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Community Service: A Description of AmeriCorps, Foster Grandparents, and Other Federally Funded Programs

Ann Lordeman and Alice Butler, Domestic Social Policy Division

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Abstract. This report describes the programs authorized by the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, (NCSA) and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended, (DVSA). In general, the programs authorized by these statutes are administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, an independent agency. NCSA authorizes AmeriCorps Grants, the National Civilian Community Corps, Learn and Serve America, and the Points of Light Foundation. DVSA authorizes VISTA and the National Senior Volunteer Corps, which consists of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program. Authorization of appropriations for the NCSA and DVSA programs expired at the end of FY1996. Programs authorized under both statutes continue to be funded through appropriations legislation. This report provides information on the specific focus of each program, age and income eligibility requirements, participant benefits, allocation of funds, and historical funding levels.

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Community Service: A Description of AmeriCorps, Foster Grandparents, and Other Federally Funded Programs

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Ann Lordeman
Specialist in Social Legislation
Domestic Social Policy Division

Alice D. Butler
Technical Information Specialist
Domestic Social Policy Division

Community Service: A Description of AmeriCorps, Foster Grandparents, and Other Federally Funded Programs

Summary

The major federally funded community service and volunteer programs in this country are authorized under two statutes: the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended (NCSA), and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended (DVSA). In general, the programs authorized by these statutes are administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, an independent federal agency.

NCSA authorizes four programs: AmeriCorps Grants, the National Civilian Community Corps, Learn and Serve America, and the Points of Light Foundation. AmeriCorps Grants is the largest of the NCSA programs, funded at \$240 million for FY2002. In addition, NCSA also authorizes the National Service Trust.

DVSA authorizes Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) and the National Senior Volunteer Corps. The Corps consists of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program. The Foster Grandparent Program is the largest of the DVSA programs, funded at \$107 million for FY2002.

While all of these programs encourage community service and volunteer activities, they vary considerably in terms of their specific program focus, age and income eligibility requirements, participant benefits, and allocation of funds. For example, AmeriCorps Grants participants serve the community in general, must be 17 years of age or older, have no income eligibility requirements to meet, and receive educational awards (from the National Service Trust). AmeriCorps funds are allocated by formula to state commissions on national and community service, on a competitive basis to programs first selected by the state commissions, and through national competition.

In contrast to AmeriCorps, Foster Grandparent Program participants specifically serve children, must be 60 years of age or older, and must be low income in order to receive a stipend of \$2.65 an hour for an average of 20 hours of service a week. Funds are awarded to public agencies and private organizations who apply directly to the Corporation.

Funding for NCSA programs is contained in the Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act. For FY2002, \$402 million was appropriated, not including \$5 million for the Office of the Inspector General. Funding for DVSA programs is contained in the Labor, Health and Human Service, and Education Appropriations Act. For FY2002, \$329 million was appropriated.

Authorization of appropriations for the NCSA and DVSA programs expired at the end of FY1996. Programs authorized under both statutes continue to be funded through appropriations legislation.

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Community Service: A Description of AmeriCorps, Foster Grandparents, and Other Federally Funded Programs

The major federally funded community service and volunteer programs in the this country are authorized by the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended (NCSA), and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended (DVSA). **Table 1** shows the programs authorized by NCSA. These programs are all funded under the Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development (VA-HUD) Appropriations Act.

Table 1. Programs Authorized by NCSA

Title I-B	Learn and Serve America
Title I-C	AmeriCorps Grants
Title I-E	National Civilian Community Corps
Title III	Points of Light Foundation

Table 2 shows the programs authorized by DVSA. These programs are all funded under the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (L-HHS-ED) Appropriations Act.

Table 2. Programs Authorized by DVSA

Title I-A	Volunteers in service to America (VISTA)
Title I-C	Special Volunteer Programs (i.e., Homeland Security)
Title II National Senior Volunteer Corps	
Title II-A	Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
Title II-B	Foster Grandparent Program
Title II-C	Senior Companion Program

All of the programs shown in **Tables 1 and 2**, except for the Points of Light Foundation, are administered by the Corporation for National and Community

Service.¹ The Corporation was created by the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-82) under subtitle G of the National and Community Service Act of 1990. The Corporation was established by combining two independent federal agencies — the Commission on National and Community Service, which administered NCSA programs, and ACTION, which administered DVSA programs. The Corporation, which is also an independent agency, is administered by a chief executive officer and a bipartisan 15-member board of directors appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

While all of these programs encourage community service and volunteer activities, they vary considerably in terms of their specific program focus, age and income eligibility requirements, participant benefits, and the allocation of funds. **Table 3** on the following page illustrates the variability among the key characteristics of each of the NCSA and DVSA programs.

The purpose of this report is to provide detailed information on each of the programs administered by the Corporation. This includes a description of the services provided, individual eligibility requirements, and the FY2002 funding level. In addition, **Table 4** provides the funding history for NCSA and DVSA programs from FY1994, the first year of funding for AmeriCorps, through FY2002.

