

## April Webinar

**OPERATOR:** Welcome and thank you for standing by. Today's call is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. All participants will be in a listen-only mode until the question-and-answer session of today's conference. At that time, you may press star-one on your phone to ask a question. I would now like to turn the conference over to your host, Tara Nokelby. Thank you, you may begin.

**TARA NOKELBY:** Thank you and good afternoon. Thank you, everyone, for joining us today. My name is Tara Nokelby, and I will be facilitating your webinar this afternoon. There will be a question-and-answer session at the end of the presentation. To open up your line for questions, please press star-one. You may also use the chat box on Webex, and I can read them aloud. This presentation will also be recorded and posted on Older Indians at a later date. Today's webinar will be with the Corporation for National and Community Service, and I will pass it over to them to let them introduce themselves. Thank you.

**ERIN DAHLIN:** Hi, this is Erin Dahlin, I am the acting chief of program operations, and I am one of the co-presenters today.

**DEBORAH COX ROUSH:** And this is Deborah Cox Roush, and I'm the director of Senior Corps.

**ERIN DAHLIN:** So we're so pleased to be with you today to talk a little bit about the resources that the Corporation for National and Community Service can offer your communities. We have a long history of working with tribes and working in communities across the country and just want to be able to explain a little bit about our programs and the different ways that we collaborate with communities now. So, I'm going to start with a brief overview of our programs, and we'll dive a little bit deeper into each of the respective programs. Debbie and I will kind of share the presentation. And as Tara said, at the very end, of course, we'll open it up for questions.

The Corporation for National and Community Service is the federal agency responsible for service and volunteering in the country. We do that through our two main programs, which are AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. Those two programs engage more than 300,000 people in 50,000 locations across the country. We have six different issue areas that we drive the work that we support across the country. Those issue areas are disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families. A little bit about how we developed. So, the Corporation for National and Community Service was established with bi-partisan support and was really established to focus on pressing problems in communities. The big thing is to focus on how we can expand opportunities for more Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve and to, in particular, build the capacity of individuals, non-profits, and communities to utilize service to address a pressing need in their community.

Our history goes—it actually predates the National and Community Trust Act that you see on your screen. But, in 1993, we were created, so we're actually about celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The Corporation for National and Community Service, the agency that administers the AmeriCorps and Senior Corps program was created in 1993, and we merged into it two of our vintage programs, and that's AmeriCorps VISTA and our Senior Corps

portfolio, as well. So, really that agency creation 25 years ago represented an overall kind of opportunity for Americans to serve, from young to old and everything in between.

In 2009, the agency was reauthorized with the six focus areas, you know, again, focusing our efforts on the six areas I had indicated before, so the disaster services, veterans, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and economic opportunity, and then really focused us in on looking at how we can help communities focus on outcomes and evaluation, looking at what evidence do we have in order to actually help drive our performance and our portfolio. The next slide just again reiterates where we focus our investments in terms of the different issue areas, but I do think it's important to note we actually don't go into the community and say, "What we think you need here is a disaster services program or to work on environmental stewardship." The big sort of secret sauce for us is that we rely on the communities to identify the issue in their community and then let us know how national service can help solve that issue.

So, now I'm going to talk a little bit about the various programs that make up—well, Debbie and I are going to share this—but make up AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. So, first, if you want to go ahead and advance the slide, the first program is AmeriCorps State and National. This is our largest AmeriCorps program and we work in partnership with governor-appointed state service commission and national organizations to fund service projects across the country. So, with this program, we give grants to organizations that focus on direct service to meet unmet community needs. Many of our grantees are things that—organizations that you're likely familiar with, like Habitat for Humanity or Teach for America, City Year, Public Allies, but we fund, you know, really hundreds of organizations with AmeriCorps members.

