

**The Office of Management and Budget
Paperwork Reduction Act Submission**

AmeriCorps Member Feedback Survey

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THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

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PART A JUSTIFICATION

Part A of this narrative provides the justification for the proposed data collection. Part B provides detail on the statistical methods for the proposed data collection.

A1 Circumstances that make the Collection of Information Necessary

Since 2008, the Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) has used the AmeriCorps Member Feedback Survey to measure the satisfaction of its AmeriCorps members with their AmeriCorps service experience. Administered through the MyAmeriCorps member portal, all exiting members in AmeriCorps State/National, VISTA and NCCC are asked to complete the survey before completing the necessary certifications to earn their education awards.

As part of the Corporation's Open Government Plan, this survey initiative is in direct support of the Corporation's efforts to improve its accountability, administrative operations and the support it provides to its members. While some performance information is maintained in Corporation administrative records, other necessary information must be gathered through contact with relevant members of the public. Starting in 2011, exiting members will complete a revised survey that captures data on the performance measures contained in Goal 2 of the Corporation's 2011-2015 Strategic Plan.

A2 How and By Whom the Data Will Be Used

The data are collected from members at the end of their service term during the automated exiting process. The Corporation intends to use the information collected to assess program performance, improve the Corporation's programs and management, and help inform prospective member applicants determine where they would like to serve. We envision that the data will not only help the public make more informed decisions regarding their choice of programs, but will also assist programs to identify and focus on areas of improvement in order to provide a better service experience to members. In addition, it is anticipated that the surveys will serve as models that the Corporation's grantees can adopt to continue to assess the performance of their own programs and projects.

A2.1 Project Overview

The Corporation was established to strengthen the ability of existing private and public agencies to expand service and address pressing community needs through partnerships, grants, training, and assistance, and to give Americans of diverse backgrounds an opportunity to serve. Created in 1993, the Corporation is a public-private partnership that has overseen three national service initiatives:

- (1) **AmeriCorps**, which is designed to engage Americans of all ages in full- or part-time service and includes AmeriCorps*VISTA, AmeriCorps*NCCC, and AmeriCorps*State and National;
- (2) **Learn and Serve America**, which integrates service and learning from kindergarten through post-secondary education; and
- (3) **The National Senior Service Corps**, which includes the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companion Program, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program.

This data collected is geared towards the AmeriCorps service initiative. Beginning in 2009, all AmeriCorps members have been invited to respond to an online version of the survey as part of the Close of Service process in the MyAmeriCorps Portal. This effort is the next phase of a pilot member data collection that started in 2004 with a sample of AmeriCorps members. Because we are now offering the survey to all exiting members the data should more effectively help gauge what aspects of members' experiences they rate highly, give programs constructive feedback, and provide a measure of program and grantee accountability (identifying where a program is doing well in providing an AmeriCorps service experience for members and where there is room for improvement).

A2.2 Purpose of the Data Collection

The 2009 Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act ("The Serve America Act" or "SAA"), reauthorizes and expands national service programs administered by the Corporation by amending the National and Community Service Act of 1990 ("NCSA" or "the Act") and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 ("DVSA"). Members participants and volunteers, work side-by-side, serve as tutors and mentors to young people, provide intensive educational services to children and adults, respond to natural disasters, help to build the capacity of local nonprofit organizations working to solve community issues, and conduct other service-related activities. The Serve America Act also requires the Corporation to measure performance goals for its programs, including conducting surveys of program participants, to determine program impact.

The first and primary purpose of the data collection is to provide another measure of reliable and valid data with which the Corporation can report the outcomes of its AmeriCorps programs. The collection will also provide data on AmeriCorps programs that in future years, can be used to assess the extent to which progress has been made and to provide an important basis for triggering training and technical assistance, as well as set future performance targets. A third purpose of the data collection is to provide valuable information to help prospective members select to which project or program they will apply.

The Corporation must be able to demonstrate clearly to Congress, the Administration, and the public that its programs are accountable and effectively

impacting the lives of the members. Where there are shortcomings, the surveys will help AmeriCorps improve services to members.

2.3 Who Will Use the Information?

A primary category of users of the outcome information to be obtained and reported are the Corporation staff and Board of Directors. A significant portion of the outcome data being collected will provide an insight to successes, issues and problems. The information will be used to inform policies and procedures in areas such as member training and benefits provided to members. The information will also help the Corporation be more strategic in working with national and local partners to provide additional training and technical assistance for funded organizations, and to enhance the value of service for the benefit of members.

A second major category of users consists of AmeriCorps grantees and local programs and projects. These include the State Commissions that oversee the AmeriCorps State program and the many nonprofit and faith-based organizations, educational institutions, and public agencies that involve AmeriCorps members in the services they provide to the general public. Most data will be aggregated such that it will provide, where appropriate, direct information on individual programs. Such data may indicate avenues for examining and helping to improve practices and procedures, even at the state and local level.

