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Collection/Record Group: Clinton Presidential Records

Subgroup/Office of Origin: Cabinet Affairs

Series/Staff Member: Irma Martinez

Subseries:

OA/ID Number: 16785

FolderID:

Folder Title:

Americorps at 100,000 A Media Toolkit [binder]

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*AmeriCorps
at 100,000:
A Media Toolkit*

Corporation for National Service
1201 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20525
(202) 606-5000
www.nationalservice.org



100,000 strong and growing

CORPORATION
FOR NATIONAL
 SERVICE

October 13, 1998

Dear Friend:

As AmeriCorps reaches its 100,000-member milestone, we are pleased to provide you with the enclosed materials to support your media outreach efforts. Many events and media efforts are being timed to coincide with the swearing-in ceremonies being held October 23, but the 100,000 milestone presents an opportunity to talk with the media about AmeriCorps throughout the fall.

This milestone also is a good time to call attention to the outstanding contributions that AmeriCorps members make every day as they help to solve our nation's pressing problems. This notebook includes the following information:

1. Sample Press Materials

- Media Advisory
- Press Release
- Letter to Editorial Board

2. Information Sheets (for distribution to media and others)

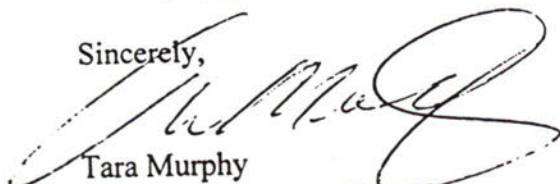
- AmeriCorps Accomplishment Data (*new!*)
- AmeriCorps at 100,000
- Op-Ed on AmeriCorps Accomplishments
- A Brief History of AmeriCorps
- The AmeriCorps Member Pledge

3. Communicating Through the Media (not for media distribution)

- Ways to Get Your Message Out
- Story Ideas
- Message Points
- Frequently Asked Questions about AmeriCorps

I encourage you to share this information with the media to build public awareness for your programs and AmeriCorps generally. If you have any questions, please contact me at tmurphy@cns.gov or (202) 606-5000, x158.

Sincerely,


Tara Murphy
Director of Public Affairs



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Divider Title: _____ 1

AMERICORPS: 100,000 STRONG AND GROWING

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

(insert local information between parentheses)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, October 23, 1998

CONTACT: (name)

PHONE: (number)

AMERICORPS: FIVE YEARS OLD AND 100,000 STRONG

*(City/State) Celebrates AmeriCorps' 100,000-Member Milestone
New Members Pledge to "Get Things Done for America" Through Service*

[CITY, STATE] – In a sign that patriotism still thrives in **[city]**, today **[number of new local/state number of members]** men and women will join the ranks of the more than 100,000 AmeriCorps members who have served or are currently serving in communities across the country and solving some of the nation's toughest problems.

At a swearing-in ceremony in **[name of city/state and place]** and throughout the country, AmeriCorps members took the AmeriCorps pledge to "get things done for America...to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier...to bring Americans together to strengthen our communities."

[Insert quote from Governor, Mayor, State Commission Executive Director, or Harris Wofford, CEO of the Corporation for National Service.]

This year, **[number]** AmeriCorps members will serve in **[local program and/or state wide programs]**, helping **[city/state]** tackle the problems of **[insert pertinent issue areas, such as illiteracy, crime, and poverty]**. **[Insert additional information concerning your local programs or statewide programs and what will be accomplished this coming year for the residents of your city/state or what has already been achieved through AmeriCorps service in your city/state.]**

Now entering its fifth year, AmeriCorps has come of age, achieving a level of membership that took the Peace Corps – AmeriCorps' international counterpart – more than 20 years to reach. In just four years, AmeriCorps members have assisted more than 33 million people in 4,000 communities across the nation, and recruited, trained, or supervised more than 1.7 million volunteers.