¹The Points of Light Foundation is a non-federal independent and autonomous entity that is not administered by the Corporation although it receives its funding under the Corporation's appropriation. A brief description of the Foundation is included in this report.

Table 3. Key Features of NCSA and DVSA Programs

	National Community Service Act Programs (NCSA)			Domestic Volunteer Service Act Programs (DVSA)			
	AmeriCorps Grants	National Civilian Community Corps	Learn and Serve America	Volunteers in Service to America	Retired and Senior Volunteer Program	Foster Grandparent Program	Senior Companion Program
Program focus	Serving the community	Serving various communities in one of five regions	Projects of benefit to both the community and students	Serving poverty communities	Serving the community	Serving children	Serving adults
Amount of volunteer service	Full time for a term of service	Full time for 10 months	N/A	Full time for a term of service	Up to 40 hours a week	Average of 20 hours a week	Average of 20 hours a week
Participant eligibility							
Age	17 years or older	18 to 24 years old	students	18 years or older	55 years or older	60 years or older	60 years or older
Income eligibility	none	none	none	none	none	low income	low income
Participant benefits							
Living allowance	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	no
Education award/stipend	\$4,725 for a full time term of service	\$4,725 for a full time term of service	none	\$4,725 for a full time term of service or a \$1,200 cash stipend	none	\$2.65/hour	\$2.65/hour

National and Community Service Act (NCSA) Programs

The purposes of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 are to: (1) meet the unmet human, educational, environment, and public safety needs of the United States; (2) renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community; (3) expand educational opportunity by rewarding national service participants with an increased ability to pursue higher education or job training; (4) encourage citizens to engage in national service; (5) reinvent government to eliminate duplication, support locally established initiatives, require measurable goals for performance, and offer flexibility in meeting those goals; (6) expand and strengthen existing service programs that provide visible benefits to the participants and community; (7) build on the existing organizational service infrastructure of federal, state, and local programs to expand service opportunities; and (8) provide tangible benefits to the communities in which national service is performed.

Major amendments were made to NCSA by the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-82). In addition to creating the Corporation to administer NCSA and DVSA programs, P.L. 103-82 also created a new national service program referred to as AmeriCorps, a National Service Trust to fund educational awards to persons participating in AmeriCorps and other select community service programs, and state commissions on national and community service to receive Learn and Serve and AmeriCorps funding. Authorization of appropriations for the NCSA programs (**Table 1**) expired at the end of FY1996. These programs continue to be funded, however, through appropriations legislation.

AmeriCorps Grants — Title I-C

The AmeriCorps Grants program, created in 1993, is a network of community service programs for individuals who are 17 or older.² AmeriCorps programs must address educational, public safety, human, or environmental needs through services that provide a direct benefit to the community. Since FY1997, the Corporation has established a priority for services to children and youth within each of these four areas. For FY2002, \$240.5 million was appropriated.

Funds are allocated as follows:

State formula programs. One-third of funds appropriated are allocated to states according to a population-based formula. Fifty percent of this funding must be used in high need areas. In general, each state has a commission on national service, whose participants are appointed by the Governor,³ that selects the community service

²This program is also called “AmeriCorps*State and National Direct” by the Corporation, and is titled National Service Trust Programs in statute.

³Only North Dakota and South Dakota do not have commissions. Programs can apply for grants directly to the Corporation for National and Community Service in states that elect not to establish commissions.

programs to receive funding, disseminates information about service opportunities, and helps recruit participants. In FY2001, 387 programs were funded.⁴

Set-asides. One percent of funds appropriated is set aside for Indian Tribes and 1% is set aside for U.S. Territories.

State competitive programs. At least one-third of the funds appropriated are distributed to programs that are first selected by the state commissions and then submitted to the Corporation for competitive consideration. In FY2001, 295 programs were funded.⁵

National direct. According to the authorizing legislation, any funds not allocated by one of the three methods discussed above are to be awarded to federal agencies and other applicants directly by the Corporation. Since FY1996, however, the appropriations bills have prohibited funding to federal agencies.⁶ Since FY1997, the appropriations bills have “capped” the amount that can be allocated for national grants.⁷ Eligible applicants for national grants include national nonprofit organizations, Indian Tribes, public or private nonprofit organizations including labor organizations, subdivisions of state and institutions of higher education. Eligible applicants that propose programs operating in more than one state are encouraged to apply for the national grants. In FY2001, 41 programs received awards.⁸

In program year 2000-2001, 32,819 individuals participated in the AmeriCorps Grants program.⁹ Fifty-three percent were enrolled in full-time terms of service and 43% were enrolled in part-time terms of service.¹⁰ Based on a random sample of

⁴Corporation for National Service. *FY2003 Budget Estimate and Performance Plan, Activities Authorized by the National and Community Service Act*, February 2002. p. 27. (Hereafter cited as CNS, *FY2003 Budget Estimate NCSA*).

⁵Ibid., p.27.