A2.4 Instrument--Item-By-Item Justification

The survey currently asks all graduating members a series of questions about their experiences while serving through the AmeriCorps program. Members are asked about the supervision and support received from staff, the overall adequacy of training and orientation, and other key areas.

We are proposing changes to the current questionnaire so that it is more aligned with the Corporation’s 2011-2015 Strategic Plan. Goal 2 of the Plan is devoted to the benefits of service to the participants; the table below contains information about the Goal 2 measures that will be collected through the Member Feedback Survey.

Objective	Measures (Priority Measures in bold)
2.0-find meaning	G2-2.1P. Percent of CNCS-supported participants who are aware of community needs and community driven solutions.
2.0-find meaning	G2-2.1.1 Number of service participants who report that they are capable of working with communities to solve problems (9a-g)
2.0-find meaning	G2-2.1.2 Number of service participants who report that they believe they can make a difference (9h-k)
2.0-find meaning	G2-2.2P. Percent of CNCS-supported participants who report that they are connected to the national service community.

2.0-find meaning	G2-2.2.1 Number of CNCS participants who report that they are connected to their CNCS national service program (17)
2.0-find meaning	G2-2.2.2 Number of CNCS participants who report that they are connected to the broader national service community (17)
3.0-satisfied	G2-3.1P. Percent of service participants engaged in CNCS-supported programs who report that they are satisfied with their service experience.
3.0-satisfied	G2-3.1.1 Number of service participants who report they are satisfied with their overall service experience (10, 11)
3.0-satisfied	G2-3.1.2 Number of service participants who report that they received the support they needed to succeed in their service activity (5)
3.0-satisfied	G2-3.1.3 Number of service participants who report that they received the orientation or training they needed to succeed in their service activity (3, 4)
4.0-find opportunity	G2-4.1P. Percent of service participants engaged in CNCS-supported programs who report gaining skills they can apply to future educational, professional or civic endeavors.
4.0-find opportunity	G2-4.1.1 Number of service participants who report that they will utilize their education award or Silver Scholars award (19a, b)
4.0-find opportunity	G2-4.1.2 Number of service participants who report that they value the skills they gained from national service (7a)
4.0-find opportunity	G2-4.1.3 Number of service participants reporting gains in leadership skills (7b)
5.0-health benefits	G2-5.1P. Percent of CNCS-supported participants 55 and older, or veterans, who report psychosocial health benefits associated with service.
5.0-health benefits	G2-5.1.1 Number of service participants reporting no symptoms of depression (21)
5.0-health benefits	G2-5.1.2 Number of service participants reporting they feel connected to their community and not socially isolated (22)
5.0-health benefits	G2-5.1.3 Number of service participants reporting increased self-efficacy (23)
5.0-health benefits	G2-5.1.4 Number of veterans serving who recently returned from active duty deployment and effectively reintegrate into their communities after serving (12)

A3 Use of Improved Technologies

Surveys of AmeriCorps members are available online with a web agent designed to ensure open access of the questionnaire, as well as provide data quality and accuracy checks. Additionally, there is customer support available to members who might encounter difficulties with the on-line survey or have questions about the content of the survey.

A4 Efforts to Identify Duplication

Corporation staff reviewed current program data collection efforts to gage duplication. Although the Corporation collects a limited amount of information from

members at the point of their exit from service, the Member Feedback Survey is the only Corporation data collection that is designed to provide information for measuring the satisfaction of members with the services and support they receive from the Corporation and AmeriCorps at the national, state and local levels.

A5 Involvement of Small Entities

None of the respondents to the surveys will be small entities; they are all individuals. We will work with our grantees and program staff to increase response rates. Some of these organizations will be small entities.

Most of the organizations already provide information on their Corporation grants electronically, and are familiar with responding to these types of Corporation requests for assistance. This data collection, therefore, has no significant economic impact on small entities.

A6 Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection

Failure to collect the data outlined in this submission on an annual basis will hinder the Corporation's ability to report necessary data for the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan, and to assess program performance. Since the collected data will help inform funding decisions, and guide the development of grantees' training plans, it is imperative that the public has access to this information, to hold the Corporation more accountable.

A7 Special Circumstances

The proposed data collection activities are consistent with the guidelines set forth in 5 CFR 1320.6 (Controlling paperwork Burden on the Public—General Information Collection Guidelines). There are no special circumstances that require deviation from these guidelines.

A8 Consultations Outside the Agency

Aside from internal Corporation consultations, the Corporation consulted extensively with external individuals to help develop the related survey instrument that is summarized in this submission.

- A Working Group established by the Corporation, consisting of Corporation staff from headquarters and the field, as well as program and grantee representatives (including representatives of State Commissions that participate in Corporation grant activities, Corporation State Offices that are involved in the administration of VISTA projects, representatives of diverse service-providing organizations that place and supervise AmeriCorps members, and current AmeriCorps members), provided advice on the survey instrument as well as implementation for this effort. We conducted regular conference calls and communicated frequently via

email. We also received feedback from the Urban Institute on specific questions and indicators.