- more -

Established in 1993 by President Clinton and a bipartisan coalition of congressional leaders, AmeriCorps engages Americans of all ages in intensive service. Working through a network of state commissions like [insert your state commission] and more than 1,000 local and national nonprofit organizations such as [insert relevant projects, such as **Habitat for Humanity, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, or the YMCA**], AmeriCorps members are:

- teaching children to read in some of the toughest schools;
- helping communities rebuild after natural disasters;
- protecting neighborhoods from the ravages of drugs and crime;
- constructing affordable housing; and
- providing health care to people living in rural areas and Native American villages.

In return for their year of service, AmeriCorps members receive an education award of \$4,725 to help pay for college or to pay back student loans.

###

AMERICORPS: 100,000 STRONG AND GROWING

SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

(insert local information between parentheses)

MEDIA ADVISORY
[date sent to media]

CONTACT: [name of person]
[telephone number]

AMERICORPS REACHES 100,000-MEMBER MILESTONE

New Members to be Sworn in on [Friday, October 23]

In [city/state] and throughout the nation, thousands of new AmeriCorps members will be sworn in on October 23, bringing the total number of Americans who have served as AmeriCorps members to 100,000. Often called the domestic Peace Corps, AmeriCorps was established by President Clinton and a bipartisan majority in Congress in 1993. This year, 40,000 men and women will serve their communities as AmeriCorps members.

WHAT: Swearing-in ceremony for [number] new AmeriCorps members who will take the pledge of service. [Add brief description of event.]

WHO: [names of speakers and attendees, including titles of important dignitaries, elected officials, etc.]

WHEN: Friday, October 23, 1998
[time]

WHERE: [name of building or place, room name or number]
[street address, city]

WHY:

- To celebrate AmeriCorps reaching its 100,000-member milestone
- To kick off national "Make A Difference Day" activities occurring on Saturday, October 24
- To honor the commitment and accomplishments of past and present members of AmeriCorps in [name of city, if regional, or name of state, if statewide].

CONTACT: [name]
[phone number]

**AMERICORPS: 100,000 STRONG AND GROWING
SAMPLE LETTER TO EDITORIAL BOARD**

[date]

[editor's name]

[organization]

[address]

[city, state, zip code]

Dear Mr./Ms. [name]:

Four years ago AmeriCorps, the “domestic Peace Corps,” was created by the President with bipartisan support from Congress to build on the concept of the GI Bill and the Peace Corps – giving Americans of all ages an opportunity to serve their communities and, after their service, get help with their education. This fall, with the swearing-in of a new class, a total of 100,000 Americans have devoted a year to serving as AmeriCorps members.

While 100,000 is a significant milestone – it took more than 20 years for the Peace Corps to reach the same mark – the dedication and accomplishments of the people who have served is what’s truly important. These Americans are tackling our most pressing needs, from illiteracy to crime to poverty. Nationally, AmeriCorps members have assisted more than 33 million people in more than 4,000 communities and have recruited, trained, or supervised nearly 2 million volunteers.

Here in [name of city], AmeriCorps members are working with organizations such as [names of local programs]. They are playing a vital role in solving urgent community problems like [insert local needs/projects]. [Insert local or statewide statistics demonstrating the impact of AmeriCorps members.]

On Friday, October 23, the fifth class of AmeriCorps members will take the AmeriCorps pledge to “get things done for America” and begin their year of service. Swearing-in ceremonies will take place in [name of site in your state] and across the nation. This is an appropriate time to share with your readers what AmeriCorps has achieved for our community and welcome these new, patriotic, committed members.

We request the opportunity to meet with you and the editorial board at [name of media outlet] to discuss the impact that AmeriCorps has had in our community. I will contact you soon to follow up on this request. In the meantime, you are welcome to call me at [your phone number]. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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AMERICORPS: 100,000 STRONG AND GROWING SAMPLE OP-ED

Americorps: 100,000 Strong and Getting Things Done in [Minnesota]

This fall, [Minnesota] and communities across the nation are celebrating an important milestone as AmeriCorps swears in its 100,000th member. Following in the tradition of the GI Bill, which tied military service to education, AmeriCorps gives Americans of all ages a chance to spend a year serving their community in exchange for help with their education. The 100,000 Americans who have answered the call to serve as AmeriCorps members since 1994 have helped improve more than 4,000 communities nationwide, benefiting more than 33 million citizens.

