get a smile when I talk about it because I am so excited about what this \$400 million partnership with the Centers for Disease Control means for this agency and about the future of the work that we're going to do. It's going to help us meet state and local public health needs while developing workforce pathways for public health careers. Public Health AmeriCorps is a first-of-its-kind response to the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and social determinants of health. These new AmeriCorps members will add capacity to the strained public health system and build a career pathway for future public health leaders from underserved communities. We've talked a lot while we've been together that we don't have to have this argument anymore about whether or not AmeriCorps is about strengthening communities or strengthening members. It has to be both, and Public Health AmeriCorps is a great example of that happening.

We've released our new five year strategic plan, our comprehensive blueprint which Cathy so beautifully outlined, and it was wonderful to hear how it resonates with all of you. We released our Equity Action Plan, which reinforces our commitment to advance equity and support for underserved communities by creating structural and lasting change in our grant-making, member recruitment and retention, and workplace. Someone said yesterday that old business adage "If it is not measured, it is not managed." And so we will not just talk about equity at AmeriCorps, we will measure it, we will have a plan against it, and we will make sure that we continue to make sure that we take action against that Equity Action Plan. For everyone that is with us today, I want to make sure they are part of this commitment -- you know last week we released our Request for Information, inviting the public to comment on a range of questions related to grantee matching requirements and we hope to hear from a wide range of stakeholders by the June 10th deadline. So, please follow-up with that.

We submitted our FY 2023 budget to Congress, a robust request, which increases funding for our agency by more than 16 percent over last year. We continue to be deeply engaged with our colleagues at the White House and other federal agencies on expanding our program to address climate change and prepare young people for future green jobs. We are building a strong, diverse team of world-class professionals that have a track record of success, including welcoming our first-ever Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, who will start with us very soon; our Director of Public Health AmeriCorps, who just started; a Chief Modernization Officer; a Chief Data Officer; a centralized recruitment team; and many other positions that are filling the ranks so that we can serve you better.

We are making steady progress on our number one priority of improving financial management and addressing findings from the Financial Statements Audit. This includes working with our Office of Inspector General, adding staff capacity, and developing corrective action plans for each finding that identify the root causes, action steps, milestones, timelines, and responsible parties for correcting them. We continue to execute the core work, which is our grant making, announcing our third round of AmeriCorps Senior grants, totaling more than \$10.5 million last week, and soon we will be awarding hundreds of millions of dollars for AmeriCorps State and National grantees and our Tribal grants.

So, this is just a partial list that does not include the ongoing work of our programs that are meeting a wide range of critical needs in communities across the country. We must continue to do this work -- and there's exciting work that's happening for Afghan refugees and expanding access to the Child Tax Credit, strengthening food security, and combating the opioid crisis, and so, so much more.

So, for nearly three decades -- next year we turn 30 as an agency -- national service has produced extraordinary results, helping countless Americans succeed in school, find productive work, escape poverty, and achieve their potential in life. Millions of Americans have experienced

the transforming impact of national service, changing their lives in powerful ways and helping them accomplish things that they had never thought possible before.

So, as we work to defeat this pandemic, strengthen our economy, address racial inequity, address the climate crisis, and meet other needs, national service and volunteering is needed now more than ever, and we have been there during this time with our communities. So, with the guidance of our Board and working together with our state and local partners and the American people, we can help build a healthier, safer, and more inclusive and equitable future for all Americans.

Thank you for providing me an opportunity to give this report today.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you, Michael. You can only imagine if Michael had five months instead of four months, this report would have gone on and on. So thank you very much; that was amazing. Do you either of you have any comments that you want to add to that?

MR. HARRIS: I do not.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Okay. You all set?

MR. SMITH: All set, thank you.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Okay, thank you. Well, thank you, Michael. Next, we're going to hear a presentation about one of AmeriCorps' success stories -- the implementation of the historic \$1 billion investment from the American Rescue Plan and the impact that that investment is having on communities around the country. I'm going to turn this over now to Fagan to lead this presentation. Fagan, I'll leave it to you.

MR. HARRIS: Thank you, Cathy. In March of 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, landmark legislation that included unprecedented funding to stop the spread of COVID-19 and respond to the public health, education, and economic crises caused by the pandemic. The

bill included a \$1 billion investment in AmeriCorps to make significant, targeted investments to provide relief related to the pandemic, with a specific focus on support for underserved and disproportionately impacted communities.

For the past 14 months, agency staff worked diligently to implement this legislation and ensure that the resources are used in an efficient and accountable way to achieve positive impacts for individuals and communities. A cross-agency team worked for months to develop a comprehensive multiyear plan. Once the plan was approved, a staggering amount of work was done to get the funds into communities, all on top of the agency's regular responsibilities.

As of last month, the agency has already distributed more than \$300 million to create new national service opportunities, to stabilize national service grantees, support increases in the living allowances for AmeriCorps State and National and VISTA members, and expand service opportunities. The funding has supported nearly 9,000 new AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, and more ARP resources will be awarded very soon.

