

## ISSUE BRIEF AMERICORPS



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AmeriCorps was created in 1993 as part of the National and Community Service Trust Act. It is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service (“the Corporation” or CNS). The authorization expired in 1996. Since then, the Congress has addressed policy, as well as funding, issues in the context of annual appropriations bills or the Rulemaking process. This year, there is a new wrinkle because both Houses of Congress have abolished the HUD-VA-Independent Agencies subcommittees that had jurisdiction over AmeriCorps. The Labor-HHS-Education subcommittees oversee the entire budget of the Corporation for National and Community Service for the first time.

Congress appropriates operating funds as well as monies for the National Service Trust to ensure that every AmeriCorps member who successfully completes a term of service receives an Education Award worth as much as \$4725 to be used to pay tuition or pay down student loans.

AmeriCorps members serve in more than 900 local and state nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and faith-based organizations funded by the Corporation through state commissions as well as with national nonprofits called “National Direct” grantees. AmeriCorps members can serve in a wide variety of programs ranging full-time stipended programs to programs that only offer the Education Award.

Members serve to address problems within four broad categories: “unmet human, educational, environmental, or public safety needs.” Communities identify their needs and choose the model that is most appropriate to meeting those needs. This is a bottom up, not a top-down program. AmeriCorps members teach in underserved schools, tutor and mentor youth including the children of prisoners, run after-school programs, build affordable housing, prevent forest fires, and help communities respond to disasters. They clean rivers and streams, support local law enforcement by providing meaningful alternatives to gangs, deliver services to the elderly, and meet other needs defined by the communities in which they serve.

This year, for example, AmeriCorps members are serving more than two million children and youth, providing valuable resources to reach the President’s goal of having all children able to read by third grade. They are also helping to recruit and train more than 600,000 community volunteers. A list of AmeriCorps program accomplishments is available in [State Profiles and Performance Report 2002-2003](#) published by the Corporation (December 2004).

In 2004, the Corporation for National and Community Service celebrated its tenth anniversary. In the last decade, more than 400,000 young Americans dedicated

themselves to either full or part-time service through AmeriCorps to improve their communities and their country. At the same time, AmeriCorps members earned Education Awards worth more than \$1 billion.

**Funding:**

The President's budget proposes to fund AmeriCorps at \$421 million. This is \$10 million below the FY2005 appropriated level and \$20 million below the Administration request for FY 2005. The Administration proposes to increase the number to be enrolled in AmeriCorps programs by 5000 \$20 million fewer dollars creating a situation that could result in the elimination of established, effective programs, many of which enroll or serve disadvantaged youth.

For additional information, see:

[www.cns.gov](http://www.cns.gov) the website of the Corporation for National and Community Service and

[www.voicesfornationalservice.org](http://www.voicesfornationalservice.org) the website of the coalition of AmeriCorps grantees, partners, and other interested parties.