About 53% of the whole AmeriCorps State and National portfolio is focused on education and including serving in over 10,000 across the country. This program supports about 65,000 AmeriCorps members. And, again, the big piece here is working through governor-appointed state service commission. About two-thirds of the money is distributed directly to state. In addition, the AmeriCorps State and National Program has a tribal set-aside that allocates 1% of the funding in AmeriCorps State and National directly to programs sponsored by tribes. That, in the past, has been a floor, not a ceiling. We use that as a guide to fund our projects in Indian Country.

Our next program is AmeriCorps VISTA, and this is our oldest program. It was part of the War on Poverty with the Lyndon Johnson Administration, but members build the capacity of the organizations they serve with. So, differently than State and National members, in this program, members are really focusing in on indirect service activities. So, if you think about indirect service, those are things like establishing fundraising programs that, you know, looking to establish volunteer programs but not actually being the volunteer, recruiting volunteers from the community, training them, and establishing programs that last long after they're gone. This program is very responsive and adaptive. We really can take this from a project idea to boots on the ground in as little as three months. And this project—this program typically places members individually or in small groups with non-profit organizations or public entities like state governments or tribal governments.

Our last program in the AmeriCorps portfolio is AmeriCorps and NCCC, and that's the residential service program for 18 to 24-year-olds. We have four campuses located across the country, one in Sacramento, California, Denver, Colorado, Vinton, Iowa, and Vicksburg,

Mississippi. From those four regional offices, we serve the entire country and all the US territories on projects that last anywhere from 6 to 10 weeks. So, again, a little bit differently than our other programs in that this is a short-term infusion of human capital to organizations and communities to address a need. So, for example, after a disaster, we may deploy AmeriCorps and NCCC members to help communities recover by blue-tarping roofs or picking up debris. We may deploy members to a community during the summer to serve as camp counselors during a summer camp program or, you know, one of the projects that we supported in Oklahoma with one of our tribes there was to build a walking trail for the community. So, again, short-term need, but you need more like hands to get the work done. And this program supports about 22,000 AmeriCorps members each year.

It's important to know what people get from serving in AmeriCorps besides a wonderful lifetime experience, we provide them training. If you serve in a full-time program, you receive a living allowance that's about \$14,000 to \$15,000 a year. You have health benefit options. And the Eli Segal Education Award, which is, at the end of your service, members are eligible to receive that education award and get [unintelligible 09:55] to pay back student loans or for tuition or job training programs. Also, while you're serving in the program, if you have student loans, they are in deferment and the interest that accrues on them is paid for by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Lastly, when we connect folks to—at the end of their service, to really talk about their life after AmeriCorps, we have an initiative called the Employers of National Service that has almost 600 employers that prioritize our AmeriCorps alum for employment with their organizations because they know that our AmeriCorps members bring with them the skills that they would like to see in their employees. They're flexible, they can problem solve, they can work with folks that are different than themselves. So, at this point, I'm going to turn it over to my colleague, Debbie, to talk about our Senior Corps program. Thank you.

**DEBORAH COX ROUSH:** Thanks so much, Erin, and thank you to everyone who is on the call today. I think it's only fitting that we have this call today. April 7<sup>th</sup> through the 13<sup>th</sup> is National Volunteer Week, and so I'm just thrilled to be able to share and talk about the 220,000 Senior Corps volunteers that we have working throughout the country. So, let's just jump in here and let me talk a little bit and inform you a little bit about Senior Corps. You know, Senior Corps programs are a great way to engage tribal elders in national service. Senior Corps taps into the skills, talents, and experience of more than 220,000 Americans, age 55 and over, to meet a wide range of community challenges through a network of three programs, which we will go through today.

Our programs are RSVP, which engages a wide range of volunteer activities in counties across the country, our Foster Grandparent Program, where elders mentor students with exceptional needs, and the Senior Companion Program, where elders provide support and respite care for home-bound seniors. Those are our three Senior Corps programs. Our volunteers are typically underrepresented in the volunteering world in general, some indications that the population that is doing the service looks more like the population being served. That's very important, especially if we talk about intergenerational programming. As you can see on the slide, for Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions, our volunteers serve

an average of 6 years, in RSVP, an average of 8 years, and the average age of our Senior Corps volunteer is 73 years young.