In addition to the \$1 billion in funding directly provided to the agency by the American Rescue Plan, AmeriCorps has also joined forces with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to launch Public Health AmeriCorps to help meet the public health needs of local communities while also creating pathways to public health-related careers. Public Health AmeriCorps is supported by a five year, \$400 million investment from the American Rescue Plan Act. Last month, AmeriCorps made its first round of Public Health AmeriCorps grants to 82 organizations, totaling more than \$60 million to support nearly 3,000 AmeriCorps members who will serve communities, providing health education, supporting health-related research, assisting with testing and vaccination efforts, addressing the opioid crisis, and so much more.

To help [everyone] understand the impact of these investments on the ground, the team has put together a virtual ARP impact tour so we can

hear directly from our AmeriCorps members, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, and program directors across the country. Thirty minutes doesn't do justice to this work or this effort, but we hope it will at least give you a snapshot. We will start the tour in New York City with Henry Street Settlement, a nonprofit agency that provides social services, arts programs, and healthcare services to New Yorkers. Henry Street Settlement administers a Senior Companion Program that received additional funding through the American Rescue Plan. We will hear first from Barbara Faulk, a Senior Companion volunteer, and then we will hear from her Project Director, Shannon Scott. Barbara and Shannon, are you there?

MS. FAULK and MS. SCOTT: Good afternoon.

MR. HARRIS: Hello, thank you for being here. Barbara has been a Senior Companion volunteer since August 2018. She provides companionship service, telephone reassurance, escort assistance, and socialization on a weekly basis to her older adult clients. Through these services, she reduces their isolation and increases their ability to socialize. Barbara also participates in the Senior Companion Program volunteer support group, which has been supported by ARP funding.

Barbara, first can you tell us what your typical day of service is like?

MS. FAULK: Well, since I became a Senior Companion in 2018, my client liked outside activities. So, our typical day we would meet for him to have his cup of coffee and he liked being outside. He was one who tinkered. And I think he liked the idea of having a lady hanging around him.

(Laughter)

MR. HARRIS: And what would you be . . .

MS. FAULK: So . . .

MR. HARRIS: Go ahead, please go ahead.

MS. FAULK: So from then we had just different activities that he liked and I enjoy.

MR. HARRIS: That's awesome. And what would you be doing if you were not an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer?

MS. FAULK: I often thought of that. But I learned I was supposed to be a Senior Companion. One day I was going for training at the Board of Elections to be a poll worker. A lady walked up to me and she said, "Are you a Senior Companion?" And I guess from the look on my face she knew I had no clue. She proceeded to tell me -- I remember she said -- "Henry Street Settlement." She talked about training in August and how she had clients. I gave her my number; she didn't call. So I Googled Henry Street Settlement and I saw Senior Companion. I hit that button, left a telephone message, and after submitting all my documentation and training, I became a Senior Companion in October of 2018, and it's been great.

Mr. Williams and I . . . he liked . . . during the pandemic. Senior Companion Program through Henry Street provided us . . . we were still able to have our day-to-day meetings, because we always met in person, but when the pandemic came, we had to switch gears. We even learned how to video chat and we constantly kept in contact that way, especially watching westerns. Mr. Williams loved his westerns. I'm now a fan of Rawhide, Big Valley, and Bonanza.

Unfortunately, I lost Mr. Williams in October due to health, and Senior Companion Program under Henry Street was there for me too. I now have another client and we do telephone assurance. We're both new to each other, so right now we're learning each other; it's mostly support. But I enjoy this program. Sometimes I'm scared of what I would be doing, if not for Senior Companions.

MR. HARRIS: Wow. Barbara, thank you for sharing that and thank you for your service during this time, especially during the pandemic. And you

all had to pivot and adjust to keep doing the service, which I think is so important to highlight. We talked a lot about the impacts of isolation of this pandemic on people and you've been on the frontline helping people make it through this really terrible time, improving their mental health and just generally contributing to the resilience of our communities. So, thank you so much.

MS. FAULK: Thank you.

MR. HARRIS: And now we'll move to Shannon Scott, who joined the Senior Companion Program in October of 2018 after graduating with her B.S. in Social Work from the College of New Rochelle. She has worked with vulnerable populations, including homeless clients, IDD [Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities] clients, younger adults, and seniors. Due to her deep connections with elders in her community and positive experiences working in social services, she applied for the Senior Companion Program Coordinator position and was recently promoted to manager because of her amazing commitment to the program's mission and ability to connect with volunteers and clients. Shannon, congratulations on your promotion.

MS. SCOTT: Thank you.

MR. HARRIS: You're welcome. Can you tell us why Henry Street Settlement applied for ARP funding?

MS. SCOTT: Well, Henry Street realized that -- after returning to service after COVID quarantines in New York City, we knew that many of our older adult clients had been disproportionately impacted and were in desperate need of supportive services, particularly to reduce the isolation and mental health impacts of COVID. Henry Street Settlement saw the opportunity to expand our services in New York City to grow our volunteer base and provide companionship to more homebound clients, particularly related to the trauma and negative mental health impacts of COVID.

