

A photograph of a smiling woman with dark hair, wearing a black t-shirt with a "LAYWORKS" lanyard, and three smiling children (two girls and one boy with glasses) in the foreground. The image is partially obscured by an orange overlay on the right side.

SERVICE YEARS AS A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE EDUCATION OUTCOMES

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FOREWARD: EDUCATION AND SERVICE YEARS

School and district leaders around the country are working tirelessly to provide a quality education to our students. However, these leaders face a host of challenges that demand their immediate and ongoing attention. At Service Year Alliance, we want to showcase how service year programs support student and school success.

Schools are facing a variety of challenges that service years can address, including:

- Improving student motivation and engagement
- Improving school climate and culture
- Closing opportunity and achievement gaps for students

How do service year programs address these challenges?

More than 44,000 national service year corps members provide in-school and after-school support, serving in almost 12,000 schools, including one out of every four low-performing schools and one out of every ten charter schools.¹ An under-recognized source of energetic, committed human capital support for youth, service year corps members help communities implement locally determined, cost-effective, evidence-based solutions to improve student outcomes. If this resource were more widely available to low-income communities, we could dramatically reduce educational disparities that leave too many students without the educational foundation they need for success in life.

Service year programs provide school leaders with an additional resource and solution in meeting the significant challenges they now face. When you ask yourself, “What is your district’s most urgent challenge when it comes to students?” we hope that you come to see service years as part of that solution.

¹ “National Service Strengthens Education,” Corporation for National and Community Service, <https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/EducationSupport.pdf>.





WHAT IS A SERVICE YEAR?

A service year is a paid, full-time opportunity to develop real-world skills through hands-on service. From fighting poverty to mentoring kids to responding to natural disasters – a service year is a meaningful and fulfilling way to tackle the most pressing challenges facing our nation through programs like AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, YouthBuild, and hundreds of others.

A service year refers to service that 1) addresses important societal problems, 2) requires a substantial time commitment over the course of 9-12 months, and 3) is performed through organized programs that are designed to build ties among individuals from diverse backgrounds or increase life opportunities for those who serve. Because of the substantial time commitment involved, service year corps members are paid modest living allowances. They may also be rewarded with other benefits to support their living needs, such as housing, food vouchers, and travel support.

THE ROLE OF SERVICE YEARS IN EDUCATION OUTCOMES

Across the educational pipeline, service years as a strategy is playing a critical role in providing support services in schools across the nation. Every year, tens of thousands of young Americans are committing to a service year to help improve outcomes at schools and are serving a large number of low-income students. Service year corps members engage in a variety of roles – they teach, mentor, tutor, support individualized learning, provide extracurricular programming, offer career awareness, help students with college navigation, and lead efforts to increase parent involvement. They undergird important reform efforts, while providing a source of “near-peer” role models to students.



Across the nation, service year programs support efforts to improve student motivation and student engagement, improve school climate and culture, and close opportunity and achievement gaps for students. This guide highlights a few specific goals and outcomes:

- Early Childhood and Kindergarten Readiness
- Improving Socio-learning and Emotional Outcomes
- Academic Achievement such as Math and Literacy Proficiency
- Reducing Chronic Absenteeism
- Achieving On-Track Indicators
- Improving High School Graduation Rates
- Facilitating College and/or Career Access and Persistence
- Reconnecting to Education and Career Pathways
- Teacher Corps Addressing Teacher Shortages and/or Teacher Diversification Goals

WAYS TO ENGAGE SERVICE YEAR PROGRAMS

To help you take action to implement a service year program in your school or district, we highlight with the program profiles different ways to engage with the program model to start building out a program that would work at your school:

REPLICATE. Design your own service year program by replicating one of the program models as inspiration;

HOST. Become a host site for a local, state, or national program model that is already within your geographic region which would bring the program model to your school;

EXPAND. Become an expansion site for a national program that is currently not in your geographic region which would bring the program model to your school;

INFORM. Inform all the young people in your school and life about the opportunity to do a service year to build the next generation of service leadership.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This handbook is a guideline to expose readers to service years as a strategy to improve education outcomes. The guide uses a sample of existing service year program models to outline the pathways to bring a service year model to local schools. Each program summary in this directory contains key information: the challenge the program is solving, a program description, grade level, education outcomes the program is focused on, and the type of engagement needed to bring this model to your school. On pages 8-9 we have a matrix of all the programs and their education outcomes so you can easily find the program that best fits your situation.