Here in [Minnesota], [number] residents have gained educational opportunities while helping to meet important needs across the state. [Insert specific projects and accomplishments – for example, *In Minneapolis, AmeriCorps members have helped move people from welfare to work and have set up tutoring programs. In other communities, members have built and renovated public housing, organized neighborhood watch programs, etc.*]

AmeriCorps benefits not only its participants, who gain skills and learn about the responsibilities of being a good citizen, but also the communities where they serve. Unlike some other federal programs, AmeriCorps gives state and local officials the authority they need to identify priorities, set goals, and make decisions in order to meet community needs most effectively.

Two-thirds of AmeriCorps grants in [Minnesota] are distributed by the governor-appointed [Minnesota Commission on National and Community Service] to proven organizations like [insert selected program names]. AmeriCorps members help these programs and national programs like Habitat for Humanity, the American Red Cross, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Boys and Girls Clubs accomplish more by serving full-time and by recruiting and training volunteers.

The growth and success of AmeriCorps is noteworthy because of the people who make it work – primarily Americans age 18 to 25 who reflect a new patriotism among today's young people and a renewed focus on helping others. AmeriCorps members often describe their year of service as intense and challenging, as they face the grim realities of tough neighborhoods, troubled schools, and the most remote rural areas. While tackling important needs, many members also serve as role models for children and youth through tutoring, mentoring, and other activities.

These young people bring to mind the idealism and dreams of past generations – and the unfulfilled dreams of President Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and others. The 100,000 individuals who have served as AmeriCorps members embody America's proud tradition of service and are leading the way for a new generation of leaders who understand the principles of community, citizenship, and responsibility.

[Minnesotans] and Americans everywhere should be grateful for all of those who have served as AmeriCorps members – and for their success in improving lives and communities.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF AMERICORPS

Service is and always has been a vital force in American life. Throughout our history, our nation has relied on the dedication and action of citizens to tackle our biggest challenges. AmeriCorps is a part of a long tradition of service that has included the Civilian Conservation Corps, the GI Bill, the Peace Corps, and the Points of Light Foundation. Following is a brief history of AmeriCorps.

1964

VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is created by the Economic Opportunity Act, giving Americans opportunities to serve full-time to help thousands of low-income communities.

1990

President George Bush signs the National and Community Service Act of 1990. The legislation authorizes grants to schools to support service-learning and demonstration grants for national service programs to youth corps, nonprofits, and colleges and universities.

1992

With strong bipartisan support, the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) is established as part of an amendment to the 1992 Defense Appropriations Bill. Building on the tradition of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s, the demonstration program is charged with expanding youth service efforts in communities.

September 1993

President Bill Clinton signs the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, creating the Corporation for National Service. VISTA and NCCC become part of the new AmeriCorps. The Corporation is charged with meeting the needs of America's communities through AmeriCorps and its two other programs, Learn and Serve America and the National Senior Service Corps

September 1994

The first class of AmeriCorps members – 20,000 strong – begin serving in more than 1,000 communities.

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 strengthen and expand volunteering and service programs, including AmeriCorps, in meeting the needs of America's youth. The campaign for America's Promise, led by General Powell, is launched to achieve to goals set at the Summit, with AmeriCorps and all the programs of the Corporation for National Service actively engaged.

March 1998

With support from a bipartisan coalition in Congress, the President introduces legislation to reauthorize AmeriCorps and other national service programs into the twenty-first century.

October 1998

The fifth class of AmeriCorps members is sworn in, bringing the total number of current and former members to more than 100,000. A total of 40,000 members will serve in 1998-99.