MR. HARRIS: Got it. And what have these additional resources allowed your organization to achieve? What are you looking forward to as a result of this increase in funding?

MS. SCOTT: One of the things that it helped us to achieve was we were able to hire a COVID Case Manager. She was able to create more adult services, trainings, and programming for volunteers working with older adult clients. We've been able to recruit about 15 new volunteers since December, which we've been grateful for since we had lost a lot of people throughout the COVID pandemic. We have created programming related to mental health awareness, risk factors, and available resources for both clients and volunteers. We conducted evidence-based mental health screenings on all of our Senior Companion volunteers as well as their clients, identifying those that needed additional resources or support. Based on the needs of our Senior volunteers, we also developed a weekly support group that Barbara Faulk is also very much a part of, which was very needed, as many volunteers lost clients throughout the COVID pandemic.

We're looking forward to continuing to expand our geographic reach within the five boroughs of New York City, developing additional programming based on the needs of our volunteers and clients, and providing more thorough resources, with the goal to lessen the trauma and PTSD experience that many of our senior population experienced in New York City. So, we're hoping that we can accomplish this throughout our time with this ARP that we are so very grateful for, which will help us to address the needs that we are trying to meet throughout this COVID crisis.

MR. HARRIS: Wow. Thank you so much, Shannon, and thank you for your leadership. You know, Michael, one of the bigger kind of eye-opening things for me over this retreat is the impact of AmeriCorps Seniors and the dynamic team, and the fact that it's one our oldest programs and also one our most stable. The follow-through of commitment of that part of our Corps is just outstanding. So, Barbara, Shannon, ya'll are the best.

Barbara, you're a hero; thank you so much for being on today. My goodness. We really appreciate ya'll. Thank you so much.

MS. SCOTT: Thank you, Barbara.

MR. HARRIS: Keep on keeping on.

MS. SCOTT: Thank you for having us, thank you.

MR. HARRIS: Thank you for joining us. Now we will head to Milwaukee, Wisconsin to hear from Randy Schneider, a Wisconsin Reading Corps AmeriCorps member and Sadie O'Connor, Program Director of Ampact, about how ARP funding has helped the Wisconsin Reading Corps expand its reach and impact. Randy and Sadie, are ya'll there? I see Randy. Hey Randy.

MR. SCHNEIDER: Hello.

MR. HARRIS: Oh, there's Sadie. Hey Sadie.

MS. O'CONNOR: Hi.

MR. HARRIS: Thank ya'll for joining us; we really appreciate it. Welcome. Randy is currently a 4th year AmeriCorps member serving with Wisconsin Reading Corps in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Randy chose to serve because he wanted to gain experience in a school setting working directly with students. As a Reading Corps Tutor, Randy supports 17 students, kindergarten to third grade. Randy, can you tell us more about the tutoring work that you do?

MR. SCHNEIDER: Yeah, absolutely. As you said, I work with the K through 3 kids. It's pretty wall-to-wall on a given day from the time school starts to the end of the school day, one kid at a time for 20 minute sessions. We have evidence-based interventions we do with each of the students based on that child's individual needs. Beyond that, I also make it a point to try to foster a love of learning with the kids, to build their confidence and teach them that mistakes are just an opportunity for them

to learn, and to just teach them to respect themselves and others, and to make good choices.

MR. HARRIS: Got it. And Randy, you've been at this for a while. I don't come across too many 4th year members, so tell us a little bit about the impact that you're making on these young people and how does the service impact you? How do you experience it?

MR. SCHNEIDER: Well, as far as the impact I'm making on the kids, I see it every day. I've got kids that'll come to me when they first start, claim that they can't read or that they don't like to read, and within a couple of weeks, they're eagerly coming to our sessions and then eventually we're seeing them singing, dancing, and hopping around, reading at grade level. I've got kids that are now in 5th or 6th grade that will come and seek me out to say thank you because the skills they learned working with me are helping them out in higher grades, and I've even got one student that went from barely talking at all to now using our reading materials to help some members of her family learn to speak English.

MR. HARRIS: Wow. Randy, thanks for sharing that.

MR. SCHNEIDER: Absolutely.

MR. HARRIS: My mom was an elementary school teacher and it's a special person who takes joy in the learning and growth of other people. So, thank you for doing what you're doing. The Wisconsin Reading Program that Randy serves in is supported through Ampact, a national nonprofit that incubates and scales evidence-based AmeriCorps programs for maximum impact. Sadie O'Connor is Ampact's Managing Director. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin and an AmeriCorps alum, Sadie has dedicated her 18 year career to growing national service in Minnesota and across the country. Under her leadership, Ampact has grown to become one of the largest administrators of AmeriCorps programs in the nation, with more than 2,000 members serving in seven states across the areas of education, healthy futures, and the environment.

Sadie, why did you apply for the American Rescue Plan resources to expand the Reading Corps program?

