

National Service: Empowering Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships



The Corporation for National and Community Service recognizes the important role that faith-based and community organizations play in creating solutions for national problems. In tackling some of our nation's most intractable issues, these organizations improve individuals' lives and give hope to countless communities around our country.

Over the past decade, the Corporation for National and Community Service -- through our Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs -- has established partnerships with a diverse group of faith-based and neighborhood groups. In many instances, we have been able to provide these organizations with trained individuals and additional resources to help them meet local needs and reinforce their organizational strength and effectiveness.

Among groups working at the local level in their community, faith-based organizations are the most popular organizations through which volunteers serve. Over 35% of American volunteers between 2006 and 2008 served with a faith-based organization. Additionally, 70% of volunteers serving primarily through faith-based organizations continue serving from one year to the next, making it the highest retention rate of any type of organization through which volunteers serve.

As the Corporation continues implementing the Serve America Act, we are looking to strengthen our partnerships with nonprofit and civic organizations, both faith-based and secular. We are also looking to promote the numerous service opportunities offered through our programs to individuals associated with faith-based and neighborhood groups.

Programming Priorities

The Corporation, in coordination with the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, has identified several programming priorities designed to engage faith-based and neighborhood organizations in national service. These priorities will provide faith-based organizations with the resources they need to produce innovative community solutions. These priorities include:

Expand Mentoring Opportunities for Academic Engagement

Through its programs, the Corporation supports efforts to build capacity, recruit volunteers, and expand mentoring opportunities to children to increase academic engagement and school turnaround.

Strengthen the Role of Community Organizations in Economic Recovery

The Corporation supports initiatives that engage community groups as an integral part of our poverty reduction efforts. Working together, we will meet the needs of economically vulnerable Americans and their families by providing financial literacy training and tools designed to improve housing and financial security; and expand employment possibilities.

Promote Interfaith Service and Diverse Collaborations

Addressing complex challenges such as turning around low-performing schools or reducing poverty can best be done through collaboration. The Corporation encourages collaboration between diverse organizations, including organizations of different faiths, in developing community solutions.

Sample Projects

Meals on Wheels and Catholic

Charities of Onondaga County, NY

More than one million more volunteers are needed to erase the waiting lists that 40% of our cities face for senior prepared meals distribution programs. Senior Corps members are working with groups like Catholic Charities of Onondaga County, NY to end hunger among our seniors through Meals on Wheels.

Habitat for Humanity of Iowa

Working with Habitat for Humanity of Iowa, AmeriCorps VISTA, NCCC and State and National members have started rebuilding the flood-devastated area of Cedar Rapids, IA. Since 1994, Habitat for Humanity AmeriCorps members have performed more than 5 million hours of service, engaged hundreds of thousands of volunteers and helped build more than 8,500 Habitat houses throughout the United States.

AVODAH, New York, NY and Washington, DC

AmeriCorps members serving with AVODAH combine frontline anti-poverty work and community building. The program places members in more than 30 community-based organizations focused on issues such as housing, immigrant and urban education, food-bank coordination, foster care, HIV/AIDS reduction, and job training for the homeless.

Embrace Richmond, Richmond, VA

AmeriCorps members serving in Embrace Richmond's Just Works Program help provide homeless and at-risk individuals with valuable job skills. Partnering with different community organizations, Embrace Richmond provides one-on-one vocational mentoring and computer skills training to the people of Central Virginia.

Arab Community Center for Economic & Social Services, Dearborn, MI

AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps VISTA members are helping to develop a comprehensive community-based health clinic to provide emergency services to new immigrants and low-income residents. They also are coordinating adult and child literacy programs.

Alliance for Catholic Education, South Bend, IN

This year the University of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) program is engaging 247 AmeriCorps members to serve as full-time teachers and administrators in 163 under-resourced elementary and secondary parochial schools across the United States. Members teach core academic subjects or participate in the Leadership, English as a New Language or Teaching Exceptional Children programs. In addition, members recruit students as volunteers for service learning projects to address a variety of community needs.

Volunteers of America Utah

Volunteers of America Utah, working with Senior Corps members through the Foster Grandparents program, serve at-risk and special needs children in schools and Head Start Centers across the state. Through this program seniors bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to counsel and mentor Utah's next generation.

Donnelly College, Kansas City, KS

Students at Donnelly College, an independent, coeducational, Catholic institution founded by the Benedictine Sisters and sponsored by the Archdioceses of Kansas City, KS, are working with Learn and Serve America to incorporate service-learning in their community. Students are using service-learning to tutor local middle and high school students in STEM disciplines, and helping design middle school science curricula that will be used when the students are brought on campus to promote college awareness.

Helpful Resources

Corporation for National and Community Service

http://www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/faith/index.asp

White House Office for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ofbnp>

United We Serve

www.serve.gov

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