

FISCAL 1999 PERFORMANCE REPORT

C O R P O R A T I O N

F O R N A T I O N A L



S E R V I C E

**ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED BY THE
NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ACT
AND THE
DOMESTIC VOLUNTEER SERVICE ACT**

MARCH 31, 2000

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results the Corporation for National Service achieved in fiscal 1999. It is the first annual performance report as required by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA or “The Results Act). This is the third and final installment of GPRA-related reports for fiscal 1999. The first was the Corporation’s Strategic Plan in September 1997. The second was the annual performance plan for fiscal 1999, submitted to Congress in February 1999.^a

The report is organized around the nine principal budget activities of the Corporation. The first section of the report covers the five program activities: AmeriCorps*State and National, AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps, AmeriCorps*VISTA, Learn and Serve America, and the National Senior Service Corps. A second section includes four support activities: National Service Trust, Evaluation, Innovation, and Program Administration.

The Corporation for National Service’s Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals

In its September 1997 Strategic Plan, the Corporation envisioned a nation in which service was valued, used to solve important problems, and rooted in community and individual responsibility. To achieve this vision, the Corporation defined its mission as providing opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to engage in service. The Corporation seeks to achieve its mission by fostering civic responsibility, strengthening the ties that bind us together as a people, and providing educational opportunities for those who make a substantial commitment to service.

The Corporation’s leadership identified five strategic goals for 1997-2002 as the focus for realizing the vision and mission. These goals are:

- GOAL ONE—Service will help solve the nation’s unmet education, public safety, environmental, and other human needs.
- GOAL TWO—Communities will be made stronger through service.
- GOAL THREE—The lives of those who serve will be improved through their service experience.
- GOAL FOUR—Service will become a common expectation and experience of Americans as an integral part of civic responsibility.
- GOAL FIVE—The Corporation will develop and maintain sound organizational systems and effective partnerships with the wider national service network.

The five strategic goals cross cut the nine principal budget activities of the Corporation, which contribute in different ways to achieving the strategic goals. This report is organized according to budget activities because they are the most familiar format for reviewing the initiatives of the Corporation. Most readers of this report, however, should be able to identify linkages between the evidence about program results and the strategic goals. The relationship between performance indicators and the strategic goals is detailed explicitly in Appendix B. The appendix presents a matrix of the relationship between the strategic goals and the performance indicators for each budget activity.

^a All Corporation documents related to GPRA are available on the web at “www.nationalservice.org.”

An Output-Outcome Model for National Service

The Corporation distinguishes among several categories of measures that relate to its efforts and those of its service programs (see Table 1). In general, the higher a category is in the table,

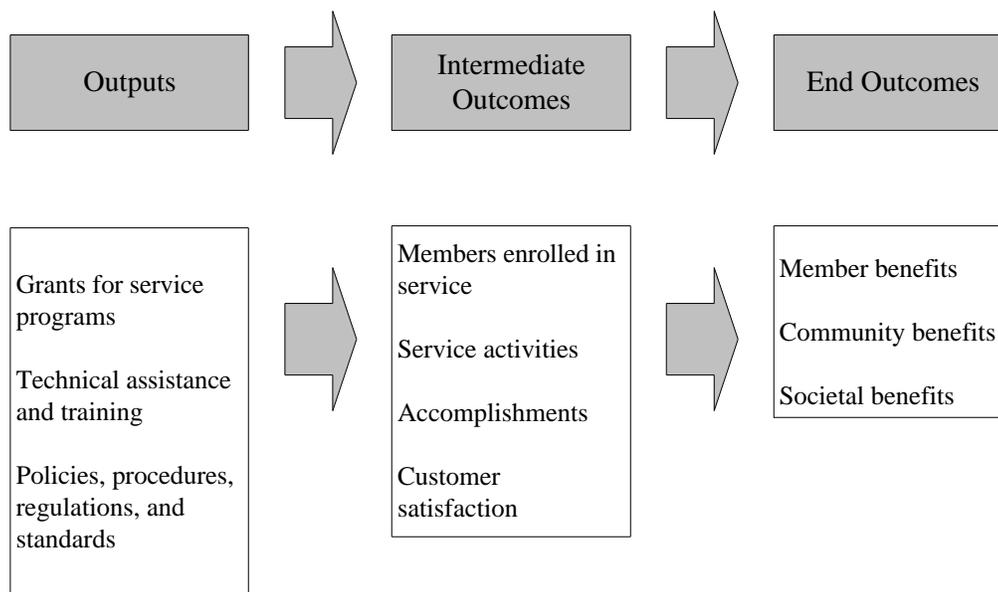
| TABLE 1. CATEGORIES OF PERFORMANCE MEASURES | | |
|---|---|---|
| Category | Definition | Examples |
| Outcomes | Events or conditions that demonstrate achievement of a program's goals. | Changes in students' reading ability resulting from AmeriCorps literacy activities. |
| Intermediate Outcomes | Activities, events, or conditions that show progress toward achievement of the program's goals. | Number of members enrolled in AmeriCorps*State programs by sub-grantees of the state commissions. |
| Output | Products or services directly produced by employees of the Corporation. | Grants awarded to State Commissions, national non-profit organizations, tribes and territories to operate AmeriCorps*State and National programs. |
| Activities | The work by the Corporation that directly produces the output, its core products and services. | Regulations, policies, standards that guide the operation of AmeriCorps*State and National. |
| Input | Resources used by the Corporation to support its activities. | The fiscal 1999 federal appropriation for AmeriCorps*State and National. |

the more important it is in addressing significant national problems. Unfortunately, the higher the category is in the table, the more difficult it is to collect data that clearly measure program performance. Frequently, complex evaluations are required to collect and analyze such effects.

In this performance report, the Corporation presents information for both the outputs from the direct effort of its employees and the outcomes of the service programs funded by the Corporation. For example, the chapter on AmeriCorps*State and National reports the number of grants and subgrantees (an output), the number of members enrolled (an intermediate outcome), and the impact of tutoring programs on students (end outcome).

Outputs presented in this report typically include numbers of grants, training and technical assistance activities, and management initiatives. Intermediate outcomes may cover numbers of members' enrolled, service activities, accomplishment data, and customer satisfaction. End outcomes include impacts on program participants, customer satisfaction, and community benefits. Whether or not an outcome is classified as "intermediate" or "end" depends on the structure and intent of the program (see Figure 1). A summary of performance results for each program activity appears at the beginning of each chapter in this report.

FIGURE 1. A GENERAL MODEL OF OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES FOR THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE



The Corporation’s Performance Measurement System

Each piece of data, whether output or outcome, comes from one of the five types of data that make up the Corporation’s performance measurement system:

- Annual performance indicators
- Accomplishment reports
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Community impact ratings
- Program evaluations.

Each of these data types is valid and useful for understanding program performance. If used alone, however, the analysis would be incomplete and misleading. A comprehensive understanding of program performance must use data from all five sources because each has strengths and taken together they complement each other.

Annual Performance Indicators

The Corporation has several data systems for which information is collected on a regular basis from grantees and subgrantees and from members of service programs. These indicators primarily measure aspects of program performance that are in the direct control of the Corporation. These data are useful for oversight and management of the programs. Many of these measures focus on what programs do with federal funds—such as carrying out projects, enrolling members, awarding subgrants, and so on.

Data Quality. The Corporation completed a review in 1999 of the data used in the annual performance indicators. The directors for every program and the managers of the data systems used by those programs have been interviewed concerning the quality of the data. They were asked to describe how the data and systems are checked for accuracy, verifiability, and validity. Appendix A of this report gives a brief characterization of the data quality for each indicator.

Accomplishment Reporting

Asking programs to report accomplishments allows them to quantify the contributions they are making toward meeting critical community needs. These counts of service performed (e.g., community buildings rehabilitated, students taught, and neighborhood watches conducted) tell a compelling story about the work of national service.

Accomplishment reports are prepared annually for AmeriCorps*State and National grantees. AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps (AmeriCorps*NCCC), AmeriCorps*VISTA and the Senior Corps programs are collecting accomplishment reports from project sponsors and grantees every other year. Due to the scale of the Senior Corps programs, their reports rely on a random sample of projects rather than a census.

Data quality. Independent research contractors collect accomplishment data from AmeriCorps*State and National grantees, AmeriCorps*VISTA project supervisors, and Senior Corps project sponsors. AmeriCorps*NCCC campus staff report accomplishment data directly to the Corporation. The data are collected annually or bi-annually using standard forms that allow for aggregation of the data nationally. The reporting forms have undergone several rounds of revision and standardization. Project directors and sponsors complete the report forms, based on their own systems for keeping records of activities and accomplishments. The Corporation has provided extensive technical assistance in this area to ensure that projects and grantees know how to do it correctly.

The data are subject to edit checks, range checks, and other tests of reasonableness by the research contractors. The data are, however, self-reports from grantees and project sponsors, dependent on the accuracy and completeness of the tracking systems they maintain. In most cases, the data are not subject to audit or other, less formal reviews by independent investigators. Accomplishment reporting simply asks programs to tell the Corporation what they got done in a structured way that can be aggregated for a picture of national effort.

The Corporation plans to conduct a field study of the accomplishment reports in 2000 as an additional check on their validity and verifiability. Investigators will review grantees' systems for tracking accomplishments and verify their accuracy.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

The Corporation's programs have many customers: program participants, grantees, community residents receiving services, and local and state governments. Gathering customer perspectives on how well their needs are met is an essential part of the Corporation's commitment to continuous quality improvement. Targeted customer satisfaction surveys will be conducted periodically, asking direct customers -- the grantees and program participants -- how well the Corporation serves them. This year the customer surveys focus on grantees in AmeriCorps*State and National, AmeriCorps*VISTA, Learn and Serve America, and the Senior Corps.

Data Quality. ORC Macro International conducted all the customer satisfaction surveys used in this report. They used acceptable and rigorous survey techniques to select samples, construct the questionnaires, and report the findings.

Community Impact Ratings

This method assesses the impact of national service programs on the communities and organizations in which members serve. This assessment, or rating, consists of a survey of important community representatives. These informants should have first-hand knowledge of the quality and impact of the service work performed by members of national service programs. AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps was assessed this year and the other service programs will be studied in 2000.

Data Quality. Research Triangle Institute (RTI) carried out the community impact rating survey covering AmeriCorps*NCCC activities in fiscal 1999. As in the customer satisfaction surveys, RTI is using scientific survey techniques to ensure that the data are accurate and valid.

Program Evaluation Studies

Program evaluation represents a significant area of investment by the Corporation. Unlike the other performance measures, outcome evaluation studies are not likely to occur every year because they are more expensive and time consuming to carry out. Program outcome studies, however less frequent, still provide reliable, valid and useful information on what national service programs achieve for the American people. And, to the degree that the basic model for a program remains constant, the results of program evaluation research will remain valid and useful.

One reason the Corporation places so much importance on program evaluation lies in the relationship the Corporation has with its national service programs and their outcomes. The Corporation supports national service almost exclusively by making grants to nonprofit, private, and public institutions. These grantees, in turn, use federal funds and guidance, combined with other sources of support, to design and operate service programs meeting locally defined needs.

Working through these networks of grantees, subgrantees, community sponsors, and other partners to accomplish the Corporation's mission means that the outcomes of national service programs are often the result of factors outside the Corporation's control. These complex systems make it challenging to identify the federal contribution to the end outcomes. Individual program evaluations, by using formal, scientific methods, including sampling and control groups, can identify the direct results and impact of national service programs.

Data Quality. The Corporation believes that, with focused, scientific, program evaluations, the results of service programs can be identified and measured. The Corporation contracts with the best research organizations in the country, then gives them the independence and resources to do reliable and valid studies of national service programs. A formal policy (Corporation for National Service Policy Number 900) governs evaluation activities in the Corporation. It sets stringent standards that ensure the quality of the studies conducted on the Corporation's behalf. In addition, there is growing interest in national service and service-learning on the part of universities, foundations, and public interest groups. Thus, in addition to the contract research sponsored by the Corporation, this report will include findings from individuals and organizations working independently of the Corporation and its support.

Changes to the 1999 Plan

Since the Corporation submitted its revised 1999 plan to Congress, the plan has undergone minor revision. In response to comments from outside reviewers, including the Office of Management and Budget, the number of annual performance indicators has been reduced. All the indicators in the 1999 plan are included here, but they have been organized into key indicators and secondary indicators. The intention in this and future reports is to focus on the key indicators. The secondary indicators are included in this report, but they will not appear in future reports.

In addition, customer satisfaction goals that may have been identified in the 1999 plan as annual indicators are now no longer listed in that category. All customer satisfaction measures, as discussed above, now comprise an independent component of the Corporation's performance measurement system. Furthermore, customer satisfaction surveys will be done no more often than every two years.

The organizing structure for this report involving the output-outcome model and the five-component performance measuring system was not part of the 1999 plan. The structure has evolved with the Corporation's growing experience in performance measurement over the last few years.

Performance Summary

The long-term goal of The Results Act is to improve accountability and increase performance. The multi-method performance measurement system developed by the Corporation has proven to be an important step in achieving the intent of The Results Act. Based upon the five types of data used to measure performance, summary assessments can be made about the Corporation's performance.

Annual Performance Indicators

In 1999, the Corporation for National Service met or exceeded 33 of 46, 72 percent, of the goals set for key, annual performance indicators. Overall, the report lists 51 key indicators, but five are indicators that had no goal because the 1999 result will be used as a baseline for setting goals in 2000 and beyond.

In eight cases, the result fell short of, but very close to meeting, the established goal. These goals were scored as having been met because the difference was so slight as to be meaningless. For example, AmeriCorps*NCCC wanted to have a service project in every state. They failed to have a project in Indiana, but they did have a project (hurricane relief) in Puerto Rico. Other examples are in Program Administration, where four goals were expressed as deadlines. Three of those four goals were met during the fiscal year, but slightly later than the deadlines. The Corporation considers these and instances like them to demonstrate substantial fulfillment of the goal.

Among the 12 goals that were not met, eight reached at least 75 percent of their targeted performance and two between 50 and 75 percent of planned performance. The Corporation achieved less than 50 percent of targeted performance on only two of the 45 goals.

Accomplishments

The diversity and scale of accomplishments make them difficult to summarize easily. Accomplishment reports for three programs--AmeriCorps*State and National,

AmeriCorps*NCCC, and Retired and Senior Volunteer Program—show that more than 700,000 students were tutored or mentored, 1.5 million trees or shrubs were planted, and over one million community crime patrols were conducted or students took part in violence avoidance activities. These indicators reflect the substantial amount of real work that is being done by those of all ages who serve their communities.

Customer Satisfaction

Grantees and program participants surveyed in fiscal 1999 generally gave the Corporation favorable ratings for its services. The customer segments rating Corporation services “good” or “very good” ranged from 78 percent to 93 percent. In contrast, customer segments rating Corporation services “not very good” or “poor” ranged from a low of 7 percent to a high of 23 percent. The results suggest room for improvement, specifically increasing the proportion of customers rating the Corporation “very good” and decreasing the proportion rating the Corporation “not very good” or “poor.” The large majority of respondents, however, were satisfied with Corporation services.

Community Impact

The Corporation conducted only one community impact study in fiscal 1999 so the aggregate achievements are easily summarized. The Research Triangle Institute study of AmeriCorps*NCCC found that over 90 percent of a sample of 240 project sponsors rated the service projects as highly successful. Ninety-six percent of respondents believed that AmeriCorps*NCCC targeted unmet needs in the community.

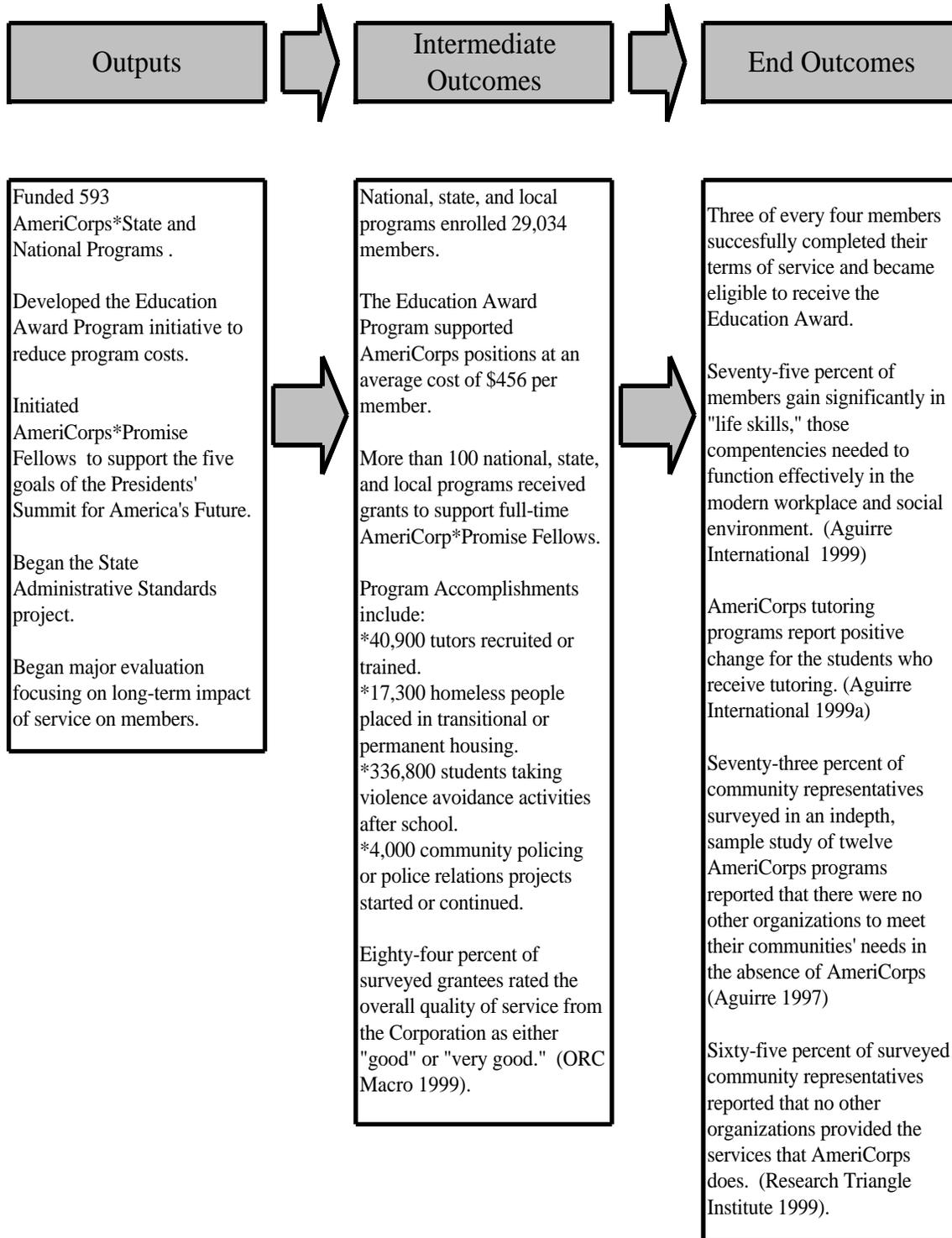
Program Outcomes

The Corporation completed 29 evaluation reports and initiated another 24 during fiscal 1999. The Corporation’s program evaluations, performed by high-quality independent contractors, and independent evaluations conducted by universities, foundations, and service programs, produced results that consistently confirm intended program effects. The program evaluations show that national service is helping to solve public problems, expand educational opportunity, and encourage responsibility.

PART I. NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

1. AmeriCorps*State and National
2. AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps
3. AmeriCorps*VISTA
4. Learn and Serve America
5. National Senior Service Corps

FIGURE 2. AMERICORPS*STATE AND NATIONAL SUMMARY OF 1999 PERFORMANCE RESULTS



CHAPTER 1. AMERICORPS*STATE AND NATIONAL

AmeriCorps offers full and part-time opportunities for members to provide community service and, in exchange for that service, to earn education awards. AmeriCorps is community based, designed to respond to local needs and concerns, and strive to meet the following five goals, which parallel the strategic goals of the Corporation for National Service:

- *Getting Things Done.* AmeriCorps helps communities meet critical needs in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, and other human needs through direct service.
- *Strengthening Communities.* AmeriCorps unites a diverse group of individuals and institutions in a common effort to improve communities through service.
- *Expanding Opportunity.* AmeriCorps helps those who help America. Individuals who serve become better citizens. National service also uses the GI Bill model. In exchange for service, AmeriCorps members earn a scholarship that helps pay for college, training, or student loans.
- *Encouraging Responsibility.* National service demands responsibility. AmeriCorps members, through service and civic education, learn to take responsibility for helping to solve community problems.
- *Supporting Service Infrastructure.* Grantees and programs operate efficiently and effectively, using reinventing government principles and appropriate management systems.

Background

AmeriCorps*State and National funding, by statute, supports service programs in three ways. First, State Commissions receive a portion of the funds. The members of these commissions are governor-appointed, bipartisan, and represent the important service constituencies in the state. Exactly one-third of the funds appropriated by Congress goes to the commissions according to a population-based formula. In 1999, 254 programs received funds under the state formula distribution. At least one-third of the funding goes to State Commissions for programs (198 programs in 1999) that the state commissions select and then submit to the Corporation for competitive consideration.

Second, National Direct grants go to national non-profit organizations and programs operating in more than one state. In 1999, there were 41 active National Direct grantees. Beginning in fiscal 1996, Congress set a limit in the appropriations language on the funds that the Corporation might grant to national non-profit organizations.

Third, two percent of AmeriCorps grant funds are set aside for Indian Tribes and U.S. Territories, (one percent each). The Corporation awards grants to Indian Tribes on a competitive

AmeriCorps Serves with Habitat for Humanity

AmeriCorps members with Miami Habitat* AmeriCorps built 60 homes for low-income families during the 1998-99 program year. Members supervised more than 7,000 construction volunteers, ensuring safety on site. The members' leadership was particularly valued during Collegiate Challenge, when 1,000 college students volunteered at Miami Habitat for Humanity during their Spring Break. Without the leadership of the AmeriCorps members, Miami Habitat for Humanity would not have been able to host this large number of volunteers.

| TABLE 2. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | | | |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Key Indicators for 1999 | | | |
| Key Indicators | Goal | Result | Goal Met? |
| Number of AmeriCorps*State and National Grantees and Subgrantees. Source: <i>AmeriCorps*State and National Program Office</i> . | 638 ^b | 593 | NO |
| Number of members enrolled. Source: <i>National Service Trust Database</i> . | 29,942 ^c | 33,854 ^d | YES |
| Average percent of expected service time completed by AmeriCorps*State and National members (not including Education Award Program members). Source: <i>National Service Trust Database</i> . | Baseline to be set | 83% | Not Applicable |
| Percent of members who complete a term of service and become eligible to receive the education award (not including Education Award Program members). Source: <i>National Service Trust Database</i> . | 80% | 74% | NO |
| Number of members enrolled in the AmeriCorps*Education Award Program. Source: <i>National Service Trust Database</i> | No goal was set | 6,705 | Not applicable |
| Percent of Education Award Program members who successfully complete a term of service and become eligible to receive the education award. Source: <i>National Service Trust Database</i> | 80% | 80% | YES |

basis and to U. S. Territories on a formula basis. The Corporation granted 10 Tribal awards and 4 awards to grantees in Territories of the United States.

Overall, the Corporation supported 593 AmeriCorps*State and National grantees in program year 1998-1999 (See Table 2). The Corporation based the goal of 638 grantees for program year 1998-1999 on previous experience. The Corporation missed meeting the target of 638 grants by seven percent. In five of six categories of AmeriCorps*State and National grants, the program met or exceeded the planned targets. It was only with respect to state formula grants that planned targets were not met (see Table 3).

^b The Corporation's revised fiscal 1999 performance plan set this goal at 652, which represents the AmeriCorps grants expected to be supported by the fiscal 1999 appropriation of \$237 million. Those funds will support programs operating in program year 1999-2000, which generally corresponds to fiscal 2000. The goal for 1999 has been revised for this report to correspond to the number of grants expected to be supported with the fiscal 1998 appropriation of \$227 million for AmeriCorps*State and National. This revised goal of 638 was the number of grants expected to operate in program year 1998-1999.

^c The Corporation's revised fiscal 1999 performance plan set this goal at 30,562. This number was based on the number of AmeriCorps members expected to be supported by the fiscal 1999 appropriation of \$237 million. These enrollments will occur in program year 1999-2000, which generally corresponds to fiscal 2000. The goal has been revised for this report to correspond to the enrollment levels expected with the fiscal 1998 appropriation of \$227 million for AmeriCorps*State and National.

^d This result includes Education Award Program members.

State Formula programs fell short of the goal because the process used by the Corporation to set the goal needs improvement. Predictions were based on the first three years experience with AmeriCorps grantees using the average cost of a grant. The Corporation is reviewing this approach and may revise the goals for the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 program years.

In program year 1998-1999, which corresponds generally with fiscal 1999, AmeriCorps* State and National programs^c enrolled 33,854 members (see Table 2). More than half of the members, 18,097, participated in AmeriCorps through programs overseen by state commissions. National Direct grantees had 5,891 members. Education Award Program grantees enrolled 6,705. The remaining 3,161 AmeriCorps members (shown as “Other” in Figure 3) participated in several smaller programs, including Promise Fellows, service-learning corps, tribes, and territories. More than 5,000 additional AmeriCorps members enrolled through AmeriCorps*VISTA and AmeriCorps*NCCC. These two branches of AmeriCorps are presented in separate sections of this report.

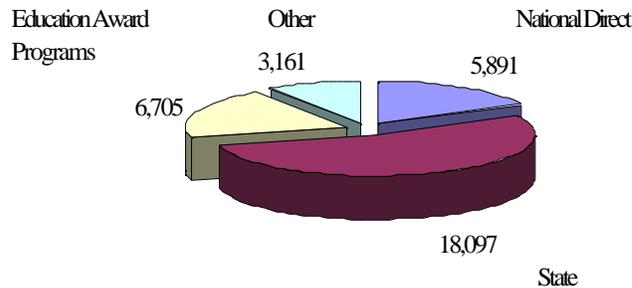
| TABLE 3. AMERICORPS*STATE AND NATIONAL GRANT AWARDS PLANNED VS. ACTUAL, PROGRAM YEAR 1998-1999 | | |
|---|----------------|---------------|
| Grant Category | Planned | Actual |
| State Competitive | 163 | 198 |
| State Formula | 364 | 254 |
| National Direct | 41 | 41 |
| Education Award Program | 60 | 86 |
| Tribes | 6 | 10 |
| Territories | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 638 | 593 |

Sources: (1) Fiscal Year 1999 Budget Estimate. Activities Authorized by the National and Community Service Act. Submission to Congress. February 23, 1998. (2) AmeriCorps*State and National Program Office. Corporation for National Service.

The Corporation’s fiscal 1999 performance plan showed a goal for enrollment supported with fiscal 1999 appropriations. Those enrollments began in the fall of 1999 and will continue through the summer of 2000. Any data from program year 1999-2000 shown in this report would be incomplete. Thus, the Corporation has changed the goal to the one for program year 1998-1999. The modified goal, shown in Table 2, comes from the Corporation’s fiscal 1998 budget request, where AmeriCorps*State and National projected an enrollment for program year 1998-1999 of 29,492. That projection was to include an unspecified number of enrollments in the new and untested Education Award Program. The Corporation did not begin projecting Education Award Program enrollments until 1999.