MS. O'CONNOR: Well, thank you for having us here today. I just want to express gratitude on behalf of our organization for the infusion of these resources and the speed at which the AmeriCorps agency distributed these resources to us as grantees so that we could put them into action in communities.

You know, we applied for ARP funding because our largest programs that we implement are Reading Corps and our Math Corps programs. Like you heard Randy talk about, we provide one-on-one and small group tutoring to children to build their foundational reading and math skills, and focusing on children who are not yet at grade level.

The ARP resources really became available at a point in time where we were seeing some of the greatest and deepest needs in our schools because of COVID-19, and we were also pretty challenged by being able to recruit and retain AmeriCorps members. So, we really saw ARP resources as this amazing opportunity to really do two things -- to one, increase the living stipend for our AmeriCorps members as part of our strategy to improve recruitment and retention and access to AmeriCorps service opportunities; and the second thing, really to expand the reach of our program to be able to serve more students and in more communities.

We're really grateful that that's what we've been able to do and specifically what we've been able to do in Wisconsin.

MR. HARRIS: Sadie, thank you for all the ways that ya'll have been stepping up to meet the need, particularly with the learning loss we're seeing in our schools and the mental health and the trauma. You and Randy are just doing the work. So, we appreciate ya'll.

The Reading Corps expansion wasn't the only ARP support that Ampact received. How did ARP funding help your other programs and what are you looking forward to as the result of those resources?

MS. O'CONNOR: Sure, yeah. Like Michael, I smile when we think about public health. We were fortunate to receive two grants through Public Health Corps. So, that will allow us to launch a new program here in Minnesota where we'll have 150 AmeriCorps members supporting public health agencies, and then we'll have another program that will be in Virginia, Illinois, and California that will be replicating our Recovery Corps program and focusing specifically on the opioid epidemic, so we're really thrilled about that.

We're thrilled about the expansion that we will have across many of our programs, but particularly in Wisconsin where the ARP funding has allowed us to expand in the current school year. We added about 30 tutors, so about 600 additional students we've been able to reach this current year. But going into next year we'll be growing the Corps from 130 tutors to 300 tutors in about 40 new communities.

We've been able to also simultaneously leverage state funding, so we've increased our state appropriation from \$1.4 million to \$3 million with really strong bipartisan support to help us expand statewide into more communities, particularly rural communities throughout Wisconsin.

So, like I said, we're just really grateful for this resources infusion right now.

MR. HARRIS: Well, we're grateful for all that you all are doing and I know that we're going to be studying both the model that you all are building out and deploying. And then Randy, your example just shines through, man. Thank you for being here both of you; we really appreciate it.

MS. O'CONNOR: Yeah, thank you.

MR. SCHNEIDER: Yeah.

MR. HARRIS: Thank you. The next stop on our ARP virtual tour is Phoenix, Arizona. Terri Shoemaker is the Vice President of External Relations at the Arizona Food Bank Network, an AmeriCorps VISTA project sponsor that is part of the VISTA Food Security Initiative. Prior to the Arizona Food Bank, Terri worked at PetSmart Charities and Best Friends Animal Society. She worked at Feeding America from 1997 to 2004 and began her nonprofit career running programs for children at Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana. We got Terri? Hey, Terri.

MS. SHOEMAKER: Absolutely, hello.

MR. HARRIS: Welcome. Thanks for being here, we really appreciate it.

MS. SHOEMAKER: Happy to be here.

MR. HARRIS: So, Terri, tell me what you're looking forward to as a result of ARP resources?

MS. SHOEMAKER: Well, it's been super transformational for us. We started our VISTA AmeriCorps program in 2017 and we had three members serving at two different sites. And those sites were our regional food bank members, which are kind of like big regional warehouses. And that's where we thought our program was going to stay. But as our food bank members used AmeriCorps VISTA members in service to really take some of their programs forward, they noticed that the agencies that they served -- so those are the soup kitchens, food pantries, homeless shelters across the state, and that's a network of about a thousand organizations -- some of those organizations were saying "Hey, how can we do that too?"

So it expanded very quickly for the first couple of years. But we were naturally capped because we only were able to do a certain amount of work, and we ended up having to start a waiting list of agencies that wanted to explore this program so they could help do more to address food insecurity in Arizona. And the infusion of this food security initiative

funding has enabled us to clear the waiting list and we are going from 13 members in service to 30 members in service and three VISTA leaders to support that service, as well as expanding to at least 20 different sites statewide. So it's just been exponential and truly very diverse in terms of the projects that are going on and how they're going to impact the lives of people who are struggling to find where their next meal is coming from.

MR. HARRIS: Wow. That's a lot of growth at a critical time. How's your blood pressure, Terri?

MS. SHOEMAKER: It's better now because I'm not saying no to people who are really interested in having some help, and it's helping those VISTA members as well, because they're building skills, from doing organic gardening to GPS farming. And the projects are just so diverse and so critical to these really small organizations who are doing that frontline work at getting food and resources right into the hands of the one in seven Arizonans that struggle with hunger.

MR. HARRIS: Yeah, it's such an important last mile problem. It's incredible.