⁶Grants for national service initiatives were received, for example, by the Departments of Agriculture and Interior for the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC); Defense/Navy for the Seaborne Conservation Corps; Health and Human Services for the Model Health Service Corps; and Veterans Affairs for the Collaboration for Homeless Veterans.

⁷For FY1997 through FY2000, this cap was \$40 million; for FY2001 it was \$45 million; and for FY2002 it is \$47 million.

⁸CNS, *FY2003 Budget Estimate NCSA*, p.27.

⁹According to the Corporation, these data are taken from the National Service Trust data base, as of January 16, 2002. Because AmeriCorps grants programs funded in a particular fiscal year have significantly different starting and ending points, it is impossible to precisely specify the starting and ending points of a particular program year. Generally speaking, most programs operating in program year 2000-2001 started between August and November 2000 and ended approximately 12 months later. Some programs have different starting and ending dates, and others take place over 2 years. This information was provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service on January 24, 2002.

¹⁰Correspondence from the Corporation on January 25, 2002. The terms of service for 4% of participants for program year 2000-2001 are unknown.

participants for the most recent year data are available (program year 1998-1999),¹¹ approximately 49% were white, 27% were African-American, 16% were Hispanic, 4% were Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 4% were American Indian. Of participants serving as of December, 2001, 75% were under the age of 30, 17% were between 30 and 45 years of age, and 8% were older than 45 years of age.¹²

In general, programs receiving AmeriCorps funding must provide full-time participants with a living allowance of at least \$9,600, and no more than twice that amount.¹³ The Corporation provides a maximum of 85% of the minimum living allowance (i.e., \$8,160) and the programs pay a minimum of 15% (i.e., \$1,440) from non-federal funds. If needed, participants receive health coverage and child care assistance. Corporation funds may be used to pay up to 85% of health care costs and 100% of child care costs. The Corporation also pays 67% of other program costs (e.g., operating and administrative costs). For FY2002, a state commission applying for an AmeriCorps grant must ensure that the average cost per full time equivalent participant be not more than \$12,400 in Corporation funds, exclusive of the education award, child care costs or any commission administrative costs.¹⁴

Within the AmeriCorps Grants program, there is a separate **Education Awards Program**, also referred to as education only awards, in which sponsoring organizations cover all costs, e.g. participant subsidies, except for the education awards (discussed in the section on the National Service Trust), and \$400 per full time equivalent participant for operating costs, which are provided by the Corporation.¹⁵ The Corporation encourages, but does not require, sponsoring organizations to provide a living allowance to participants. In addition, sponsoring organizations are not required to provide participants either child care or health care. The program, begun in FY1997, “seeks to broaden the network of national service programs and strategies and to increase the number of communities using AmeriCorps members to better meet their education, public safety, environmental, and other human needs.”¹⁶ For the 1999-2000 program year, grants were made to provide more than 9,500 individuals with the opportunity to participate at a cost to the Corporation (exclusive of the education award) of \$2.2 million. Calculated on a full-time equivalent basis this amounted to \$413 per each of the 5,295 full time equivalent participants.¹⁷

¹¹The survey was conducted by Westat, a research corporation based in Rockville, MD. This data is unpublished and was provided by the Corporation on July 10, 2000.

¹²Correspondence from the Corporation on January 25, 2002.

¹³Corporation for National and Community Service. *AmeriCorps 2002 Application Guidelines [for states]*, p.17.

¹⁴Corporation for National and Community Service. *AmeriCorps*State Commission Administrative Guidance Fiscal Year 2002*, p. 26.

¹⁵Corporation for National and Community Service. *Education Awards Program 2002 Application Guidelines*, p. 4. (Hereafter cited as CNCS, *Education Awards Program 2002 Application Guidelines*.) See: [<http://www.americorps.org/resources/guidelines2002.html>].

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁷Correspondence from the Corporation on January 24, 2002.

National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) — Title I-E

The National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) was originally authorized under the Department of Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993 (P.L. 102-484).¹⁸ NCCC is a federally operated 10-month residential program for youth ages 18-24 who are citizens, nationals, or lawful permanent resident aliens of the United States. NCCC participants address needs in the areas of education, public safety, environment, human needs and disaster relief.¹⁹ For FY2002, \$25.0 million was appropriated.

Corps participants live in one of five regional campuses in Washington, DC (Capital Region), Perry Point, MD (Northeast Region), Charleston, SC (Southeast Region), Denver, CO (Central Region), and San Diego, CA (Western Region). Participants may be temporarily relocated from their campuses to projects in communities throughout their region of the country.

In program year 2000-2001,²⁰ 1,002 individuals participated in NCC service.²¹ Based on a random sample of participants for the most recent year data are available (program year 1998-1999), 73% were white, 6% were African-American, 7% were Hispanic, 4% were Asian, and 1% were American Indian, and the race/ethnicity is unknown for the remaining 9%.²² Of participants serving in December 2001, 29% were 19 years of age or younger, 68% were between 20 and 24 years of age, and 3% were 25 years old. Females comprised 71% of the participants.²³

Corps participants receive a living allowance of \$4,000 annually, health insurance, and assistance in paying child care costs.²⁴ As discussed in the section on the National Service Trust, participants are eligible to receive an educational award upon successful completion of service.