TAKE ACTION: BRING A SERVICE YEAR MODEL TO YOUR SCHOOL

At the end of the day, the purpose of this guide is to make it easier for educators to start a service year program at your school. If after you read this guide, you are saying to yourself:

- ✓ yes I want to start a service year program
- ✓ yes one of these models helps us address outcomes we want to see
- ✓ yes I want more information

Great! Contact us at growth@serviceyear.org so we get you started on creating a service year program for your situation.

Service Year Alliance can help you:

- ✓ identify the right model for your school;
- ✓ connect to one of these programs listed in this guide; or even
- ✓ provide low-cost consulting to help you bring a service year program to your school, explore AmeriCorps funding, or design your own program

To give you a starting place, there is also links on [page 26](#) that give context to starting a service year program, including funding options. You can become one of the nearly 12,000 schools utilizing service to address your biggest challenges!



PROGRAM EXAMPLES & THEIR OUTCOMES

PAGE 1 OF 2

		PROGRAMS						
OUTCOMES		ARTIST YEAR	CITIZEN SCHOOLS	CITY YEAR	COLLEGE POSSIBLE	COLORADO YOUTH FOR A CHANGE	COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS: THE HEART OF TEXAS	GREAT OAKS CHARTER SCHOOL
	Early childhood and kindergarten readiness							
	Improving Socio-learning and Emotional Outcomes	✓		✓			✓	✓
	Academic Achievement such as Math and Literacy Proficiency		✓	✓			✓	✓
	Reducing Chronic Absenteeism	✓		✓		✓	✓	
	Achieving On-Track Indicators	✓		✓	✓			✓
	Improving High School Graduation Rates	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
	Facilitating College and/or Career Access and Persistence				✓		✓	✓
	Reconnecting to Education and Career Pathways					✓	✓	
	Teacher Corps Addressing Teacher Shortages and/or Teacher Diversification Goals							✓
		PAGE 11	PAGE 12	PAGE 13	PAGE 14	PAGE 15	PAGE 16	PAGE 17

PROGRAM EXAMPLES & THEIR OUTCOMES

PAGE 2 OF 2

PROGRAMS

METROPOLITAN FAMILY SERVICE	PLAYWORKS	READING CORPS	READING PARTNERS	TEACH FOR AMERICA	UP2US	URBAN TEACHERS	OUTCOMES
✓		✓		✓			
✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
		✓	✓	✓		✓	
✓	✓			✓	✓		
✓		✓		✓			
				✓		✓	
				✓		✓	
				✓		✓	
PAGE 18	PAGE 19	PAGE 20	PAGE 21	PAGE 22	PAGE 23	PAGE 24	
							Early childhood and kindergarten readiness
							Improving Socio-learning an Emotional Outcomes
							Academic Achievement such as Math and Literacy Proficiency
							Reducing Chronic Absenteeism
							Achieving On-Track Indicators
							Improving High School Graduation Rates
							Facilitating College and/or Career Access and Persistence
							Reconnecting to Education and Career Pathways
							Teacher Corps Addressing Teacher Shortages and/or Teacher Diversification Goals



PROGRAM PROFILES



PROGRAM PROFILE



ARTIST YEAR

ArtistYear places recent arts graduates across all mediums at low-income schools as dedicated teaching artists. Each ArtistYear Fellow is partnered with a certified teacher to deliver standards-based arts education to students. Fellows use this arts education as a tool to engage low-income students more deeply in the life of their school and community, yielding increases in school attendance, and improvements in student attitudes around their peers, schools, and neighborhoods. Fellows also act as capacity builders for a school's emerging arts program, helping their school build and bolster arts programs and curriculum goals to make all schools "arts rich."