^c AmeriCorps*State and National enrollment includes all AmeriCorps members except those in AmeriCorps*NCCC and AmeriCorps*VISTA.

**FIGURE 3. LEVELS OF ENROLLMENT
AMERICORPS*STATE AND NATIONAL PROGRAMS
Program Year 1998-1999^f**



Source: National Service Trust Database. Corporation for National Service.

Program Initiatives in 1999

AmeriCorps*State and National initiated new or expanded activities in several areas during 1999. These initiatives included:

- Education Award Program.
- AmeriCorps Leaders.
- AmeriCorps Promise Fellows.
- Governor’s Service Initiative.
- America Reads.

Education Award Program

To expand AmeriCorps as well as reduce costs, the Corporation developed this initiative for individuals to receive only the AmeriCorps education award from the Corporation. Almost all other costs associated with the AmeriCorps member come from a non-profit organization or from the private sector. Since the inception of the program, there have been 174 Education Award Program grantees with over 19,000 members with an average cost to the Corporation (excluding the education award) of \$455 per full-time equivalent member.

AmeriCorps Promise Fellows

As a follow-up to the Presidents’ Summit for America’s Future in fiscal 1997, the Corporation began a special initiative designed to identify talented individuals who will assist with state and local efforts to provide all young people with the five fundamental

AmeriCorps Boosts Academic Achievement

More than 150 AmeriCorps members served as literacy tutors in 13 elementary schools throughout Oakland to enhance students' basic reading and writing skills. The members provided 30 minutes of one-on-one tutoring, four times a week, to more than 1,300 first- and second-grade students in the Oakland Unified School District during 1998-99. Teachers reported that 78 percent of the students served improved their overall attitude towards school, 92 percent improved their overall academic skills, and 87 percent improved their reading and writing skills.

^f The “Other” category includes members participating in programs sponsored by Tribes, U. S. Territories, Service-Learning Corps, Higher Education grants, and Promise Fellows.

resources identified at the Summit: (1) caring adults in their lives as parents, mentors, tutors, coaches; (2) safe places with structured activities in which to learn and grow; (3) a healthy start and a healthy future; (4) an effective education that equips them with marketable skills; and (5) an opportunity to give back to communities through their own service. In program year 1998-1999, the Corporation awarded 61 grants and enrolled more than 400 Promise Fellows.

AmeriCorps Leaders

The AmeriCorps Leaders Program is a national program that provides opportunities for outstanding AmeriCorps members to develop their leadership skills. The primary goal of this program is to provide the next generation of community leaders with the skills to succeed and achieve results. Only former members of Corporation for National Service-sponsored programs are eligible to apply to the AmeriCorps Leaders program. The selection process is highly competitive. Almost 200 AmeriCorps members were nominated for the approximately 60 Leader positions. In 1999, 51 AmeriCorps Leaders served at AmeriCorps service sites throughout the country.

Governor's Service Initiatives

For fiscal 1999, the Corporation directed that additional funds go to new statewide initiatives that tie into a governor's priority and could benefit from a service component. To use these funds, a governor-appointed state commission had to develop a major statewide initiative in one or more of the four issue areas of education, environment, public safety, and other human needs.

America Reads

In fiscal 1998, Congress appropriated additional funds for the Corporation to conduct activities designed to ensure that every school child can read well and independently by the third grade. The Corporation awarded grants to 30 separate organizations selected by states. These activities continued and expanded in fiscal 1999.

Administrative Initiatives in 1999

The Corporation began two important administrative projects in 1999, both of which will have major impacts on the way AmeriCorps*State and National relates to its grantees.

- The State Administrative Standards Project
- The Web-Based Reporting System (WBRs).

AmeriCorps Trains Teachers, Students, and Parents in Computer Use

Twelve Project FIRST AmeriCorps members provided more than 1,300 hours of computer training to 200 Atlanta Public Schools teachers and 600 hours of computer training for more than 2,500 students. Members also helped set-up and staff computer labs at 12 schools, providing 4,600 hours of support and technical assistance to teachers, students, and parents. As part of Technology Links, the programs' parent training program, members refurbished and provided computers donated by IBM to 27 parents who successfully completed the training. To support these efforts members recruited 91 volunteers to serve as computer trainers in three community labs serving 93 parents.

The State Administrative Standards Project.

The State Administrative Standards is a new tool that the Corporation uses to assess and expand the capacity of state commissions to administer federal funds in a responsible manner. The Corporation awards federally appropriated funds to state commissions for developing and supporting national service within the state. The state commissions must conduct statewide grant processes, monitor programs, provide training and technical assistance, and serve as liaison between the Corporation and the local programs. The State Administrative Standards seek to communicate what the Corporation expects of state commissions. The standards aim to serve as an effective and consistent tool for the Corporation to assess state commission administrative systems.

The State Administrative Standards consist of eleven standards that reflect the essential functions of a state commission. The Corporation developed these Standards beginning late in 1998, with the input of a Standards Working Group, made up of state commission staff and board members and Corporation staff. The Corporation staff ensured that all the statutory and agency policy regulations are included in the Standards. Based on six years of experience with AmeriCorps and state commission operations, the Standards reflect realistic and reasonable expectations.

The eleven standards are:

1. Conducts proper grant process.
2. Properly monitors programs and ensures compliance.
3. Properly monitors member records.
4. Reports properly to the Corporation for National Service.
5. Utilizes appropriate financial and management systems.
6. Uses a planning and assessment process.
7. Manages personnel and volunteer resources.
8. Implements a system for training and technical assistance.
9. Generates broad-based support.
10. Promotes and initiates service within the state.
11. Communicates information within the state.

The Standards review process has three stages. First, a state commission completes a self-assessment using the Standards tool. The self-assessment helps the commission gain a realistic view of its own administrative systems. Second, a six-person review team spends one week at the commission conducting the formal Standards assessment. Finally, when the review is complete, there are two products. One product is a technical assistance plan created in collaboration with the state commission with financial resources available from the Corporation for National Service. The plan will help the state commission meet any Standards it has not yet met, thus increasing its capacity to implement successfully national service in the state. The second product is an assessment by Corporation staff that, along with other considerations, determines eligibility for competitive and special initiative money and similar discretionary resources.

The six state commissions that participated in the Standards Pilot Project (May-September 1999) gave the Standards process very high marks. For these commissions, the State Administrative Standards was an effective tool to strengthen their internal systems and to create a more effective operation.

Over the next three years, the remaining states will participate in a State Administrative Standards assessment. The Corporation for National Service is committed to assisting all state commissions

to reach the level of operation described in the State Administrative Standards. The Standards will help the Corporation devolve more of the implementation of national service to the state level as the administrative capacity of state commissions increases.

The Web-Based Reporting System (WBR)

In fiscal 1999, the Corporation moved to full-scale implementation of a Web-Based Reporting System (WBR) to control, monitor, and report on AmeriCorps member service. WBR is an effective management control tool for programs and commissions to use to monitor service programs in thousands of communities across the country (see the National Service Trust chapter for more detail on WBR).

Getting Things Done

Over the past five years, AmeriCorps*State and National programs have proven effective at meeting critical needs and strengthening communities. Table 4 summarizes a few of the numerous accomplishments for 1997-1998, the most recent program year for which data are available.

The Annual Accomplishments Review is a survey of the program year outputs of national service programs. The goal of the data collection is an estimate of national service programs' accomplishments organized into a set of common categories. The Accomplishments Review started in AmeriCorps*State and National in program year 1994-1995. In the past two years, other Corporation programs, including AmeriCorps*VISTA, AmeriCorps*NCCC, and Senior Corps, have adapted it for their use.

Corporation staff and an independent contractor, Aguirre International, designed the Accomplishments Review survey instrument. They first field tested the survey approach with focus groups and then tried it in a sixty-program on-site verification performed during the 1994-1995 program year. Following each subsequent administration, a review of accomplishment categories determined if some categories needed to be added, dropped, or modified.

The Accomplishment Review seeks to provide a summary of accomplishments recorded throughout the program year. The report is due in October, following each program year. Individual AmeriCorps grantees, sub-grantees, and operating sites send the forms to a contractor. The contractor enters the data and employs a series of computerized and manual data cleaning operations. Service programs are contacted to clarify and adjust their reports. Care is taken to correct double counts of service recipients.

In their 1994-1995 on-site review of 60 randomly sampled programs, Aguirre International found that the data reported were, in fact, an underestimate of the actual program accomplishments.

AmeriCorps Helps Red Cross Respond to Disasters

Ten AmeriCorps members with the American Red Cross National Rapid Response Corps in Atlanta participated in six national disaster relief operations during the 1998-1999 program year. They assisted families recovering from the floods in central Texas and tornadoes in Tennessee, Louisiana and Georgia. In addition, the Atlanta members responded to 631 local single- or multi-family disasters, assisting more than 1,260 people. When not responding to national or local disasters, Red Cross AmeriCorps members presented disaster preparedness training such as Fire Safety and Hurricane Preparedness to more than 87,870 people, primarily children, and recruited 116 new volunteers for the chapter.

Programs tended to enumerate only their core activities carefully and let other, secondary or one-time service activities go unrecorded.

Beginning in program year 1999-2000 and reaching full implementation in 2000-2001, tracking and reporting of AmeriCorps*State and National accomplishments will become part of the Web-Based Reporting System (WBRS), an Internet system for collecting data from programs.

Strengthening Communities

AmeriCorps strengthens communities through the effects on local organizations, both those that sponsor AmeriCorps members as well as those that collaborate with the grantee organizations. AmeriCorps also has direct impacts on families, neighborhoods, and communities. The levels of local financial support and customer satisfaction are two, additional measures of the impacts of AmeriCorps.

Effects on Organizations

At present, the primary source of evidence about AmeriCorps' effect on nonprofit organization is the 1999 Aguirre study, in which 60 randomly sampled service programs supported by AmeriCorps were studied for the institutional impacts of AmeriCorps involvement (Aguirre 1999c). The investigators studied sponsoring organizations, those receiving the AmeriCorps grant; partnering organizations, those with a formal link to the program, often as host-sites for AmeriCorps service; and other involved institutions, those with regular, but informal, relationships to the program.

The researchers concluded that, in general, the introduction of AmeriCorps to a community had significant organizational effects on the network of institutions associated with the program. Overall, three-quarters of sponsors reported that the grant had caused their institution to change. Most of these changes were in two categories: organizational enhancements (e.g., more capacity, increased efficiency, additional organizational elements, such as training) and increased collaborations with other community groups. Organizations that reported no change tended to be larger, more established organizations with a history of large grant programs. The investigators note, "the Corporation's challenge to programs to meet higher quality standards may have the most long-lasting impact of any of the Corporation's goals...the Corporation's emphasis on accountability, formal objectives, needs assessments and program evaluation were difficult for many programs to adjust to." The programs reported, however, that in the process of responding to these demands, their effectiveness and the perception of their organization in the community were both enhanced. These and other end outcomes of AmeriCorps members' service activities are summarized in Table 5.

Each AmeriCorps grantee works with a variety of other community organizations, forming a performance partnership, through which they collaboratively provide services. Interviews conducted by Aguirre International revealed that partnering organizations believed that they had benefited from a range of enhancements similar to those observed in sponsoring organizations: increased capacity, improved quality, greater extent of community collaboration. Overall, 95 percent reported that involvement with AmeriCorps had had a positive impact on their organization.

| TABLE 4. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORTS^g A Sample of Accomplishments from 1997-1998 (Aguirre 1999b) | | |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| Emphasis Area | Selected Service Accomplishments | Number of Beneficiaries |
| Education | Students Taught (all grades, K-12) | 486,700 |
| | Peer tutors recruited or trained | 40,900 |
| Health and Human needs | Homeless people placed in permanent housing or transitional-to-permanent housing | 17,300 |
| | Individuals receiving prenatal health screening, diagnosis, and follow-up care | 480,900 |
| | People receiving health related information | 1,577,400 |
| Environment and Neighborhood Restoration | Community buildings rehabilitated, renovated, or repaired | 1,100 |
| | Trees planted in cities, towns, rural areas, and parks | 1,372,200 |
| Public Safety | Neighborhood watches conducted | 500 |
| | Students trained in-school conflict mediation programs | 119,900 |
| | Students taking part in violence avoidance activities after school | 336,800 |

Effects on Communities

Aguirre International collected data from a sample of community representatives knowledgeable about their communities and aware of the AmeriCorps service within it (Aguirre 1999b). Community representatives from sixty AmeriCorps-served communities completed surveys and interviews, focusing on 15 dimensions of potential community impact. Eight-six percent of representatives felt that AmeriCorps was different from other community programs, citing the full-time commitment of members, the extensive training, its community focus, and other factors. A large proportion (83%) rated the overall effect of the service program as “Outstanding” or “Very Good.” Among the most well regarded aspects of the programs related to community impact were understanding their clients (90% outstanding/very good) and encouraging civic responsibility (69% outstanding/very good). Even on difficult dimensions, such as “changing the ways CBOs [community-based organizations] work together” or “providing community leadership” at least 60 percent of the community representatives rated AmeriCorps’ efforts as outstanding or very good. The lowest ratings of the programs came from “understanding community politics” and “community mobilization,” which approximately 10 percent of those surveyed rated as unsatisfactory. This is not surprising, given that neither community politics nor mobilization receive any emphasis within AmeriCorps’ program policy.

^g The data derive from the Corporation’s accomplishment reporting system, are not subject to audit, and should be considered approximate indicators of level of performance. Independent reviews conducted of the accomplishment reporting process in earlier years found that the reported results were accurate reflections of effort. In fact, programs were frequently found to underreport accomplishments.

**TABLE 5. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: END OUTCOMES
ESTABLISHED BY INDEPENDENT PROGRAM EVALUATION STUDIES**

A Sample of Outcomes from AmeriCorps*State and National

| Outcomes | Findings | Source |
|--|--|--|
| Outcomes For AmeriCorps Members | | |
| Education Awards | Three of every four members successfully completed their terms of service, becoming eligible to receive the education award. | National Trust Data Base |
| Life Skills | Seventy-five percent of members gain significantly in "life skills," those competencies needed to function effectively in the modern workplace and social environment. | Aguirre International 1999c |
| Civic Engagement | Members' appreciation for the importance of civic engagement was strongly affected by national service. Members leave service with an increased appreciation for others and with a better understanding of community issues, but virtually all (99%) planned to volunteer in the future and many indicated considering service-oriented careers following their AmeriCorps experience. | Jastrzab and others 1997 |
| Outcomes for Individuals Receiving Services | | |
| Education | AmeriCorps tutoring programs report positive change for the students who receive tutoring. | Aguirre International 1999a |
| School Readiness | "The results of the analyses on the first two cohorts of children over their first year in the Jumpstart program [a grantee of AmeriCorps] suggest that the program has positive effects on at-risk children's school readiness, and suggest that, as the program is developed further and more children participate in the evaluation, there is real potential for showing stronger and positive program effects." | Ripple 1997 |
| Mentoring | AmeriCorps members support mentoring programs, which are effective in reducing youth crime and helping young people succeed in school. The most recent Department of Justice report on mentoring concludes that mentoring programs reduce youth crime and help young people succeed in school. The report states that in one study participants with mentors were 46 percent less likely to start using drugs, 27 percent less likely to start using alcohol, and almost 33% less likely to hit someone. The study reports that the young people paired with mentors were 50 percent more likely to attend class, felt more competent about doing school work, skipped fewer classes, showed measurable increases in grade point averages, and demonstrated noticeably improved relations with their peers and families. | Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention 1999 |
| (table continued on next page) | | |

| TABLE 5 (continued) | | |
|----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Area of Outcome | Findings | Source |
| | Outcomes for Communities | |
| Meeting Community Needs | Seventy-three percent of community representatives surveyed in an in-depth, sample study of twelve programs reported that there were no other organizations to meet their communities' needs in the absence of AmeriCorps. | Research Triangle Institute 1999 |
| Unique Services | Sixty-five percent of surveyed community representatives reported that no other organizations provided the services that AmeriCorps does. | Research Triangle Institute 1999 |
| Bringing People Together | “. . .in community after community it [AmeriCorps] became a catalyst for people to work together to find new ways to solve problems.” | Shumer and others 1995 |
| Generating Volunteers | A national evaluation found an average of eight community volunteers generated by each AmeriCorps member under the AmeriCorps*State and National program. Subsequent reports by projects documented an average of 12 community volunteers per project. | Aguirre International 1997 |
| | Return on Investment | |
| Cost-Benefit Ratio | An independent cost-benefit study found that programs supported by AmeriCorps returned between \$1.60-\$2.60 for every dollar spent. The General Accounting Office validated the methodology and approach used in this independent study. | Neumann and others 1995 |
| | Another independent study found that AmeriCorps produced, on average, a return of \$1.66 for every dollar invested. | Aguirre International 1999c |

In 1999, Research Triangle Institute conducted in-depth interviews with 96 community representatives in 12 communities served by AmeriCorps members (Research Triangle Institute 1999). The focus of the interviews was the “value-added” that AmeriCorps provided to their communities, that is, the extent to which the services were unique and would not otherwise be available in the absence of AmeriCorps. In addition to rating the quality of AmeriCorps services as generally high, 73 percent of community representatives reported that there would no other organizations to meet their community’s needs in the absence of AmeriCorps. Twenty-two percent felt that other organizations could provide some, but not all of the AmeriCorps services. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of representatives stated that before AmeriCorps there was no other organization providing the services that AmeriCorps provided. The remaining third (35%) said that there had been “like-sounding” services previously, but that they differed in significant ways. They characterized the previously extent services as less consistent, less committed, less extensive, and less professional. None among those interviewed reported that an equivalent service to the community had been available before AmeriCorps. Roughly the same proportions

(2:1) indicated that either no services or some services of AmeriCorps were currently being duplicated within the community.

Local Support for AmeriCorps

Private and other local support under AmeriCorps*State and National programs has increased by more than \$50 million in the last five years (see Figure 4). The General Accounting Office documented grantees' reporting of an increase in state and local funding from \$134 million in 1994-1995 to over \$185 million in 1998-1999 in one portion of AmeriCorps – AmeriCorps*State and National.^h This is strong evidence of the growing support for AmeriCorps.

Other evidence for the growth of private support for AmeriCorps is shown by the interest in the AmeriCorps Education Award Program, where the Corporation provides only the education award and up to \$500 per member, and the sponsor provides all other funding. In the first full year of operation, program year 1997-1998, the Education Award Program grantees enrolled 10,665 members.

FIGURE 4. INCREASE IN PRIVATE AND LOCAL SUPPORT FOR AMERICORPS



Source: Based on data contained in General Accounting Office Report United States General Accounting Office. Report to Congressional Requestors. National service Programs. Two AmeriCorps Programs. Findings and Benefits. GAO/HEHS-00-33, p. 10.

Customer Satisfaction

In 1998 (the most recent year for which data are available), the Corporation conducted a customer satisfaction survey of the AmeriCorps*State and National grantees, using the services of an independent research firm (ORC Macro 1999). Sixty-nine percent of the sample responded to questions focusing on three essential areas of interest: (1) importance and performance of various Corporation functions; (2) quality of service received from the Corporation; and (3) factors having the greatest influence on overall satisfaction. For all essential performance areas, a majority of respondents gave positive satisfaction ratings (see Figure 5).

^h United States General Accounting Office. Report to Congressional Requestors. National service Programs. Two AmeriCorps Programs. Findings and Benefits. GAO/HEHS-00-33, p. 10. Amounts are calculated by multiplying the number of full-time equivalent participants times the grantee matching funds per participants, as reported in Table 2 of the GAO report.

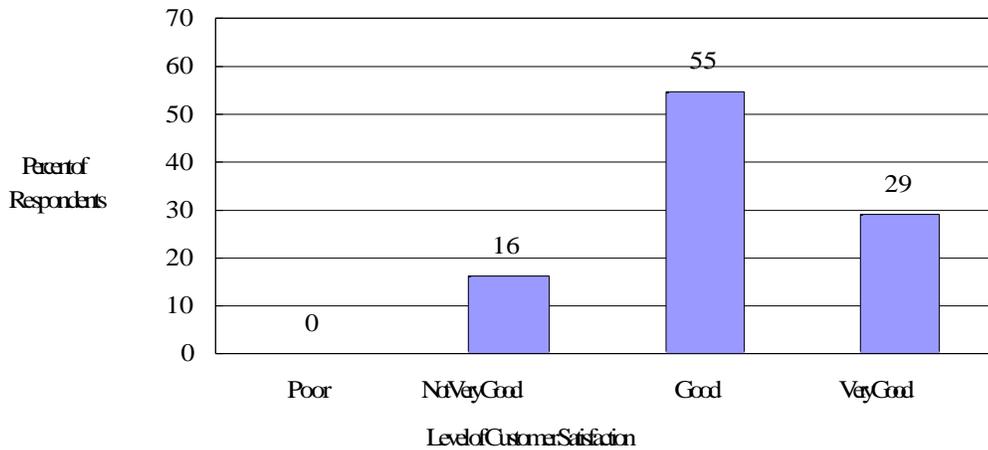
Eighty-four percent of the respondents representing the AmeriCorps*State and National grantees rated the overall quality of service received in the past year from the Corporation as either “good” or “very good.” On a four-point scale (“poor” = 1 and “very good” = 4), the average rating of overall quality of service was 3.3.

An analysis of the results revealed several factors that affect overall satisfaction with the Corporation’s AmeriCorps*State and National program. Four of the more important ones were:

- Issuing grants in a timely manner.
- Providing timely responses to inquiries and calls.
- The Corporation’s performance in providing consistent information.
- The Corporation’s sensitivity to local needs and conditions.

The Corporation is now analyzing the survey’s findings with the goals of identifying areas of performance most in need of improvement and determining how to bring about change.

FIGURE 5. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
Grantees Rate Their Satisfaction with Corporation Services in 1998



Source: *Evaluation of the 1998 Customer Satisfaction Survey, AmeriCorps*State and National Program.* ORC Macro, Calverton, MD

Expanding Opportunity

AmeriCorps*State and National has grown steadily since 1994 and now grants over 40,000 service positions per year to community-based organizations. About two-thirds of them are full-time positions. The majority of these AmeriCorps members are in their twenties and generally mirror the demographic profile of the communities in which they serve. This means that half of them are Caucasian and half are from racial or ethnic minorities. Their economic and educational backgrounds echo the socioeconomic profile of Americans generally.

In return for serving in AmeriCorps, members receive education awards, which they can use to pay for college costs or to retire debt incurred in pursuing a degree beyond high school. The rates at which members stay in the program and earn the education award are high.

Completing Service and Earning the Education Award

The Corporation uses as the primary indicator for how long members serve the average percent of time served compared to the time expected to serve (see Table 2). Overall, AmeriCorps*State and National members (excluding Education Award Program members) served 82.8 percent of the service term for which they enrolled. For example, a full-time AmeriCorps member takes on, at enrollment, the obligation to serve 1700 hours within the next twelve months. If the member serves the full 1700 hours, the completion rate is 100 percent. If the member were to serve only 1000 hours, the rate would be 58.8 percent. The members who completed terms of service with an Education Award Program grantee finished, on average, 86.8 percent of their expected service hours.

Another measure used to show expanding opportunity through AmeriCorps participation is the rate at which members successfully earn the education award. Three out of four members ending their term of service in fiscal 1999, 73.9 percent, qualified for an education award (see Table 2). This rate covers all AmeriCorps*State and National members, except those in the Education Award Program, whose rate was higher at 80.4 percent.

The Corporation aspired to a goal of 80 percent completion in 1999 and fell somewhat short of this target. The rate is relatively constant over the five-year history of AmeriCorps*State and National programs, ranging from a low of 71.8 percent in 1995 to a high of 77.3 percent in 1997 (See Figure 6). The goal for 1999 was set in 1997 before this five-year history was available. The Corporation, however, will review performance in this area and look for ways to improve the rate at which members become eligible for the education award.

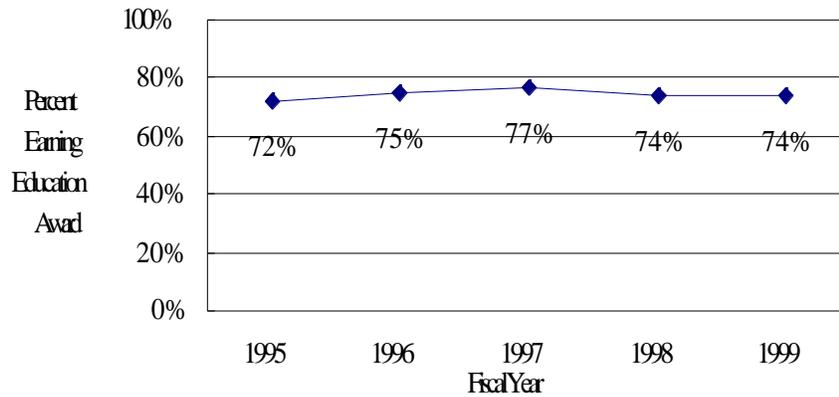
Increasing Responsibility

Serving in AmeriCorps has a positive effect on participating members that will assist them in becoming productive citizens with an increased sense of civic responsibility.

Effects on Members

AmeriCorps' emphasis on providing service, in addition to member development, appears to have served the members very well. Aguirre International analyzed changes in members' reported "life skills," those "...competencies needed to function effectively in the modern workplace and social environment" over the course of a service year (Aguirre 1999b). They also compared members' life skills to the change in life skills reported by a comparison group of similar individuals not engaged in national service. Their study concluded that over three-quarters of members had life skill gains, many of them "dramatic" gains, while the comparison group members did not. Moreover, all ethnic groups realized these gains and the improvements were particularly marked for members who entered the program with limited skills. Those in human services programs appeared to gain the most.

FIGURE 6. PERCENT OF AMERICORPS MEMBERS WHO COMPLETE A TERM OF SERVICE AND BECOME ELIGIBLE TO EARN AN EDUCATION AWARD 1995-1999



Source: National Service Trust Database. Corporation for National Service.

Data from members also suggested that their appreciation for the importance of civic engagement was strongly affected by national service. Members left service with an increased appreciation for others and with a better understanding of community issues. All (99%) planned to volunteer in the future and many indicated considering service-oriented careers following their AmeriCorps experience (Aguirre 1999b). These outcomes are corroborated by data from AmeriCorps members collected at their exit from service: nearly all report their intention to continue volunteering and the majority say that their AmeriCorps experience was influential in that commitment.

Report of Secondary Performance Indicators

Some of the indicators originally included in the Corporation’s revised fiscal 1999 performance plan have been modified or dropped (see Table 6). In 1999, the Corporation conducted a review of the 1999 performance plan’s indicators and the data systems supporting them. In some cases, collecting the data annually proved infeasible and the collection has been shifted to intermittent program evaluations. For example, three indicators related to literacy and after-school activities, which planners expected to gather annually, will be covered in future intermittent evaluations of tutoring and literacy activities.

An indicator showing members’ rating of their service experience was dropped for two reasons. First, a review of the data over the first four years of AmeriCorps showed satisfaction uniformly high with no annual variation. Second, with the installation of WBRS at the beginning of program year 1999-2000, programs and members are no longer reporting these data as part of the AmeriCorps exit information.

The indicator measuring “percent of grantees meeting Corporation standards for success” has given way to the State Administrative Standards Project. An indicator more closely reflecting this initiative was added to the fiscal 2001 performance plan.

The “percent of community representatives rating projects as highly successful” will be reported in the fiscal 2000 report. This information was to have been part of the Community Impact Rating Survey scheduled for 1999, but implementation was delayed. It is now scheduled for late in 2000.