AMERICORPS AT 100,000

"I will get things done for America – to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier."
-- from the AmeriCorps Member Pledge

Just four years since its launch, AmeriCorps is celebrating its 100,000th member – a milestone that it took the Peace Corps more than 20 years to reach. To mark this occasion, thousands of new and former AmeriCorps members are joining together this fall in communities across the country and are pledging to "get things done for America."

Not the "Me" Generation

Together, AmeriCorps members, most age 18 to 25, are shattering stereotypes of the "me generation" by devoting a year or more to help strengthen communities by tackling the nation's most serious problems. Rather than taking advantage of other career opportunities, AmeriCorps members choose to devote a year to serving and demonstrating the potential of individuals to make a difference.

A Track Record of Growth and Accomplishment

After four years, AmeriCorps has come of age. With more than 100,000 members, AmeriCorps has brought the ideals of the Peace Corps home to America on a grand scale. Since 1994, AmeriCorps members have served more than 4,000 communities, mobilized and recruited nearly 2 million volunteers, tutored and mentored more than 2 million children, organized after-school programs for more than a half million at-risk youth, and built or rehabilitated more than 25,000 homes.

AmeriCorps members help solve problems like illiteracy, poverty, and crime. Through their service, AmeriCorps members are making America a better place for everyone. Among the many ways they improve lives:

- They teach children to read in some of the toughest schools.
- They help communities hit by natural disasters to rebuild.
- They protect neighborhoods from the ravages of crime.
- They provide health care to people living in rural areas and Native American villages.

New Patriotism

The growth in AmeriCorps reflects the new patriotism of today's young people. This year alone, 40,000 young people will be recruited to serve with AmeriCorps – thousands more than will join the U.S. Marines. Some of these young men and women will serve with our country's most effective nonprofits, including Habitat for Humanity, the American Red Cross, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, the YMCA, and Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Thousands of others will serve with faith-based organizations like the Catholic Network of Volunteer Service, Lutheran Social Services, and the National Council of Churches.

Some 500 will serve as AmeriCorps Promise Fellows, in the America's Promise campaign led by General Colin Powell to achieve the goals for children and youth set at the 1997 Presidents' Summit for America's Future. Still others will serve with hundreds of smaller community-based organizations.

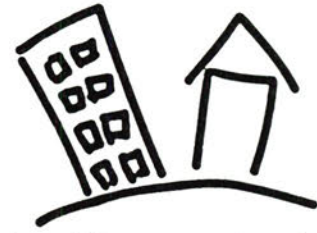
A Commitment to Continued Service

The benefits of AmeriCorps last beyond a single year. Those who serve learn responsibility and effective citizenship through their actions, and for many AmeriCorps members, their year of service is a bridge to a lifetime commitment to helping others. The AmeriCorps members' pledge to "get things done for America" and "bring Americans together to strengthen our communities" includes a lasting promise: "I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond." In fact, one-third of former AmeriCorps members have gone on to work for nonprofit groups, and half volunteer in their communities at least six hours each month.



AMERICORPS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

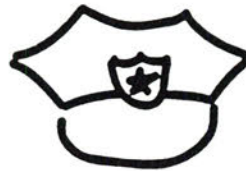
More than 100,000 Americans have served, or are currently serving, as AmeriCorps members—tackling critical problems like illiteracy, crime, and poverty. Following are just a few of their accomplishments over the past four years. In all, AmeriCorps members have served nearly 33 million people in more than 4,000 communities.



AmeriCorps members have improved the lives of people through health care, housing, and other service.



AmeriCorps members have helped children succeed in school and out of school.



AmeriCorps members have worked with police and community organizations to make neighborhoods safer.

2,640,096 Children taught, tutored, or mentored

40,500 Safety patrols established, operated, or expanded

25,179 Homes built or rehabilitated

2,429,700 Homeless individuals given food, clothing, or other necessities

208,500 Senior citizens given independent living assistance

564,000 At-risk youth served through afterschool programs

337,500 Persons provided with job or career counseling



AmeriCorps members have met important environmental needs.