MS. SHOEMAKER: Absolutely.

MR. HARRIS: It's incredible to hear how you've tripled your VISTA members in one year to meet the soaring demand due to increased food [in]security, so thank you so much for your service and leadership, Terri. We really appreciate it.

MS. SHOEMAKER: Thanks to everybody. Thank you for this infusion of funds which is making all of this work possible and also building our network of really qualified employees to work at food banks and other food-based and related charities so we can help all of the folks who are helping people who are struggling with hunger here in Arizona. So thank you so much for this; it's really been transformational for our entire network.

MR. HARRIS: Thank you. Thank you for being a partner that leverages our Corps as that employment pipeline as well. Thank you so much, Terri and take care.

MS. SHOEMAKER: Of course.

MR. HARRIS: Alright. We're coming to the end here. So, we'll end our ARP impact tour where we started, which is back in New York. We'll hear from one of the 82 organizations that received a Public Health AmeriCorps grant last month.

So we're going to bring up Orlando Reboredo, who is the Senior Director of Service Programs for the Community Health Care Association of New York State. He joined that organization in 2009 and the AmeriCorps staff shortly thereafter in 2010, and under his leadership the program has expanded in size and scope, more than tripling the annual number of members, host sites, and individuals impacted by the program since 2010. Orlando also leads their Health Insurance Navigator program, which works to provide enrollment assistance to individuals and families applying for health insurance through the New York State Health Marketplace. Welcome, Orlando.

MR. REBOREDO: Thank you and I'm honored to be here representing CHCANYS, our federally qualified community health centers, as well as the AmeriCorps team here at CHCANYS.

MR. HARRIS: Given that you've tripled your Corps, I'm going to ask you how your blood pressure is doing as well. Man, ya'll are just awesome. Orlando, why did you apply for American Rescue Plan resources?

MR. REBOREDO: So, as you mentioned, we have a longstanding AmeriCorps program where we place members at federally qualified community health centers in some of the neediest communities across the United States. When COVID hit, everything went on immediate pause. I actually want to give credit to AmeriCorps for quickly acting on some really key changes to the rules and program requirements that facilitated a lot of what

happened that year, particularly in ensuring that the members were able to finish their term of service even if it was interrupted.

We saw that our members were going to be -- their service would be paused -- but what we quickly found out was there were members who were very much needed at the frontlines of the community health center's response to COVID-19. Our members actually returned to in-person service doing COVID testing, doing food distribution at the food pantries that we support that saw the need explode in the immediate aftermath of COVID-19, and those who could not serve in person were actually doing remote work, checking in with patients and things of that nature remotely. So, that experience really just highlighted how important this program is and we ended up recruiting members during the height of the pandemic to support health centers in their response.

Fast forward to 2021 and this opportunity for Public Health AmeriCorps comes out. We could not be more excited about the possibilities this gave to our program. With the Public Health AmeriCorps, we are going to be increasing our members' living allowance from \$16,000 to \$26,000 . . .

(Applause)

MR. HARRIS: Excellent.

MR. REBOREDO: . . . which finally meets minimum wage criteria, hopefully helping with recruitment as well as retention, but more importantly, being able to open up this opportunity to folks in a socioeconomic status that maybe was not a realistic possibility for them because of their financial considerations.

Another thing that we're extremely excited about is the additional resources from the CDC, our great partners in New York with the State Commission and the Department of Health, as well as the other organizations that are going to be participating with Public Health AmeriCorps, and the possibilities that this opens for training and professional development for our members.

Obviously, AmeriCorps has always focused on the impact that our members have on the people that they serve and the communities that they serve, but with the Public Health AmeriCorps, there is also an additional focus on how this program impacts the members and their careers, professional and personal development. We are so excited to have those additional resources, because we know that our members' experience that they receive in this program changes their lives, changes how they view the world, and change how they develop in their careers and their futures. So, we're very excited about that additional focus and the added resources.

MR. HARRIS: Amazing. Orlando, let me ask you this. So you're increasing stipends, you've grown the Corps, you're tightening the linkage between their service and their next step, whether that's work or education -- like, you've got it all in motion and you're deploying all the best practices. What are you most excited about as you leverage these resources?

MR. REBOREDO: All of it. A little cheesy, but all of it equally. I think that with the additional resources, it means additional attention to AmeriCorps. And I think that service is so important, and again, service changes you. We're hopeful that with having an institution like the CDC, for example, here in New York, the Department of Health, institutions like Cornell University -- all of a sudden, we're seeing institutions that that were not familiar with AmeriCorps interested in AmeriCorps and wanting to support AmeriCorps. So we are so excited about that because I think once anyone has that personal experience with AmeriCorps -- whether it's as a member or as a patient or an individual, or whether it's as a site supervisor, for example -- I think people instantly fall in love with the program and what it represents and the possibilities. So I think that that part is the most exciting part -- just being able to promote the program even more and bring more people into the AmeriCorps umbrella.