National Service Trust — Title I-D

The National Service Trust, created in 1993, is a special account in the U.S. Treasury from which **educational awards** are made for eligible participants in

¹⁸This program is called AmeriCorps*NCCC by the Corporation, and the Civilian Community Corps in statute.

¹⁹Participants are on 24-hour call to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for natural disasters.

²⁰The program year for NCCC starts in October and ends in November of the following year. NCCC allows members to enter service in October and January; members must complete 10 months of service. Approximately 60% of members enter in the October class and 40% enter in January. This information was provided by the Corporation on January 24, 2002.

²¹CNS, *FY2003 Budget Estimate* NCSA, p. 71.

²²The survey was conducted by Westat, a research corporation based in Rockville, MD. This data is unpublished and was provided by the Corporation on July 10, 2000.

²³Correspondence from the Corporation on January 25, 2002.

²⁴Information provided by the Corporation in July 2000 and verified January 24, 2002.

AmeriCorps Grants, the National Civilian Community Corps and VISTA.²⁵ To receive an award, a participant must: (1) successfully complete the required term of service for the program in which he or she is enrolled; (2) have been at least 17 years old at the time the service period began; (3) at the time the award is used, has received a high school diploma or equivalent, is enrolled at an institution of higher education in a program leading to a recognized credential and maintains satisfactory progress, or has received a waiver from these requirements; and (4) be a citizen or national of the United States or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States.

The educational award for a full time term of service (i.e., 1,700 hours in a period of generally 10 to 12 months) is \$4,725 and half of that amount (approximately \$2,362) per part time term of service of at least 900 hours. An individual can earn a maximum of two full or partial educational awards.²⁶ Awards are made at the end of the service term in the form of a voucher that must be used within 7 years after successful completion of service. Awards are paid directly to qualified postsecondary institutions or lenders in cases where participants have outstanding loan obligations. Awards can be used to repay existing or future qualified education loans or to pay for the cost of attending a qualified college or graduate school or an approved school/work program. Educational awards are taxed as income in the year they are used. For program year 1999-2000, the Corporation estimates that 40,334 individuals were enrolled in approved positions leading to an educational award.²⁷

The appropriations bills for FY1998 through FY2002 have contained up to \$5 million of the Trust funds in each fiscal year for the **National Service Scholarship Program**. This program, also referred to by the Corporation as the President's Student Service Scholarship program, was begun in FY1997 under the Corporation's demonstration authority to recognize outstanding service by juniors and seniors in public or private high schools. Students who have demonstrated a sustained commitment of at least 100 hours in a 12 month period can receive a scholarship of \$1,000 for college costs. The Trust provides \$500 of the scholarship with the remainder coming from local sponsors, such as school districts, community foundations, local businesses, and religious and civic organizations.²⁸ High school principals work with representatives of community organizations, teachers, and students to determine how applications will be solicited and how scholarship

²⁵The National Service Trust is also used to pay interest on qualified student loans of participants who have obtained forbearance (i.e., postponement) in the repayment of their loans while participating in AmeriCorps, the National Civilian Community Corps, or VISTA.

²⁶While individuals may earn no more than two educational awards, they may serve a maximum of three terms in a combination of the three programs, subject to the statutory limits of each program (e.g., all 3 years could be served in VISTA, but only 2 years could be served in NCCC or AmeriCorps Grants with a third year in another program). See: Corporation for National and Community Service. *2001 Program Director's Handbook for AmeriCorps State and National Programs*, pp. 56-59. See: [<http://www.americorps.org/resources/handbooks.html>].

²⁷CNCS, *FY2002 Budget Estimate NCSA*, p. 16.

²⁸The Corporation uses funds appropriated under Subtitle H (Investment for Quality and Innovation) to cover the costs of marketing and delivering the program.

recipients will be selected. A high school principal may nominate one junior or senior student per school, per year for the scholarship.²⁹ For program year 2001, an estimated 7,500 high school students could receive scholarships.³⁰

For FY2002, the Administration did not request any funding for the National Trust and no appropriations to it were made. The Administration calculated that no new funds were needed for costs associated with new AmeriCorps members. From amounts previously transferred to the National Service Trust, \$5 million for FY2002 is available for the National Service Scholarship Program.