52,519,752 Trees planted

69,740 Tons of trash removed from neighborhoods



AmeriCorps members have strengthened nonprofits by increasing volunteer support.

1,691,220 Volunteers recruited, trained, or supervised



AmeriCorps members have served in clinics, VA hospitals, and other health-related facilities.

419,000 People immunized



I will get things done for America—
to make our people safer,
smarter, and healthier.

I will bring Americans together
to strengthen our communities.

Faced with apathy,
I will take action.

Faced with conflict,
I will seek common ground.

Faced with adversity,
I will persevere.

I will carry this commitment
with me this year and beyond.

I am an AmeriCorps member,
and I will get things done.

—AmeriCorps Pledge

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WAYS TO GET YOUR MESSAGE OUT

Following are some ways you can work with local media and community organizations to build support for your program and AmeriCorps, whether or not you have a specific event planned for October 23.

Identify members and programs to highlight

- *Identify two to four AmeriCorps "heroes" in your community or state.* You may want to look for members who have achieved extraordinary goals or overcome obstacles through national service. Based on our recent experiences, news outlets are particularly interested in talking to new AmeriCorps members about their commitment to service. Reading the attached story ideas may help you identify the kind of AmeriCorps member you want to choose. Once these individuals are selected, check their interest and availability for interviews with reporters in October. These individuals will serve to exemplify the good work of all AmeriCorps members.
- *Identify your best programs.* You will be receiving an updated state profile of AmeriCorps programs throughout your state. At this point, we recommend that you decide which programs you would like to highlight for the media. Down the road you can call the directors of these programs and ask if they would be willing to talk to reporters about the accomplishments and commitment of AmeriCorps members.

Reach out to the media

- *Contact the editorial boards of your local newspapers.* This is a good time to connect with editorial boards that have commented on AmeriCorps in the past. You can share with them how AmeriCorps has grown in terms of its membership, accomplishments and local support. Let them know that this year AmeriCorps will be recruiting more members than the U.S. Marine Corps! Arrange to meet editors to discuss the 100,000-member milestone and promote the local accomplishments of members. If possible, bring an AmeriCorps member and/or a project director to the meeting. Your efforts will complement letters that we are sending to editorial boards asking them to use this opportunity to editorialize about AmeriCorps. To help you in this effort, we have included a draft letter that you may want to use.
- *Call reporters who have covered AmeriCorps activities in the past.* Let them know about the upcoming celebration of AmeriCorps' 100,000 members and tell them you will have additional information to share with them shortly. Tell reporters this story is part of celebrations occurring nationwide and suggest a strong local angle. If you are holding an event on October 23, inform the reporter of photo opportunities and potential feature stories.

- *Ask an AmeriCorps alumni to draft a letter to the editor* talking about what it means to be one of 100,000 young Americans who have chosen to give a year of service to their community and country. Or ask an AmeriCorps project director to write a letter talking about the accomplishments of AmeriCorps in your community.
- *Ask your local partners and other community organizations to include a brief article about AmeriCorps' accomplishments in their newsletters.*

STORY IDEAS

The celebration of AmeriCorps reaching 100,000 members provides an opportunity to focus attention on AmeriCorps' accomplishments. Following are some story ideas that may interest reporters.

To implement the story ideas suggested below, identify two or three AmeriCorps members from your best programs who are willing to share their experiences with reporters. The descriptions will give you a sense of what type of member to seek.

AmeriCorps Members Are Shattering the "Me Generation" Stereotype

Step inside the world of an average 18-year-old and what do you find? Perhaps someone who watches Bart Simpson, sleeps a lot, and saves for a new stereo? Now think about 18-year-olds building houses for the homeless, tutoring children in some of the toughest neighborhoods, and ridding streets of crime and drugs. That's the life of AmeriCorps members, all of whom are shattering the image of today's young "me generation." AmeriCorps members are both doers and dreamers: They envision a better world and roll up their sleeves to make it happen. Their accomplishments speak for themselves.