MR. HARRIS: Well, thank you for your leadership, Orlando. Thank you for leading so boldly, so strongly in this moment, and shout out to your

entire team and the entire Corps. I know it's a team sport doing this, so shout out to everybody there in New York.

On behalf of the Board, we want to thank Orlando, Terri, Sadie, Randy, Shannon, and Barbara for joining us today, and for helping us better understand the extraordinary impact that the American Rescue Plan is having in your communities. To say that we appreciate your important work and wish you continued success is probably the understatement of the day. We are just blown away by all of you. Ya'll are heroes and we love your energy, your passion, your commitment. So thank you, thank you.

(Applause)

Cathy or Alvin, while they're still online, you have any questions?

MR. WARREN: I do, but first I just want to echo what Fagan just said. Absolutely impressed, thrilled, grateful for everything that you all are doing in your communities, in your states, across the country. You are exactly what we hope for in terms of the impact, in terms of the change, and in terms of the kind of people and leaders that we're hoping AmeriCorps can support. So just thank you so much for doing the hard work that you have.

I just want to sort of also express my appreciation for a couple things that Sadie and Orlando, you mentioned in particular, that are really on the minds of our Board and our leadership.

Number one, just sort of the pace at which resources were deployed. I was really happy to hear that and I want to commend Michael and I want to commend all of our staff here at AmeriCorps because we all know that -- especially in the middle of the pandemic, and we're still in the middle of the pandemic -- time is of the essence. And moving government processes is not always the quickest thing. It really means a lot to hear from you, your recognition that we were able to take quick action to deploy resources quickly. That really means quite a bit.

The second thing is the work that you've done to use these resources to increase stipends. That is very much on the minds of this Board and our leadership. And looking to you as that example of a way to do that, you need to know that we are going to do everything we can to get additional resources for the agency, but your creativity and your vision to kind of take the resources that are available and already move forward to increase the stipends for members means a lot to us. It's a great inspiration and example to us.

So I do actually have a question and it's for you, Sadie; I think you're still there. So, I was just fascinated and excited to hear about your success leveraging state resources and it sounded like you had almost doubled -- if I remember the number, it was around 3 million I believe that you said you were getting -- and that that was done in a bipartisan way, which is crucial. So I'm wondering if you could just tell us a little bit more about how you've gone about securing state resources, but also how you've approached braiding those resources with -- and I heard you say this as well -- not just one AmeriCorps source of funding, but multiple AmeriCorps streams of funding. So can you tell us a little bit more about that?

MS. O'CONNOR: Yeah. Well, I think the way that we have approached it is kind of taking the playbook from the Minnesota Reading Corps that has been successful in securing a fairly large state appropriation to support the work and marrying that with the federal AmeriCorps dollars, and philanthropic dollars also. So really just sort of copying that blueprint. And I will say that the thing that we always come back to is the results that we have for the program and our ability to show that the model truly works. Thanks to the investment, again, of AmeriCorps the agency, we had a randomized control trial of our program, so we actually have really strong evidence that the model works. So we have that.

Plus, we have principals and teachers within our current school systems that can talk about the impact that they actually see with their own data about how students are growing and progressing. So it's really that

impact data that's really compelling legislators and other philanthropic stakeholders in wanting to make an investment in what works.

MR. WARREN: Thank you, Sadie.

MS. O'CONNOR: Pretty simple.

MR. WARREN: You make it sound simple, but we all know it's not that simple. Thank you.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: I just want to join my colleagues in saying how impressed I was. I wanted to be part of this Board, but now I know why I really wanted to be part of this Board. And Barbara, in a few years when I decide to retire and I'm home, I want you to come and be my Senior Companion. We'll find different movies to watch. But I really appreciate it. And just the commitment that you all have really does . . . it makes our jobs better and easier when we know there's people like you out there doing this great work. It really makes all the difference in the world and I'm glad to hear it has an impact on you as well as all of the people you serve.

So, I just want to join my colleagues in thanking all of you for spending some time with us. Zoom has some negative impacts, but also has this great impact that we are able to hear from people across the country. So thank you.

At this point, I guess we will move on. We have some time left for some public comments. So the way we do this, we are going to ask you to -- it's actually on your screen now -- but raise your hand using the "raise your hand" feature on your Zoom. I'd like to remind you to keep your comments to two minutes so that we can allow as many people as possible. And we won't necessarily have time to respond to comments of all of our stakeholders, but let me promise you, we will follow up with the appropriate staff members and Corps members who can be helpful to you to answer any questions, and what we can answer, we will. So, let me start . . . I don't know . . . I'm going to turn this over to Kim.

KIM: Alright, we have a couple of hands raised. The first one is Austin. Austin, you'll see a prompt; select it and you'll be allowed to talk.

AUSTIN: Hi everybody, thank you for allowing me this time to speak. I'm currently a Site Supervisor -- excuse me, Project Supervisor -- in Georgia, and I've recently finished serving as a VISTA And I just want to bring it to the Board's attention -- I know it's on your radar -- you'd mentioned before about looking into raising the stipend. As a lot of sites are, we're having trouble recruiting and bringing people in, and I just wanted to just share my experience as a VISTA.