THE CHALLENGE

To solve the arts education opportunity gap in low-income schools to ensure every underserved student and school can reap the academic, social, and person benefits that come from arts education and access.



EDUCATION LEVEL SERVED

- Preschool
- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School



EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Improving Socio-learning and Emotional Outcomes
- Reducing Chronic Absenteeism
- Achieving On-Track Indicators
- Improving High School Graduation Rates



WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Host
- Expand
- Inform

PROGRAM PROFILE



CITIZEN SCHOOLS

Students in under-resourced communities have few chances to engage in the enrichment and deeper learning opportunities needed for success versus upper-income families -- that spend 300 more hours each year participating in enriching experiences outside of the classroom than do the three million students in lower-income households -- resulting in a deficit of nearly 6,000 hours by middle school. Citizen Schools addresses the critical opportunity gap in education by mobilizing a team of passionate AmeriCorps members, aspiring educators, and community volunteers to enable public middle schools in low-income communities to provide a longer learning day, rich with new opportunities.



THE CHALLENGE

To address the opportunity gap in education by providing more learning experiences outside the classroom in under-resourced communities.



EDUCATION LEVEL SERVED

- Middle School



EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Academic Achievements such as Math and Literacy Proficiency
- Improving High School Graduation Rates



WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Expand
- Inform

PROGRAM PROFILE



CITY YEAR

City Year helps students and schools succeed. Fueled by national service, City Year partners with public schools in 29 urban, high-need communities across the U.S. and through international affiliates in the U.K. and South Africa. Diverse teams of City Year AmeriCorps members provide research-based student, classroom and school-wide supports to help students stay in school and on track to graduate from high school, ready for college and career success. A 2015 study shows that schools that partner with City Year were up to two-to-three times more likely to improve on math and English assessments.



THE CHALLENGE

To help bridge the gap between what students need and what most schools can provide, City Year recruits diverse young adults to serve full-time as AmeriCorps members who work alongside teachers to support student and school success.



EDUCATION LEVEL SERVED

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School



EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Improving Socio-learning and Emotional Outcomes
- Academic Achievement such as Math and Literacy Proficiency
- Reducing Chronic Absenteeism
- Achieving On-Track Indicators



WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Expand
- Inform

PROGRAM PROFILE



COLLEGE POSSIBLE

College Possible makes college admission and success attainable for students from low-income backgrounds through an intensive curriculum of coaching and support. AmeriCorps members serve as coaches, guiding high school students through key aspects of preparing for college over the course of their junior and senior years. College-bound students are supported through the transition to college, and throughout their college careers with coaching and guidance on financial aid, registration, housing, social-emotional well-being and campus resources.



THE CHALLENGE

To narrow the degree divide in the U.S., supporting, mentoring and coaching students from low-income backgrounds to and through college.



EDUCATION LEVEL SERVED

- High School
- Post-Secondary School



EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Achieving On-Track Indicators
- Improving High School Graduation Rates
- Facilitating College and/or Career Access and Persistence



WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Host
- Inform



PROGRAM PROFILE



COLORADO YOUTH FOR A CHANGE (CYC)

Colorado Youth for a Change (CYC) is solving Colorado's dropout crisis. It is our goal to re-engage Colorado students that are either at risk for not completing high school, or who have dropped out of school completely, by providing case management to build positive relationships, reducing barriers to educational success and coordinating academic support services, so that students will re-engage with their education and earn their high school diploma or GED, thereby ultimately contributing to solving the dropout crisis in Colorado.