Copies of draft survey questions were distributed by the Corporation to the working group. The Corporation expects to continue extensive outreach to its stakeholders to encourage a high rate of survey response, as well as appropriate utilization of the information that will result from this effort.

A9 Payments to Respondents

No payments are being made to respondents.

A10 Arrangements and Assurances Regarding Confidentiality

Participation in the surveys associated with this submission is voluntary, with no adverse consequences to respondents for non- or partial participation.

Respondents will be informed that their responses are considered confidential—i.e., that there will be no names, identifiers, or other obvious means to connect individual respondents to their responses on the data files that will be made available to any group of individuals outside of the Corporation. Furthermore, reports prepared with these data will only involve aggregations that do not identify any individual respondents with their responses.

A11 Sensitive Questions

The questions being asked on the surveys associated with this submission are not considered to be sensitive. Sensitive questions are defined as those whose answers, if made public, could cause physical, mental, emotional, economic, or other harm to an individual.

A12 Estimate of Annualized Burden Hours

Exhibit A12 provides information on the estimated time to complete the data collection and the total burden for the data collection effort—separately for each survey module and for the total survey effort.¹ The information that we will obtain from organizations will only better help us locate current members, and will limit their response burden. These questions asked of organizations and grantees will provide valuable information not already contained in our administrative records. The information will help link member responses to specific program aspects and thus will better help the Corporation to understand where and why programs are encountering issues.

¹ Data collection includes VISTA and NCCC members who are serving in federally operated programs. As such, they are deemed to be “members of the public” for information-collection purposes.

Exhibit A12: Estimate of Annualized Burden Hours

The estimated number of respondents will incrementally increase each year in parallel with the expected numbers of allotted AmeriCorps slots. The numbers of respondents that will be surveyed is estimated as follows: 2011 - 115,000 respondents; 2012 – 140,000 respondents; 2013 – 170,000 respondents.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
	115,000	140,000	170,000	200,000	210,000	235,000	250,000	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
			(A x B)		(C x D)	(B x D)	(E / 60)	
SURVEY MODULE	Number of Respondents	Burden per Respondent (Minutes)	Total Annual Burden (Minutes)	Number of Responses	Total Respondent Burden (Minutes)	Total Burden per Respondent (Minutes)	Total Project Burden (Hours)	
Current State and National Direct Members	170,000	10	1,700,000	1	1,700,000	10	28,333	
Current VISTA Members *	*	0	0	1	0	0	0	
Current NCCC Members *	*	0	0	1	0	0	0	
TOTAL	170,000		1,700,000		1,700,000		28,333	

*Members of VISTA and NCCC are serving in federally operated programs and, as such, are deemed not to be members of the "public" for information collection purposes. Since they are exempt from burden calculation, the time associated with this aspect of the data collection is entered as zero (0) hours.

A13 Estimated Recordkeeping and Reporting Cost Burden on Respondents

There are no record keeping or preparatory requirements in this data collection. The cost burden to respondents, therefore, is essentially the time required to respond to the survey questions.

A14 Estimated Cost to the Federal Government

There are no additional costs to the government.

A15 Reasons for Changes in Burden

The change in burden being requested is due to the need to use the survey to capture data on the Goal 2 indicators in the strategic plan.

A16 Tabulation Plans, Statistical Analysis, and Study Schedule

The primary reporting by the Corporation will be of data aggregated across all respondents—separately for AmeriCorps State, AmeriCorps National, NCCC and VISTA. The analysis will include:

- A series of bivariate analyses will be done to relate the data for individual outcome indicators to specific AmeriCorps *member* characteristics. This disaggregation into subgroups (such as for various member demographic characteristics and types of service provided) will provide the Corporation and the AmeriCorps programs with considerably more detail, and thus considerably more useful information on which to explore where improvements may be needed
- A content analysis of the answers to open-ended questions will be done to identify patterns of responses that suggest particular service problems or provide improvement suggestions and reinforce positive management and operation strategies.
- For a few questions in the member surveys for which the same wording is being used as that used in recent national surveys, results for AmeriCorps member respondents will be compared to those other surveys (consisting of data for the general population or relevant sub-populations) as a benchmark.
- After examining the bivariate analyses, it is expected that a small number of multivariate analyses will be done that relate a particular outcome to two or more organization or member characteristics—if it appears that this will provide valuable insights with respect to the AmeriCorps program—as to specific conditions which correspond to successful outcomes.
- In November 2011, basic data will be released to the public under the Open Government Plan, as more responses are collected from exiting members.

A17 Expiration Date Display Exemption

Any reproduction of the data collection instrument, including an online version, will prominently display the OMB approval number and expiration date.

A18 Exceptions to Certification

This submission, describing data collection, requests no exceptions to the Certificate for Paperwork Reduction Act (5 CFR 1320.9).