

SERVICE YEAR ALLIANCE



Mission

To make a year of service a common expectation and opportunity for all young Americans.

What is a service year?

A service year is a paid opportunity to develop real-world skills through hands-on service. A service year before, during, or after college – or as a way to get back on track – gives young people the chance to transform their lives, make an impact in their community, and become the active citizens and leaders our nation needs.

Organizations including Habitat for Humanity, Teach For America, City Year, the Peace Corps, Public Allies, and thousands of other nonprofit organizations and public agencies offer service year positions. Federal funding for service years comes from AmeriCorps, YouthBuild, the Peace Corps, and other agencies.

Why Service Years?

Changing Lives

Service builds workforce skills and connections, supports college completion, and develops a sense of efficacy and purpose.

Solving Problems

Service years provide cost-effective human capital that can be directed at society's biggest challenges like educational equity, disaster response, conservation, and community development.

Developing Leaders

Service years develop diverse, public-spirited leaders and engaged citizens with the skills and commitment to work across divides and do what's right.

Why Now?



Social trust at historic lows: Trust in institutions – from government to NGOs – plunging. Exit polls show 8-in-10 voters believe country never more divided.

Americans want it: Nearly two-thirds polled want “to establish a system of national service for young Americans to serve in a civilian or military capacity for at least one year.”

Young people want to serve: One in four young adults would “definitely do” a service year.

Offers pathway to careers: Even with strong economy, young adults have double the unemployment rate, 4.6 million out of school and out of work; predicted workforce shortages.

Builds civic engagement: “Civic deserts” growing; volunteering declining; only 1% serve in the military (70% ineligible).

What We Do

SCALE: Create the conditions that will enable at least 200,000 young people to serve annually by 2023, matching the approximate number of young people who enter the military each year.

QUALITY: Increase the number of young adults who have high quality experiences that prepare them for career success and help them become public-spirited leaders for life.

EQUITY: Create the conditions for all young people to serve, regardless of background, ensuring they have a sense of belonging during their experience.

Service Years Transform Lives



From Struggling with Poverty to Running a Service Program

“My service year led me to stable employment and the ability to make an impact.”

- Amanda



From Gang Member to Director of Workforce Development

“I don’t know where I’d be if I didn’t do my service year”

- Germain



From Homeless Veteran to Nonprofit Leader

“My experience with AmeriCorps helped me redefine what it means to be successful.”

- Kevin



From Dropping Out of High School to a Youth Leader

“I’m now a positive example for what happens when you make the most of a second chance.”

- Xavier