THE CHALLENGE

To support young people who are struggling with school attendance or have already dropped out of school to finish their education.



EDUCATION LEVEL SERVED

- High School



EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Reducing Chronic Absenteeism
- Reconnecting to Education and Career Pathways



WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Host
- Expand
- Inform



YOUTHFORACHANGE.ORG

PROGRAM PROFILE

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS: THE HEART OF TEXAS

Communities In Schools (CIS) is the nation's largest dropout prevention organization, serving 1.5 million at risk students annually. Locally, Communities In Schools of the Heart of Texas serves over 3,200 at-risk students across 20 schools and 6 districts. The CIS Community Servers AmeriCorps program provides school-based mentoring for students identified as at-risk of academic failure through one-on-one and small group mentoring for grades K-12 youth who are enrolled in schools in the Greater Waco Area Community.



THE CHALLENGE

To assist with increasing high school graduation rates. We surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.



EDUCATION LEVEL SERVED

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School



EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Improving Socio-learning and Emotional Outcomes
- Academic Achievement such as Math and Literacy Proficiency
- Reducing Chronic Absenteeism
- Improving High School Graduation Rates
- Facilitating College and/or Career Access and Persistence
- Reconnecting to Education and Career Pathways



WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Host
- Inform



PROGRAM PROFILE



GREAT OAKS CHARTER SCHOOL

The mission of the Great Oaks Foundation is to launch and support a network of charter schools that prepare students for college success through high-dosage tutoring. Based in New York, NY, Wilmington, DE, Newark, NJ, and Bridgeport, CT, our AmeriCorps tutors work with students in small groups and personalize instruction based on each student's needs. Our tutors coach and mentor students and help them set appropriate goals based on their strengths and challenges.



THE CHALLENGE

To help children who are struggling to reach grade level proficiency in math and English language arts (ELA) and need additional support based on additional challenges.



EDUCATION LEVEL SERVED

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School



EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Improving Socio-learning and Emotional Outcomes
- Academic Achievement such as Math and Literacy Proficiency
- Achieving On-Track Indicators
- Improving High School Graduation Rates
- Facilitating College and/or Career Access and Persistence
- Teacher Corps Addressing Teacher Shortages and/or Teacher Diversification Goals



WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Replicate
- Inform



PROGRAM PROFILE



METROPOLITAN FAMILY SERVICE

Ready, Set, Go! (RSG) is a free program designed to help transition 0-5 year-old children and their parents/ caregivers into Kindergarten. Through Parent-Child Interaction Groups, parent workshops, and home visits, our RSG curriculum is effective, engaging, and fun! Also, our RSG members address the challenges faced by our students and families by identifying and providing access to resources in the community that help cover families' basic needs using the "Parent Impact Survey" assessment tool. RSG programs are set within local elementary schools and community centers throughout the greater Portland, OR area.



THE CHALLENGE

To help parents and their kids gain access to basic life needs and build an engagement strategy so the children are kindergarten ready and successful throughout their full school lifecycle.



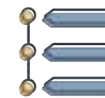
EDUCATION LEVEL SERVED

- Preschool
- Elementary School



EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Early Childhood and Kindergarten Readiness
- Improving Socio-learning and Emotional Outcomes
- Reducing Chronic Absenteeism
- Achieving On-Track Indicators



WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Replicate
- Inform



[METFAMILY.ORG/READYSETGO](https://metfamily.org/readyssetgo)

PROGRAM PROFILE



PLAYWORKS

Playworks provides both direct service and training to support schools in providing daily safe and healthy play. Corps members work at schools throughout the country to deliver programming and norm empathy, teamwork, leadership and inclusion in low income schools.



THE CHALLENGE

To improve school climate by addressing students' social, emotional and physical well-being through play.



EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Improving Socio-learning and Emotional Outcomes
- Reducing Chronic Absenteeism



EDUCATION LEVEL SERVED

- Elementary School



WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Replicate
- Host
- Inform

PROGRAM PROFILE



READING CORPS

Reading Corps is changing academic outcomes for thousands of students. It combines the people power of national service with literacy science to help struggling learners transform into confident students. Reading Corps places trained AmeriCorps tutors in elementary schools and early learning centers, where they deliver proven literacy strategies to help children build a strong foundation in reading, an essential skill for school and life. Reading Corps is serving students throughout Minnesota and in 11 states and Washington, D.C., and is helping more than 40,000 students each year become successful readers.



THE CHALLENGE

To ensure all children are ready for Kindergarten and on track to be successful readers by the end of third grade.



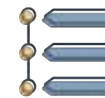
EDUCATION LEVEL SERVED

- Preschool
- Elementary School



EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Improving Socio-learning and Emotional Outcomes
- Early Childhood and Kindergarten Readiness
- Academic Achievement such as Math and Literacy Proficiency
- Achieving On-Track Indicators



WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Host
- Expand
- Inform

PROGRAM PROFILE



READING PARTNERS

Reading Partners has nearly 400 service corps members in various positions across the organization and across the country. Our members provide direct service in the community by delivering our literacy program to elementary school students and recruiting volunteers, or by building capacity for our regional teams to ensure more students can be served. Our diverse and expansive volunteer and service corps members provide one-on-one tutoring to students, and our program is proven to help children master the reading fundamentals they need to unlock their potential as successful, happy and confident readers in school and in life.



THE CHALLENGE

To solve the literacy crisis in our country by leveraging community volunteers and service corps members to provide 1:1 tutoring in under-resourced elementary schools.



EDUCATION LEVEL SERVED

- Elementary School



EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Academic Achievement such as Math and Literacy Proficiency



WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Host
- Expand
- Inform

PROGRAM PROFILE



TEACH FOR AMERICA

Teach For America finds outstanding leaders who commit to expanding educational opportunity, beginning with at least two years teaching in an under-resourced public school. Working shoulder-to-shoulder with students, educators, and community members, corps members go beyond traditional expectations to support the academic and personal growth of their students. The impact corps members have in the classroom fuels a lifelong commitment to their students and shapes the trajectory of their lives and careers.



THE CHALLENGE

To make lasting change that takes bold, grounded leaders working together, inside and outside of schools, fighting for the aspirations of children and their families.



EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Early Childhood and Kindergarten Readiness
- Improving Socio-learning and Emotional Outcomes
- Academic Achievements such as Math and Literacy Proficiency
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- Improving High School Graduation Rates
- Facilitating College and/or Career Access and Persistence
- Teacher Corps Addressing Teacher Shortages and/or Teacher Diversification Goals



EDUCATION LEVEL SERVED

- Preschool
- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School



WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Host
- Inform

**TEACHFOR
AMERICA**

TEACHFORAMERICA.ORG

PROGRAM PROFILE



UP2US

Up2Us Sports engages, trains, and supports coaches to transform youth, programs, and communities across the USA. Up2Us Coaches leverage the power of sports to: 1) expand recreational opportunities for youth in low-resource settings/communities; 2) link youth with a caring adult coach through group and one-on-one mentoring; and, 3) cultivate young people's social and emotional skills for success on the playing field and in the classroom. We place 350 number of coaches in 300 organizations across the USA. Coaches receive 35-plus hours of sport-based youth development and trauma-informed training over the course of their 1-year AmeriCorps placement.



THE CHALLENGE

To equip youth in underserved communities with the social and emotional skills needed to navigate difficult situations in their lives.



EDUCATION LEVEL SERVED

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School



EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Improving Socio-learning and Emotional Outcomes
- Reducing Chronic Absenteeism



WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Host
- Inform



UP2US.ORG

PROGRAM PROFILE



URBAN TEACHERS

Urban Teachers is a four-year teacher preparation program where the first two years participants are enrolled as AmeriCorps members. In the first service year, participants engage in an intensive clinical residency where they co-teach alongside a host teacher and practice delivering whole group and small group instruction. The residency year and the subsequent three years of teaching make up a comprehensive induction and support program designed to retain teachers in urban schools where they are most needed. AmeriCorps members earn a master's degree from the Johns Hopkins University School of Education during their two years of service.



