

National Service: Empowering Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships



The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) 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 other 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 some of the most popular organizations through which volunteers serve. More than 34% of Americans volunteer with a faith-based organization.

As CNCS continues implementing the Kennedy 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

CNCS, 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, CNCS 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

CNCS 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. CNCS encourages collaboration between diverse organizations, including organizations of different faiths, in developing community solutions.

Sample Projects

Notre Dame Mission Volunteers Program, Inc.

More than 370 AmeriCorps members provide academic assistance and life skills training in high poverty areas and volunteer recruitment for programs that target low-income, high risk children, youth, and economically disadvantaged adults in communities throughout the United States.

Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest

In Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington 135 AmeriCorps members serve in direct service and capacity building roles. They address economic opportunity, education, health, and domestic violence while helping organizations build capacity, achieve sustainability, and meet the needs of clients that would not receive services without AmeriCorps members.

Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska

With the help of 39 AmeriCorps members serving in 13 different programs across the state and throughout the organization, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska's At Ease program provides mental health services and counseling to active military personnel, veterans, and loved ones, regardless of their ability to pay. Therapists, peer support specialists, and volunteers offer confidential counseling, individualized treatment, and support to those who may be suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or are simply struggling to rebuild their lives.

St. Vincent Healthcare – Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Health System

St. Vincent Healthcare, working with Senior Corps members through the Foster Grandparent program, serves at-risk and special needs children in schools and Health Start Centers in 7 rural counties and 3 Indian Reservations across Central Montana. Through this program seniors bring a wealth of experience, knowledge, compassion, and cultural heritage to Montana's next generation.

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army engages Senior Corps members through RSVP and the Foster Grandparent program to serve low-income families - immersing children in music and the arts, teaching job skills to abused women, and helping chronically homeless people become productive citizens with projects involving school and urban gardens and recycling operations.

Cathedral Home for Children Foster Grandparent Program

Cathedral Home for Children serves as the Foster Grandparent Program sponsor for isolated communities in eight central Wyoming counties. Grandparents work one-on-one with the most academically, physically, and emotionally needy students. More than 140 children benefit from the early intervention and extra attention provided by the 40 dedicated and caring Cathedral Home for Children Foster Grandparents.

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