Story ideas: 1) Profile an AmeriCorps member who had options, such as a well-paying job or acceptance to graduate school, but chose to dedicate a year to community service. 2) Profile an AmeriCorps member who has achieved extraordinary accomplishments.

AmeriCorps Brings People Together to Achieve Common Goals

At a time when race and class continue to divide our country, AmeriCorps gives people of different economic and ethnic backgrounds an opportunity to work side by side to get things done for America. AmeriCorps is diversity in action. It opens the door for young adults to meet people and visit places that are distinct from their own experiences and backgrounds. Serving as AmeriCorps members broadens their understanding of America and offers a different perspective on interacting with a diverse group of people.

Story ideas: 1) Profile two AmeriCorps members from diverse backgrounds who overcame their cultural barriers and united to accomplish common goals. 2) Profile an AmeriCorps member who is working in a community completely different from the environment in which he/she was raised.

AmeriCorps Comes of Age

This is a unique time in AmeriCorps' history. While AmeriCorps is frequently referred to as the "domestic Peace Corps," AmeriCorps' rate of growth exceeds that of the Peace Corp. It took the Peace Corps more than 20 years to reach the size AmeriCorps has achieved in four years. This year, AmeriCorps is recruiting more members than the U.S. Marine Corps. (AmeriCorps is recruiting 40,000; the Marines are recruiting 33,800.)

While some in Washington, D.C., continue to play politics with AmeriCorps, the program enjoys bipartisan support among governors, mayors, and national figures such as General Colin Powell, Elizabeth Dole, and Millard Fuller of Habitat for Humanity.

Story idea: Suggest reporters write a piece that focuses on the evolution and accomplishments of AmeriCorps in your state. Show how it has grown, achieved real results, and turned critics into real supporters.

AmeriCorps Members Serve as Role Models for Youth

As committed, engaged citizens, AmeriCorps members find solutions to our communities' toughest problems. While AmeriCorps members have an impressive list of accomplishments, one of their greatest contributions is reaching out to children and youth. Through their mentoring and problem-solving, AmeriCorps members equip children and youth with the skills and determination to succeed on their own. Projects such as tutoring, job training, fighting crime and drugs, and improving the environment provide opportunities for AmeriCorps members to be both mentors and role models for some of our nation's most at-risk children and youth.

Story idea: Profile the relationship between an AmeriCorps member and a child or youth. Readers will learn about the powerful positive impact AmeriCorps members can have with a community and its children.

A Day in the Life of an AmeriCorps Member

Let reporters and readers learn what it is like to be an AmeriCorps member. With permission from a project site coordinator, suggest that a reporter and photographer follow a member for a day. The reporter will experience first-hand the challenges and responsibilities that a member faces every day. This will describe the program for readers better than any brochure or fact sheet. If possible, find a member who serves on a project with many sights, sounds, and interactions -- this will provide an interesting backdrop for the story.

AMERICORPS: 100,000 STRONG AND GROWING MESSAGE POINTS

The following message points can help provide a framework for discussing AmeriCorps and its 100,000-member milestone. Focusing on a few key points will help reinforce information about AmeriCorps' success and growth over the last four years. These suggested themes can be used in a number of ways -- for discussions with reporters, preparing speeches, participating in editorial board meetings, or meeting with community leaders and/or legislators.

At 100,000 members strong and growing, AmeriCorps has brought the Peace Corps home to America on a grand scale.

- Based on the belief that people should have the opportunity to serve their country right here at home, AmeriCorps provides citizens of all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to spend a year "getting things done for America."
- In just four years, more than 100,000 young people have joined AmeriCorps, a milestone it took the Peace Corps more than two decades to reach. This year, 40,000 young people will serve with AmeriCorps, six times as many as with the Peace Corps.

AmeriCorps' track record is one of growth and accomplishment.