THE CHALLENGE

To ensure every student receives a great education by preparing highly effective, career educators for the students who need them most.



EDUCATION LEVEL SERVED

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School



EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Academic Achievements such as Math and Literacy Proficiency
- Improving High School Graduation Rates
- Facilitating College and/or Career Access and Persistence
- Teacher Corps Addressing Teacher Shortages and/or Teacher Diversification Goals



WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Host
- Expand
- Inform



WANT TO START A SERVICE YEAR PROGRAM?

Contact us at growth@serviceyear.org so we can get you started. Service Year Alliance can help you:

- ✓ identify the right model for your school;
- ✓ connect to one of these programs listed in this guide; or even
- ✓ provide low-cost consulting to help you bring a service year program to your school, explore AmeriCorps funding, or design your own program.

Become one of the nearly 12,000 schools utilizing service to address your biggest challenges!

HELPFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

Creating a Service Year Program

A toolkit for starting a new service year program. The toolkit helps an organization design and plan a program and provides tips to execute on the plan successfully.

Funding Resources for Education Service Year Programs

This resource is a starting place for the reader to understand your options and possibilities in pulling together a funding strategy for an education service year program.

Leveraging National Service in Your Schools: A Superintendent's/Principal's Toolkit to Utilizing National Service Resources

A toolkit from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) for superintendents, principals, and other education stakeholders to determine the best ways for you to leverage national service resources in your schools.

The Role of National Service in Improving K-12 Education Outcomes Webinar

National Service Programs provide vital support to students across the nation. This webinar illustrates the role national service plays in helping communities design and implement locally determined, results-driven, cost-effective solutions to improve student outcomes. It features program examples and ways that you can leverage national service in your own community.

White Paper: Role of National Service in Improving Education

Reviews national service as playing a critical, but largely unrecognized, role in supporting school success.

Service Year Expansion Guide

Reviews 12 national programs (a few of which are education focused) and gives the challenge they are addressing, the solution their program puts forth, and the type of expansion a new location could work with that program to establish.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Service Year Alliance would like to thank all the programs featured in this guide:

ArtistYear, Citizen Schools, City Year, College Possible, Colorado Youth for a Change, Communities in Schools: The Heart of Texas, Great Oaks Charter School, Metropolitan Family Service, Playworks, Reading Corps, Reading Partners, Teach for America, UP2US, and Urban Teachers.

These programs work tirelessly to bring top-notch education to students across the United States and deliver a program that is also beneficial to the service year corps member.



ABOUT SERVICE YEAR ALLIANCE

Service Year Alliance is working to make a year of paid, full-time service – a service year – a common expectation and opportunity for all young Americans. A service year before, during, or after college 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. Expanding service years has the power to revitalize cities, uplift and educate children at risk, and empower communities struggling with poverty. It can unite the most diverse nation in history, binding people of different backgrounds through common cause.

OUR VISION

Every year, one million young Americans engaged in a service year, solving important problems while transforming their own lives. How will we get there?



SERVICEYEAR.ORG

Access to and presence on a state-of-the-art online marketplace and resource hub



NATIONAL RECRUITMENT, AWARENESS, AND CORPS MEMBER SUPPORT

Access to and participation in a national campaign to inspire a generation to serve, rewards for their service, and resources to support corps members during and after their service



GROW SERVICE YEAR PROGRAMS

Access to best practices, knowledge sharing and awards to grow and improve your existing programs and help create new ones



POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Support from the Washington, DC policy operation, grassroots movement across the country, and an alliance of influential Americans

SERVICE YEAR