I thought it was great to have that experience and to learn on the job like that and am very thankful for it. Unfortunately, due to the stipend and the way my student loans worked out, with some of them being private loans, I'm actually in a worse financial hole than when I began the year. And even with the Segal [Education] Award, I'm still worse off, just because of the way the interest rate is going up -- my loans have variable rates. And not being able to pay those loans during that year at all, and not getting any forbearance from that private lender, I'll now be paying off more than I would have if I didn't serve as a VISTA.

So, I just want to raise that concern to the Board here and anybody else who might be on the call that this is a pretty serious issue that could really make it so that VISTAs only come from those people who can afford to be a VISTA, and I think that'd be a tremendous loss for the program. So, thank you very much for hearing me out; I do appreciate that.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you, Austin.

KIM: Alright, next is Angela.

ANGELA: Good afternoon, everyone. I am the Program Director for the SCP program with Neighbor-to-Neighbor in South Carolina and I am a newbie, but I have to tell you I appreciate this type of forum so much. Every time I attend, I learn something new or become enthused and excited about

the program all over again. So, thank you so much for doing these. You guys do remarkable work and I am so proud to be a part of it.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you so much.

MR. HARRIS: Thank you very much. And just to circle back quickly to Austin.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Okay.

MR. HARRIS: Austin, we hear you; we appreciate you raising that and we're working on it, and want to underscore that we hear you.

MS. ADAMS: A.B., you're next.

MX. STEWART: Hi everyone. My name is A.B. Stewart. My pronouns are they/them and I want to just begin by thanking you, Fagan, Alvin, Catherine, Michael, and all the others who shared from your programs. I'm coming to you from Little Rock, Arkansas, which several years ago was named the number one small AmeriCity by AmeriCorps. I'm a two year NCCC alum and over the last several years I have started and directed an AmeriCorps state program here in Arkansas. Currently I am serving on the NCCC Alumni Advisory Council, which has just begun; we just had our first meeting this week. Many of you pointed out the multiple outcomes of AmeriCorps service and sort of underlining that and underscoring that today -- namely, [the] impact in our communities and also member development and even strengthened capacity for organizations leveraging AmeriCorps -- and I'm curious, now that the strategic plan has been approved, so celebrate that. Are there any thoughts about an agency theory of change for AmeriCorps as a whole that illustrate these multiple outcomes and help align our programs with a national vision?

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Do we want to . . .

MR. HARRIS: Michael, you want to speak to that?

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: We have a minute or two.

MR. SMITH: It is a great question. I think if you go to our website and you look at our research about AmeriCorps, I think -- we think -- we have a bit of a theory of change about how we get the work done. One of the interesting things about AmeriCorps, which I think is a part of our "secret sauce," is we are not one thing. We provide people power. We invest in 40,000 locations across the country -- and that's working on everything from education, to health, in hospitals, working on workforce pathways. So, the actual unit of change looks a little different all across the country, but we do think that there is something about combining people power, combining training, providing this Corps experience that can both transform challenges in communities while also transforming AmeriCorps members, and I hope we've done a decent job of articulating it. But it is a really great question for us to take back to the team and make sure that we put an even finer point on it.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Kim?

KIM: Michelle, you're next.

MS. LUCKETT: Hi, good afternoon. My name is Michelle Lockett and I am the CEO for the Be Ready Alliance Coordinating for Emergencies -- or BRACE -- out of Pensacola, and I just wanted to take a moment and thank the Board and thank AmeriCorps for its ongoing support of our organization and of the State of Florida as a community and a state that is frequently impacted by disasters. The AmeriCorps VISTA program has allowed us the opportunity to help long-term recovery groups around the state that have been impacted by Hurricanes Irma, Michael, and Sally to increase our capacity with VISTAs who understand the cultural dynamics of their community. And as everyone knows, all disasters are local and the response at the end of the day falls to the local nonprofits to handle. The AmeriCorps VISTA program has been vital around the State of Florida and through our organization in helping our communities continue to stand up so that disasters are no longer community killers, but just a community nuance and nag.

So thank you for funding us, thank you for paying attention to the fact that our most vulnerable populations impacted by disasters are low-income neighborhoods and those affected by poverty, and we look forward to coming up with even more creative programming in the future. Thank you.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Michelle, thank you very much.

MS. ADAMS: Kelly, you're next.

MS. DALY: Hello. Sorry; I'm on a poor internet connection. My name's Kelly Daly and I'm the AmeriCorps Employees Union President, and I would just like to welcome the Board. We look forward to working with you. I represent the bargaining unit employees at the agency and we've provided a lot of input and are pleased that Michael and his team pay close attention and are willing to work with us, and that I just look forward to meeting all of you in the future.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Kelly, thank you for joining us.

MS. ADAMS: Well, there are no more hands raised, but I do see a question in the chat. "Can the tax structure of the Ed [Education] Award be changed [so] they have a less adverse impact on many members who are already low-income partners?"