Let me talk to you about our three programs. The Foster Grandparent Program, established in 1965, is one of the oldest intergenerational programs in the country. The volunteers provide person-to-person service to children in the tribal community supporting early childhood and K12 education to help the children learn academic and life skills critical to their development and the future success. Foster Grandparent volunteers serve in schools as mentors, tutors, and role models to children at risk of falling behind and to those with disabilities and/or those with other special needs. In addition to schools, Foster Grandparent volunteers serve in organizations like hospitals, childcare programs, Head Start programs, and other residential settings. Through these intergenerational relationships, the elders provide impactful service to help young people become productive members of society while they remain active and connected to their communities.

Tribal communities have also had Foster Grandparents teach children native language and traditions or work with the children in a tribal court system in addition to directly support their academic achievement, helping to transfer culture, knowledge, and customs from one generation to another. So, there's a big [unintelligible 13:50] in Foster Grandparent Program, and it's very important when it comes to intergenerational programming. I'm going to actually spotlight two of our tribal programs as we go through the slides today. The first one is the Navajo Nation Foster Grandparent Program, which has celebrated 53 years of Foster Grandparent Programming, with funding first awarded in 1965, making it one of the very first Foster Grandparent Programs. Today, the nation engages over 120 Foster Grandparent volunteers serving an estimated 500 children annually in over 50 sites in Arizona and New Mexico, including public, boarding, and community schools, and Head Start and daycare centers. Volunteers serve the Navajo children by teaching them about the culture, tradition, arts and crafts, writing and speaking in the Navajo language, and assisting the school teachers with implementation of the assigned curriculum. That's our Foster Grandparent Program.

Next, I'd like to talk to you about our Senior Companion Program, which was established in 1974. The Senior Companion Program promotes independent living and prevents isolation by providing peer assistance and friendship that helps frail older adults remain in their homes instead of having to move to a more costly institutional care. Senior companion volunteers help with tasks such as grocery shopping, paying bills, light housekeeping, and other tasks, or, you know, just being a friend to someone who may be homebound or who just might not have as much contact with others. Volunteers also provide respite to give family members or professional caregivers time off to run their own errands or take care of their own appointments. Because cultural participation is an important part of healthy aging, tribal communities have used the Senior Companion Program to help their elders stay at home in their communities and participate in traditional activities like fishing and community gatherings. Elder Senior Companion volunteers provide other elders in need with person-to-person service and offer support, particularly respite, to family caregivers.

Many also help their elder clients and family members mitigate and prevent elder abuse, including financial abuse and protection against financial fraud. Our second spotlight of the day in our slide is the Pueblo of Zuni Senior Companion Program. This is another long-time grantee of our Senior Companion Program. As job opportunities in this highly rural and isolated

community are few, many adults find employment off the pueblo. As a result, elders face a growing need for support services as close family member involvement becomes less prevalent. Senior Companion volunteer support, such as paying bills, shopping for groceries, and providing light housekeeping, helps elders stay where they want to be, and that's at home in their community. Their service also offers friendship to other elders who might not have as much contact within the larger community.

Finally, I'd like to talk to you about our RSVP Program. It was established in 1971. RSVP is actually one of America's largest volunteer efforts. We engage more than 185,000 other adults in RSVP, retired or not, to use their skills and life experience in volunteer service that helps solve challenges facing communities today. RSVP volunteers strengthen public and non-profit agencies by building the infrastructure needed to efficiently and effectively mobilize experienced and skilled volunteers with vital programs and service. RSVP volunteers serve in diverse volunteer roles that may include intergenerational education, access to care, including opioid abuse and prevention, transportation services that support aging in place, and housing services and activity in evidence-based programs. Additionally, they help increase the capacity of local organizations by recruiting and managing other volunteers. In the past, tribal RSVP projects have assisted elders to access healthcare, provide companionship and friendly visiting, and assisting individuals to achieve financial independent goals. These activities help support the quality of life for elders as they age in place in the communities that they've always called home.