Table 6 shows the disposition of the secondary indicators. Note that future performance reports will not cover these indicators.

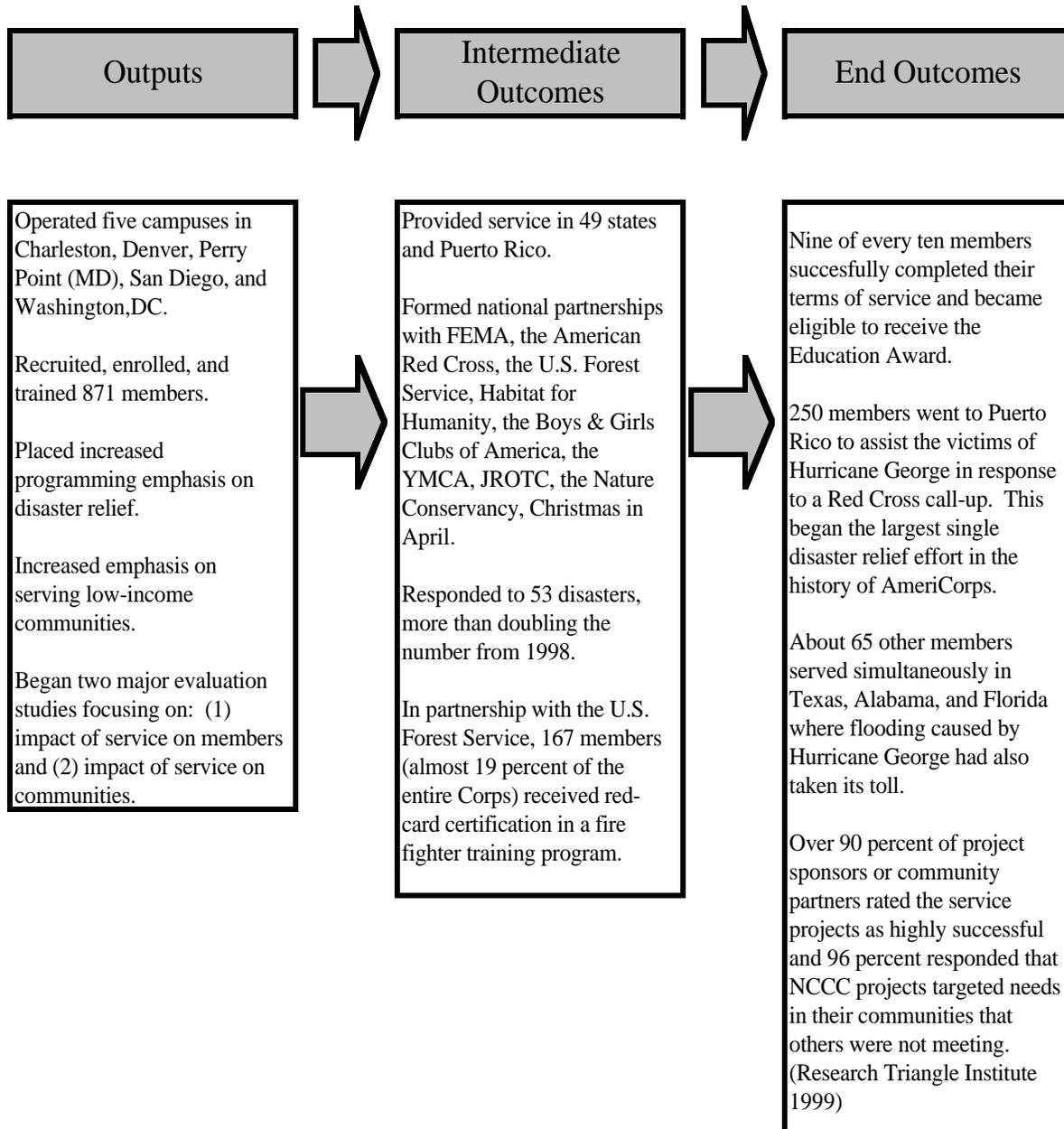
| TABLE 6. SECONDARY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | | | |
|--|--------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Secondary Performance Indicators | Goal | Result | Status |
| Number of community volunteers generated and organized annually by AmeriCorps*State and National members to serve in elementary school reading activities. | 45,000 | Data will be collected in intermittent program evaluations | Dropped as an annual indicator |
| Number of AmeriCorps*State and National members annually providing tutoring to elementary school children. | 7,500 | Data will be collected in intermittent program evaluations | Dropped as an annual indicator |
| Number of AmeriCorps*State and National grantees annually engaged in after-school activities. | Baseline to be set | Data will be collected in intermittent program evaluations | Dropped as an annual indicator |
| Percent of Members rating program as offering a successful service experience. | 90% | Data are unavailable | Dropped |
| Percent of grantees and subgrantees meeting Corporation standards for success. | 85% | Changed to State Standards | Modified |
| Percent of community representatives rating projects as highly successful. | 90% | Available in 2000 | Modified |

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FIGURE 7. AMERICORPS*NCCC SUMMARY OF 1999 PERFORMANCE RESULTS



CHAPTER 2. AMERICORPS*NATIONAL CIVILIAN COMMUNITY CORPS

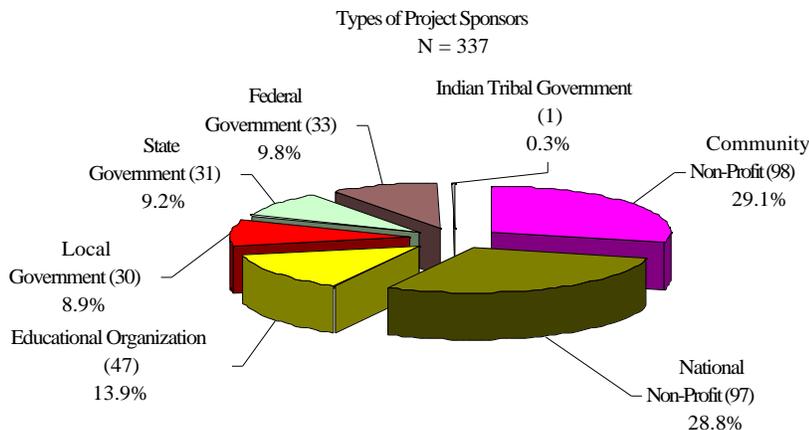
Modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps and the United States military, the National Civilian Community Corps, a full-time residential service program, was proposed by Senators Boren, McCain, Warner, Dole, Wofford, Nunn, Kennedy, Mikulski, Simon, Dixon, Domenici, Reid and Seymour in 1991 and enacted into law in 1993. Since AmeriCorps*NCCC was launched in 1994, more than 20,000 young Americans have applied for membership. Only 6,000, however, have been able to serve due to level funding since 1995. Members serve for ten months on a wide range of team-based service projects in collaboration with local sponsors in almost every state and territory. AmeriCorps*NCCC members are diverse; teams are made up of young people from a variety of backgrounds. The average age of members is about 21 years. Members without their high school diplomas serve alongside college graduates.

AmeriCorps*NCCC has five campuses located on closed military bases in San Diego, California; Charleston, South Carolina, and Denver, Colorado; a veterans medical facility in Perry Point, Maryland; and a municipal facility in Washington, DC. Projects focus on environmental activities, education, human needs, and disaster response; 50 percent of all projects are conducted in low-income communities. Project sponsors include non-profit community-based and national organizations, park services, educational institutions, and state and local governments. Service-learning is an integral part of AmeriCorps*NCCC's project activities, residential experience, and approach to member development.

“Because NCCC volunteers are trained in disaster relief and fire fighting, their deployment to disaster and emergency situations has become an important component of our recovery efforts.” -- James L. Witt, Director, FEMA

“The AmeriCorps volunteers are revitalizing the involvement of youth in the American Red Cross. Youth are the future of the American Red Cross.” -- Armond Mascelli, Senior Director of Disaster Services for the American Red Cross

FIGURE 8. TYPES OF PROJECT SPONSORS
Program Year 1998-99



Source: AmeriCorps*NCCC Service Project Database System. Corporation for National Service.

Outcomes

In fiscal 1999, 871 members completed 478 projects in 49 states and Puerto Rico and assisted citizens on 53 disaster relief projects (see Table 7). Ninety-two percent of the members successfully completed a full term of service. The average percent of expected service time completed by this group of AmeriCorps*NCCC members was 103 percent. That this exceeds 100 percent is the result of two factors: the high completion rate and the practice on the part of many members of serving more hours than the minimum required to earn the education award.

| TABLE 7. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Key Indicators for 1999 | | | |
| Key Indicators | Goal | Result | Goal Met? |
| Number of members enrolled. Source: <i>National Service Trust Database</i> . | 800 | 871 | YES |
| Average percent of expected service time completed by AmeriCorps*NCCC. Source: <i>National Service Trust Database</i> . | Baseline to be set ⁱ | 103% | Not Applicable |
| Percent of members who complete a term of service and become eligible to receive the education award. Source: <i>National Service Trust Database</i> . | 80% | 92% | YES |
| Number of states in which projects are completed. Source: <i>NCCC Project Completion Report</i> . | 50 | 49 and Puerto Rico | YES |

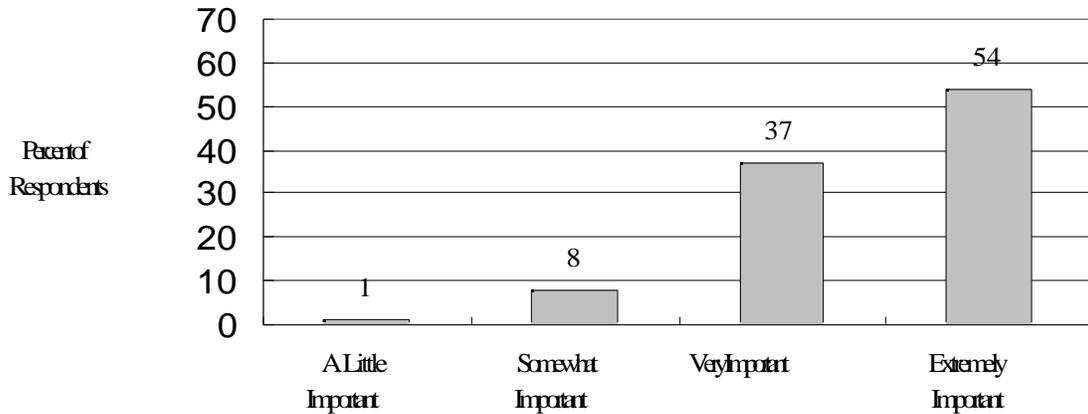
Accomplishment and evaluative data for AmeriCorps*NCCC offer evidence that the program provides a wide range of valuable service. Members who served in fiscal 1999 overwhelmingly believe that their AmeriCorps*NCCC experience contributed to their understanding of civic responsibility as well as their commitment to community service (Westat 2000). The first of three phases of an outcome evaluation of AmeriCorps*NCCC was completed in fiscal 1999. The evaluation consisted of eight case studies. Five of the eight projects studied were found to have direct outcomes for members, project sponsoring agencies, and service recipients. Phase two of this study is ongoing and consists of an examination of 108 projects. In addition to these evaluation studies, a longitudinal study of members is currently underway, and an independent evaluation of members' experiences is conducted annually.

The Corporation completed a Community Rating Survey for AmeriCorps*NCCC in January 2000. AmeriCorps*NCCC conducted 330 projects in program year 1998-1999, and of these the survey randomly sampled 240. Data were collected via telephone from the director or key contact person at the organization or agency sponsoring the AmeriCorps*NCCC project in a community. The purpose of the survey was to assess the communities' satisfaction with various aspects of the services provided to them by the AmeriCorps*NCCC. Over 90 percent of project sponsors or community partners rated the service projects as highly successful and 96 percent

ⁱ When the 1999 performance plan was developed, data systems supporting this indicator were still under development. The Corporation is now able to calculate this statistic accurately, using the National Service Trust database. The goals on this indicator for 2000 and 2001 will be set in relation to 1999 performance.

responded that AmeriCorps*NCCC projects targeted needs in their communities that others were not meeting (See Figure 9).

FIGURE 9. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: COMMUNITY IMPACT RATINGS
 Importance of AmeriCorps*NCCC Services to the Community
 Program Years 1994-1998



Source: Community Impact Rating Survey. Research Triangle Institute, 1999

AmeriCorps*NCCC achieved impressive results in fiscal 1999 with no increase in funding. Members worked long hours doing hard and important work—and the results are visible in communities across the country (See Table 8). The goal of completing 325 projects was exceeded by 47 percent .

AmeriCorps*NCCC did not complete a project in the state of Indiana, but considering the completion of an unanticipated project in Puerto Rico, NCCC was close enough to be rated as having completed the goal of a project in every state. AmeriCorps*NCCC program accomplishments demonstrate the impact that a full time residential service experience can have on communities and the young Americans who serve.

Disaster Relief

The Federal Emergency Management Center, the American Red Cross, and the U.S. Forest Service are the primary sponsors of AmeriCorps*NCCC disaster relief efforts. As a part of the American Red Cross National Disaster Response Network, AmeriCorps* NCCC members are trained and certified in CPR, first aid, mass care, damage assessment, and family assistance. Fire fighting is also an important aspect of AmeriCorps*NCCC’s disaster activities. In partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, 167 members (almost 19 percent of the entire Corps) were red-card certified in a rigorous and challenging fire fighter training program.

| TABLE 8. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORTS^j | |
|--|---|
| A Sample of Accomplishments from 1999 | |
| Emphasis Area | Selected Service Accomplishments |
| All Areas | 1.4 million hours of service in 49 states and Puerto Rico and 9,000 volunteers leveraged |
| Education | 31,500 students tutored or mentored 580 summer and environmental education programs organized or facilitated |
| Health and Human Needs | 2,500 senior citizens assisted 3,200 homeless people helped |
| Environment and Neighborhood Restoration | 200,000 trees or shrubs planted 4,250 miles of trail constructed or restored 750 homes constructed or renovated |
| Disaster Relief | 83,000 people assisted in disaster areas 40,500 meals served to disaster victims 780,000 pounds of clothing distributed to disaster victims |

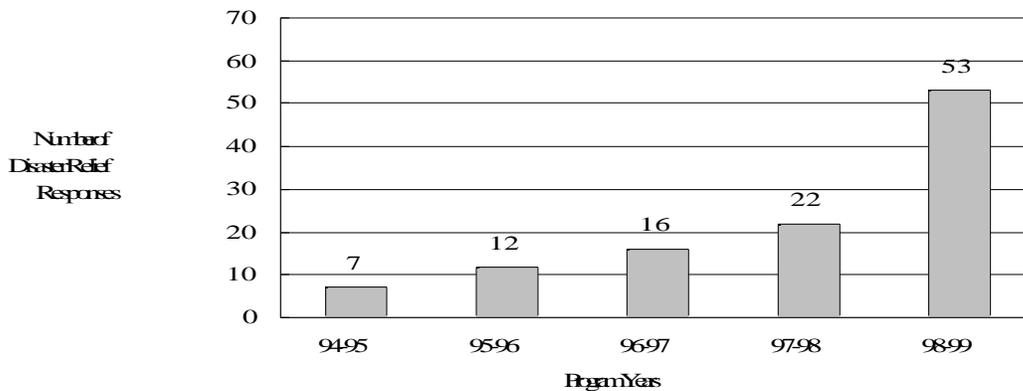
Source: AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps Project Database.

In just five years, AmeriCorps*NCCC disaster relief responses have increased from seven disasters to 53 in fiscal 1999; about 11 percent of the projects portfolio. AmeriCorps*NCCC completed almost as many disaster projects in year five as had been completed in the first four years. Very soon after team leaders and members reported to the AmeriCorps*NCCC campuses to begin the fiscal 1999 program year, they were deployed to Puerto Rico to assist the victims of Hurricane Georges. This began the largest single disaster relief effort in the history of AmeriCorps with over 250 NCCC members serving in Puerto Rico in response to an American Red Cross call-up. At the same time, about 65 other members served in Texas, Alabama, and Florida, where flooding caused by Hurricane Georges had also taken a toll.

The 1998-1999 program year was auspicious for AmeriCorps*NCCC members. For the first time since NCCC began collaborating with FEMA, American Red Cross, and the U.S. Forest Service, members served in every major disaster during 1999. These national partners also counted on NCCC to support the full extent of their disaster response programs. In recent years, NCCC has expanded its emergency response efforts to include disaster preparedness and long-term recovery efforts. In fiscal 1999, members served on disaster preparedness projects in California, Colorado, Virginia, and Wisconsin; and on long-term disaster recovery projects in Alabama, North Dakota, New York, and Texas.

^j The data derive from the Corporation's accomplishment reporting system, are not subject to audit, and should be considered approximate indicators of level of performance. Independent reviews conducted of the accomplishment reporting process in earlier years found that the reported results were accurate reflections of effort. In fact, programs were frequently found to underreport accomplishments.

FIGURE 10. AMERICORPS*NCCC DISASTER RELIEF RESPONSES PER YEAR
Program Years 1994-1998



Source: AmeriCorps*NCCC Service Project Database System. Corporation for National Service.

AmeriCorps*NCCC concluded program year 1998-1999 the same way it started the year -- with an emphasis on disaster response. Hurricane Floyd inflicted a tremendous amount of destruction in North Carolina. At FEMA's request, AmeriCorps*NCCC deployed team leaders to North Carolina who were still in training to begin what became a long-term response that is ongoing. Team leaders were quickly followed by members as the new class completed the Corps Training Institute program. As members supported FEMA in the wake of Hurricane Floyd, 18 members from the Western Region campus were fighting wildfires in southern California.

Serving with Community Volunteers

An important goal of AmeriCorps*NCCC is to include local volunteers whenever possible. The involvement of volunteers helps to ensure that certain project activities can be sustained beyond AmeriCorps*NCCC participation, contributes to getting more done in a shorter timeframe, and provides leadership and organizational skills development opportunities for members. The community impact survey conducted by Research Triangle Institute found that 87 percent of respondents felt that the services and activities provided by AmeriCorps*NCCC teams in fiscal 1999 fostered greater community involvement beyond the scope of a single project (Research Triangle Institute 2000).

AmeriCorps*NCCC members are highly trained and organized, and are particularly effective at mobilizing and supervising other volunteers. Project sponsors rely heavily on full-time NCCC members to supervise and thereby enhance the effectiveness of their part-time volunteers. For every NCCC member in service in fiscal 1999, ten local volunteers served on NCCC projects. The activities that NCCC members perform to engage more volunteers on service projects range from simple outreach to coordinating volunteer activities at project sites. NCCC wants to expand the involvement of local volunteers in the service that NCCC members perform. NCCC also seeks to serve as a resource to project sponsors who want to engage large numbers of volunteers on special events, but lack the resources to plan for and manage a project of this size.

Coordination of Large Scale Events and Large Groups of Volunteers. AmeriCorps*NCCC members make a big difference for organizations conducting major volunteer efforts. Scenic Hudson, a private non-profit agency in New York whose mission is to protect and preserve the Hudson Valley environment and riverfront communities, wanted help coordinating the annual Great River Sweep, an event that has gained increased momentum since the Hudson River was designated an American Heritage River. They came to the AmeriCorps*NCCC. Members recruited and coordinated 2,000 volunteers from 80 communities to participate in a massive clean up along the Hudson. Because of NCCC, Scenic Hudson was able to double the size and scope of the Great River Sweep.

Another example of AmeriCorps*NCCC members effectively coordinating large numbers of volunteers is the Habitat for Humanity Collegiate Challenge. Members coordinated the efforts of almost 2,000 students who volunteered with Habitat during their spring breaks. The Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service also provides an opportunity for NCCC members to effectively engage and lead volunteers. In Washington, DC members worked with DC Housing Authority and 200 volunteers on rehabilitating two senior citizens housing units. In NCCC's single largest non-disaster service activity, 235 members assisted with the 1999 Special Olympics World Summer Games. Members served as delegation assistants and helped to coordinate many of the thousands of volunteers who helped with the Games.

While AmeriCorps*NCCC performed service with a multitude of project sponsors, overall the service projects reflect NCCC's growing commitment to collaborate with national organizations. In an effort to meet the greatest need and to provide the greatest overall return for the residents of the communities being served, NCCC has developed broad-based alliances with national organizations that have affiliates in communities throughout the country. In addition to NCCC's national partnerships with FEMA, the American Red Cross, and the U.S. Forest Service, NCCC implemented national initiatives with Habitat for Humanity, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the YMCA, JROTC, the Nature Conservancy, Christmas in April, and faith based institutions.

The two largest national partnerships that resulted in the greatest number of completed projects focused on low-income housing and youth development issues. Alliances with the Habitat for Humanity and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America have provided AmeriCorps*NCCC with a unique opportunity to work collaboratively with other organizations to address compelling needs at national and local levels.

Habitat for Humanity. AmeriCorps*NCCC performed 33 separate projects with Habitat for Humanity sites across the country. This represents an 80 percent increase over the previous year. In addition to the seven Collegiate Challenge sites, NCCC members supported Habitat's new

“My wife and I worked as volunteers in a program that provides services for handicapped children. An AmeriCorps*NCCC team from Charleston worked with us and were fantastic with the children. All of the volunteers worked extremely hard and were patient, loving and caring. If these young adults are representative of the AmeriCorps*NCCC program, then national service is on the right track. This is one expenditure of my tax dollars that I feel is well spent.” -- Tyson Graham, Columbus, Mississippi, June 17, 1998

“It is through our partnership with NCCC that Habitat is able to create the awareness and generate the results that help to address our ultimate goal of the elimination of poverty housing.”
-- Michael Williard,
Director, Program
Enhancement, Habitat for
Humanity International

initiative focused on home building in communities damaged by severe weather and helped to build five homes in Birmingham, Alabama. In support of Habitat's Native American initiative, NCCC members helped to renovate seven homes on the Cherokee River Reservation at Eagle Butte, South Dakota. Members also supported Habitat's interest in constructing homes in low-income Hispanic communities when a team helped build three homes in Edinburg, Texas.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America. In support of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America Safe Summer Program, AmeriCorps*NCCC teams served at 26 Clubs over a two-month period. Members renovated the facilities and helped coordinate and implement after-school and summer programming for the youth at the Clubs. This project was so successful that the NCCC level of involvement will increase by 100 percent in fiscal 2000.

National partnerships enable AmeriCorps*NCCC to support the voluntary sector in solving many of the country's most pressing problems including housing and safe places for children and youth. NCCC is working with the YMCA to upgrade facilities and develop programming for children, with Christmas in April to build housing, and with The Nature Conservancy to develop environmental educational programs and build trails. NCCC's collaboration with national partners reflects a trend towards national initiatives with local implementation.

This collaborative approach to working with national partners is a powerful service multiplier, with other non-profit organizations and government agencies learning first hand what the NCCC can do to meet the compelling needs in communities across the nation. In order to respond to this escalating call for service support, the NCCC will continue to maximize its service effectiveness.

Outcomes from Program Evaluation Studies

No formal evaluation studies on the results and outcomes of AmeriCorps*NCCC are yet available. Two major studies are underway, however. One study is the *Longitudinal Research on National Service Participation*, begun during 1999 and planned to continue for 3-5 years. This study focuses on improvements in the lives of members resulting from their service. The second study is the *AmeriCorps*NCCC Community Impact Evaluation*, also started in 1999. This impact study is investigating the degree of program impact on communities and the ability of communities to sustain projects after AmeriCorps*NCCC members depart. Results available from these studies will appear in the next annual performance report for AmeriCorps*NCCC, covering fiscal 2000.

Report of Secondary Performance Indicators

In 1999, the Corporation conducted a review of the 1999 performance plan's indicators and the data systems supporting them. One result of that review was the decision to reduce the number of indicators. Reviewers outside the Corporation, including the Office of Management and Budget, had suggested that the plan would benefit by reducing the number of indicators and focusing on the key indicators. The Corporation responded by reducing the number of indicators. For AmeriCorps*NCCC, the number dropped from seven to four key indicators (as shown in Table 7). The results for the three remaining secondary indicators are shown in Table 9. The first two indicators listed in Table 9 will not be included in future performance plans or reports of the Corporation. The fourth, "percent of community representatives rating projects as highly successful" was discussed earlier (see Figure 8). The Community Impact Rating Survey used to collect the data for this indicator will be undertaken every other year and not annually. Therefore,

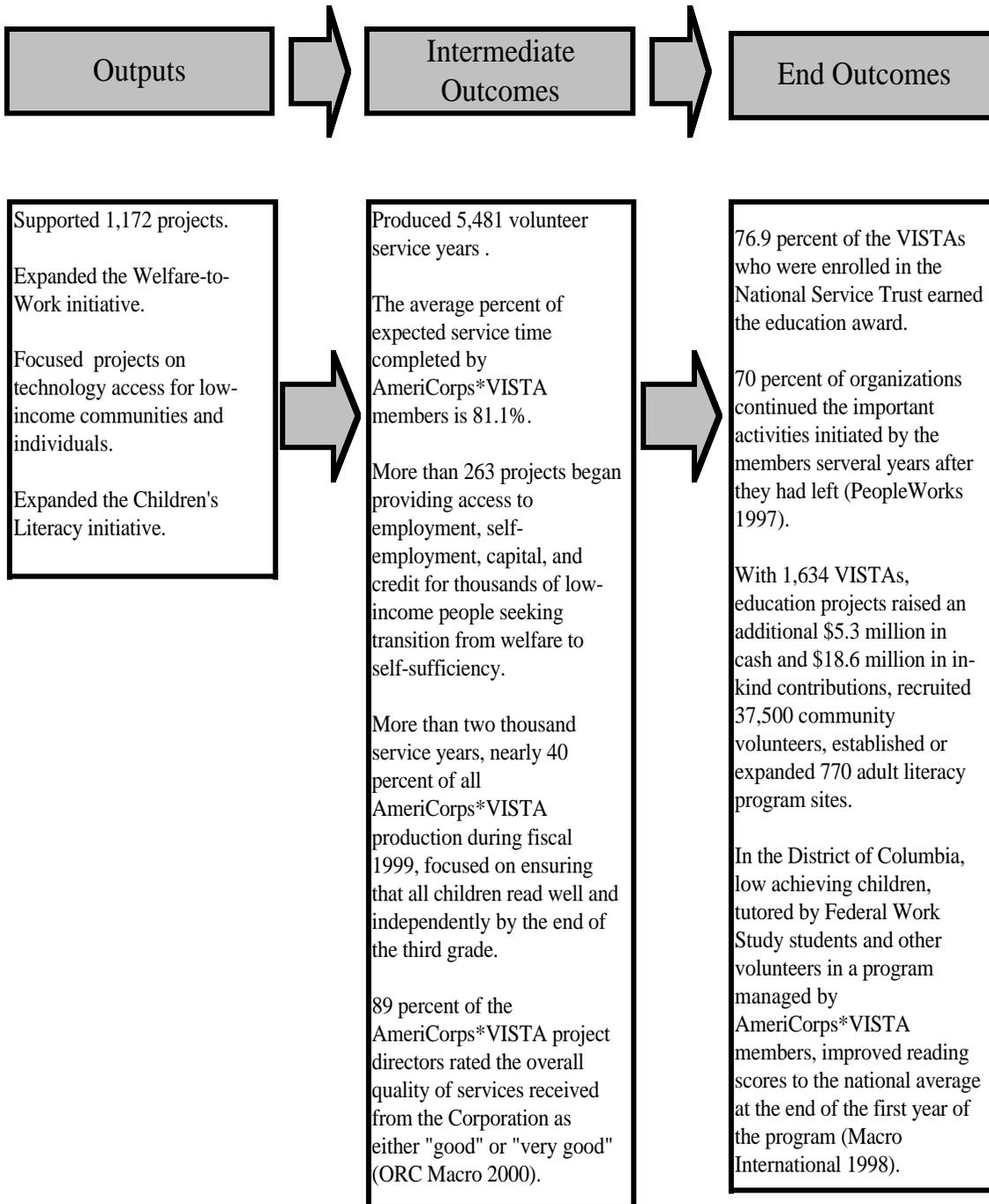
it will not be reported as an annual performance indicator, but it will still be included as one of the program’s performance measures, as one type of customer satisfaction result.

| TABLE 9. SECONDARY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | | | |
|--|------|--------|----------|
| Secondary Performance Indicators | Goal | Result | Status |
| Number of completed projects that help solve the nation’s unmet education, public safety, environment, other human needs, including disaster relief. Source: <i>NCCC Project Completion Report</i> . | 325 | 478 | Dropped |
| Percent of projects that will be completed in low-income communities with significant compelling needs. Source: <i>NCCC Project Completion Report</i> . | 40% | 50% | Dropped |
| Percent of community representatives rating projects as highly successful. Source: <i>Community Impact Surveys</i> . | 90% | 90% | Modified |

References

Research Triangle Institute. 2000. *Community Impact Rating Survey for AmeriCorps*NCCC*. Research Triangle Park, NC.
 Westat. 2000. *Analysis of Responses to the Class V Exit Survey*. Rockville, MD.