- Since 1994, more than 100,000 members have served more than 4,000 communities. Together, these Americans have helped solve some of our nation's most pressing problems.
- In the last four years, AmeriCorps members have:
 - ⇒ served more than 32 million people;
 - ⇒ recruited and trained nearly 2 million volunteers;
 - ⇒ taught, tutored, or mentored more than 2 million children;
 - ⇒ operated after-school programs for more than a half million at-risk youth;
 - ⇒ established and expanded more than 40,000 "safe zones" in schools and neighborhoods;
 - ⇒ built and rehabilitated more than 25,000 homes;
 - ⇒ removed more than 69,000 tons of trash from neighborhoods;
 - ⇒ immunized 419,000 people;
 - ⇒ given more than 2 million homeless people food and clothing; and
 - ⇒ helped more than 200,000 senior citizens live independently.
- *Include local accomplishment information*

AmeriCorps is getting things done in [insert state].

- AmeriCorps gives local governments and local organizations the flexibility and resources they need to solve local problems. With two-thirds of AmeriCorps grants going directly to governor-appointed state commissions, AmeriCorps serves the people and the communities that most need help.
- *Cite information from your state profile on the total number of AmeriCorps members serving in your state and the amount of financial support.*

AmeriCorps members are shattering stereotypes of the “me” generation and practicing a new kind of patriotism.

- Rather than take advantage of jobs generated by a strong economy, 100,000 people have put off immediate career goals and chosen to serve their country for a year with AmeriCorps.
- Rather than fighting enemies abroad, AmeriCorps members fight the everyday enemies of poverty, illiteracy, and violence that threaten our nation. In this way, AmeriCorps extends our country’s proud tradition of citizen service -- a tradition reflected in both the Peace Corps and the military.
- By saying no to apathy and inaction and yes to service and citizenship, AmeriCorps members remind us of the power of ordinary Americans to make a difference.

AmeriCorps members are helping our nation’s children succeed and lead.

- With more than two-thirds of AmeriCorps members serving children and youth. By teaching, tutoring, and mentoring children, creating safe zones in neighborhoods and schools, making sure children get the health care they need, and asking young people to serve -- the five goals of the Presidents’ Summit for America’s Future -- AmeriCorps is helping our nation’s children to succeed in life.
- *Use your state profile to cite specific local programs focused on children and youth – and examples of how AmeriCorps is on the frontlines of local efforts to fulfill the goals of the Summit and working with America’s Promise.*
- As leaders and role models for youth, AmeriCorps members are practicing and instilling the values of active-duty citizenship and teaching children, as Martin Luther King said, that “everybody can be great because anyone can serve.”

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT AMERICORPS

- **What is AmeriCorps? When was it created?**

AmeriCorps, the domestic Peace Corps, gives citizens the opportunity to engage in full-time service to their community. Working through a grassroots network of more than 1,000 national and local nonprofit and faith-based organizations, AmeriCorps members tutor and mentor at-risk children; make schools and neighborhoods safer, clean rivers and restore parks, provide health care in underserved rural and Native American communities, build and rehabilitate homes, and other things that make communities stronger.

AmeriCorps was created in September 1993 by President Clinton and a bipartisan majority in Congress. Since AmeriCorps follows the model of the GI Bill – rewarding those who serve -- after completing a year of service, AmeriCorps members receive an education award to help pay for college or training.

- **What do AmeriCorps members do?**

AmeriCorps members help solve problems and make communities stronger. Working with organizations such as the American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Boys and Girls Clubs, as well as many other national, state, and local nonprofit organizations, AmeriCorps members recruit and train volunteers; tutor and mentor at-risk youth; build homes; clean up rivers and streams; help seniors live independently; and provide emergency and long-term assistance to victims of natural disasters, among other things. AmeriCorps members serve in communities across America, in both urban and rural areas.

- **Where do AmeriCorps members serve?**

Since it was established, AmeriCorps members have served in more than 4,000 communities. This year alone, 40,000 AmeriCorps members are working with more than 600 organizations to serve more than 2,500 communities.