These are our three Senior Corps programs, Foster Grandparents, Senior Companion, and RSVP. Again, it's very fitting today that I talk about our 220,000 volunteers and the impact that they make every day in their communities. Erin?

**ERIN DAHLIN:** Thanks! So, lastly, I think it's important to talk about, you know, we don't do this work by ourselves. We do this work with a network of grantees of which we would love for you to consider being part of. One of the big pieces that some of our grantees—as I indicated earlier, we are the nation's largest grant-maker for service and volunteering. We work very closely with America's non-profit sector and local and tribal government to make sure that we are addressing the nation's challenges through service. So CNCS, we give grants to programs, to the nation's leading non-profits, things like American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and more. We have a network of over 3,500 grantees that our volunteers and AmeriCorps members serve through.

The other side of this is really that, you know, the support that we get from our corporate partners. Our projects are not done with solely federal dollars. They're done in consultation with and in partnership with—really the public/private partnership is essential to being able to deliver our services. We require some matching resources for our grants, depending on the program, and I think it's an important piece to note that, last year, our programs leveraged 1.2 billion dollars, so about double our appropriation from the federal government. It really is a testament that we rely on local individual organizations and community partners to support national service.

I think one of the other, you know, interesting pieces is that each of the corporate sponsors on the slide that you see before you has supported different initiatives and different outreach efforts that allow people to connect with volunteering and national service

## April Webinar

opportunities in their community. So, I think we really wanted to spend the bulk of our time on questions with you all, so that is kind of the brief overview of the Corporation for National and Community Service programs. But our real work is working with you, partners in the communities, to address the most pressing needs. So, Tara, I'm going to go ahead and turn it back over to you to see, you know, what kind of questions we may have.

**TARA NOKELBY:** Thank you, and again, for everyone that's on the line, you can press star-one for them to patch your line through or you can type in the Webex chat box, and I can read the questions aloud.

**ERIN DAHLIN:** While we're waiting for questions to come in, I will just sort of quickly touch on the way that we give our grant funding out. For the most part, it's, you know, a process of both competitive and non-competitive awarding of grants. Each year, we announce the various grant competitions the agency hosts on our website. We also share it with, you know, with our partners, like Title VI, to let folks know when these resources are available. Last year, the agency hosted 17 competitive grant competitions. Our goal, again, is to reach into as many communities as possible. In addition, we're really trying our very best to streamline our application processes and make it very intuitive for folks that are not familiar with the government grant application process. So, we've taken some efforts to really streamline our applications and provide technical assistance to organizations so that they can access our resources.

**TARA NOKELBY:** Thank you and, so far, I do not see any questions coming through on Webex. Operator, do you see any coming through on the line?

**OPERATOR:** We have no questions on the phone.

**TARA NOKELBY:** Okay. All right. Well, I don't see any questions coming through here either, but—

**DEBORAH COX ROUSH:** Tara, we might remind them, if they want to find out more information, they can go to the web and just [nationalservice.gov](http://nationalservice.gov) and it can talk about all of our programs.

**TARA NOKELBY:** Yes, of course. You certainly can, and you can always use us as a resource, as well. You can always email our team and we can put you in contact, and then we can also help point you in the right direction. So, if we don't have any questions, I do want to say thank you so much to both of our speakers today. We really appreciate you taking the time out of your day to speak with Title VI. Thank you to all of the people that attended, as well.

**DEBORAH COX ROUSH:** Thank you so much.

**ERIN DAHLIN:** Great, thank you!

April Webinar

**TARA NOKELBY:** Bye.

**DEBORAH COX ROUSH:** Bye.

**OPERATOR:** This concludes today's presentation. Thank you for attending. You may disconnect at this time.