FIGURE 11. AMERICORPS*VISTA SUMMARY OF 1999 PERFORMANCE RESULTS



CHAPTER 3. AMERICORPS*VISTA

The AmeriCorps*VISTA program is designed to meet unmet needs in low-income communities. AmeriCorps*VISTA members serve on locally sponsored projects on a full-time basis for one year. Members work and live in the communities in which they serve. The designs for member assignments seek to create a unique working partnership among the project's sponsoring organization, the community, and the private sector. The result of this partnership is to ensure the sustainability of activities started by members. In order to sustain local projects, members focus on building community capacity, mobilizing private and public resources, recruiting community volunteers and increasing self-reliance.

AmeriCorps*VISTA program performance in fiscal 1999 can be understood by focusing on six areas:

- Member recruitment and development
- Service accomplishments
- Sustainability and capacity building in low-income communities
- The cost share program
- Customer satisfaction
- New program initiatives for fiscal 1999.

In the annual performance plan for 1999, AmeriCorps*VISTA set targets for seven key annual performance indicators. The program substantially met or exceeded six of the seven goals (see Table 10).

Member Recruitment and Development

AmeriCorps*VISTA members are recruited for the skills, experience, and commitment they bring to the project. They come from all walks of life, all geographical areas, all economic levels and all age groups. Approximately 15 percent are 50 years of age or older, and more than 33 percent are between the ages of 18 and 27. Nearly 50 percent are college graduates and about the same percentage are minorities. It is a diverse group, which serves both the member and their projects well.

New members begin immediately with immersion in a pre-service orientation to be followed within 120 days by intensive early service training. In addition, the AmeriCorps*VISTA program has made extensive efforts to train all new AmeriCorps*VISTA project supervisors who have the responsibility to further develop the capacity of members to build community capacity. The Corporation has significantly expanded support for VISTA training, both for members and for supervisors, during the past year.

During fiscal 1999, AmeriCorps*VISTA produced 5,481 service years through appropriated funds on almost 1,200 projects nationwide (see Table 10). In addition, the \$73 million VISTA appropriation supported almost 900 Summer Associates and the training, health care, child care and other support services for all members enrolled in the cost share program (1,000 members in cost share agreements).

AmeriCorps*VISTA Mobilizes a Community

The Safety Net for Abused Persons (SNAP) project in Iberia, Louisiana mobilized community volunteers, and in-kind and cash donations to support SNAP's domestic violence shelter. Upon completion of the project, SNAP's volunteer program increased from 30 to 60 volunteers. The shelter expanded from 16 to 22 beds. Community volunteers donated 11,000 additional hours. And, the center expanded its outreach by 50 percent, from under 600 victims to 900.

| TABLE 10. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR AMERICORPS*VISTA | | | |
|---|--------------------|--------|----------------|
| Key Indicators for 1999 | | | |
| Key Indicators | Goal | Result | Goal Met? |
| Number of AmeriCorps*VISTA projects. Source: <i>VISTA Management System</i> . | 1,200 | 1,172 | YES |
| Number of VISTA service years completed (excluding negotiated cost-share agreements). Source: <i>VISTA Management System</i> . | 5,500 | 5,481 | YES |
| Number of VISTA service years supported by cost-share agreements. Source: <i>VISTA Management System</i> and <i>VISTA Cost Share Database</i> . | 1,350 | 1,000 | NO |
| Average percent of expected service time completed by AmeriCorps*VISTA members (retention rate). Source: <i>National Service Trust Database</i> . | Baseline to be set | 82% | Not applicable |
| Percent of those VISTAs who enroll in the Trust earning the Ed Award. Source: <i>National Service Trust Database</i> . ^k | 80% | 88% | YES |
| Number of AmeriCorps*VISTA projects focused on welfare-to-work challenges. Source: <i>VISTA Management System</i> . | 250 | 263 | YES |
| Number of AmeriCorps*VISTA projects focused on technology issues. Source: <i>VISTA Management System</i> . | 15 | 18 | YES |
| Number of VISTA service years completed in projects where the focus of activity is children's literacy. Source: <i>VISTA Management System</i> . | 2,200 | 2,231 | YES |

Two significant member retention statistics are part of AmeriCorps*VISTA's annual performance goals. One goal concerns the percent of members enrolling in the education trust who earn the education award upon conclusion of AmeriCorps*VISTA service. During fiscal 1999, 88.1 percent of the members who ended their term of service earned an education award.

The second retention statistic concerns the amount of service completed as a percentage of service time expected. This statistic applies to all members, including those who opt for the \$1,200 end-of-service adjustment allowance instead of the education award. The average percent of expected service time completed by AmeriCorps*VISTA members in 1999 was 81.1 percent. This result will become the baseline for setting performance goals in 2000 and beyond.

^k This indicator is based on those members who were enrolled in the Trust to earn the education award at the time they ended their term of service. During the tenth month of service, members may choose to switch from earning the education award to receiving a cash stipend. Those choosing to make the switch are not included in calculating the rate for this indicator.

Service Accomplishments

A survey by Westat (1999) collected data on specific project accomplishments from the 700 AmeriCorps*VISTA projects in operation for at least nine months before September 1997.¹ This bi-annual survey found that “the VISTA program is fulfilling its legislative mandate to alleviate poverty and poverty-related problems, to generate private sector resources, to encourage volunteer service, and to strengthen the capacity of local agencies and organizations to carry out this anti-poverty mission” (see Table 11).

Sustainability and Capacity Building in Low-income Communities

A long-term goal of AmeriCorps*VISTA projects is to continue the work started by VISTA members after they leave and the Corporation’s support has ended. Over the past five years, an average of 68 percent of all projects continued to operate three to five years after the members left their assignments (see Table 12). AmeriCorps*VISTA expects that members will train their replacements in local organizations and communities, thus allowing continuation of member-initiated activities after resources are withdrawn.

A significant area of service is capacity building. Members work with local organizations to increase their capabilities for delivering community services. AmeriCorps*VISTA members raise funds, develop volunteer recruitment and management initiatives, mount public education campaigns, and provide training and technical assistance.

A recent evaluation of AmeriCorps*VISTA accomplishments found that the average amount of support generated per member for project activities was \$24,000 (PeopleWorks 1997). In addition, each member recruited an average of 42 volunteers. In a recent follow up evaluation, preliminary indications are that each member will have recruited an average of 60 volunteers. These 60 volunteers will donate 1,300 hours of service annually to local projects.

Cost Share Program

The AmeriCorps*VISTA cost share allows local sponsoring organizations to enter into agreements with AmeriCorps*VISTA, using their own resources to pay for basic member support costs. Since 1994, the number of members funded in cost share agreements has risen from 560 to 1,000. Over 200 sponsoring organizations participate in cost share, which generates about \$5.5 million in non-federal cash contributions to direct member costs per year.

The Panhandle Health District in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho sponsored a statewide immunization project and provided funds to support the AmeriCorps*VISTA members assigned through this agreement. During the four years of this project, members raised Idaho’s infant (age 0-2) immunization rates from 50 percent in 1994 to 72 percent in 1998. They built concerned citizen coalitions in each health district, which continue to address community immunization issues. Volunteer “baby trackers” continue to deliver reminders to parents when each set of immunizations is due. Ongoing public education and awareness campaigns are enduring legacies of this cost-shared AmeriCorps*VISTA effort.

In 1999, AmeriCorps*VISTA did not meet its goal of 1,350 service years supported by cost-share agreement, reaching only 1,000. This was due to less participation than originally anticipated in

¹ An update of this bi-annual survey is underway and will be available for reporting in the 2000 performance report.

| TABLE 11. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORTS | |
|---|---|
| A Sample of Accomplishments from 1999 ^m | |
| Emphasis Area | Selected Service Accomplishments by AmeriCorps*VISTA members |
| Education With 1,634 VISTAs | Helped education projects raise an additional \$5.3 million in cash and \$18.6 million in in-kind contributions. Recruited 37,500 community volunteers. Established or expanded 770 adult literacy program sites. |
| Housing and Homelessness with 848 VISTAs | Helped raise \$12.7 million in cash and \$6.9 million in in-kind contributions. Helped 2,300 households obtain housing loans. Facilitated the rehabilitation of 2,900 housing units and construction of 1,100 new ones. |
| Community and Economic Development with 701 VISTAs | Helped raise \$6.2 million in cash and \$5.9 million in in-kind contributions. Placed 3,700 individuals in jobs at an average hourly wage of \$6.77. Established or expanded 235 programs in empowerment zones and enterprise communities. |
| Health and Nutrition with 565 VISTAs | Established or expanded 170 immunization programs and immunized 47,200 children and youth. Established or expanded 90 food banks and ensured the distribution of more than four million pounds of food. Recruited about 9,000 community volunteers who provided 294,200 hours of community service. |
| Public Safety with 423 VISTAs | Boarded up 230 abandoned buildings and helped 3,000 households install new window or door locks. Established or expanded 27 victim assistance programs and served 11,500 individuals in victim assistance programs. Helped raise \$1.9 million in cash and \$6 million in in-kind contributions. |

Source: Westat, Inc. 1998. *1997 AmeriCorps*VISTA Accomplishments*. Rockville, MD.

the number of organizations supporting cost shares. A factor was a policy change in 1998 that increased by 25 percent the cost to the local project sponsors of the cost share program. AmeriCorps*VISTA changed its cost share policies in 2000 to give community-based

^m The data derive from the Corporation's accomplishment reporting system, are not subject to audit, and should be considered approximate indicators of level of performance. Independent reviews conducted of the accomplishment reporting process in earlier years found that the reported results were accurate reflections of effort. In fact, programs were frequently found to underreport accomplishments.

organizations increased flexibility to participate in this initiative. The Corporation has changed its cost share goal for 2000, adjusting it downward by 350.

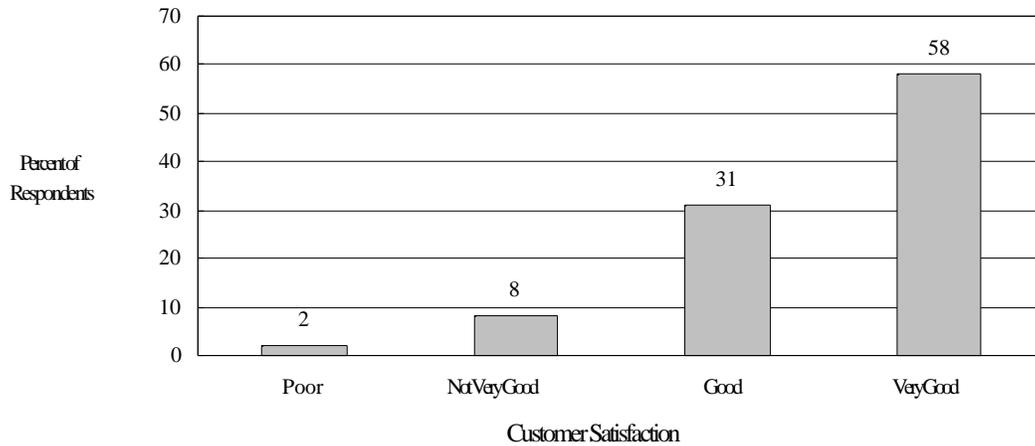
| TABLE 12. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: END OUTCOMES ESTABLISHED BY INDEPENDENT PROGRAM EVALUATION STUDIES A Sample of Outcomes from AmeriCorps*VISTA Programs | | |
|---|---|---|
| Outcomes | Findings | Source |
| Sustainability | <p>A study of AmeriCorps*VISTA concluded that nearly 70 percent of organizations continued the important activities initiated by the members several years after they had left.</p> <p>An earlier evaluation of the AmeriCorps*VISTA Summer Associates program concluded that it expanded the capacity of nonprofit and public sponsors to provide service to low-income communities.</p> | <p>People Works 1997</p> <p>ACTION 1993</p> |
| Tutoring | <p>In the District of Columbia, low achieving children, tutored by Federal Work Study students and other volunteers in a program managed by AmeriCorps*VISTA members, improved reading scores to the national average at the end of the first year of the program.</p> <p>A 1997 study of the Summer Reads program implemented by AmeriCorps*VISTA noted the following:</p> <p>“The vast majority of tutors completing a questionnaire (94%) agreed or strongly agreed that the children they worked with had improved their reading skills as a result of participating in the Summer Reads program. Similarly, most students completing a questionnaire (70%) believed that their reading skills had improved and that at least some of the improvement could be attributed to working with a tutor.”</p> | <p>Macro International 1998</p> <p>Macro International 1997</p> |
| Member Development | <p>An evaluation of the AmeriCorps*VISTA Summer Associates program noted that lower income members viewed the program as a way to gain work experience and as a bridge to gaining full-time employment.ⁿ</p> | ACTION 1993 |

Customer Satisfaction

In 1999, the Corporation began a series of customer satisfaction surveys of all national service programs. An independent research firm surveyed all 473 AmeriCorps*VISTA project directors (ORC Macro 2000). In a telephone survey, 81 percent of the sample responded to questions focusing on three essential areas of interest: (1) importance and performance of various Corporation functions; (2) quality of service received from the Corporation; and (3) factors having the greatest influence on overall satisfaction. For all essential performance areas, a majority of respondents gave positive satisfaction ratings (see Figure 12).

ⁿ This study was done by ACTION, a government agency, and a precursor to the Corporation for National Service, not by an independent contractor.)

FIGURE 12. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
Grantees Rate Their Satisfaction with Corporation Services in 1998



Source: *Evaluation of the 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey, AmeriCorps*VISTA Program*. ORC Macro, Calverton, MD

Eighty-nine percent of the AmeriCorps*VISTA project directors rated the overall quality of service received in the past year from the Corporation as either “good” or “very good.” On a four-point scale (“poor” = 1 and “very good” = 4), the average rating of overall quality of service was 3.5.

A detailed analysis of the results revealed that five factors had the greatest impact on overall satisfaction with the Corporation’s AmeriCorps*VISTA program:

1. The quality of service received from Corporation State Offices.
2. The Corporation’s performance in providing a vision of AmeriCorps*VISTA national service.
3. The Corporation’s performance in providing consistent information.
4. The Corporation’s sensitivity to local needs and conditions.
5. The quality of service received from the Corporation’s Office of Evaluation.

The Corporation is now analyzing the survey’s findings with the goals of identifying areas of performance most in need of improvement and determining how to bring about needed change.

Program Initiatives in Fiscal 1999

Welfare to Work Activities

In 1999, AmeriCorps*VISTA expanded its Welfare to Work initiative. As the time limits on public assistance began to expire, the number of members and projects that focus on the creation of economic opportunities for welfare recipients has expanded accordingly. During the year, more than 263 projects began providing access to employment, self-employment, capital, and credit for thousands of low-income people seeking transition from welfare to self-sufficiency (see Table 10).

One example of AmeriCorps*VISTA's Welfare to Work initiative is the Florida Rural Development Council in Tallahassee. Members attracted 35 businesses to locate in the rural communities of north central Florida. These small businesses have already generated 170 jobs for former welfare recipients.

AmeriCorps*VISTA members are serving in local community development credit unions to develop Individual Development Account (IDA) initiatives. The intent of IDAs is raising matching funds for the accounts of low-income persons. Local IDA initiatives provide counseling on home ownership, financial management, and small business development. At the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation in Oakland, California, a single member has raised \$190,000 in matches for individual development accounts that can then be used to help purchase a home, an education, or a small business.

Technology Access

The gap in technology access for low-income communities and individuals is a significant national issue that is being addressed by AmeriCorps*VISTA members and projects. AmeriCorps*VISTA members are involved in all aspects of technology development activities including assessing technology needs; design of technology plans; organizing computer learning centers; securing resources for hardware, software, and communications links; and, implementation of training programs.

An example of AmeriCorps*VISTA technology access programming is a unique partnership among the United Way of America, IBM, and AmeriCorps*VISTA. This project, Teaming for Technology, is enhancing leadership and technology skills at grassroots organizations. During fiscal 1999, AmeriCorps*VISTA funded 18 projects focused on technology issues. AmeriCorps*VISTAs provided more than \$1.8 million in technology hardware, software, and services to 800 non-profit agencies.

In Detroit, Teaming for Technology members have introduced forty non-profit organizations to the power of the Internet for the first time. Others received assistance in installing and understanding software that was already on hand. Still others were able to design their own Web

Leveraging Community Resources

In Southern California's Housing Development Corporation, two AmeriCorps*VISTA members were assigned to develop after-school programs for low-income students. The California Federal Bank awarded one member a grant for \$5,300 to buy educational software. Additional support came from Target Stores, who gave a member an in-kind grant to buy craft supplies for the after-school program. Together, these members recruited and managed over 50 community volunteers to assist with various after-school activities.

pages for the first time. At Detroit's Sacred Heart Church a full-fledged computer training program is serving more than 100 community members ranging in age from 5 to 85.

The Corporation anticipates a significant expansion of both the standard and cost-share programs in the technology access focus area in fiscal 2000 and beyond.

Children's Literacy

In fiscal 1999, AmeriCorps*VISTA continued its expanded Children's Literacy initiative. More than two thousand service years, nearly 40 percent of all AmeriCorps*VISTA production during fiscal 1999, focused on ensuring that all children read well and independently by the end of third grade. This initiative is a comprehensive, nationwide effort to create in school, after-school, weekend, and summer tutoring programs in reading (see Table 12). As part of this effort, AmeriCorps*VISTA members play an active role in recruiting, training and coordinating volunteer tutors from all walks of life including college students, senior citizens, and volunteers from the business and private voluntary sector.

Secondary Performance Indicators

In 1999, the Corporation conducted a review of the 1999 performance plan's indicators and the data systems supporting them. One result of that review was the decision to reduce the number of indicators. Reviewers outside the Corporation, including the Office of Management and Budget, had suggested that the plan would benefit by reducing the number of indicators and focusing on the key indicators. To comply with that suggestion, the Corporation reduced the number of indicators for AmeriCorps*VISTA from eleven to eight key indicators (as shown in Table 10). The remaining three, secondary indicators are shown in Table 13.

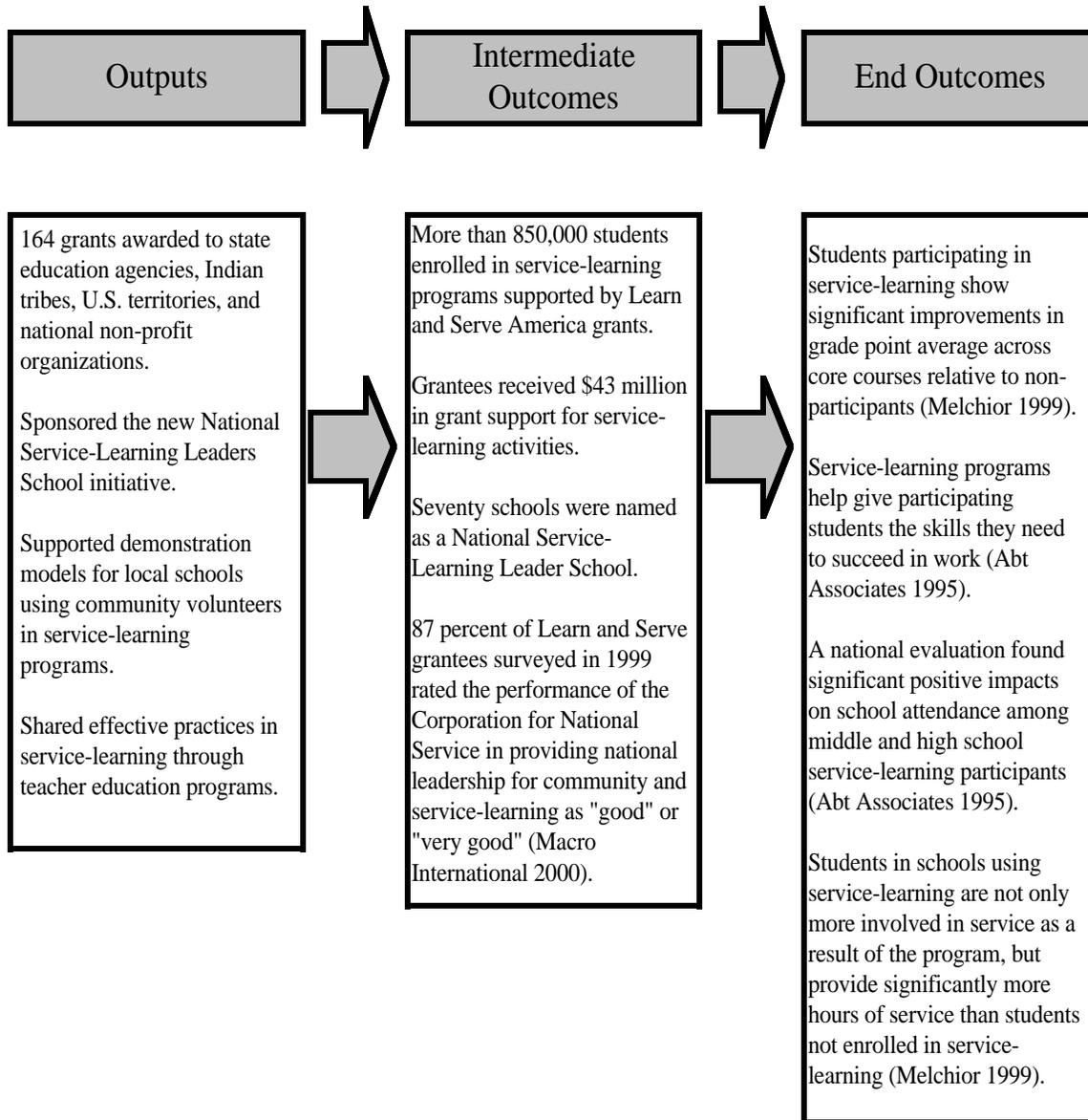
When the Corporation drafted its 1999 performance plan, the expectation was that these indicators would become part of an annual, data collection system. Resource constraints, however, have limited the compilation of these statistics to less frequent intervals. The first indicator, on sustainability, derived from a 1997 program evaluation. A re-study of this issue is currently underway and the results will be available for the 2000 performance report. The other two indicators are included in the bi-annual accomplishment reports discussed previously (See Table 11).

| TABLE 13. SECONDARY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | | | |
|---|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| Secondary Performance Indicators | Goal | Result | Status |
| Percent of services begun by AmeriCorps*VISTA projects in operation 2-3 yrs. after project conclusion (Baseline: 70 percent in 1997). | 70% | Not available | Modified |
| Number of community volunteers recruited for each VISTA service year achieved. | 30 | Not available | Modified |
| Ratio of cash and in-kind resources generated by VISTA members to direct federal support for VISTA projects. | 2:1 | Not available | Modified |

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FIGURE 13. LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA SUMMARY OF 1999 PERFORMANCE RESULTS



CHAPTER 4. LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA: K-12 SCHOOL-BASED, COMMUNITY-BASED, AND HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Many Americans view service as an important means to achieve public purposes. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the nation's schools and colleges. Service has become a tool for enhancing student academic achievement, connecting youth to their communities, and reforming educational institutions. The juncture of service and education has come to be known as service-learning and the Corporation for National Service through Learn and Serve America is a national leader in this field.

Learn and Serve America provides young people with opportunities to serve by supporting efforts to connect community service with academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility. These opportunities are the results of Learn and Serve America grants to state education agencies, state community service commissions, Indian tribes, U. S. territories, schools, colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations. Grantees create new service-learning programs, replicate existing models, and conduct training in how to design and implement programs.

Service-Learning Defined

Service-learning is a method by which students improve their academic learning and develop personal skills through structured service activities that meet community needs. The initiatives impact both the participants and the community. Students develop practical skills, self-esteem, and a sense of civic responsibility by planning and implementing their service activities. These activities provide students with opportunities to learn by preparing, leading, and reflecting on their service experiences.

In *schools and colleges*, service-learning is integrated into the academic curriculum. Teachers facilitate learning by creating opportunities for -- and with -- students so that they understand and analyze their service experiences in the context of their courses. In *community organizations*, service learning is integrated into youth programming and leadership development. Community leaders facilitate learning by establishing learning objectives closely linked with community goals.

Two factors distinguish service-learning from other forms of community service and volunteering. First, service-learning facilitates learning about the issues behind the community needs the students are addressing. Understanding the historical, sociological, and cultural contexts within which the needs surface is of critical importance. Secondly, service-learning is a reciprocal activity. It is the act of giving and receiving so that both parties in the service relationship teach and learn from one another.

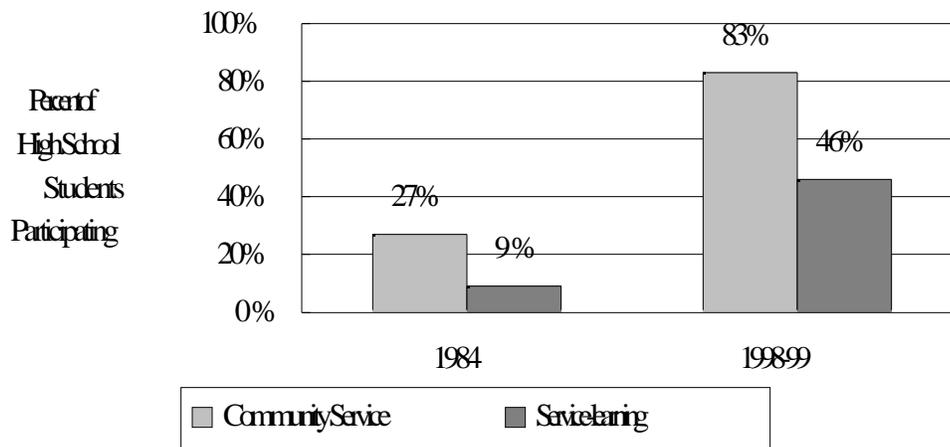
High School Students Roll Up Their Sleeves....

