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### **About Us : History of National Service**

When faced with challenges, our nation has always relied on the dedication and action of citizens. The Corporation for National and Community Service carries on a long tradition of citizen involvement by providing opportunities for Americans of all ages to improve their communities through service.

Following is a brief history of national service.

#### **1910**

American philosopher William James envisions non-military national service in his essay "The Moral Equivalent of War": "...instead of military conscription, a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against Nature, the injustice would tend to be evened out and numerous other goods of the Commonwealth would follow."

#### **1933-1942**

Through the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), created by Franklin D. Roosevelt, millions of young people serve terms of 6 to 18 months to help restore the nation's parks, revitalize the economy, and support their families and themselves.

The GI Bill links service and education, offering Americans educational opportunity in return for service to their country.

#### **1961**

President John F. Kennedy establishes the Peace Corps, with authorizing legislation approved by Congress on September 22, 1961. President Kennedy says, "The wisdom of this idea is that someday we'll bring it home to America."

#### **1964**

As part of the "War on Poverty," President Lyndon B. Johnson creates VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), a National Teacher Corps, the Job Corps, and University Year of Action. VISTA provides opportunities for Americans to serve full-time to help thousands of low-income communities.

#### **1960s**

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program (which today comprise National Senior Service Corps) are developed to engage older Americans in the work of improving the nation.

#### **1970**

The Youth Conservation Corps engages 38,000 people age 14 to 18 in summer environmental programs.

**1976**

California Governor Jerry Brown establishes the California Conservation Corps, the first non-federal youth corps at the state level.

**1978**

The Young Adult Conservation Corps creates small conservation corps in the states with 22,500 participants age 16 to 23.

**1980s**

National service efforts are launched at the grassroots level, including the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (1984) and Campus Compact (1985), which help mobilize service programs in higher education; the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (1985), which helps replicate youth corps in states and cities; and Youth Service America (1985), through which many young people are given a chance to serve.

**1989-1990**

President George Bush creates the Office of National Service in the White House and the Points of Light Foundation to foster volunteering.

**1990**

Congress passes, and President Bush signs, the National and Community Service Act of 1990. The legislation authorizes grants to schools to support service-learning (Serve America, now known as Learn and Serve America) and demonstration grants for national service programs to youth corps, nonprofits, and colleges and universities.

**September 1993**

President Bill Clinton signs the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, creating AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National and Community Service to expand opportunities for Americans to serve their communities. VISTA becomes part of AmeriCorps.

**1994**

Congress passes the King Holiday and Service Act of 1994, charging the Corporation for National and Community Service with taking the lead in organizing Martin Luther King Day as a day of service.

**September 1994**

The first class of AmeriCorps members - 20,000 strong - begin serving in more than 1,000 communities. In swearing in these Americans, President Clinton says: "Service is a spark to rekindle the spirit of democracy in an age of uncertainty.... When it is all said and done, it comes down to three simple questions: What is right? What is wrong? And what are we going to do about it? Today you are doing what is right - turning your words into deeds."

**1995**

A study commissioned by the IBM Foundation, the Charles A. Dana Foundation, and the James Irvine Foundation finds that every federal dollar invested in AmeriCorps results in \$1.60 to \$2.60 or more in direct, measurable benefits to AmeriCorps members and the communities they serve.

### **April 1997**

The Presidents' Summit for America's Future, chaired by General Colin Powell, brings together President Clinton, former Presidents Bush, Ford, and Carter, and Mrs. Reagan to recognize and expand the role of AmeriCorps and other service programs in meeting the needs of America's youth.

### **1997**

AmeriCorps expands by introducing the Education Awards Program, which allows more organizations to join the service network -- nonprofits, faith-based organizations, colleges and universities, welfare-to-work programs, and other groups.

President Clinton and former President George Bush announce the resumption of the Daily Points of Light Award.

### **October 1999**

AmeriCorps celebrates five years and 150,000 members. General Colin Powell, Utah's Governor Mike Leavitt, Coretta Scott King, and Sargent Shriver join President Clinton at the White House honoring the winners of the first All\* AmeriCorps awards.

### **June 2000**

The Foster Grandparent Program recognizes its 35th anniversary. As the Senior Companion Program enters its 26th year of service, and RSVP look ahead to its 30th birthday in 2001, the three National Senior Service Corps programs engage more than 500,000 adults age fifty-five and older in sharing their time and talents to help meet local community needs.

### **October 2000**

AmeriCorps\*VISTA commemorates 35 years of fighting poverty in America. Since 1965, more than 130,000 VISTA members have used a hands-on, grassroots approach to empower individuals and communities throughout the country.

With this year's AmeriCorps class, funded with 2000 appropriations, more than 200,000 individuals will have served in AmeriCorps since 1994.

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