Learn and Serve America — Title I-B

Learn and Serve refers to three service learning programs authorized since 1990. Service-learning is designed to involve students in community service projects that address local needs in education, public safety, human services, and the environment in ways that benefit both the student and the community. The three programs are: school-based programs for students, community-based programs for school-age youth, and higher education innovative programs for community service.³¹ For FY2002, \$43 million was appropriated. Funds are used for implementing and operating the programs. By statute, 63.75% of funds are for school-based programs, 11.25% are for community-based programs, and 25% are for higher education programs. Grants in all three programs are awarded on 3 year cycles, which began in FY1994. The Corporation estimates that 1.80 million individuals will have participated in Learn and Serve Programs in FY2000.³²

School-Based Programs. These programs help schools create service-learning initiatives that involve elementary and secondary school students in community service which is integrated with their academic curricula. Of the funds available for school-based programs, 3% are set aside for Indian Tribes and territories. Of the remainder, 75% is awarded to State Education Agencies (SEAs) on a formula based equally on the number of school-age youth and on the states' previous year's allocation for Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).³³ The SEAs distribute the funds locally on a competitive basis. Twenty-five percent of the remainder is awarded through a competitive process to SEAs, Tribes, U.S. Territories, and grantmaking entities.³⁴ A new grantee must provide 10% of the total

²⁹ More information on the scholarships can be obtained from the worldwide web at: [<http://www.nationalservice.org/scholarships>].

³⁰CNS, *FY2002 Budget Estimate NCSA*, p.19.

³¹The school and community-based programs are authorized under Part I of Title I-B, titled "Serve America Programs."

³²CNS, *FY2002 Budget Estimate NCSA*, p.70.

³³Title I of ESEA is a major federal elementary and secondary education program for disadvantaged students.

³⁴The Corporation's *1999 Guide to Programs and Grants* (August 1998, p. 19) defines grantmaking entities as public or private nonprofit organizations which have experience in
(continued...)

program cost in non-federal matching funds; this match increases to 20% and 30%, respectively, in years 2 and 3, and is 50% for any subsequent year the grantee receives funds under this program.

Community-Based Programs. These programs help community groups create service-learning initiatives that involve elementary and secondary school students in community service. Funds are distributed through competitive grants given by the Corporation to national nonprofit organizations and state commissions. Funds are then awarded in local competitions. A new grantee must provide 10% of the total program cost in non-federal matching funds; this match increases to 20% and 30%, respectively, in years 2 and 3, and is 50% for any subsequent year the grantee receives funds under this program.

Higher Education Programs. These programs help institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations to create service-learning initiatives that involve postsecondary school students in community service which complements their academic studies. Programs are selected and funded directly by the Corporation through a national competition. Eligible applicants include public and private nonprofit institutions of higher education, consortia of institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, and public agencies working in partnership with colleges and universities. Grants are for 3 years (with annual renewal funding contingent upon program performance and availability of appropriations), and must be matched in cash or in kind, dollar for dollar. The amount of funding that can be requested in subsequent years may be reduced each year on a sliding scale to encourage the sustainability of programs.

Points of Light Foundation — Title III³⁵

Established in 1990 as a nonprofit charitable organization, the Foundation is by statute a non-federal independent and autonomous entity whose purposes are to: (1) encourage every American to help solve critical social problems by volunteering; (2) identify successful and promising community service projects and disseminate information about them; and (3) discover new leaders and develop individuals and institutions that serve as strong examples of commitment to others. In 1991, the Foundation merged with the National Volunteer Center, a non-governmental organization, and is now associated with a nationwide network of private volunteer centers and corporate representatives.

The Foundation is authorized to receive funding as part of the Corporation's appropriation and must provide a 25% match with funds raised from the private sector. The Corporation and Foundation work together to coordinate activities and support related missions, but the Foundation is not administered by the Corporation. For FY2002, \$10.0 million was appropriated.

³⁴(...continued)

service-learning, have existed for at least 1 year, and will make subgrants in two or more states.

³⁵For more information on the Points of Light Foundation, see its Internet Web Site at [<http://www.pointsoflight.org>].

Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA) Programs

The purpose of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (DVSA) is to foster and expand voluntary citizen service in communities throughout the nation in activities designed to help the poor, the disadvantaged, the vulnerable, and the elderly. DVSA, as amended, authorizes Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) and the National Senior Volunteer Corps. The Corps consists of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program. Funding for DVSA programs are contained in the L-HHS-ED appropriations act. Although authorization of appropriations for DVSA programs expired at the end of FY1996, they continue to be funded through appropriations legislation.

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) — Title I-A

Formerly administered by the ACTION agency (now abolished), this federally administered program is called AmeriCorps*VISTA by the Corporation, and has been authorized since 1965 to recruit volunteers (also referred to as members) to serve in poverty and poverty-related projects. Volunteers, who must be at least 18 years old, serve full time for at least 1 year, but not more than 3 years.³⁶ To the maximum extent possible, they live among and at the economic level of the people they serve. The role of the volunteers is to mobilize community resources, increase the capacity of the community to solve problems, and ensure that activities initiated or expanded by the volunteers are sustained by the community when they leave. For example, VISTA volunteers may work with Habitat for Humanity to recruit persons to build homes; create a database of volunteer medical professionals who see low-income patients in their offices; or initiate contacts with foundations, private funders, and community agencies to secure financial support for local community organizations. For FY2002, \$85.3 million was appropriated.

In program year 2000-2001, 4,477 members completed VISTA service.³⁷ Based on a random sample of participants for the most recent year data is available (program year 1998-1999), 60% were white, 26% were African-American, 11% were Hispanic, 2% were Asian, and 1% were American Indian.³⁸ Of VISTA participants serving in December 2001, 79% were female.³⁹ By statute, the Corporation is required to encourage participation of those 18 through 27 years of age and those 55 and older.