When a massive fish kill affected the nearby Roanoke River, the entire Jamesville (North Carolina) High School student body and their teachers worked together to develop curriculum-related, service-learning strategies that focused on cleaning up the river. Students hauled truckloads of old tires, appliances, and car parts out of the Roanoke River Refuge; produced a video and materials on the problem; and started a recycling program aimed at preventing pollution. They also helped the North Carolina Fish and Wildlife Service test water and combat alligator weed that clogs the river and its tributaries. The students are credited for developing a new environmentally friendly way that is now being widely used to kill the weed.

The Growth of Service-Learning

A recent study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (1999) surveyed a broad sample of public schools regarding the prevalence of community service and service-learning. The findings showed that 64 percent of all schools, including 83 percent of public high schools, have community service activities organized or recognized by the school (see Figure 14). Thirty-two percent of all public schools, including nearly half of all high schools, organize service-learning as part of their curriculum. These figures have grown considerably since 1984 when a study reported that service-learning was offered in only 9 percent of all high schools (Newmann and Rutter, 1985).

FIGURE 14. GROWTH OF SERVICE-LEARNING, 1984-1999



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (1999) and Newman and Rutter (1985).

Service-learning is widely recognized as a vehicle to help meet the goals of a variety of educational initiatives. Most importantly, local school districts across the country are increasingly using service-learning as a means of meeting state academic standards. Local efforts use service-learning activities to complement other national education programs, including School-to-Work and various titles of the Improving America's Schools. Because of the positive impacts on students' learning, behavior, and civic attitudes, many educators view service-learning as an effective vehicle for educational reform.

Community service efforts on college and university campuses are widespread. The College Board's 1999 annual study indicated that nearly half of the 1,800 colleges and universities surveyed take volunteer experience into consideration to various degrees when evaluating a student's admission application. Additionally, California Governor Gray Davis recently proposed a \$10 million initiative that would make service and service-learning opportunities available to all students in the state's public higher education system.

Higher education is increasingly integrating service into the curriculum. According to recent statistics, almost two million students (out of approximately 6.7 million) participate in service-

learning at four-year public and private institutions. Moreover, 1,200 community colleges, almost half the national total, offer service-learning courses.

Recently U. S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley and the Corporation's Chief Executive Officer Harris Wofford renewed a joint declaration of principles of service-learning. The declaration affirms the commitment of the two agencies to assist in developing quality service-learning programs in the nation's schools. An inter-agency working group of the U.S. Department of Education and the Corporation for National Service coordinate initiatives to implement the six principles of service-learning and education reform in the declaration.

As the field of service-learning continues to grow, one of the roles of Learn and Serve America is to foster the adoption of service-learning as a teaching methodology in K-12 and higher education institutions. Through grants and technical assistance, the scope of service-learning continues to broaden and the quality of service-learning programs continues to deepen.

How the Corporation for National Service Supports Service-Learning

The Corporation for National Service supports service-learning primarily through its Learn and Serve America grants program. Learn and Serve America provides funding to state education agencies (SEA), state commissions on national and community service, Indian tribes, U.S. territories, colleges and universities, and non-profit organizations. Grantees create new service-learning programs, replicate existing models, and train staff, faculty, adult volunteers, and students in service-learning. The Corporation leverages its investments through matching fund requirements for grantees in states and localities. The program requires that school- and community-based grantees provide progressively higher matches over time so that, by the fourth year of an initiative, cash or an in-kind match is fifty percent, or dollar-for-dollar, increasing the prospects for sustainability. Higher education grantees must match Corporation funds dollar-for-dollar from the first day of the grant. This requires that colleges and universities make a significant investment in the long-term sustainability of the initiative.

In fiscal 1999, the appropriation for Learn and Serve America was \$43 million. The Corporation funded 107 school-based and community-based programs and 57 higher education programs. These programs enrolled approximately 1,230,000 participants (See Table 14). As mandated by legislation, the Corporation reserved approximately:

- \$10,750,000 for grants for higher education programs.
- \$4,837,500 for grants to state commissions and grantmaking entities for community-based programs.
- \$821,300 for school-based grants to Indian tribes and U.S. Territories.

University Students Return to Elementary Schools....

The University of Pennsylvania's America Reads Partnership with the Drew Elementary School and the Wilson Elementary School in Philadelphia is a university-assisted, student-initiated, community school managed and supported program. The focus is on both school day and extended-day literacy promotion activities that run from Mondays through Thursdays – 3 to 4:30 p.m. – with over 80 instructional meetings each year. Fifty America Reads work-study university students from West Philadelphia High School and elementary school teachers staff the programs. Most of the student participants focus their academic study on teaching as well as service-learning. Activities include literacy tutoring, help with homework, and literacy-based enrichment activities.

- \$6,647,800 for competitive school-based grants to States, Indian tribes, or grantmaking entities.
- \$19,943,400 for formula allotment grants to state educational agencies (SEAs).

Figure 15 shows the percentages of funds received by these types of grantees.

| TABLE 14. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | | | |
|---|---------|------------------|------------|
| Key Indicators for 1999 | | | |
| Key Indicators | Goal | Result | Goal Met? |
| Number of K-12 and higher education grants. Source: <i>Department of Service Learning. Corporation for National Service.</i> | 169 | 164 ^o | YES |
| Number of students in projects supported by Learn and Serve America. Source: <i>Learn and Serve America Grantee Project Progress Reports. Department of Service Learning. Corporation for National Service.</i> | 824,000 | 1,230,000 | YES |
| Number of Leader Schools selected. Source: <i>Department of Service Learning. Corporation for National Service.</i> | 100 | 70 | NO |
| Number of high school students receiving Presidential Service Scholarships. Source: <i>Citizen Scholars Foundation.</i> | 10,000 | 3,164 | NO |

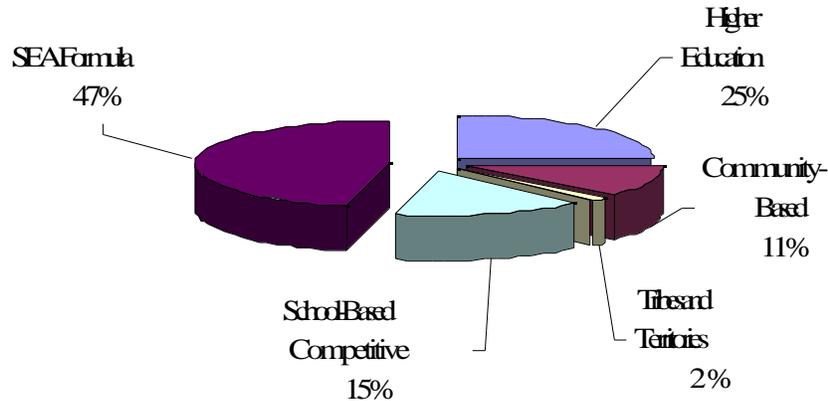
In addition to funding nearly 200 grants and more than 3,000 subgrants, the Department of Service-Learning provides leadership nationally for the growing field of service-learning. By working closely with numerous national organizations, the Department of Service-Learning staff keeps abreast of the directions of the field; links to policy and curriculum developments; and the connections between service, civic education, character education, campus engagement, and educational reform. Organizations cooperating with the Corporation in promoting service-learning include the Campus Compact, the National Youth Leadership Council, the Education Commission of the States' Compact for Learning and Citizenship, the Constitutional Rights Foundation, and the YMCA of the USA.

Department staff represent the Corporation for National Service at professional development forums. These include the U.S. Department of Education's Regional Conferences on Improving America's Schools and conferences of the American Association of School Administrators, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, and the American Association of Higher Education.

^o The result is five grants short of the target, a difference of only three percent. The Corporation considers this to be close enough to count as having met the goal.

FIGURE 15. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

Fiscal 1999



Source: Department of Service-Learning, Corporation for National Service.

The Department of Service-Learning administers several recognition programs: the President's Student Service Challenge – Scholarships and Awards -- and the National Service-Learning Leader Schools.

- **The President's Student Service Challenge.** Millions of students serve every day -- improving communities and making America stronger. The President's Student Service Challenge is an opportunity for schools, colleges, and community organizations to recognize young people for their outstanding community service and to encourage more young people to serve. The Challenge has two components, scholarships, and awards.
 - *President's Student Service Awards.* Students who serve at least 100 hours in a 12-month period are eligible for the President's Student Service Award. Students may be certified by schools, colleges, or community organizations and receive a specially designed gold pin with the presidential seal, a presidential certificate, and a letter from the President. Youth ages 5 to 14 who perform 50 hours of community service within a 12-month period receive a silver pin with the presidential seal as well as a presidential certificate and a letter from the President.
 - *President's Student Service Scholarships.* Each high school in the country may select two junior or senior students to receive a \$1,000 scholarship for outstanding service to the community. The Corporation for National Service provides \$500 for each scholarship matched with \$500 from the community. Scholarship recipients must have served at least 100 hours within a 12-month period. In addition, students receive the President's Student Service Award gold pin, as well as a presidential certificate and a letter from the President.

The goal was to award 10,000 Presidential Scholarships during fiscal 1999, but only 3,164 were awarded. This is a significant increase from the number of scholarships awarded in fiscal 1997 and 1998, which were 1,700 and 2,300, respectively. One reason for falling short of the goal was the inability of local schools to secure the \$500

match for each scholarship. The Corporation is looking for ways to support school principals in their efforts to secure matching funds including efforts to identify corporate and nonprofit sponsors. In addition, the Corporation has increased the number of scholarships for which schools are eligible from one to two each year. This will give participating schools an opportunity to secure a second scholarship and will provide a greater incentive for non-participating schools to join. The Corporation has also increased its outreach as a means to secure local school involvement and financial support.

- National Service-Learning Leader Schools. This Presidential initiative recognizes schools for excellence in service-learning. Middle schools and high schools receive White House recognition for improving learning and teaching at their schools and strengthening their communities through high quality, broad-based service-learning. Selection criteria include an extensive portfolio with detailed descriptions, statistics, and a variety of evidence such as syllabi, photographs, and student essays. The schools serve as models of excellence for two years by providing both awareness programs and professional development to other schools. In 1999, the Corporation received 136 Leader School applications and named 70 schools as “National Service Leader Schools” (see Table 14), 30 short of the goal. The number of schools selected reflects the judgments of peer reviewers and Corporation staff that it was appropriate to select only outstanding applicants during the first year of the program. The Corporation is working with state education agencies to improve the overall quality of the applicants for the next cycle. In addition, the feedback provided to rejected nominees in the first round of selections will lead to better applications that, in turn, will produce more applications that are successful.

Customer Satisfaction

In 1999, the Corporation began a series of customer satisfaction surveys of all national service programs. Using an independent research firm sampled opinion from 136 Learn and Serve America grantees. In the telephone survey, 83 percent of the sample responded. Questions focused on three essential areas of interest: (1) importance and performance of various Corporation functions; (2) quality of service received from the Corporation; and (3) factors having the greatest influence on overall satisfaction. For all essential performance areas, a majority of respondents gave positive satisfaction ratings.

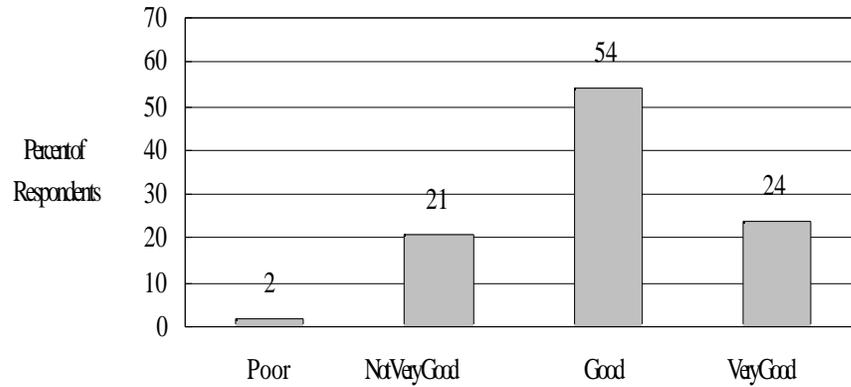
Seventy-eight percent of the Learn and Serve America grantees rated the overall quality of service received in the past year from the Corporation as either “good” or “very good.” On a four-point scale (“poor” = 1 and “very good” = 4), the average rating of overall quality of service was 3.0 (See Figure 16).

A detailed analysis of the results revealed that five aspects of Corporation support to service-learning grantees had the greatest impact on overall satisfaction with the Corporation’s performance:

- Ability to issue grants in a timely manner.
- Fostering collaborative efforts with other service-learning networks.
- Service received from the Corporation’s Grants Office.
- Providing national leadership for community service and service-learning.
- Providing training and technical assistance.

The Corporation is now conducting an in-depth analysis of the survey's findings with the goals of identifying areas of performance most in need of improvement and determining how to bring about change.

FIGURE 16. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
Grantees Rate Their Satisfaction with Corporation Services in 1999



Source: *Evaluation of the 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey, Learn and Serve America*. ORC Macro, Calverton, MD.

The Impact on Service-Learning on Students

Many studies have examined the impact of service-learning programs, including those funded in part by Learn and Serve America, across all levels of education. The findings of these studies are positive and the outcomes are highly consistent (see Table 15 for a summary of these findings).

The studies show that service-learning activities that are well designed, linked to intentional learning outcomes, and engage students in significant amounts of service have strong benefits to student participants. The extensive research on service-learning supports several generalizations about its impact. Service-learning participation:

- Has a positive effect on students' engagement in school.
- Helps students acquire academic skills and knowledge.
- Reduces the likelihood that students will engage in risk behaviors.
- Enhances students' social and civic development.
- Benefits communities.

**TABLE 15. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: END OUTCOMES
ESTABLISHED BY INDEPENDENT PROGRAM EVALUATION STUDIES**
A Sample of Outcomes from Service-Learning Programs

| Outcomes | Findings | Sources |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Participation in School | <p>Students engaged in service-learning have higher attendance rates than their peers who are not engaged.</p> <p>Students at all levels feel they learn more in service-learning classes than other classes.</p> <p>Students engaged in service-learning are more likely to graduate.</p> <p>Educators and students in schools with strong service-learning programs report a more positive school climate through a greater feeling of connectedness to the school and through decreased teacher turnover and increased teacher collegiality.</p> | <p>Shafer 1993 Supik 1996 Shumer 1994</p> <p>Weiler and others 1998 Berkas 1997</p> <p>Astin and Sax 1998 Roose and others 1997</p> <p>Billig and Conrad 1997 Wieler and others 1999</p> |
| Risk Behaviors | <p>Middle school and high school students involved in service-learning are less likely to engage in behaviors that lead to pregnancy or arrest.</p> <p>Students involved in service-learning are less likely to be referred to the school office for disciplinary measures.</p> | <p>Melchior 1999 Allen and others 1994 Shaffer 1993</p> <p>Follman 1997 Follman 1998</p> |
| Academic Improvement | <p>Service-learning participation is associated with higher scores on state tests of basic skills and higher grades.</p> <p>Students who participate in high quality service-learning programs show greater school engagement and achievement in mathematics than non-participants.</p> <p>Middle and high school students who participate in service-learning tutoring programs increase their grade point averages and test scores in reading/language arts and math and are less likely to drop out of school.</p> <p>Students or faculty report that service-learning improves students' ability to apply what they have learned in their communities</p> <p>(table continued on next page)</p> | <p>Astin et al 2000 Anderson and others 1991 Shumer 1994 Shaffer 1993 Dean and Murdock 1992 O'Bannon 1999</p> <p>Melchior 1999</p> <p>Supik 1996 Rolzinski 1990</p> <p>Eyler and Giles 1999 Gray and others 1998 Oliver 1997 Nigro and Wortham 1998</p> |

| TABLE 15 (continued) | | |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Outcomes | Findings | Sources |
| Social and Civic Development | <p>Students who engage in service-learning programs report a greater acceptance of cultural diversity.</p> <p>High school students who participate in service-learning programs are more likely to develop bonds with adults and report that they learn from and work with the elderly and disabled.</p> <p>College students had increased commitment to community service after participating in service-learning activities.</p> <p>Students who engage in service-learning increase their understanding of how government works.</p> | <p>Melchior 1999 Berkas 1997</p> <p>Morgan and Streb 1999</p> <p>Sax and Astin 1997 Gray et al 1999</p> <p>Berkas 1997</p> |
| Benefits to Communities | <p>Community members who participate in service-learning as partners with the school view youth as valued resources and positive contributors to community.</p> <p>Ninety percent of the partnering agencies indicate that Learn and Serve America participants help the agency improve their services to clients and the community.</p> | <p>Billig and Conrad 1997 Weiler and others 1999 Melchior 1999 Kinsley 1997</p> <p>Melchior 1999</p> |
| Philanthropic Giving | Undergraduate service participation correlated with future charitable donations to college. | Sax and Astin 1997 |

Report of Secondary Performance Indicators

Two indicators originally included in the Corporation’s revised fiscal 1999 performance plan have been modified or dropped (See Table 16). In 1999, the Corporation conducted a review of the 1999 performance plan’s indicators and the data systems supporting them. Missing data or inadequate data systems were discovered in a few cases and these indicators have been dropped from the plan.

In the case of the indicator on number of subgrantees providing service-learning activities afterschool, the data system for collecting these data was developed and piloted in 1999, but it will not be operational until 2000. As for the other, secondary indicator, on percent of grantees rated by Corporation staff, it was decided that this indicator lacked methodological rigor. The internal review revealed that no objective criteria existed to make this rating and the decision was made to exclude it from this report and from future performance plans.

TABLE 16. SECONDARY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

| Secondary Performance Indicators | Goal | Result | Status |
|---|---------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Number of subgrantees providing service-learning activities afterschool. | Base-line to be set | Not available | Data collection delayed to 2000 |
| Percent of Corporation-supported grantees and subgrantees receiving an “adequate” or “outstanding” rating from Corporation staff. | Base-line to be set | Not available | Dropped |

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CHAPTER 5. NATIONAL SENIOR SERVICE CORPS

The National Senior Service Corps (Senior Corps) is a network of more than half a million seniors who are making a difference as Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) volunteers. These programs tap the experience, skills, talents, interests, and creativity of seniors age 55 and over. The Senior Corps is a pioneer in developing volunteer opportunities for older adults. The Senior Corps continues to serve as a leader in testing and refining new models of senior service that will meet the needs of communities, as well as the interests and priorities of the older adults of today and tomorrow.

The Senior Corps' three programs provide a wealth of volunteer opportunities to seniors while meeting an array of community needs.

- The Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), established in 1965, links income eligible seniors age 60 and older to children and youth with special and exceptional needs.
- The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), established in 1971, places senior volunteers age 55 and older to perform a myriad of services, including organizing neighborhood block watches, identifying sources of groundwater contamination, teaching computer classes, tutoring and mentoring children and youth, and participating in natural disaster recovery.
- The Senior Companion Program (SCP), established in 1974, creates opportunities for income eligible seniors age 60 and older to serve adults in need of extra support to continue living independently and with enhanced quality of life.

Additionally, through its Senior Demonstration Programs, Senior Corps tests and pilots innovations in senior service, using the demonstration authority to try elements and program models beyond the scope of its three main programs. These demonstration activities serve as incubators for innovation and new ideas, with the intent of incorporating promising and successful lessons into the three existing programs.

The Senior Corps' three programs have placed millions of older Americans in volunteer opportunities for more than 30 years. When the Senior Corps programs began, in the 1960s and 1970s, the predominant interest was in enhancing the well being and satisfaction of the senior volunteers. This outcome aligned with "productive aging" as an essential component in later life quality. Senior Corps programs contributed a wealth of information to demonstrate the value of volunteering as a component of productive aging.

A Vision of Senior Service for a New Century

With sweeping demographic changes currently underway, an essential element in remaining a strong and vital senior service leader is to adapt and position the Senior Corps programs for this coming wave of older adults. The influx of "baby boomers" into the age 55 and older age groups will change, forever, the definition and characteristics of retirement and later life. Senior Corps has developed a "vision of senior service" that will help to attract these older adults, who are wealthier, better educated, more vigorous, and healthier than any before. This vision includes a full menu of options: volunteer service opportunities that range from full time to part time; a flexible set of benefit options and incentives; and mechanisms for participants to easily move

from one to another as circumstances change. Key elements of this vision are now in place, and a strategic direction has been set.

For its 20-30 year history, Senior Corps programs operated as individual placement models, primarily to provide volunteer opportunities to older persons, contribute to productive aging, and assist low-income seniors. Senior Corps is now transforming the programs to harness the tremendous resource that the growing population of older persons represents. The focus has expanded from the individual volunteer to emphasize the needs in communities, from volunteer activities to service with outcomes.

Programming for Impact: Making a Difference in the Communities Served

The new generation of older Americans will provide tremendous energy and resources to the senior service movement. In this new environment, it is anticipated that funding and other resources must go to those programs that can distinguish themselves among competitors by demonstrating the value, cost-effectiveness, and significant results in solving critical community needs. Thus, Senior Corps has aggressively moved beyond talking about "how much time and how many senior volunteers we provide" to answering the question, "what difference do we make?"

Programming for Impact was adopted by the Senior Corps in 1996, as a programmatic framework to help answer the questions, "What do Senior Corps volunteers accomplish for the communities they serve? How can their contributions to the community be measured?" There are five interrelated elements in the Programming for Impact model:

- (1) Community need that the volunteers will address.
- (2) Inputs needed, such as the volunteer and other resources.
- (3) Roles for the volunteers, and their service activities.
- (4) Short term, measurable accomplishments.
- (5) Longer term impact or permanent change in the community due to the volunteers and their service.

This report presents Programming for Impact outcomes for the first time. Programming for Impact indicators of success exist for each of the Senior Corps programs, as well as current demonstration activities.

Senior Demonstrations

Senior Corps tests new models for mobilizing older persons in service through its demonstration authority, which builds on the effective practices and lessons learned through RSVP, FGP, and SCP. Demonstration activities position the Senior Corps to tap the vast civic potential of the aging baby boom generation.

Recent demonstration activities, which are discussed in more detail in the "Demonstration Programs" section of this report, include: Seniors for Schools; Senior Leaders in RSVP, FGP and SCP; Seniors for Habitat; and Experience Corps for Independent Living.

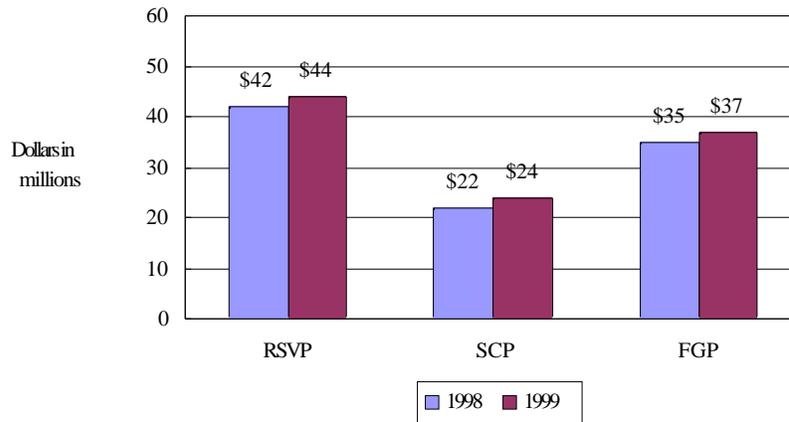
A Network of National Alliances

Senior Corps programs have long received financial support from the non-federal sector. This support, which includes state and local government appropriations, the for-profit sector, and nonprofit agencies, augments federal resources and allows local Senior Corps projects to expand the scope and quality of services provided by volunteers to the community. Broad-based and ongoing relationships with diverse constituencies are essential to "mainstreaming" senior service into local service delivery networks, as well as enhancing the visibility of seniors as resources at the national level. In 1998, Senior Corps established the "National Organization Initiative" to expand its programs by tapping the expertise of national nonprofit organizations and building on their existing networks of affiliates who operate programs at the local level. Through this initiative, national organizations are exploring ways to strengthen the role of senior volunteering throughout their organizations and ways to support networking among their local affiliates selected as Senior Corps project sites.

Through state, local, and private sector funding, investments in Senior Corps programs at the local level have increased steadily over the past several years. In fiscal 1999, these allies contributed the following dollars to Senior Corps programs (see Figure 17):

- Foster Grandparent Program: almost \$37 million, an increase over the nearly \$35 million invested in 1998.
- Senior Companion Program: \$24.1 million, up from the almost \$22 million in 1998.
- RSVP: over \$44 million, an increase over the \$42 million invested in 1998.

FIGURE 17. STATE, LOCAL, AND PRIVATE SECTOR FUNDING FOR SENIOR CORPS PROGRAMS, 1998-1999

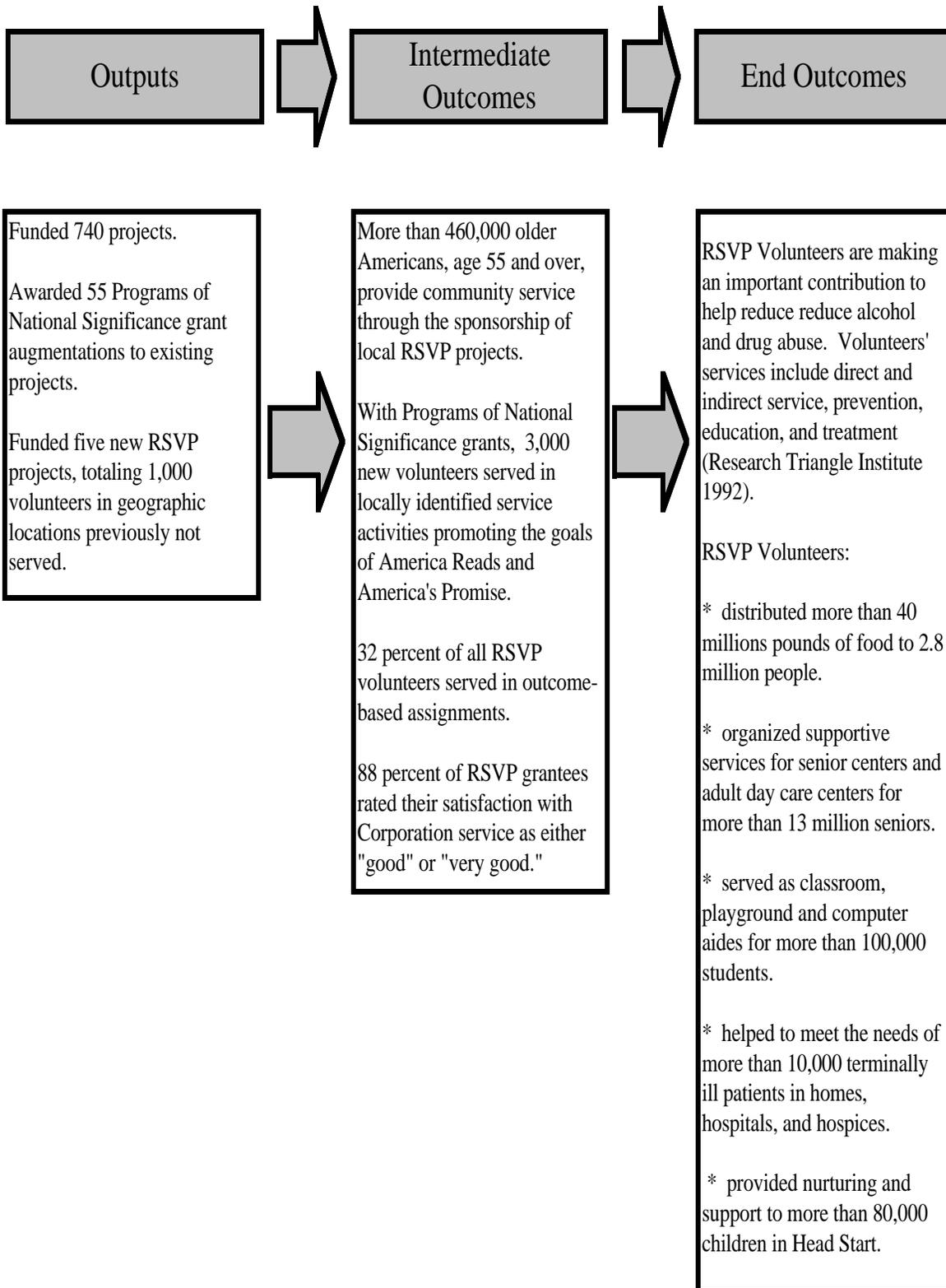


Source: Grants Tracking Database. National Senior Service Corps. Corporation for National Service.

