

Cannon, Mary

From: Corporation for National & Community Service <cncs@delivery.nationalservice.gov>
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To: Cannon, Mary
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CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

March 27, 2020

Dear State Commissions and National Directs,

First, let me say thank you for the amazing work you have been doing in the midst of this crisis! You have acted to protect your employees, AmeriCorps members, volunteers, and others in the service family. You have been creative and innovative in determining how to move forward during this challenging time. And you have raised your concerns quickly and shared them with us so that we could help you work through solutions.

We have been striving to provide quick answers to your questions for your programs and AmeriCorps members while providing as much flexibility as possible within our existing authorities.

Congressional Update

I'm sure you've seen the news that Congress passed and President Trump has signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The legislation contains several important provisions that will help our agency, grantees, and AmeriCorps members during this time. Specifically, the new law:

- ensures AmeriCorps members can earn their full Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, even if their service is disrupted due to COVID-19;
- allows AmeriCorps State and National grantees receiving fixed-amount awards to access their full federal funding based on member enrollment; and,
- expands the AmeriCorps NCCC upper age and program term limit for members to limit disruption during the COVID-19 emergency.

We are working on guidance related to these items and the impact on AmeriCorps programs and will post it very soon to nationalservice.gov/coronavirus.

Supporting Service in Your Communities

In the last few weeks, we have heard a growing demand from the public on how individuals can help during the COVID-19 crisis. I am so excited that our commissions and programs have been active and innovative to support their communities in many ways.

We have received numerous reports from the field about AmeriCorps members participating in local response efforts during this extraordinary crisis across the country and in U.S. territories. The temporary interruption of national service duties meant many members have been reassigned from typical assignments at schools to support emergency efforts such as call centers, food distribution projects, and senior support services, or shifted from in-person service to virtual service.

Here are a few examples:

- The need for anti-hunger and feeding initiatives is greater than ever with states closing schools around the nation. We have seen AmeriCorps members continue their service through food distribution programs from North Carolina to California to Guam.
- Vulnerable populations need those who are less at-risk to deliver meals, pick up prescriptions, and perform wellness checks to ensure the safety of their fellow citizens.
- The nation's blood supply has been greatly impacted by the pandemic, and we urge the healthy to find blood drives in their communities to provide this life-giving resource.
- Sheltered-in-place? Many of our state leaders are providing tips on ways to continue volunteering from home. For example, groups are finding ways to meet community needs by hosting sewing circles to create masks for medical workers.
- AmeriCorps alumni are answering the call to contribute their time to help during this crisis, and there are few people who better understand the meaning of service and citizenship and the call to serve than these men and women.
- And we recognize the fantastic work our State Commissions are doing to share volunteer opportunities and community needs in support of their friends and neighbors.

CNCS has prepared a list of 10 ways individuals can safely help in their communities. This is available on [Serve.gov](https://www.serve.gov), along with graphics you can download and share with your social media network.

Inspired to Serve Report Released

On Wednesday, the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service released its final report to Congress, [Inspired to Serve](#). The final report reflects the significant effort they put into learning about national service programs and includes many ideas for strengthening service in America.

In closing, I hope you all are taking care of yourself and following White House and CDC guidelines to protect your family and others. Please know that I appreciate your work to get things done for America.

In Service,

Chester W. Spellman

Chester W. Spellman
Director, AmeriCorps State & National

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