³⁶The minimum age of 18 is established by Corporation policy; the National and Community Service Act permits persons age 17 and older to participate in programs that lead to an educational award. The limit of 3 years of service is also established by the Corporation; the Domestic Volunteer Service Act sets the limit at 5 years.

³⁷These are members who completed service during the period of October 1, 2000, through September 30, 2001 (FY2001). In the case of VISTA, the program year is the same as the fiscal year. This information was provided by the Corporation on January 24, 2002.

³⁸The survey was conducted by Westat, a research corporation based in Rockville, MD. The data is unpublished and was provided by the Corporation on July 10, 2000.

³⁹Correspondence from the Corporation on January 25, 2002.

In program year 2000-2001, approximately 48% were 18 through 27 years of age; 10% of the participants were 55 and older.⁴⁰

Volunteers receive a living allowance of approximately \$9,300, and either a lump sum stipend that accrues at the rate of \$100 for each month of service, or the educational award under the National Service Trust. In FY2001, 59.5% of full-time members chose the education award. Of members in the summer program, 100% chose the educational award. In the aggregate, 70% of members chose the education award during FY2001.⁴¹ Participants also receive health insurance, child care allowances, liability insurance, and eligibility for student loan forbearance (i.e., postponement). Travel and relocation expenses can also be paid to participants serving somewhere other than in their own community.

Special Volunteer Programs — Title I-C

Conference report language (H.Rept. 107-342) for the DVSA FY2002 appropriation includes funding for a new activity, **Volunteers in Homeland Security**, under the authority of Section 122 of Title I -C. The language specifies that funds are to be used to place volunteers in community activities that are targeted specifically at contributing to homeland defense. Grants will be made to state and community organizations on a competitive basis in the areas of public safety, public health, and disaster relief and preparedness. For FY2002, \$5.0 million was appropriated.

National Senior Volunteer Corps — Title II

The National Senior Volunteer Corps (Senior Corps) consists primarily of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), the Senior Companion Program (SCP).⁴² The premise of the Senior Corps is that seniors through their skills and talents can help meet priority community needs and have an impact on national problems of local concern.

In all three programs, project grants are awarded to public agencies, such as state, county, and local governments, and to private nonprofit organizations. These entities apply to the Corporation's state offices for funds to recruit, place, and support the senior volunteers. The Corporation can generally cover up to 90% of the project costs, although the Corporation is authorized to provide funds in excess of 90% in certain circumstances. Under all three programs, the Corporation is required by statute to make a portion of funds in excess of the previous year's appropriation available to existing program sponsors on a competitive basis for Programs of National Significance. The purpose of Programs of National Significance is to

⁴⁰Correspondence from the Corporation on February 8, 2002.

⁴¹Correspondence from the Corporation on January 24, 2002.

⁴²The National Senior Volunteer Corps was formerly known as the Older American Volunteer Programs. Included in the Senior Corps is a small senior demonstration program. In the past 7 years, this program has been funded three times: in FY1995 at \$1.0 million, and in FY1999 at \$1.08 million, and in FY2000 at \$1.5 million. The purpose of this program is to demonstrate innovative activities involving older Americans as volunteers.

supplement the number of an entity's volunteers in order to address national problems of local concern.

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) — Title II-A. Formerly known as the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, RSVP has been authorized since 1969 to serve as a clearinghouse that provides volunteer opportunities for persons 55 and over. Volunteers are matched with opportunities that make use of their skills and life experiences, including tutoring, planning community gardens, conducting community safety patrols, coordinating recycling programs, teaching adult education computer classes, and serving as hospital aides. Volunteers serve without stipends but are reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses, such as transportation costs. For FY2002, \$54.9 million was appropriated.

In FY2001, approximately 480,000 volunteers served in 766 projects.⁴³ Of the volunteers, 89% were white, 8% were Black/African American, 2% were Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 1% were American Indian/Alaskan Natives. Hispanic of any race made up 4% of the volunteers. Persons between the age of 55 and 74 accounted for 53% of the volunteers, those between 75 and 84 accounted for 37%, and those 85 and older accounted for 10%. Women made up 75% of the volunteers.

Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) — Title II-B. This program, started in 1965 under the authority of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, provides service to children with special or exceptional needs. To serve as a foster grandparent, an individual must be 60 years of age or older and have an income that does not exceed 125% of the poverty line, or in the case of volunteers living in areas determined by the Corporation to be of a higher cost of living, not more than 135% of the poverty line.⁴⁴ Volunteers receive stipends of \$2.65 an hour. For FY2002, \$106.7 million was appropriated.

In FY2001, a total of 30,200 individuals served as foster grandparents.⁴⁵ Fifty-five percent were white, 39% were Black/African American, 3% were Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 3% were American Indian/Alaskan Natives. Hispanic of any race made up 10% of the foster grandparents. Persons between the ages of 60 and 74 accounted for 63% of the volunteers, those ages 75-84 accounted for 32%, and those 85 and older accounted for 5%. Women made up 90% of the volunteers.