Administration and Management

In 1999, Senior Corps redesigned many of its primary systems and tools to help assure that its policies and procedures reflect statute, regulations, and sound program management practices. The Corporation published new regulations for each of the Senior Corps programs in the March 24, 1999 Federal Register. Regulations became effective on April 24, 1999. These new regulations set the minimum standards of operation, increased flexibility at the local project level, and incorporated language that sets meeting community needs and outcomes for the recipients of senior volunteer service as priorities. Also, Senior Corps developed and distributed a new guide for compliance monitoring that project managers use to document findings on quality assurance and fiscal compliance with terms and conditions for federal funds.

FIGURE 18. RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM SUMMARY OF 1999 PERFORMANCE RESULTS



THE RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (RSVP)

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) matches older Americans who are willing to help with local problems in their communities. RSVP volunteers choose how and where they will serve, and determine how many hours a week they will volunteer. They do not receive any monetary incentives, but the project may reimburse individuals for some costs associated with their service activities. In addition, RSVP provides appropriate insurance coverage for volunteers while on assignment.

Each year, more than 460,000 older Americans, age 55 and over, provide community service through the sponsorship of more than 760 local RSVP projects, the majority of which are federally funded. The amount of service can vary from a few hours a month to almost full-time, with the average hours of service being approximately four hours a week.

RSVP volunteers serve through public agencies and nonprofit organizations. They tutor children and youth, organize neighborhood watch programs, renovate homes, help people recover from natural disasters, or whatever their skills and interests lead them to do. In 1999, the Corporation awarded 55 Programs of National Significance grant increases to existing projects. This provides for more than 3,000 new volunteers to serve in locally identified service activities promoting the goals of America Reads and America's Promise. The Corporation also funded five new RSVP projects, totaling 1,000 volunteers in geographic locations previously not served.

“More than 40 RSVP volunteers spend time each week in our elementary schools helping children to improve their reading and comprehension skills. The volunteers meet with the children one-on-one. This project is credited with boosting student self-esteem, as well as improving overall reading success. It provides opportunities for positive interaction between older adults and children. The services provided by the RSVP volunteers are a valuable resource to the children in Unified School District #428.”

-- Clay Guthmiller,
Superintendent of Schools
referring to RSVP volunteers
from Barton County RSVP,
Great Bend, KS

| TABLE 17. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (RSVP) | | | |
|---|---------|---------|------------|
| Key Indicators for 1999 | | | |
| Key Indicators | Goal | Result | Goal Met? |
| Number of federally funded RSVP projects. Source: <i>Grants Tracking Database. National Senior Service Corps.</i> | 744 | 740 | YES |
| Number of federally funded RSVP volunteers in service. Source: <i>Grants Tracking Database. National Senior Service Corps and 2. Project Profile and Volunteer Activity Survey.</i> | 454,570 | 466,900 | YES |
| Percent of RSVP volunteers serving in outcome-based assignments. Source: <i>Project Progress Report from Grantee to State Office.</i> ^p | 20% | 32% | YES |

^p This indicator tracks the progress of Programming for Impact in the national RSVP network. The "outcome-based assignment", as evidenced by a Programming for Impact statement on file with the volunteer station, or placement site, indicates the community need that the RSVP volunteers will help

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) Performance in 1999

The Corporation identified three annual performance indicators for RSVP in 1999. RSVP met all three of its annual targets for 1999. The program funded 740 projects, supported 466,900 RSVP volunteers in service and 32 percent of all RSVP volunteers served in outcome-based assignments (see Table 17). These outcome-based assignments engage volunteers in activities that contribute to meeting a community need as identified by important stakeholders in the community. The results of service must be measurable and there must be a system in place for reporting the information.

Accomplishment Highlights: Focus on Serving Children and Youth

In 1999, RSVP volunteers nationwide focused significant time and effort on serving children and youth. They served as tutors, literacy coaches, mentors to children in schools, community centers, Head Start centers, before and after school programs, and other settings to help children gain reading proficiency (See Table 18).

Administrative Cost Increases to Relieve Resource Constraints in Local RSVP Projects

According to an independent national program evaluation, RSVP projects are "large and complex, presenting serious management challenges to project directors." More than half of the RSVP project directors responding to the survey reported that they were at the saturation point in terms of numbers of volunteer stations or volunteers they could manage effectively. The study found numerous cases where the size of the projects exceeded the capacity of the project staff to manage stations and volunteers active during the year (Westat 1997).

To help answer this management challenge, in 1999, Senior Corps was able to provide an administrative cost increase to all federally funded RSVP projects. This increase permanently increases the federal base funding for federal projects. In fiscal 1999, the total cost increase was \$1.2 million.

Customer Satisfaction

In 1999, the Corporation began a series of customer satisfaction surveys of all national service programs using an independent research firm (ORC Macro 2000). The researchers drew a random sample of 320 Retired and Senior Volunteer Program directors. In the telephone survey, 86 percent of the sample responded to questions focusing on three essential areas of interest: (1) importance and performance of various Corporation functions; (2) quality of service received from the Corporation; and (3) factors having the greatest influence on overall satisfaction. For all essential performance areas, a majority of respondents gave positive satisfaction ratings (See Figure 19).

Eighty-eight percent of the RSVP program directors grantees rated the overall quality of service received in the past year from the Corporation as either "good" or "very good." On a four-point scale ("poor" = 1 and "very good" = 4), the average rating of overall quality of service was 3.1.

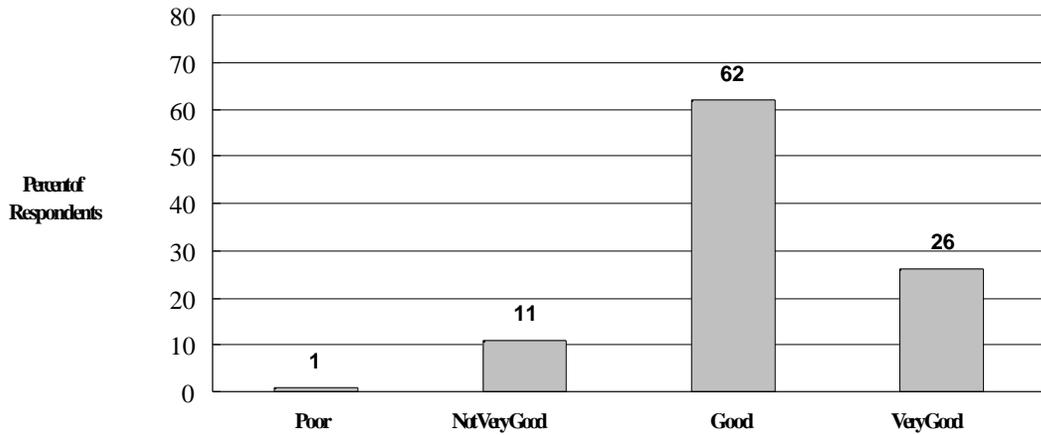
to meet through their service, including the anticipated accomplishments and, as applicable, the long-term impact of their service to meet the need.

| TABLE 18. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORTS A Sample of Accomplishments from 1999 | |
|--|--|
| Emphasis Area | Selected Service Accomplishments |
| Service to Children | <p>39,847 RSVP volunteers provided assistance and services to 264,495 children^q</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21,354 RSVP volunteers served as literacy tutors to 119,821 children • 7,917 RSVP volunteers served as mentors to 55,859 children • 4,554 RSVP volunteers assisted 57,742 children through before and after school activities • 2,853 RSVP volunteers worked with 19,220 children in child care programs • 3,129 RSVP volunteers provided outreach to ethnic groups with limited English proficiency. <p>These volunteers Reached 43,840 parents through services to their children.</p> <p>Source: Corporation for National Service. <i>State Reports 1999: Demonstrating Accomplishments.</i></p> |
| Other Services | <p>Distributed more than 40 million pounds of food to 2.8 million people. ^r</p> <p>Organized supportive services for senior centers and adult day care centers for more than 13 million seniors;</p> <p>Served as classroom, playground, and computer aides for more than 100,000 students;</p> <p>Helped to meet the needs of more than 10,000 terminally ill patients in homes, hospitals, and hospices;</p> <p>Provided nurturing and support to more than 80,000 children in Head Start;</p> <p>Provided business counseling to more than 2,000 private, nonprofit and public agencies to improve their operations, and benefiting more than 3 million of their clients; and</p> <p>Conducted more than 700,000 community crime patrols, freeing up more than one-half million hours of law enforcement time.</p> <p>Source: Aguirre International. 1999. <i>Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Accomplishment Summary.</i> Survey data: July 1, 1997 to June 30, 1998.</p> |

FIGURE 19. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
RSVP Grantees Rate Their Satisfaction with Corporation Services in 1999

^q The data on services to children derive from annual reports prepared by Corporation State Offices, based on project progress reports from grantees and other data.

^r The data derive from the Corporation's accomplishment reporting system, are not subject to audit, and should be considered approximate indicators of level of performance. Independent reviews conducted of the accomplishment reporting process in earlier years found that the reported results were accurate reflections of effort. In fact, programs were frequently found to underreport accomplishments.



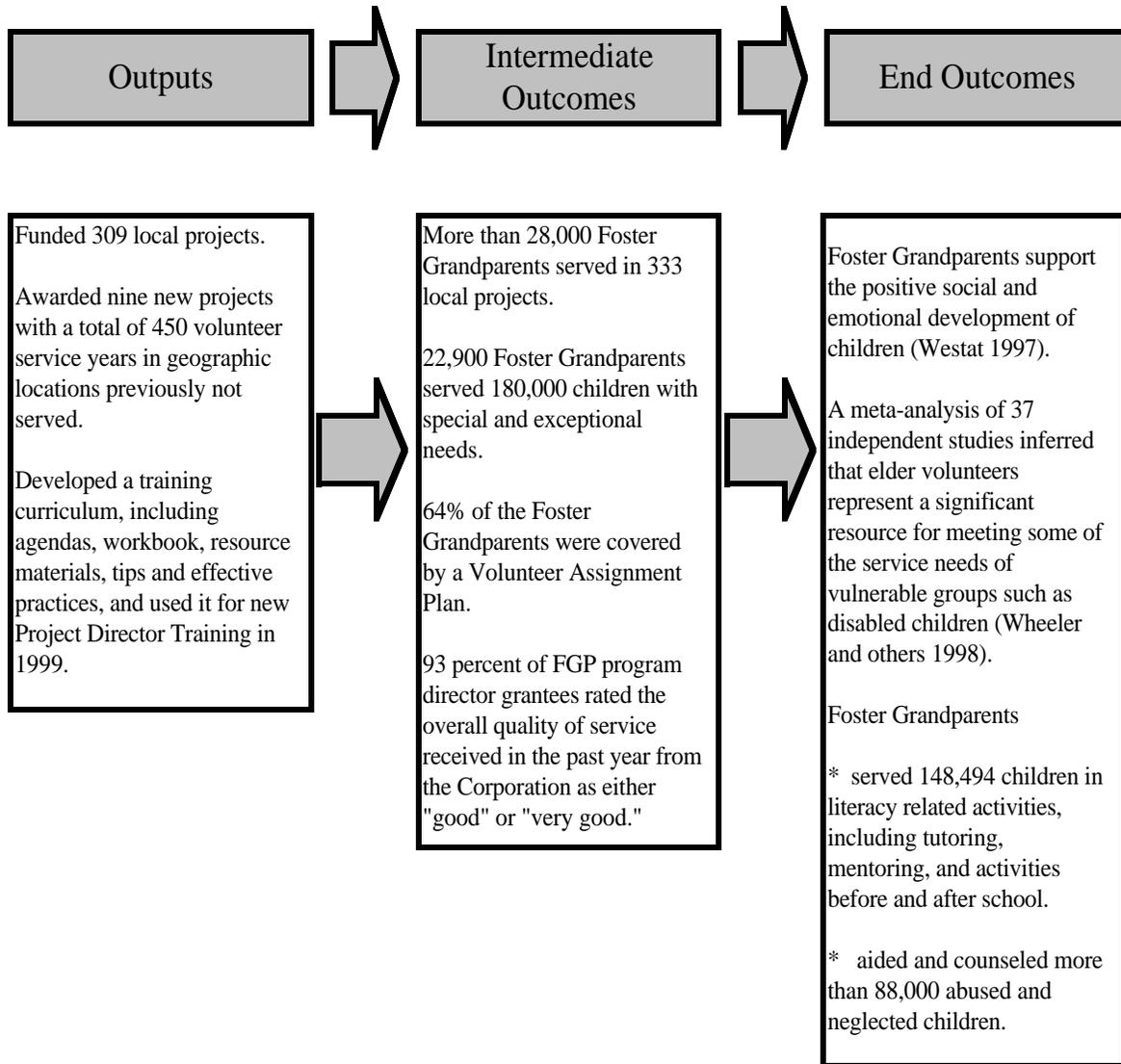
Source: ORC Macro. 2000. *The 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program*. Calverton, MD.

A detailed analysis of the results revealed that five factors had the greatest impact on overall satisfaction with the Corporation's program performance related to RSVP:

- Providing policy guidance, interpretation, and clarification.
- Providing training and technical assistance.
- Providing feedback on project performance.
- Providing a national vision of senior service.
- Issuing grants in a timely manner.

The Corporation is now analyzing the survey's findings with the goals of identifying areas of performance most in need of improvement and determining how to bring about needed change.

FIGURE 20. FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM SUMMARY OF 1999 PERFORMANCE RESULTS



THE FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM (FGP)

Since 1965, Foster Grandparents have provided valuable aid to children and youth with exceptional needs. Foster Grandparents serve an average of 20 hours a week and receive stipends set at \$2.55 per hour. They must be age 60 or above and meet certain low-income requirements. In addition to the stipend, Foster Grandparents receive accident, liability, and automobile insurance coverage, if needed, during their assignments.

In fiscal 1999, more than 28,000 Foster Grandparents served in 333 local projects. Foster Grandparents serve in schools, hospitals, drug treatment centers, correctional institutions, and Head Start and day care centers. They help abused and neglected children, mentor troubled teenagers and young mothers, and care for premature infants and children with physical disabilities. In 1999, 31 Programs of National Significance grant augmentations were awarded to existing projects for 475 new volunteer service years in locally identified service activities that promote the goals of America Reads and America's Promise. Nine new projects with a total of 450 volunteer service years were awarded in geographic locations previously not served.

Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) Performance in 1999

The Foster Grandparent Program met all of its Government Performance and Results Act Indicator targets for 1999 (see Table 19). The program funded 309 local projects and non-federal sources funded an additional 24 projects. These projects sponsored 22,900 Foster Grandparents, who served 180,000 children with special and exceptional needs. And, 64 percent of the Foster Grandparents were covered by a Volunteer Assignment Plan. These plans include a written description of the Foster Grandparent's assignment with a child and the plan identifies specific outcomes for the child served and the activities of the Foster Grandparent.

Focus on Serving Children and Youth

In 1999, FGP volunteers nationwide rallied to serve as literacy tutors, literacy coaches, mentors, and helpers in schools, community centers, and other settings to help children gain reading proficiency. Supporting activities, such as pre-literacy and mentoring, helped to encourage children's readiness for and desire to read well. Nationally, the Foster Grandparents served 148,494 children in literacy-related activities, including tutoring, mentoring, and activities before and after school.

Making a Difference in a Young Life . . .

Foster Grandparent Shirley Lewis of New Orleans worked for more than 25 years as a nurse's aide. As a Foster Grandparent, she serves at a group home for teenage girls in crisis. One of her first assignments was 16-year-old Cindy. Cindy was withdrawn, depressed, sullen, the child of drug-dependent parents. Her only passion was a love for animals. Cindy was a poor student, failing in school. With the patient tutoring and encouragement of her Foster Grandparent, Cindy was able to obtain her GED. "Grandma Shirley" encouraged her through the next few years, as she found work at the zoo. Two years later, Cindy attends college, working toward a degree as a veterinary technician. She remembers "Grandma Shirley" with love and fondness. She made all the difference.

-- Catholic Charities
Archdiocese of New Orleans
Foster Grandparent Program

| TABLE 19. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM (FGP) | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Key Indicators for 1999 | | | |
| Key Indicators | Goal | Result | Goal Met? |
| Number of federally funded FGP projects. Source: <i>Grants Tracking Database. National Senior Service Corps.</i> | 296 | 309 | YES |
| Number of federally funded FGP service years completed. Source: <i>Financial Status Reports from Grantee.</i> | 22,850 | 22,900 | YES |
| Number of children with special and exceptional needs served by Foster Grandparents. Source: <i>Project Profile and Volunteer Activity Survey.</i> | 98,800 ^s | 180,000 (served annually) | YES |
| Percent of Foster Grandparents covered by Volunteer Assignment Plans that include a written description of a Foster Grandparent's assignment with a child, and identifies specific outcomes for the child served and the activities of the Foster Grandparent. Source: <i>Project Progress Reports from Grantee to State Office.</i> ^t | 50% of all FGP volunteers nationwide | 64% of all FGP volunteers nationwide | YES |

Foster Grandparent Contributions to Young Children

According to an independent program evaluation of Foster Grandparents placed in Head Start Centers (Westat 1997), Foster Grandparents support the positive social and emotional development of children. The study looked at the links between the Foster Grandparents' activities and the outcomes for children. The final report showed how a series of caregiver behaviors from a standard caregiver scale (Arnett scale of positive behaviors) could be used to identify and measure Foster Grandparent's interactions with children. Overall, the study found that Foster Grandparents demonstrated "positive caregiver behaviors that result in gains for children, classrooms, and Head Start centers." This finding and others from previous evaluations of FGP are listed in Table 21.

Senior Corps took the findings of this national evaluation and developed a training curriculum, including agendas, workbook, resource materials, tips and effective practices, and used it for new Project Director Training in 1999. Additionally, the training resource was distributed to all Foster Grandparent (and RSVP) projects nationwide as a training and technical assistance tool.

^s The goal as set in the 1999 performance plan referred to the number of children expected to be seen daily. The Senior Corps based this goal on budget projections. The result was determined from the bi-annual *Project Profile and Volunteer Activities* reported filed by all Senior Corps grantees. The goal will be revised in the final 2001 plan to reflect this new understanding of the level of performance.

^t This indicator tracks the progress of Programming for Impact in the national FGP network. The "written assignment description" includes the specific tasks that the Foster Grandparent will engage in, as well as the measurable outcomes for the children served. The written assignment description then provides a tool to track the progress of the children served, including specific accomplishments facilitated by the Foster Grandparent through service.

| TABLE 20. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORTS | |
|---|--|
| A Sample of Accomplishments from 1997-1998 | |
| Emphasis Area | Selected Service Accomplishments |
| Literacy | <p>Foster Grandparents volunteers provided assistance and services to 148,494 children^u</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9,231 Foster Grandparents served as literacy tutors to 62,615 children • 6,457 Foster Grandparents served as mentors to 41,358 children • 1,140 Foster Grandparents assisted 9,245 children through before and after school activities • 5,064 Foster Grandparents worked with 26,877 children in child care programs • 1,496 Foster Grandparents provided outreach to ethnic groups with limited English proficiency <p>The Foster Grandparents reached 6,639 parents because of service to their children.</p> <p>Source: Corporation for National Service. <i>State Reports 1999: Demonstrating Accomplishments</i>.</p> |
| Other Services to Children | <p>Foster Grandparents^v:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visited and nurtured more than 200,000 children • Provided constructive guidance and positive role modeling to more than 145,000 children • Aided and counseled more than 88,000 abused and neglected children • Provided one-on-one support and nurturing to more than 27,000 youth offenders and ex-offenders. <p>Source: Aguirre International. 1999. <i>Foster Grandparent Program Accomplishment Summary</i>. Survey data: July 1, 1997 to June 30, 1998.</p> |

Customer Satisfaction

In 1999, the Corporation began a series of customer satisfaction surveys of all national service programs using an independent research firm (ORC Macro 2000). The researchers drew a random sample of 223 Foster Grandparent Program directors. In the telephone survey, 74 percent of the sample responded to questions focusing on three essential areas of interest: (1) importance and performance of various Corporation functions; (2) quality of service received from the Corporation; and (3) factors having the greatest influence on overall satisfaction. For all essential performance areas, a majority of respondents gave positive satisfaction ratings (see Figure 21).

^u These data on services to children derive from annual reports prepared by Corporation State Offices, based on project progress reports from grantees and other data.

^v The data derive from the Corporation's accomplishment reporting system, are not subject to audit, and should be considered approximate indicators of level of performance. Independent reviews conducted of the accomplishment reporting process in earlier years found that the reported results were accurate reflections of effort. In fact, programs were frequently found to underreport accomplishments.

| TABLE 21. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: END OUTCOMES ESTABLISHED BY INDEPENDENT PROGRAM EVALUATION STUDIES | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Outcomes | Findings | Source |
| Developmental Improvements for Children | An impact study of FGP on Head Start concluded from intensive observations in six classrooms that “the majority of Foster Grandparents engage in a wide variety of activities and interactions that are associated with positive developmental outcomes for children . . .” | Westat 1997 |
| Mentoring At-risk Youth | A study of two Foster Grandparent Programs and three other initiatives found the older adults particularly effective in serving as mentors to at-risk youth. The elders formed significant relationships with the young people, a mix of teenage mothers, youth in trouble with the juvenile justice system, and youth at risk of dropping out. | Freedman 1998 |
| Resource for Disabled Children | A meta-analysis of 37 independent studies inferred that elder volunteers represent a significant resource for meeting some of the service needs of vulnerable groups such as disabled children. | Wheeler and others 1998 |
| Benefits for Foster Grandparents | A three-year study found that participants’ mental health and social resources improved when compared to those on a waiting list who wanted to join the program but could not due to lack of program resources. The same study reported that 71 percent of the Foster Grandparents almost never felt lonely compared with 45 percent of the waiting list group. Eighty-three percent of participants reported being more satisfied with their life, compared with 52 percent of those waiting to join the program. | Litigation Support Services 1984 |
| Cost-Benefit | The Foster Grandparent Program is highly cost-effective, with a net excess of quantifiable benefits over costs of more than \$1.5 million. | Booz Allen 1972 |

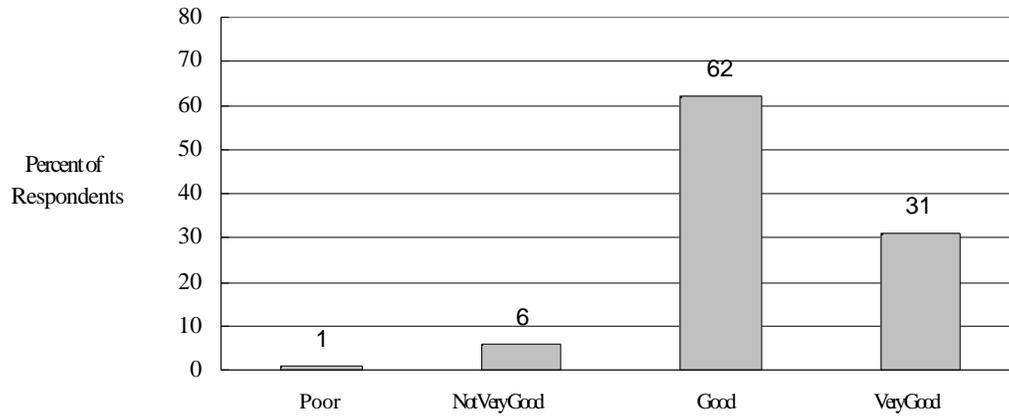
Ninety-three percent of the FGP program directors grantees rated the overall quality of service received in the past year from the Corporation as either “good” or “very good.” On a four-point scale (“poor” = 1 and “very good” = 4), the average rating of overall quality of service was 3.2.

A detailed analysis of the results revealed that four factors had the greatest impact on overall satisfaction with the Corporation’s program performance related to FGP:

- Providing consistent information.
- Providing training and technical assistance.
- Frequency of contact with Corporation State Office.
- Quality of service from the Corporation Service Center (the office responsible for issuing grants).

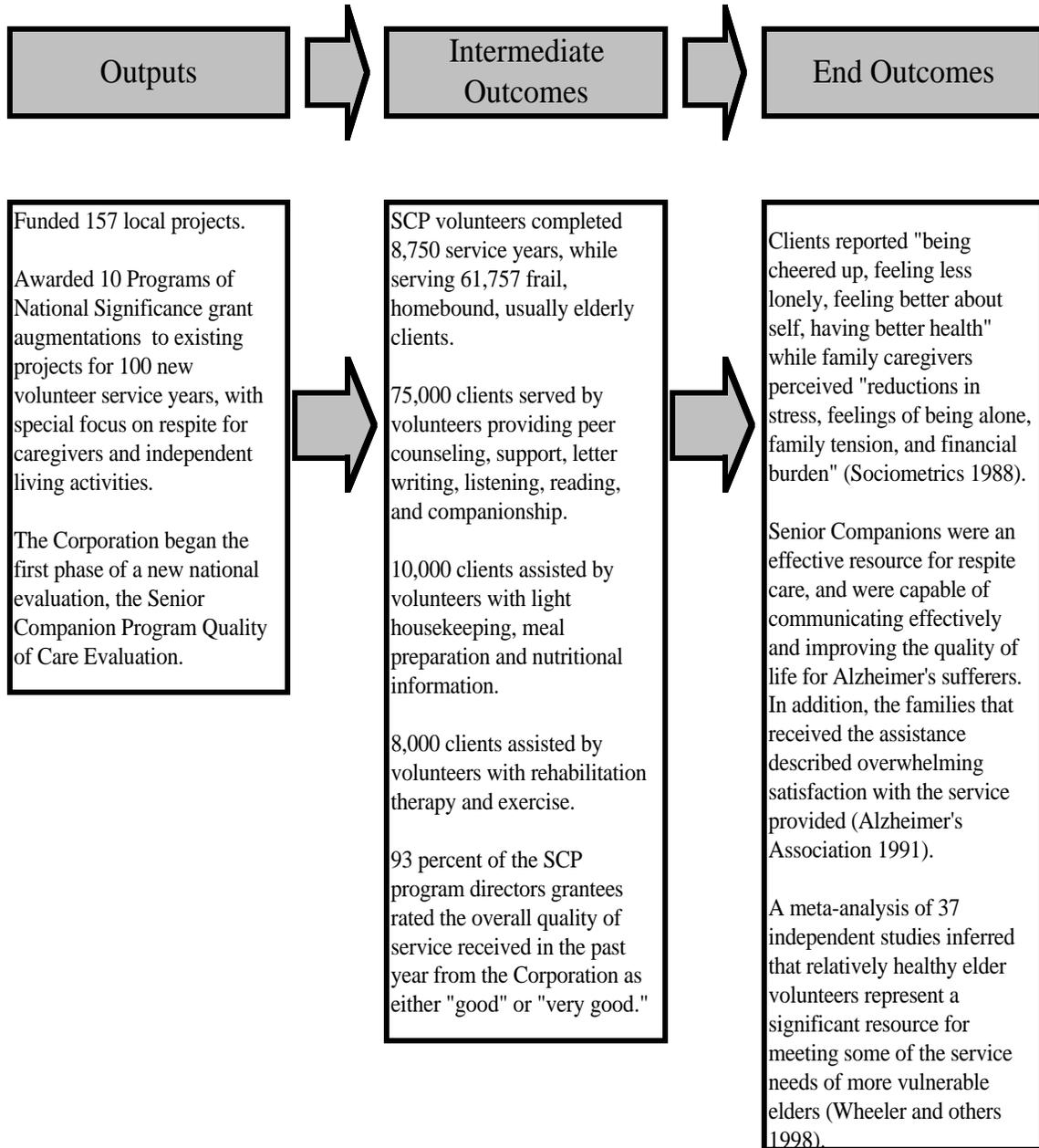
The Corporation is now analyzing the survey’s findings with the goals of identifying areas of performance most in need of improvement and determining how to bring about needed change.

