



# AmeriCorps Longitudinal Study: Impacts of Service on Members

*Serving Country and Community: A Longitudinal Study of Service in AmeriCorps is an evaluation of AmeriCorps designed to assess the long-term impact of the program on AmeriCorps members. The results reflect the early impacts of AmeriCorps\*State and National and AmeriCorps\*NCCC programs on members' civic engagement, education, employment, and life skills. The report also includes basic descriptive information on members and their experiences in AmeriCorps programs.*



## KEY FINDINGS

The initial effect of AmeriCorps participation for AmeriCorps\*State and National is consistently positive across a majority of civic engagement, education, employment and life skills outcomes, and over half of the effects are statistically significant. While the effects of participation for AmeriCorps\*NCCC are more varied, the results are generally positive and many effects are statistically significant.

### National Service Increases Civic Engagement

- AmeriCorps members increased their level of civic engagement on many of the outcome measures, while comparison group members typically showed little or no change.
- Participation had a significant effect on AmeriCorps\*State and National members who did not volunteer prior to enrolling, reflecting the capacity of AmeriCorps to strengthen civic attitudes and behaviors.
- Participation in AmeriCorps\*State and National resulted in statistically significant positive impacts on members, including their:
  - ◆ Connection to community
  - ◆ Knowledge about problems facing their community

- ◆ Participation in community-based activities
- ◆ Neighborhood obligations such as reporting crime and keeping neighborhoods clean
- ◆ Grassroots efficacy, such as starting new programs to meet community needs
- Participation in AmeriCorps\*NCCC resulted in statistically significant positive impacts on members' connection to community, knowledge about problems facing their community, and participation in community-based activities.

### National Service is a Pipeline to Public Service

- AmeriCorps\*State and National members were significantly more likely than the comparison group to choose public service careers such as teaching, social work, military, and public safety.
- Members of both AmeriCorps\*State and National and AmeriCorps\*NCCC experienced significant increases in their work skills.

### Impacts on Members' Education and Life Skills

- AmeriCorps had no significant short-term impacts on measures of educational attainment.

(Continued)

FACT SHEET

- Participation in AmeriCorps\*State and National did not have a significant effect on members' appreciation of cultural and ethnic diversity, and members in AmeriCorps\*NCCC experienced negative effects.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

- Nationally representative sample of more than 2,000 full-time AmeriCorps members.
- More than 100 AmeriCorps\*State and National programs and three AmeriCorps\*NCCC regional campuses.
- The study compares changes in the outcomes of members to those of similar individuals over time, controlling for interest in service, demographics, and prior civic engagement.
- Data collection at program entry (1999-2000) and at the end of service (2000-2001). A supplemental survey was conducted approximately three years after baseline (2002-2003) to address potential selection bias and collect limited follow-up data on outcomes.
- Follow-up data will be collected in 2005-2006 to assess longer-term impacts of AmeriCorps.
- The study was conducted by Abt Associates Inc., an independent social policy and research firm, under contract to the Corporation for National and Community Service.

## AMERICORPS

In 2004, AmeriCorps will support a record 75,000 opportunities for Americans to provide intensive service to their communities and country through three programs: AmeriCorps\*State and National, AmeriCorps\*VISTA, and AmeriCorps\*NCCC (National Civilian

Community Corps). AmeriCorps members recruit, train, and supervise community volunteers, tutor and mentor youth, build affordable housing, teach computer skills, clean parks and streams, run after-school programs, help communities respond to disasters, and build the capacity of nonprofit groups to become self-sustaining, among many other activities. In exchange for a year of full-time service, AmeriCorps members earn an education award of \$4,725 that can be used to pay for college or graduate school, or to pay back qualified student loans. Since 1994 more than 350,000 Americans have served in AmeriCorps.

## CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

AmeriCorps is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, which also oversees Senior Corps and Learn and Serve America. The programs of the Corporation provide opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities and country. Together with the USA Freedom Corps, the Corporation is working to build a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in America.

## MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about AmeriCorps, visit [www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org) or call 800-942-2677 or TTY 800-833-3722.

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