Of the over 275,000 children served by the foster grandparents in FY2001, 39% were 5 years of age or under, 46% were between 6 and 12 years of age, and 15% were 13 and older.⁴⁶ Of the children served, 63% had one of five special needs. The

⁴³Corporation for National Service. *National Overview 2001 Retired and Senior Volunteer Program*. See: [http://www.seniorcorps.org/research/overview_rsvp01.html].

⁴⁴Income eligibility levels are based on the poverty guidelines issued yearly by the Department of Health and Human Services and are published by the Corporation in the *Federal Register*.

⁴⁵ Corporation for National Service. *National Overview 2001 Foster Grandparent Program*. See: [http://www.seniorcorps.org/research/overview_fgp01.html].

⁴⁶By statute, children refers to individuals under the age of 21. However, the law provides that in the case of mentally retarded individuals a program may continue to serve a child past
(continued...)

special needs areas were learning disabilities (26%), significantly medically impaired (13%), developmentally delayed/disabled (10%), abused/neglected (7%), and emotionally impaired/autistic (7%).

Senior Companion Program (SCP) — Title II-C. Authorized since 1973, the SCP gives primarily low-income volunteers age 60 and over the opportunity to provide supportive services to vulnerable, frail adults who are homebound and, generally, living alone. Volunteers provide companionship, do simple chores, provide transportation to medical appointments, and offer contact to the outside world. Volunteers receive an annual physical exam, may receive meals, and are provided with a stipend of \$2.65 an hour. For FY2002, \$44.4 million was appropriated.

In FY2001, the number of individuals who served as senior companions was 15,500.⁴⁷ Fifty-eight percent were white, 35% were Black/African American, 5% were Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 2% were American Indian/Alaskan Natives. Hispanic of any race made up 11% of the senior companions. Persons between the age of 60 and 74 accounted for 64% of the volunteers, those between 75 and 84 accounted for 31%, and those 85 and older accounted for 5%. Women made up 85% of the volunteers.

Of the nearly 61,300 adults served by the senior companions in FY2001, 12% were between 22 and 64 years of age, 22% were between 65 and 74, 36% were between 75 and 84, and 30% were 85 and older. Nearly half of the clients were frail elderly and 10% had Alzheimer's disease.

Funding Trends

Table 4 on the following page shows trends for the Corporation for National and Community Service Appropriations from FY1994, the first year for which the Corporation received funding. Total funding for the Corporation has increased 29% from FY1994 through FY2002.

Funding for NCSA programs has increased 10% since FY1994. The largest funding increases during this period have been for the National Civilian Community Corps (150%) and for AmeriCorps (55%). Smaller increases or decreases have been for the Learn and Serve America program, and in the areas of Innovation, Demonstration, and Assistance; Evaluations; and Program Administration. Other projects designated in appropriations bills received funding in FY2001 and FY2002.

Funding for DVSA programs has increased 61% since FY1994. The largest funding increases during this period have been for VISTA (100%), the Foster Grandparent Program (61%), the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (60%), and the Senior Companion Program (49%). Program administration has received a small increase and a new program of Homeland Security was funded in FY2002.

⁴⁶(...continued)

the chronological age of 21 if the child was receiving service prior to becoming age 21. Of all individuals served for FY2001, 1% were 21 years of age or older.

⁴⁷Corporation for National Service. *National Overview 2001 Senior Companion Program*. See: [http://www.seniorcorps.org/research/overview_scp01.html].

Table 4. Corporation for National and Community Service Appropriations, FY1994-FY2002^a
(in millions)

	FY1994 approp.	FY1995 approp.	FY1996 approp.	FY1997 approp.	FY1998 approp.
National & Community Service Act (NCSA) Programs^b					
National Service Trust (educational awards)	93.250	116.270	59.000	59.000	70.000 ^d
AmeriCorps	155.500	219.000	215.000	215.000	227.000 ^e
National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC)	10.000	18.000	18.000	18.000	18.000
Learn and Serve America	40.000	46.000	43.000	43.000	43.000
Other Projects	—	—	—	—	—
Points of Light Foundation	5.000	5.830	5.500	5.500	5.500
Innovation, Demonstration & Assistance	31.900	30.000	29.850	30.000	30.000
Evaluations	4.600	5.500	5.000	5.000	5.000
Program Administration	24.750	27.523	24.918	25.000	27.000
NCSA Programs Subtotal	365.000	468.123	400.268	400.500	425.500
Inspector General (OIG) ^a	0.944	2.000	2.000	2.000	3.000
NCSA and OIG Subtotal	365.944	470.123	402.268	402.500	428.500
Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA) Programs^c					
VISTA	42.724	47.700	41.235	41.235	65.235
Volunteers In Homeland Security	—	—	—	—	—
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)	34.388	35.708	34.949	35.708	40.279
Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)	66.117	67.812	62.237	77.812	87.593
Senior Companion Program (SCP)	29.773	31.244	31.155	31.244	35.368
Senior Demonstration Program (SDP)	0.0	1.000	0.0	0.0	0.0
Program Administration	31.151	31.160	28.541	27.850	28.129
DVSA Programs Subtotal	204.153	214.624	198.117	213.849	256.604
Total	570.097	684.747	600.385	616.349	685.104