FIGURE 21. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
FGP Grantees Rate Their Satisfaction with Corporation Services in 1999



Source: ORC Macro. 2000. *The 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey, Foster Grandparent Program*. Calverton, MD.

FIGURE 22. SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM SUMMARY OF 1999 PERFORMANCE RESULTS



THE SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM (SCP)

Senior Companions provide assistance to frail, homebound individuals, most of them elderly. These clients have difficulties with daily living tasks and Senior Companions help them retain their dignity and independence. The Senior Companion Program, like the Foster Grandparent Program, provides low-income person, age 60 and over, the opportunity to serve those in need. Senior Companions receive the same stipend and insurance as Foster Grandparents and serve 20 hours a week.

Senior Companions help homebound clients with chores such as paying bills, buying groceries, and finding transportation to medical appointments. They receive training in topics such as Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, and mental health, alert doctors and family members of potential health problems. In 1999, ten Programs of National Significance grants went to existing projects for 100 new volunteer service years, with special focus on respite for caregivers and independent living activities.

Senior Companion Program Performance in 1999

The Senior Companion Program met its annual performance goals for 1999 (see Table 22). The program funded 157 local projects. SCP volunteers completed 8,750 service years, while serving 61,757 frail, homebound, usually elderly clients. Seventy-four percent of the SCP volunteers served in positions covered by Volunteer Assignment Plans. These plans include a written description of a Senior Companion's assignment with a client, and identifies specific outcomes for the client served and the activities of the Senior Companion.

Accomplishment Highlights

Approximately 24 local Senior Companion projects in 16 states are part of their community's Medicaid supported service network, delivering home health and care services as part of the community-based Medicaid Waiver plans. Each state's Medicaid lead agency approves these plans and identifies services and reimbursements for each approved partner.

Medicaid waiver partnerships are a growing area of opportunity for Senior Companion projects. They result in better integration of senior service into core independent living delivery networks and access to Medicaid Waiver funds to recruit and place additional Senior Companion volunteers above the numbers that their base federal or state funds support.

Building Community – Two Seniors at a Time . . .

Mr. Ware is a diabetic amputee with failing vision, no family in the area, and who was increasingly depressed and withdrawn. His life was almost entirely isolated until Senior Companion "Nate" came along. Other than going to the doctor, Mr. Ware had not left his house in eight months. Nate suggested a ride, and the two of them ended up driving through the area. These were the first steps in what would become a strong bond between two aging men: one who needed help and one who needed to be needed.

Nate visits Mr. Ware five days a week. Mr. Ware now gets out of wheelchair, does his own shopping, and goes to the barbershop with Nate. The two men are good friends, and Nate is like family. Mr. Ware's physical appearance and mental attitude changed vastly, much more like the proud man he once was.

| TABLE 22. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM (SCP) | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Key Indicators for 1999 | | | |
| Key Indicators | Goal | Result | Goal Met? |
| Number of federally funded Senior Companion projects. Source: <i>Grants Tracking Database. National Senior Service Corps.</i> | 155 | 157 | YES |
| No. of federally funded SCP service years completed. Source: <i>Financial Status Reports from Grantee.</i> | 8,700 | 8,750 | YES |
| Number of frail, homebound, usually elderly clients served by Senior Companions. Source: <i>Project Profile and Volunteer Activity Survey.</i> | 50,500 | 61,757 | YES |
| Percent of Senior Companions covered by Volunteer Assignment Plans that include a written description of a Senior Companion's assignment with a client, and identifies specific outcomes for the client served and the activities of the Senior Companion. Source: <i>Project Progress Report from Grantee to State Office.</i> ^w | 75% of all SCP volunteers nationwide | 74% of all SCP volunteers nationwide | YES |

Senior Companion services under Medicaid waiver partnerships were delivered in the following states in 1999:

| | | | |
|------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| Alabama | Michigan | Pennsylvania | Wisconsin. |
| California | Missouri | Rhode Island | |
| Illinois | New Jersey | South Carolina | |
| Kansas | Nevada | Utah | |
| Minnesota | New York | Vermont | |

Together, 774 individual Senior Companions provide services through Medicaid waiver partnerships, with total funding of \$2,277,604. They reached an estimated 2,144 clients.

Administrative Cost Increase for Existing SCP Projects

In fiscal 1999, Senior Companion projects received more than \$990,000 to help support a modest administrative cost increase.

National Evaluation Underway

In 1998, the Corporation began the first phase of a new national evaluation, the Senior Companion Program Quality of Care Evaluation. This three-year study will provide new

^w This indicator tracks the progress of Programming for Impact in the national SCP network. The "written assignment description" includes the specific tasks that the Senior Companion will engage in, as well as the measurable outcomes for the adult clients served. The written assignment description then provides a tool to track the progress of the clients served, including specific accomplishments facilitated by the Senior Companion through service.

information about the degree to which Senior Companions help clients to live independently, while maintaining active involvement with the family and community. The study will also investigate the role of SCP volunteers in helping clients receive and eat balanced meals. And, the research will investigate the importance of SCP services in reducing stress for other caregivers.

| TABLE 23 PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORTS^x | |
|--|---|
| A Sample of Accomplishments from 1997-1998 | |
| Selected Service Accomplishments | |
| <u>Hours of Service</u> | |
| 460,000 | To clients with mental health disabilities. |
| 500,000 | To clients with developmental disabilities. |
| 600,000 | To clients with physical disabilities. |
| <u>Clients Served</u> | |
| 75,000 | Provided peer counseling, support, letter writing, listening, reading, and companionship. |
| 10,000 | Assisted with light housekeeping, meal preparation, and nutritional information. |
| 8,000 | Assisted with rehabilitation therapy and exercise. |

Source: Aguirre International. 1999. *Senior Companion Program Accomplishment Summary*. Survey data: July 1, 1997 – June 31, 1998.

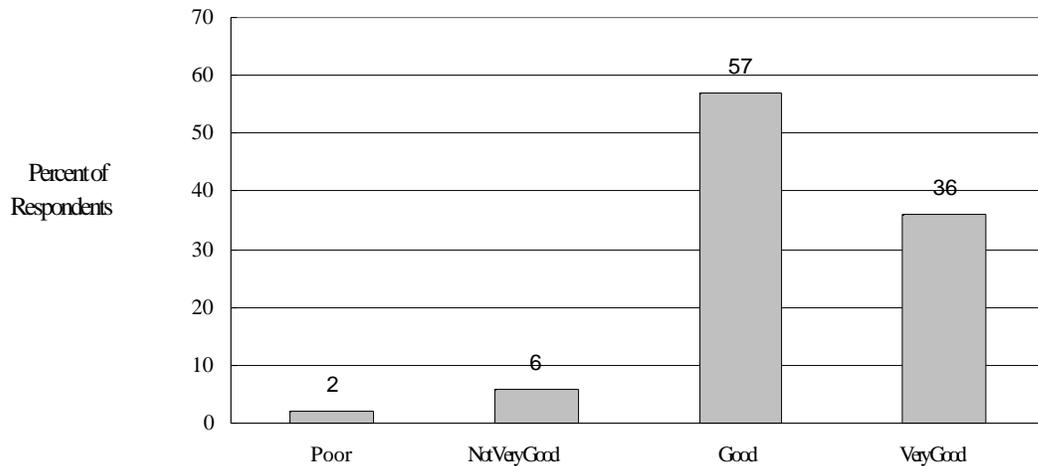
Customer Satisfaction

In 1999, the Corporation began a series of customer satisfaction surveys of all national service programs using an independent research firm (ORC Macro 2000). The researchers drew a random sample of 172 Senior Companion Program directors. In the telephone survey, 74 percent of the sample responded to questions focusing on three essential areas of interest: (1) importance and performance of various Corporation functions; (2) quality of service received from the Corporation; and (3) factors having the greatest influence on overall satisfaction. For all essential performance areas, a majority of respondents gave positive satisfaction ratings (See Figure 23).

Ninety-three percent of the SCP program directors grantees rated the overall quality of service received in the past year from the Corporation as either “good” or “very good.” On a four-point scale (“poor” = 1 and “very good” = 4), the average rating of overall quality of service was 3.3.

^x The data derive from the Corporation’s accomplishment reporting system, are not subject to audit, and should be considered approximate indicators of level of performance. Independent reviews conducted of the accomplishment reporting process in earlier years found that the reported results were accurate reflections of effort. In fact, programs were frequently found to underreport accomplishments.

FIGURE 23. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
SCP Grantees Rate Their Satisfaction with Corporation Services in 1999



Source: ORC Macro. 2000. *The 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey, Senior Companion Program..* Calverton, MD

A detailed analysis of the results revealed that three factors had the greatest impact on overall satisfaction with the Corporation's SCP program performance:

- Quality of service from the Corporation State Office.
- Sensitivity to local needs and conditions.
- Quality of service from the Corporation's Area Manager (the office responsible for coordinating the activities of a cluster of State Offices).

The Corporation is now analyzing the survey's findings with the goals of identifying areas of performance most in need of improvement and determining how to bring about needed change.

| TABLE 24. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: END OUTCOMES ESTABLISHED BY INDEPENDENT PROGRAM EVALUATION STUDIES | | |
|---|--|--|
| Outcomes | Findings | Source |
| Overall Benefits to Clients | <p>An early study of the Senior Companion Program concluded that companions “have an important impact on alleviating the loneliness of the adults they serve, increasing their level of activity, and meeting other basic needs” and that the companions “perform a service that would not be available to needy adults if the program did not exist.”</p> <p>A 1988 study examining the effectiveness of the Senior Companion Program found important benefits to clients and their families. Clients reported “being cheered up, feeling less lonely, feeling better about self, having better health” while family caregivers perceived “reductions in stress, feelings of being alone, family tension, and financial burden.</p> | <p>Booz, Allen, Hamilton 1975</p> <p>Sociometrics 1988</p> |
| Resource for Disabled Children | A meta-analysis of 37 independent studies inferred that relatively healthy elder volunteers represent a significant resource for meeting some of the service needs of more vulnerable elders. | Wheeler and others 1998 |
| Support for Alzheimer’s Sufferers | In 1991, the Alzheimer’s Association studied a demonstration program bringing together Senior Companions and Alzheimer’s sufferers, concluding that the seniors were ‘an effective resource for respite care,’ and were capable of communicating effectively and improving the quality of life for clients. In addition, the families that received the assistance described ‘overwhelming satisfaction’ with the service provided. | Alzheimer’s Association 1991 |

SENIOR DEMONSTRATIONS

The Senior Corps Demonstration initiatives test new models and emerging effective practices for involving older people in volunteer service. Senior Demonstrations build on effective practices and lessons learned from the current Senior Corps programs, as well as other national service activities. The goal is to find the best way to tap the vast civic potential of the coming baby boom generation - the largest, best educated, healthiest, wealthiest, longest-living generation of seniors in the nation's history. Four Senior Demonstrations were underway in 1999: Seniors for Schools, Senior Leaders, Seniors for Habitat, and the Experience Corps for Independent Living

Seniors for Schools National Demonstration: Focused On Child Literacy

Seniors for Schools was launched in 1997 to focus the resources and talents of older volunteers to help ensure that children in need of extra literacy assistance would read independently by the end of the third grade. A total of nine Seniors for Schools sites operate around the nation, in Florida, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Texas. Senior volunteers are recruited, trained and placed in elementary schools to provide literacy services, including tutoring in reading, to students in primary grades.

Seniors for Schools 1999 Performance Results

Seniors for Schools met all of its annual performance indicator goals for 1999 (see Table 25). Seniors for Schools placed 304 intensive service (15 hours a week or more) volunteers in child literacy activities. An additional 124 volunteers served in less intensive placements. Altogether, these volunteers served 3,974 children, providing tutoring, outreach for parental involvement, and other literacy-related activities.

| TABLE 25. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR SENIOR DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM (SDP) | | | |
|--|-------|--------|------------|
| Key Indicators for 1999 | | | |
| Key Indicators | Goal | Result | Goal Met? |
| Seniors for Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of intensive service (15 hours a week or more) Seniors for Schools volunteers in targeted America Reads placements. Source: <i>Quarterly Progress Reports from Grantees.</i> | 270 | 304 | YES |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children served by Seniors for Schools volunteers through literacy-focused placements. Source: <i>Quarterly Progress Reports from Grantees.</i> | 1,500 | 3,974 | YES |

Outcomes of the Seniors for Schools Initiative

Students targeted for tutoring by Seniors for Schools volunteers were among the lowest achievers in their respective schools. Many improved a full grade level or more and demonstrated an increase in reading confidence. This finding indicates a profound benefit to the children, who consistently showed positive outcomes as measured by a variety of standardized and non-standardized instruments in numerous schools. In several demonstrable ways, Seniors for Schools affected children’s reading ability and increased schools’ instructional resources (See Table 26).

| TABLE 26. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: END OUTCOMES ESTABLISHED BY INDEPENDENT PROGRAM EVALUATION STUDIES | | |
|---|---|-------------------|
| Outcomes | Findings | Source |
| Impact on Children | <p>89% of the children measured improved their reading skills during the project year.</p> <p>69% of tutored students increased their reading level by one full grade or more.</p> <p>83% of teachers reported observing positive changes in student literacy, including increases in reading ability.</p> <p>74% of teachers reported observing positive changes in reading or assessment test results.</p> <p>71% of teachers indicated a positive impact on student literacy due to non-tutoring activities.</p> <p>More than 82% of principals, staff, and teachers surveyed indicated that students displayed increased positive attitude toward reading and self-confidence in reading ability.</p> | Project Star 2000 |
| Impact on Schools | <p>98% of principals, staff, and teachers surveyed want to continue to have Seniors for Schools volunteers in their institutions next year.</p> <p>98% of teachers surveyed reported that the Seniors for Schools initiative increased their ability to target instruction to specific student needs; and</p> <p>Over 98% of the principals/staff and 92% of teachers surveyed noted that the seniors were a positive adult role models and increased the children's respect for older adults.</p> | |

Senior Leaders

The Senior Leaders model focused on sustained, intensive service (15 or more hours of service a week) of senior leaders in the three existing Senior Corps programs. The senior leaders helped to recruit and support even greater numbers of volunteers ages 55 and older. Additionally, the volunteers could serve without regard to income or restrictions on the types of activities that they could undertake.

During 1998 and 1999, more than 125 Senior Corps projects incorporated senior leaders into their volunteer ranks, resulting in 285 senior leaders nationally. Ninety-two RSVP projects recruited and placed 165 senior leaders nationwide. Twenty-one FGP projects placed 68 senior leaders. And, 12 SCP projects placed 51 senior leaders.

One important element of the Senior Leaders initiative was to attract older adults who are not age or income eligible for SCP or FGP. End-of-year data indicated that Senior Leader opportunities did reach out and engage volunteers meeting these characteristics. Of the 69 FGP Senior Leaders serving nationwide in 1999, 23 (or 33%) were younger than the required minimum age of 60 years for eligibility in the program. Of the 51 SCP Senior Leaders serving nationwide in 1999, 15 (or 29.5%) were younger than the required minimum age of 60 years for eligibility in the program.

Senior Leaders perform a range of tasks and critical functions. Leaders help to streamline project operations, increase projects' efficiency and productivity, and improve the quality of services. They serve as liaison to volunteer stations and the community. Leaders recruit and train other volunteers. Leaders coordinate service projects, help with publicity, locate community resources, and do needs assessments as part of project planning.

In fiscal 2000, the Congress directed that the Corporation could not use fiscal 2000 funds to provide payment of non-taxable, non-income stipends to individuals not meeting income requirements established by Congress.^y Congress further directed that all demonstration activity be funded under Part E, Senior Demonstration Programs. However, Part E funds were insufficient to continue Volunteer Leaders in RSVP, FGP, and SCP. Consequently, Volunteer Leaders in FGP will end at the conclusion of the fiscal 1999 grants. Volunteer Leaders who are age and income eligible will be continued with SCP authority and funding. Volunteer Leaders in RSVP will be continued in fiscal 2000 under Part E authority and funding.

Seniors for Habitat

Seniors for Habitat is a pilot program involving the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and selected Habitat for Humanity International affiliates. Eight RSVP projects were funded to use the time, talent, experience, and resources of older adults in helping build the capacity of Habitat affiliates. These affiliates seek to move people out of substandard housing and into their own homes. In fiscal 1999, more than 180 Seniors for Habitat volunteers are helping to complete construction projects and cut the completion time in half while doing so.

Experience Corps for Independent Living

In 1998, the Corporation launched the Experience Corps for Independent Living to test innovative ways to use the experience, time and talents of older volunteers in order to expand the supply of independent living services available to frail elders and their families/caregivers. The project is operating in six communities: Phoenix, AZ; Sacramento, CA; Palm Beach Gardens, FL; Baltimore, MD; Minneapolis, MN; and Salt Lake City, UT. As of September 30, 1999, 217 volunteers were serving in the project.

Each of the six sites received \$225,000 to cover operating expenses for 24 months. The Corporation is providing technical assistance to the projects to help them identify other sources of funding so that the projects can continue after they have expended the Corporation grant funds.

Specific outcomes for communities include: increasing the numbers of older persons who receive independent living services; increased numbers of caregivers who receive respite services;

^y Source: U.S. House of Representatives, November 1999, through the Conference Report on H.R. 3194, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2000

improved efficiency among professional providers as a result of being freed from performing certain tasks; the addition of services to older persons and their caregivers not previously offered; and increased numbers of volunteers supporting and supplementing the independent living services delivered by professionals and para-professionals.

The core elements identified in the original Experience Corps were incorporated into this demonstration initiative. These core elements that create optimal conditions for both “Getting Things Done” and providing a high quality experience for senior volunteers are: focused activity; critical mass of volunteers in each site; service options for volunteers, including *direct and indirect roles* for volunteers and opportunities for *intensive service and less intensive service*; leadership opportunities for volunteers; team and corps concept; diversity among volunteers with respect to backgrounds, ethnicity and income; and incentives, including monetary incentives for volunteers who provide intensive service of 15 or more hours a week.

In fiscal 2000, funding was not made available for the Experience Corps for Independent Living projects.

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PART II. SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

6. National Service Trust
7. Evaluation
8. Innovation, Demonstration, and Assistance
9. Program Administration

CHAPTER 6. NATIONAL SERVICE TRUST

The National Service Trust provides a secure repository for education awards earned by eligible participants who successfully complete a term of service in one of the three branches of AmeriCorps: AmeriCorps*State and National, AmeriCorps*NCCC, and AmeriCorps*VISTA. In addition, for the past several years, special legislative language has permitted the Corporation to use funds from the Trust for the President's Student Service Scholarship Program. In this program, the Corporation awards scholarships to high school students who perform outstanding community service. Funds are appropriated in the Operating Expenses account and are transferred into the Trust, an account in the U. S. Treasury. In addition to appropriated amounts, the Trust consists of interest on and proceeds from the sale or redemption of any obligations held by the Trust.

The value of an education award depends on the length of service provided. Completion of a full time term of service, currently requiring a minimum of 1,700 hours of service, entitles an AmeriCorps member to an education award of \$4,725. Completion of a part-time term of service, requiring a minimum of 900 hours of service, entitles an AmeriCorps member to an education award of \$2,362.50.

The participant can use the education award to:

- (1) Repay qualified student loans.
- (2) Pay all or part of the cost of attendance at a qualified institution of higher education.
- (3) Pay expenses incurred in participating in an approved school-to-work program.

Education awards earned by AmeriCorps members are available for seven years from the end of the service. The National Service Trust makes payments directly to the qualified education institutions and the loan holders as directed by the AmeriCorps members and by the institutions. In addition to the education award, funds in the Trust can be used to pay for interest accrued on qualified student loans that were placed in forbearance while participants performed service. After five full years of operation, the total federal funds appropriated for the Trust has reached \$468 million. The interest earned from investing the Trust funds totals \$96 million (see Table 27). In the fiscal 2000 appropriation, Congress rescinded \$80 million of the amounts previously appropriated to the National Service Trust.

Enrollment Levels

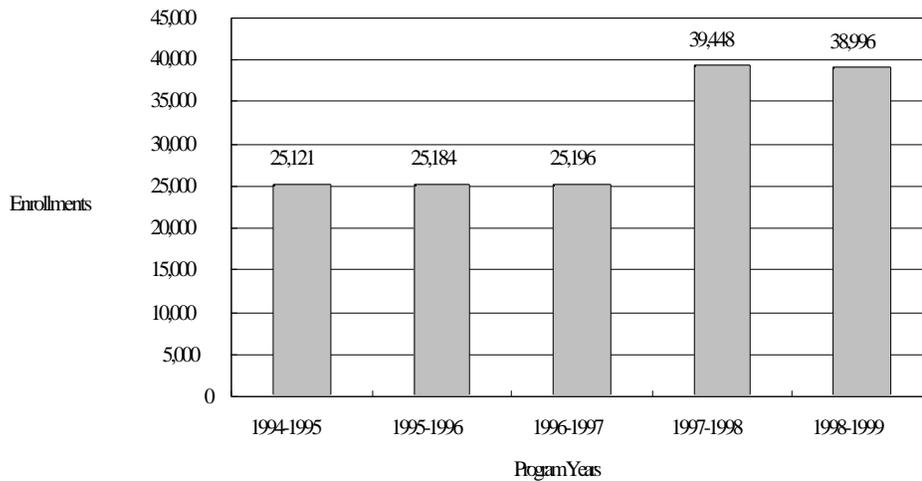
Trust enrollments during the first five years of its operation are summarized in Figure 24. Annual enrollments were 25,000 per year for the first three years, increased by 55 percent in program year 1997-1998, and leveled off again in program year 1998-1999. According to the latest available data, the Trust enrolled 38,996 AmeriCorps members in program year 1998-1999 (see Table 29).

This is slightly less than the enrollment goal of 41,000 members in the Trust. The difference reflects three issues. First, some enrollment is incomplete as some projects, primarily in the Education Award Program, have an extended period in which to enroll members. Second, enrollment estimates are projections reflecting assumptions about the activities and operations of

| TABLE 27. NATIONAL SERVICE TRUST FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS AND INTEREST RECEIVED 1994-1999 | | |
|---|----------------|--------------|
| Fiscal Year | Appropriation | Interest |
| 1994 | \$ 98,250,000 | \$ 4,219,587 |
| 1995 | 115,070,000 | 11,227,948 |
| 1996 | 56,000,000 | 15,950,892 |
| 1997 | 59,000,000 | 16,410,706 |
| 1998 | 70,000,000 | 23,306,391 |
| 1999 | 70,000,000 | 25,104,255 |
| Total | \$ 468,320,000 | \$96,219,779 |

Sources: (1) VA/HUD appropriation bills, 1994-1999; (2) National Service Trust subsidiary ledger. Corporation for National Service.

FIGURE 24. ENROLLMENTS IN THE NATIONAL SERVICE TRUST PROGRAM YEARS 1994-95 THROUGH 1998-99^z



Source: National Service Trust Database. Corporation for National Service.

thousands of non-profit organizations in communities across the country. Third, there is evidence that some local programs, particularly those targeted at specific populations, experienced recruitment challenges in light of the strong economy.

^z Data current as of March 8, 2000 and excludes AmeriCorps*VISTA members who choose a cash stipend at the end of service instead of an education award.

| TABLE 28. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | | | |
|--|--------|--------|-----------|
| Key Indicators for 1999 ^{aa} | | | |
| Key Indicators | Goal | Result | Goal Met? |
| Number of AmeriCorps members enrolling in the Trust. Source: <i>National Service Trust Database.</i> | 41,000 | 38,996 | NO |
| Percent of AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service and become eligible to receive an education award. Source: <i>National Service Trust Database.</i> | 80% | 77% | NO |

At the end of program year 1998-1999, the total number of enrollments in the National Service Trust reached 153,000 (See Table 29). This total does not include some AmeriCorps*VISTA members. AmeriCorps*VISTA members have an option to receive a cash stipend instead of an education award for successfully completing service. Approximately 2,700 AmeriCorps*VISTA members did not choose the education award option in program year 1998-1999.

| TABLE 29. ENROLLMENTS IN THE TRUST PROGRAM YEARS 1994-95 THROUGH 1998-99 | |
|---|-------------|
| Program Year | Enrollments |
| 1994-1995 | 25,121 |
| 1995-1996 | 25,184 |
| 1996-1997 | 25,196 |
| 1997-1998 | 39,448 |
| 1998-1999 | 38,996 |
| Total | 153,945 |

Sources: National Service Trust Database. Corporation for National Service.

The total number of education awards earned from all program years since 1994-1995 reached 102,405 at the end of 1998-1999. The difference between the number of members who enroll and the number who earn education awards is a combination of those who leave the program without earning an education award and those who are still serving in a program. The total dollar value of those awards was \$377 million (See Table 30). This information is current as of March 8, 2000. As there are still many people serving from program year 1998-1999 and some from program year 1997-1998 (several programs had late start-up dates and part-time service can be performed over several years), these data will change in subsequent reports.

^{aa}One annual performance indicator, formerly listed under the Trust, concerning the number of Presidential Student Service Scholarships now is listed under Learn and Serve America. Trust appropriations fund the program, but the Department of Service-Learning administers it.

| TABLE 30. NUMBER OF EDUCATION AWARDS AND THEIR VALUE PROGRAM YEARS 1994-1995 THROUGH 1998-1999 | | |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Program Year | Number who earned award | Value of awards |
| 1994-1995 | 18,792 | \$ 62,780,077 |
| 1995-1996 | 18,412 | 71,440,911 |
| 1996-1997 | 18,163 | 71,101,193 |
| 1997-1998 (incomplete data) | 25,845 | 94,414,423 |
| 1998-1999 (incomplete data) | 21,193 | 77,086,488 |
| Total | 102,405 | \$376,823,092 |

Sources: National Service Trust Database. Corporation for National Service.

Earning and Using the Education Awards

AmeriCorps members earn the education award when they have successfully completed a term of service (not including those members of AmeriCorps*VISTA who choose to earn the cash stipend). Across all three branches of AmeriCorps – State and National, VISTA, and NCCC – 76.9 percent of the members successfully completing a term of service in fiscal 1999 earned the education award.