MR. HARRIS: Thank you for that question. It is an issue that has been raised and we are currently talking with all of our stakeholders in the White House and on Capitol Hill about what can be done to address that challenge.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Kim, if that's all we have, let us know.

MS. ADAMS: Just a moment, somebody just put in text that I have another one, but her hand is not showing raised, so let me just thumb down and see if I can find her. Elizabeth, can you lower your hand and raise it again, because it is not showing for me? There we go, thank you. Just a

moment and I'll send you the prompt -- or at least I'm seeing one hand raised -- let me get back up to the top. Nope, let me try a different way here.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: I don't think that's the question she's on though.

MR. HARRIS: While we are waiting to get the next question, I saw someone in the chat mention the Senior Companion stipend. When we talk about living allowance, we also mean the stipend as well. We have had a conversation where all of us are not pleased with where the Senior Companion stipend is and recognize that we need to work with our stakeholders to do what we can to make sure that that is changed.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Right, and I assure you that the Board is definitely aware of that and that was a big part of our conversation yesterday, so thank you for raising that.

MS. CHUNG: Good afternoon, this is Elizabeth Chung. Can you hear me?

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Yes.

MR. HARRIS: Yes.

MS. CHUNG: Very good. Thank you so much to all the Board members. I'm Elizabeth Chung. I'm the Executive Director and Project Director for Asian American Center Frederick. My background is Public Health for 50 years -- that's a long time. I'm very excited that we do have SCP and RSVP programs. What I want to bring to the Board's attention is that -- as you can probably hear my accent -- when I first came to this country, I could not speak English. So after 50 years -- a long-long journey -- so I want to really encourage and recommend to really look at our immigrant population, the non-English speaking population. I know the strategic plan focus also on our (inaudible) racial inequity issues. It is a long journey to rise from the basement of the system to the top of the system. So I would like to see that some kind of infrastructure development -- technical system, maybe -- to really help bring back development of this

journey, particularly in Public Health. As I mentioned, Public Health, I have community health workers training program, I have developed the Public Health volunteers and so on and so forth. So, it is really important that we can bring those together into the RSVP or to Senior AmeriCorps program, and also to SCP program But easy to say; how to make that happen through this grant application process? I did apply; I was not granted because perhaps it's an evidence-based program and so forth. So there are many organizations that provide a committed, health-driven community-based programming -- you all know that -- but please look at infrastructure development, developing the new immigrants to be our future volunteers. They have a bilingual, bicultural skill set that we cannot ignore. That's far more valuable than what we can give them. So right now we are helping Afghan families, helping Ukrainians; we have doctors, we have doctors, we have PhDs coming from those countries that certainly once they're eligible we certainly want to bring them into our volunteer program. This is the best way to serve our country, to be part of Americans.

The other thing I want the Board to look at is collective impact. Earlier we talk about funding stream. I am also active in our community health resources in Maryland and I know that there are perhaps many different ways that I think our volunteer services can look at Department of Aging, Department of Children Services, to bring those resources together with our federal resources. Thank you. I know; long-winded.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Alvin wanted to respond to that for a minute.

MR. WARREN: Very quickly, Elizabeth -- thank you very much for your comments. I just want to quickly address a couple of them. Number one, this morning the Board met with several of our members from the area and I noticed that several of them were immigrants and first generation. So, I come from a state with a significant immigrant population, as well as individuals who are not exclusively, or at least not first language speakers, in English. I really appreciate your comments, we'll definitely take them to heart. In the strategic plan we do talk about reaching out

to and including more underserved populations, so I appreciate you flagging that.

The second point you made about collective impact -- again, it goes back to the presentations that we heard. Where are there opportunities to leverage additional resources from states, from tribes, from other organizations, and from philanthropy? So the Board is very much thinking about this. Thank you very much.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. I think . . . Are we going to take that as all the time we have? Okay. I wasn't sure if we were done, but I want to take a minute to thank everybody who joined us today, and especially the people who asked questions and made comments. I want you to know that we heard everything that you said and we really appreciate you taking the time to join us today. This has been an important discussion to strengthen and advance the work of AmeriCorps and to help the agency meet its mission. You see all of our social media channels there. I want to thank all of you for joining and for really caring about AmeriCorps, because without you Michael couldn't do his job; we wouldn't be able to be here. So, we really appreciate all of you, the members and the staff, for everything that you do. So, thank you and we're going to bring this meeting to a close. If somebody would like to motion?

MR. WARREN: So moved.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Alright, we are officially adjourned. Thank you very much for joining us.

(Whereupon, at 1:31 p.m., the PROCEEDINGS were adjourned.)

* * * * *

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

I, Gary Euell, notary public in and for the District of Columbia, do hereby certify that the forgoing PROCEEDING was duly recorded and thereafter reduced to print under my direction; that the witnesses were sworn to tell the truth under penalty of perjury; that said transcript is a true record of the testimony given by witnesses; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this proceeding was called; and, furthermore, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public for the District of Columbia