Programs	FY1999 approp.	FY2000 approp.^g	FY2001 approp.ⁱ	FY2002 approp.
National & Community Service Act (NCSA) Programs^b				
National Service Trust (educational awards)	70.000 ^d	70.000 ^d	69.846 ^d	00.000 ^k
AmeriCorps	237.000 ^f	228.395 ^h	230.492	240.492
National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC)	18.000	17.892	20.954	25.000
Learn and Serve America	43.000	43.000	42.905	43.000
Points of Light Foundation	5.500	7.471	9.978	10.000
Other Projects	—	—	18.959 ^j	19.000 ^l
Innovation, Demonstration & Assistance	28.500	33.500 ^h	28.437	28.488
Evaluations	5.000	5.000	4.989	5.000
Program Administration	28.500	27.895	30.931	31.000
NCSA Programs Subtotal	435.500^f	433.153	457.491	401.980
Inspector General (OIG) ^a	3.000	3.985	5.000	5.000
NCSA and OIG Subtotal	438.500^f	437.138	462.491	406.980
Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA) Programs^c				
VISTA	73.000	80.574	83.074	85.287
Volunteers in Homeland Security	—	—	—	5.000
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)	43.001	46.117	48.884	54.884
Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)	93.256	95.988	98.868	106.700
Senior Companion Program (SCP)	36.573	39.219	40.395	44.395
Senior Demonstration Program (SDP)	1.080	1.494	.400	.400
Program Administration	29.129	31.129	32.229	32.229
DVSA Programs Subtotal	276.039	294.521	303.850	328.895
Total	714.539^f	731.659	766.341	735.875

Source: FY1994 appropriations from transmittal from the Corporation for National and Community Service. FY1995-FY2001 appropriations from the Corporation's annual budget submissions to Congress. FY2002 appropriations are from P.L. 107-73.

^aThese appropriations reflect any rescissions or other adjustments made to the original appropriations. The FY2002 amount could be modified through further legislation during FY2002.

^bNCSA programs and the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) are funded under the VA-HUD & Independent Agencies Appropriations Act.

^cDVSA programs are funded under the Labor-HHS-ED & Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

^dFor FY1998, FY1999, and FY2000, the Congress designated up to \$5 million of the annual for the National Service Scholarship Program.

^e\$25 million of this amount was designated for literacy and mentoring program.

^f\$10.0 million of this was included in the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Appropriations Act, 1999 (P.L. 105-277) rather than in the VA-HUD & Independent Agencies Appropriations Act.

^gThe FY2000 amounts reflect a .38% rescission required by P.L. 106-113.

^hThese amounts reflect a \$5 million transfer from AmeriCorps to Innovation, Demonstration and Assistance to fund a grant to the Girl Scouts.

ⁱThe FY2001 amounts reflect a .22% rescission for NCSA programs as required by P.L. 106-554.

^jThis includes approximately \$7.5 million for America's Promise — The Alliance for Youth, Inc., \$5.0 million for Communities in Schools, \$2.5 million for Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc., \$2.5 for Boys and Girls Clubs of America, and \$1.5 million for Youth Life Foundation.

^kFrom amount previously transferred to the National Service Trust, \$5 million is available for the national Service Scholarship Program.

^lThis includes \$7.5 million for America's Promise — The Alliance for Youth, Inc., \$5.0 million for Communities in Schools, \$2.5 million for YMCA of the USA, \$1.5 million for Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc., \$1.5 million for Youth Life Foundation, and \$1.0 million for Teach for America.

Additional Reading

- Corporation for National Service. *Strengthening Organizational Effectiveness and Service Delivery*. A Report from the Panel of the National Academy of Public Administration. Washington, undated.
- An Evaluation of AmeriCorps, Summary*. Submitted by Aguirre International. Washington, March 9, 1999.
- U.S. General Accounting Office. *National Service Programs: AmeriCorps*USA — Early Program Resource and Benefit Information*. HEHS-95-222. Washington, August 29, 1995.
- *National Service Programs: AmeriCorps*USA — First Year Experience and Recent Program Initiatives*. T-HEHS-95-146. Washington, May 21, 1996.
- *National Service Programs: Role of State Commissions in Implementing the AmeriCorps Program*. HEHS-97-49. Washington, February 20, 1997.
- *National Service Programs: Enrollment and Education Award Data on Selected AmeriCorps Projects*. HEHS-97-96R. Washington, March 19, 1997
- *National Service Programs - Status of AmeriCorps Reform Efforts*. HEHS-97-198R. Washington, September 3, 1997.
- *National Service Programs — Two AmeriCorps Programs' Funding and Benefits*. GAO/HES-00-33. Washington, February 15, 2000.