AmeriCorps members work with national nonprofits like the American Red Cross (317 members), Boys and Girls Clubs (94 members), the YMCA (789 members), and Teach for America (3,841 members), with faith-based organizations like Habitat for Humanity (742 members), the Catholic Network of Volunteer Services (73 members), and the National Council of Churches (6,215 members), and hundreds of local organizations.

- **What has AmeriCorps accomplished?**

AmeriCorps members have taught, tutored, or mentored more than 2 million youth; organized after-school programs for more than a 500,000 at-risk youth; established 4,000 safety patrols; built or rehabilitated more than 25,000 homes; planted more than 52 million trees; and recruited, trained, or supervised nearly 2 million volunteers.

- **How many have served with AmeriCorps?**

Since it was launched four years ago, more than 100,000 men and women have served in more than 4,000 communities with AmeriCorps. This year alone, more than 40,000 citizens – six times the number of Peace Corps volunteers – will have the opportunity to serve with AmeriCorps.

- **How many AmeriCorps programs are there?**

For the 1997-98 program year, there are a total of 871 programs in which AmeriCorps members serve.

- **How much do AmeriCorps members get paid?**

Members generally receive a living allowance of between \$600 and \$800 per month, and after they complete their term of service, they receive an education award of \$4,725.

- **What is the average cost per AmeriCorps member?**

The average cost per member is \$16,000. This includes a living allowance, an education award, and costs associated with program administration. As part of a bipartisan agreement reached in March 1996 with Senator Grassley, AmeriCorps is cutting costs significantly. The cost of AmeriCorps has been cut by \$1,000 per member each year. The Corporation for National Service has already successfully lowered the cost per member to \$16,000 in the current grant year and is on track to cut the cost per member to \$15,000 next year.

- **Is AmeriCorps cost-effective?**

Four separate, independent evaluations have concluded that AmeriCorps is a cost-effective investment that returns between \$1.40 and \$3.90 in benefit for each dollar invested. What's more, each study concluded that AmeriCorps' full value is understated because the benefits of safer streets, better schools, stronger communities, and more active citizens are difficult to quantify and are not seen immediately.

The most in-depth analysis was conducted by a team of conservative "Chicago School" economists commissioned by the Charles A. Dana, IBM International, and James Irvine Foundations. In *The Benefits and Costs of National Service*, Kormendi/Gardner Partners predict that for every dollar invested in AmeriCorps, the public will realize \$1.60 to \$2.60 or more in direct, measurable benefits. In the *Cost-and-Benefit Study of Two AmeriCorps Projects in the State of Washington*, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory found that every dollar invested in these projects yielded a return up to \$2.40 in benefits. The University of Minnesota, in the *Youthworks-AmeriCorps Evaluation First Year Report*, found benefits up to \$3.90 for each dollar invested in the programs.

- **What is the demographic breakdown of AmeriCorps members?**

AmeriCorps members reflect the diversity of the communities in which they serve. Approximately one in two (48 percent) AmeriCorps members are white, approximately one in four (28 percent) are

African-American, and one in six (16 percent) are Hispanic. Approximately 3 percent are Asian, and 2 percent are Native American.

Forty-four percent of AmeriCorps members have already earned a bachelor's degree, spent some time in graduate school, or earned a graduate degree. Another 44 percent have spent some time in college or have a high school diploma, while 9 percent have not yet completed high school.

Forty percent of AmeriCorps members come from households with an annual income of less than \$30,000, 64 percent come from households with an annual income of less than \$50,000, and a total of 78 percent come from households with an annual income of less than \$70,000.

- **How many education awards have been earned?**

As of October 13, 1998, there have been 66,285 education awards earned with a total value of \$247,166,274.20.

- **What is AmeriCorps' budget?**

AmeriCorps' budget this year is \$441 million.

- **How many volunteers have AmeriCorps members recruited to date?**

AmeriCorps members have recruited, trained, or supervised approximately 1.7 million community volunteers.