The Corporation aspired to a goal of 80 percent for completions in 1999 and fell somewhat short of this target. Both AmeriCorps*NCCC and AmeriCorps*VISTA exceeded the goal. AmeriCorps*State and National did not and, because of its size relative to the other programs, brought the overall rate down. The rate for AmeriCorps*State and National is relatively constant over its five-year history, ranging from a low of 71.8 percent in 1995 to a high of 77.3 percent in 1997. The goal for 1999 was set in 1997 before this five-year history was available. The Corporation, however, will review performance in this area and look for ways to improve the rate at which members become eligible for the education award.

Education awards can be used in three ways. First, the award can repay qualified (generally, Federally guaranteed) student loans. Second, the award can pay all or part of the cost of attending a qualified institution of higher education (a school which has a program participation agreement with the Department of Education under the provisions of the Higher Education Act). And, three, the award can pay for expenses incurred while participating in an approved school-to-work program. Through fiscal 1999, 56 percent of the awards money used financed continuing education, 33 percent paid student loans, and 11 percent was used to do both.

In addition to the education award, individuals participating in AmeriCorps are entitled to have most of their qualified student loans placed in forbearance during their period of service. Forbearance permits the loan recipient to suspend payments during the term of service. If the individual successfully completes the term of service, the National Service Trust will pay the interest that accrued on those student loans while the member was in service.

Education awards are generally available for use by the member who earned them for seven years from the end of the member's service. The dollar amount of the education award that has been

used through the end of program year 1998-1999 totals \$124 million (as of 9/30/99). Interest forbearance payments made for members total \$11 million (see Table 31).

The pattern of use by AmeriCorps members has been very consistent. People who earned an education award from service in the first year of the program have used about 63 percent of the education award funds held in trust for them (as of September 30, 1999). Most of those awards will be available until sometime in fiscal year 2002. Because payments from the Trust have only a five-year history, the utilization rate for the last two years is unknown. For budgeting purposes, the Trust assumes that 78 percent of all earned award amounts will be used.

| TABLE 31. AMOUNT OF EDUCATION AWARDS USED BY MEMBERS AND PAID INTEREST FORBEARANCE, PROGRAM YEAR 1994-95 THROUGH 1998-99 | | |
|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Program year of service | Education award used | Interest Forbearance paid |
| 1994-1995 | \$ 39,334,935 | \$ 468,115 |
| 1995-1996 | 41,500,105 | 936,915 |
| 1996-1997 | 36,344,321 | 1,672,738 |
| 1997-1998 | 4,191,402 | 2,556,571 |
| 1998-1999 | 3,352,883 | 6,111,568 |
| Total | \$ 124,723,648 | \$11,745,910 |

Source: 1999 Financial Statement. Corporation for National Service.

Management of the National Service Trust

The Corporation made a number of changes to the operations of the National Service Trust in fiscal 1999 to improve the quality of its records and the service it provides to AmeriCorps members. The Corporation engaged a new contract firm to provide telephone assistance to AmeriCorps members. The Corporation hired another firm to improve the timeliness of Trust mailings to members. The Corporation installed an optical imaging system to record incoming mail and to image existing Trust records. Finally, the Corporation completed development of the Web-based Reporting System (WBRS) to improve the quality and timeliness of Trust data received from the hundreds of AmeriCorps grantees throughout the country (see Innovation chapter for more details).

CHAPTER 7. EVALUATION

The program evaluation activities of the Corporation employ the methods of social science research to assess the design, implementation, and effects of national service programs. One goal of evaluation in the Corporation is to provide decision-makers at all levels of national service with information that can improve national service programs. Another goal is to determine the extent to which national service programs produce measurable outcomes and, to the extent that they do not, to determine why not.

The Corporation initiates 20-30 studies, each year, using independent, evaluation research contractors. Past and present contractors have included:

- *Abt Associates*, Cambridge, Massachusetts
- *Aguirre International*, San Mateo, California
- *Brandeis University*, Waltham, Massachusetts
- *ORC Macro International*, Calverton, Maryland
- *PeopleWorks*, Los Angeles, California
- *Rand Corporation*, Santa Monica, California
- *Research Triangle Institute*, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina
- *The University of California*, Los Angeles
- *Westat Incorporated*, Rockville, Maryland.

In addition to program evaluation, the appropriations for evaluation support Corporation staff who provide technical assistance on evaluation and research issues. Evaluation staff advise grantees on the conduct of outcome-based program evaluations and program improvement studies. Corporation evaluation staff review grant proposals with respect to evaluation-related content. The staff supervise the collection of basic information from 45,000-50,000 individuals in national service programs and nearly 1,300 programs and grantees. The staff also help to direct the Corporation's Web-based Reporting System (WBRS) and to disseminate effective practice information related to national service.

Activities in 1999

In 1999, the Corporation carried out research and related activities intended to further understanding of national service in four areas: descriptive research, outcome research, literacy initiatives, and technical assistance (See Table 32). Although literacy initiatives are organized around a content area rather than a set of purposes and methods, the Corporation's investment in literacy and reading has been sufficient to justify highlighting its efforts in this area.

Descriptive Research

Because much of the Corporation's programming is new, outcome research often begins with a careful descriptive analysis used to inform the design of a subsequent outcome study. Descriptive studies completed in fiscal 1999 included a survey of service-learning in public conducted in collaboration with the National Center for Education Statistics (1999) and a study of customer satisfaction among AmeriCorps*State and National grantees and sub-grantees by ORC Macro International (1999).

TABLE 32. ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF EVALUATION IN FISCAL 1999

| Title | Conducted by | Ended in 1999 | Active in 2000 |
|--|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Studies begun before 1999 | | | |
| <i>1997-1997 Annual Accomplishments Review Data Collection (AmeriCorps*State/National Direct)</i> | Aguirre | X | |
| <i>1997-1998 Customer Satisfaction Survey (AmeriCorps*State/National Direct Grantees)</i> | Macro | X | |
| <i>1997-1998 Member Demographic Survey (All AmeriCorps)</i> | Westat | X | |
| <i>Survey of Service Learning in American Schools (Joint project with the Department of Education)</i> | Westat | X | |
| <i>1997-1998 NCCC Accomplishments Report</i> | Westat | X | |
| <i>1997-1998 NCCC Entry/Exit Member Experience Survey</i> | Westat | X | |
| <i>1997-1998 Foster Grandparent Program Accomplishments</i> | Aguirre | X | |
| <i>1997-1998 Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Accomplishments</i> | Aguirre | X | |
| <i>1997-1998 Senior Companion Program Accomplishments</i> | Aguirre | X | |
| <i>Senior Companion Program Quality of Care Outcome Evaluation, Design Phase Report</i> | Research Triangle | X | |
| <i>An Evaluation of the Seniors for Schools Demonstration Project, 1997-1998</i> | Aguirre | X | |
| <i>Preliminary Analysis of Corporation for National Service Recruitment Practices</i> | People Works | X | |
| <i>Development of a Performance Standards System for State Service Commissions</i> | Corporation staff | X | |
| <i>A Longitudinal Study of Member Outcomes, Phase I (Design Study Report)</i> | Abt | X | |
| <i>An Evaluation of Education Award Only Programs</i> | Westat | X | |
| <i>Evaluation Toolkit: A User's Guide to Evaluation Tools for National Service Programs</i> | Aguirre | X | |
| Studies Begun in Fiscal 1999 | | | |
| <i>A Brief Synthesis of Research on National Service</i> | B. Boston | X | |
| <i>Learn and Serve America Higher Education Summary Report</i> | Rand | X | |
| <i>Learn and Serve America K-12 Summary Report</i> | Abt | X | |
| <i>Assessment of Grantee Technical Assistance Needs (TA Focus Groups)</i> | People Works | X | |
| <i>A Review of Trust Management Practices in AmeriCorps*State/National Direct Programs</i> | Corporation staff | X | |
| <i>An Assessment of the Value Added of AmeriCorps*State/National Direct Activities</i> | Research Triangle | X | |

| TABLE 32. ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF EVALUATION IN FISCAL 1999 | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Title | Conducted by | Ended in 1999 | Active in 2000 |
| Studies begun in 1999 (continued) | | | |
| <i>An Analysis of the Intended Outcomes of AmeriCorps Tutoring and Literacy Programs</i> | Aguirre | X | |
| <i>Case Studies of Effective Practices in AmeriCorps*State/National Direct Programs</i> | Corporation staff | X | |
| <i>Follow-up Study of AmeriCorps*State/National Direct</i> | Aguirre | X | |
| <i>Supplemental Analysis of AmeriCorps Life Skills Outcome Data</i> | Aguirre | X | |
| <i>DC Reads, Year Two Evaluation (Learner Outcomes)</i> | Macro | X | |
| <i>Descriptive Study of AmeriCorps Literacy Programs</i> | Abt | X | |
| <i>Literacy Learning Assessment of Progress (A tutor's tracking and assessment tool)</i> | Bank Street College of Education | X | |
| <i>A study of Longitudinal Member Outcomes, Data Collection Phase</i> | Abt | | X |
| <i>Senior Companion Program Quality of Care Outcome Evaluation, Data Collection Phase</i> | Research Triangle | | X |
| <i>Development of a Web-based Annual Accomplishments Tracking Systems for AmeriCorps*State/National Direct Programs</i> | Aguirre | | X |
| <i>An Evaluation of the Implementation of Citizenship Training Materials</i> | People Works | | X |
| <i>An Assessment of the Sustainability of VISTA Project Activities</i> | People Works | | X |
| <i>VISTA Accomplishment Survey and Tracking Data Base</i> | Aguirre | | X |
| <i>1998-1999 Annual Accomplishments Review Data Collection (AmeriCorps*State/National Direct)</i> | Aguirre | | X |
| <i>1998-1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey (AmeriCorps*State/National Direct Grantees)</i> | Macro | | X |
| <i>1998-1999 Member Demographic Survey (All AmeriCorps)</i> | Westat | | X |
| <i>1999-2000 Customer Satisfaction Survey of Indirect Customers (NCCC, NSSC, VISTA) Survey</i> | Macro | | X |
| <i>An Evaluability Assessment of NCCC Impact: Project Case Studies</i> | Westat | | X |

Source: Office of Evaluation. Corporation for National Service.

During 1999, Aguirre International collected and analyzed accomplishment data (output measures) for the 1997-1998 program year for all three branches of AmeriCorps (Aguirre 1998). Aguirre also began accomplishment data collection for the three Senior Corps programs for program year 1998-1999. Members of all three branches of AmeriCorps responded to a random sample telephone survey by Westat, Inc., asking for basic demographic data (Yudd and others

1999). And, ORC Macro International began customer satisfaction surveys of nearly all Corporation grantees and many of its sub-grantees.

Outcome Research

During 1999, the Corporation began sponsoring data collection in several significant outcome studies intended to provide definitive evidence about its most important goals. One study concerned the effects of service on its participants. Abt Associates began data collection in a longitudinal study of the impact of AmeriCorps*State and National and AmeriCorps*NCCC service on those who serve. They will follow a cohort of 2,200 AmeriCorps members and nearly 1,800 matched comparison group members over several years. The study seeks to determine the effects of full-time service on a range of important dimensions including educational attainment, career choices and progress, future service activities, and civic participation.

The Corporation has a commitment to conduct outcome-focused evaluations of all its major program initiatives. A five-year outcome study of AmeriCorps*State and National, done by Aguirre International, was completed in 1999 (Aguirre 1999a). This is one of the largest research projects conducted during the Corporation's existence. Major studies of the two service-learning programs, Learn and Serve K-12 (Melchior 1998) and Learn and Serve Higher Education (Gray and others 1998) were completed before 1999. Fiscal 1998 saw the completion of an outcome study of aspects of the Foster Grandparents program (Westat 1997).

In 1999, Research Triangle Institute began a comparison group investigation of the effect of the Senior Companion Program on the quality of life of frail senior citizens living independently. This research will not only shed light on the effectiveness of the Senior Companion Program, but will constitute a significant addition to the general literature on improving the quality of life for frail seniors.

Westat, Inc. began an outcome study of the AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps. During the initial phase, investigators conducted a series of case studies of NCCC service projects to determine the types of outcomes likely to be found and to explore the methods that would most likely succeed in capturing NCCC impacts on a larger scale. The second phase, involving a national sample and more quantitative methods, will begin in fiscal 2000.

Outcome research on AmeriCorps*VISTA is underway in the form of a study by PeopleWorks, Inc. of the sustainability of VISTA project outcomes. This research into the lasting effects of projects initiated by VISTA volunteers continued through 1999.

Literacy Initiatives

For the past three years, the Corporation has made reading and literacy-related activities a program emphasis. The agency has initiated several evaluations intended to assess the effects of these efforts.

The largest of these is a multi-part effort by Abt Associates to assess the effects of AmeriCorps tutoring on the reading skills of young children (Moss and others 1999). The first part of this project, conducted in preparation for the large-scale outcome study, involved an analysis of the intended outcomes of AmeriCorps tutoring and literacy programs. Next, a descriptive analysis of literacy and tutoring programs was conducted. It helped prepare for the outcome study and provided a range of valuable information about the state of Corporation reading interventions.

In late fiscal 1999, data collection began in the outcome study. This research will provide crucial evidence about the effect of tutoring by AmeriCorps members. The study will follow nearly 1,000 kindergarten through third grade students being tutored in almost 200 schools nationwide. Abt Associates is administering before and after, standardized assessments of reading ability to these students and a comparison group. This will permit the researcher to estimate the effects of the intervention. This study will not only bear on the effectiveness of AmeriCorps, but will constitute the first rigorous, large-scale comparison-group study of the effectiveness of tutoring.

Evaluations of the DC Reads project (Macro 1999) and the Seniors for Schools demonstration (Project Star 1999a) were also part of the Corporation's literacy evaluation efforts. The Seniors for Schools evaluation, carried out by Project Star of Aguirre International, followed the efforts of the nine sites in that project to improve the literacy skills of young children using senior citizens as tutors. ORC Macro completed in 1999 its evaluation of the student reading outcomes in the DC Reads project, a tutoring collaboration in the Washington DC public schools.

The Corporation used its evaluation expertise to provide technical assistance to programs engaged in tutoring. A collaborative effort of Corporation staff, grantees, and a technical assistance provider resulted in the production of an assessment tool for tutors. The tool instructs tutors on the essential competencies of reading while it permits them to develop a detailed picture of their students' reading ability, and provides a quantitative measure of change in reading ability. The tool also serves as a record-keeping device for tutoring sessions. It will be available in fiscal 2000.

Technical Assistance

The Corporation believes that evaluation is an effective management tool as well as a means of assessing effectiveness. To that end, the agency has required many grantees to develop annual, outcome-based objectives and to track progress toward them. At the same time, grantees and subgrantees have access to extensive technical assistance in evaluation. During fiscal 1999, Project STAR of Aguirre International, a technical assistance provider in evaluation, provided numerous forms of technical assistance to the Corporation's programs across the streams of service. This included the AmeriCorps State and National Direct and VISTA programs, Indian Tribal programs, U.S. Territorial programs, State Commissions, Learn and Serve Higher Education consortia, and the National Senior Service Corps. Project STAR also worked with the Corporation to determine effective ways to deliver assistance to new national service initiatives, such as America Reads and America's Promise.

Project STAR responded to 450 requests for technical assistance to provide support and training in assessing results (hence the acronym). They conducted 99 site visits with AmeriCorps*State and National Direct programs, providing intensive assistance to develop measurable objectives, create or adapt tools for data collection, analyze data, and report results to stakeholders. Project STAR provided technical assistance by telephone with 41 programs and conducted objective reviews with 71 programs. Some State Commissions requested that Project STAR review the objectives of all AmeriCorps programs in their state. In order to build evaluation capacity further, Project STAR also responded to 55 requests by State Commissions for on-site assistance and presentations. In response to the increased demand for training, Project STAR presented 53 workshops at 33 conferences, reaching more than 2,000 participants.

Project STAR maintains a resource library on program evaluation materials and tools to support the Corporation's issue areas of education, public safety, human needs, and the environment.

In fiscal 1999, Project STAR responded to 181 requests for tools and materials to measure outcomes of program activities. The Internet web page is another technical assistance resource for information on outcome-based evaluation. Programs used the interactive tools on the web page to develop 110 objectives and 66 evaluation plans. Project Star also completed an excellent guide to local program evaluation entitled *The Toolkit: A User's Guide to Evaluation for National Service Programs*. This guidebook has been widely distributed and is available on the web page. Project STAR also publishes a quarterly newsletter and distributes it nationwide.

Because of these comprehensive efforts, some programs requested more advanced training and technical assistance, and Project STAR developed additional materials and workshops to meet these needs. Corporation officers also reported marked improvement among programs that have received evaluation technical assistance. In fiscal 2000, the scope of evaluation technical assistance services will extend to Learn and Serve K-12 and Community-Based Organizations.

The Office of Evaluation also continued development of an effective practices information exchange and of its Web-Based Reporting System. The accomplishments reporting mentioned above will be incorporated into the on-line system during fiscal 2000. Finally, evaluation professional staff presented at several professional conferences, provided technical assistance directly to many grantees, and served as general resources to all Corporation staff on a wide range of questions touching on all kinds of research and its interpretation

The Corporation is also developing a means of disseminating effective program practices to the national service network. Using the Internet, this initiative made significant progress during fiscal 1999 and an effective practices website will be operational in fiscal 2000.

The evaluation capabilities of the Corporation were employed in two other initiatives designed to assist grantees: the Web-Based Reporting System (WBRS) and the State Commission Standards project (for details, see the chapter on AmeriCorps*State and National).

Related to the literacy theme discussed above, evaluation expertise was used to provide technical assistance to programs engaged in tutoring. A collaborative effort of Corporation staff, grantees, and a technical assistance provider resulted in the production of an assessment tool for tutors. The tool instructs tutors on the essential competencies of reading while it permits them to develop a detailed picture of their students' reading ability, and provides a quantitative measure of change in reading ability. The tool also serves as a record-keeping device for tutoring sessions. It will be available in fiscal 2000.

Other Activities

In addition to the major studies described above, the Corporation began a series of smaller research projects in 1999. These included implementation studies on the deployment of the Web-based Reporting System (WBRS) at the local program level and on a set of Corporation-sponsored citizenship training materials. Also, Corporation staff completed two, intensive, research projects: (1) a set of case studies intended to illuminate effective practices in highly successful programs; and (2) a series of focus groups designed to determine the technical assistance needs of Corporation grantees.

The Corporation proposed to initiate 28 studies during 1999 (see Table 33). That goal was not met. To develop its annual plan the Office of Evaluation seeks considerable input from the Corporation's program and management units. Based on their perceived research needs, and those topics suggested by evaluation staff, a portfolio of proposed studies is developed and

presented to the Corporation's Board of Directors. Typically, the annual evaluation plan has a large agenda with the understanding that it might well exceed staff or funding capacity within a given year depending upon the ultimate complexity and expense of each study. In addition, every program year brings the need for previously unforeseen projects that arise mid-year. In fiscal 1999, resource requirements for unanticipated studies, plus the initiation of the SCP, reading outcome, and member longitudinal studies, meant that the Corporation was able to begin 24 studies. The Corporation is reviewing the process by which it sets annual goals for its evaluation efforts. The revised 2001 performance plan will include the results of that review.

Use of Evaluation Data

The Corporation views evaluation as a service with a variety of customers, including Congress, Corporation grantees, the service field generally, the Corporation's Board of Directors, senior management, and program managers. Each of these client groups can use evaluation findings to help manage their responsibilities with respect to national service.

Corporation senior management use evaluation data to improve program operations and to set program policy. AmeriCorps*NCCC managers recently redesigned their recruitment and selection process based upon the recommendations from an evaluation study by PeopleWorks.^{bb} The data from the tutoring outcome study will play a role in determining the future direction of the agency's efforts to ensure that all young children can read effectively (Moss and others 1999). Also at the agency-wide level, evaluation results are a primary source of information for the establishment and tracking of performance goals.

National service programs use the Corporation's evaluation results in two ways. First, programs communicate to their local stakeholders the value of the enterprise in which they are engaged. And, second, effective practices information derived from these studies help improve the design and management of programs.

Program staff at Corporation headquarters uses evaluation data both to gauge the areas of success and those requiring improvement in the initiatives and programs they fund. They also use effective practice information to guide their grantees. For example, a recent study of the Foster Grandparents Program caused the Senior Corps management to disseminate the instrument used in the study (the Arnett Caregiver's Scale) to all FGP programs for use in internal evaluation (Westat 1997).

Finally, the interested public employs the Corporation's research findings in a variety of ways. Studies such as the on-going tutoring research, the member longitudinal studies, and the service-learning studies completed in 1998 have applicability to significant societal questions. As such, they become contributions to broad fields of inquiry well beyond national service. In addition, those wishing to know more about the service activities in their communities or those who are considering service as a solution to their communities' problems consult the Corporation's research to gauge the value of national service generally.

The Corporation's research on school-based and higher-education service learning has become two of the most widely cited studies in the field of service learning (Abt 1995 and Rand 1998). The data on life skills development emerging from the five-year study of AmeriCorps*State and National is being recognized for its implications for youth development generally (Aguirre 1997). As mentioned previously, the study of tutoring outcomes now being conducted will be the first

^{bb} The PeopleWorks study is still in draft and scheduled for completion in 2000.

significant study of a community-based educational movement that is growing rapidly nationwide.

The Corporation is committed to the view that research is only valuable to the extent that it is utilized by its stakeholders and its intended audience. The agency is constantly seeking ways to better design and present research to further that end.

| TABLE 33. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | | | |
|---|-----------|--------|------------|
| Key Indicators for 1999 | | | |
| Key Indicators | Goal | Result | Goal Met? |
| Number of evaluation studies initiated. Source: <i>Office of Evaluation. Corporation for National Service.</i> | 28 | 24 | NO |
| Number of evaluation reports completed. Source: <i>Office of Evaluation. Corporation for National Service.</i> | 26 | 29 | YES |
| Number of Corporation Grantees (State Commissions and State Education Agencies) and State Offices receiving evaluation technical assistance. Source: <i>Office of Evaluation. Corporation for National Service.</i> | 40 of 155 | 72 | YES |

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CHAPTER 8. INNOVATION, DEMONSTRATION, AND ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

The Innovation, Demonstration, and Assistance Activities include funds for a wide variety of programs and initiatives to carry out the purposes of subtitle H of the National and Community Service Act, as amended. The goals of these activities are: build the ethic of service among Americans of all ages and backgrounds; support innovative demonstration service programs that may not be eligible under other subtitles of the legislation; provide training, leadership development, and technical support to grantees and service programs receiving assistance under the Act; build a strong infrastructure at the local and state levels to support and provide technical assistance to programs; foster program effectiveness leading to high quality programs and real community impact; assist programs enrolling participants with disabilities and accommodating their participation; and support disaster relief efforts.

The activities supported by Innovation funds discussed in this chapter include:

- Training and technical assistance for all of national service
- AmeriCorps recruitment
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day grants
- Grants for individuals with disabilities
- National Service Fellows
- America Reads

Five activities funded under Innovation are presented in other chapters so that they may be more closely aligned with the areas of the Corporation where they are administered. The AmeriCorps Education Award Program, AmeriCorps Leaders, and the AmeriCorps*Promise Fellows program appear as part of the AmeriCorps*State and National chapter. Included as part of Learn and Serve America chapter are two programs funded through Innovation, but administered by the Department of Service-Learning: the President's Student Service Scholarships and the Leader Schools.

Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA)

The National and Community Service Act authorizes the Corporation to provide, directly or through contracts or cooperative agreements, training and technical assistance (T/TA) in support of activities under the national service laws. Accordingly, the Corporation provides technical assistance and training to enhance program quality through consistent, focused delivery of T/TA services. Corporation T/TA takes into account the needs of community-based projects, the level of resources available locally, and the Corporation's expectations and objectives.

Training and Technical Assistance Providers

During the year the Corporation provided approximately \$6 million to state commissions for use in the delivery of T/TA services to Corporation-funded programs. The Corporation extended the use of these funds to include all streams of service – AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and the Senior Corps. In addition, planning activities were expanded to include multiple partners and programs in the design and delivery of training activities.

The Corporation offered training and technical assistance services in the areas of sustainability, organizational development, leadership development, member development and management,

financial management, training materials development, and supervisory skills training (see Table 1). Programs identified these areas and others through national needs assessments that the Corporation conducts every three years. In addition, special assistance was available during the year to Corporation-funded programs involved in literacy.

In fiscal 1999, training and technical assistance providers delivered more than 1,400 training and technical assistance events. The events involved program staff and members in AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs.

T/TA providers (see Table 34) are experienced, well-established organizations selected by the Corporation after rigorous competition that includes both peer and staff review. All provider organizations bring strong records of accomplishment working with non-profit, volunteer or community service agencies.

As part of the T/TA Electronic Publishing Initiative (EPI) that began during the previous fiscal year, downloadable versions of 43 of the most sought after T/TA publications became available on the Internet. EPI is part of an on-going, Corporation-wide effort to reduce spending on print materials and to expand accessibility to the Corporation's most useful publications.

To increase the Corporation's responsiveness to the needs of customers, it conducted a nationwide needs assessment in 1999. The study focused on the types of T/TA grantees want and how they want it delivered. Data were collected through focus groups, individual face-to-face interviews, and telephone interviews. The Corporation is now using the data to develop plans for 2000.

The Web-Based Reporting System

The new Web-Based Reporting System (WBRS) allows AmeriCorps grantees to complete most of their transactions with the Corporation electronically. WBRS improves the quality and timeliness of National Service Trust data received from the hundreds of AmeriCorps grantees throughout the country. Using a worldwide web browser, grantees and sub-grantees are now able to track and report data more easily and accurately and to use the information they collect more effectively as a management tool.

WBRS started in 1997 by the Corporation and a T/TA provider to support state commissions and local service programs. In 1999, WBRS moved toward full operation. The new reporting system simplifies the data collection process needed to monitor fiscal and program compliance as well as quality of program implementation. The project was undertaken to strengthen Corporation and grantee capacity to enroll AmeriCorps members, track their progress, process their education awards, and make grantee submission of financial status and progress reports easier.

The Corporation tested WBRS in fiscal 1999 with ten state commissions (see Table 35). With the successful completion of the test, the Corporation began to train its grantees in the spring of 1999. In fiscal 1999, 43 of the 49 state commissions received training in WBRS. The remaining six commissions were trained early in fiscal 2000.

Using WBRS, grantees now complete and submit member-enrollment, change-of-status and end-of-term forms electronically. The system automatically checks forms for errors, speeding up processing time at the Corporation. With grantee information downloaded into its database, the National Service Trust is now able to process education awards more quickly. WBRS also allows grantees to maintain member service-hour records in a central database linked to other member

forms, and to complete and submit electronically financial status reports and progress reports. The latter report includes a census of a program's AmeriCorps members, information on their service hours and the status of their progress toward objectives.

| TABLE 34. TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS | |
|--|---|
| 1999 | |
| Provider | Issue Area |
| ACKCO/American Indian Professional Services | Tribal programs |
| Aguirre International/Project Star | Evaluation services |
| Aguirre International/Project TASC | Technical assistance to state commissions |
| Campaign Consultation | Sustainability |
| Catholic Network of Volunteer Service (CNVS) | Member development and management |
| CHP International | Human relations and diversity training |
| ETR Associates | National Service Resource Center |
| National Service-Learning Clearinghouse | Information collection and dissemination on Service-Learning Programs & Resources |
| National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (NASCC) | Crew-based programs |
| National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) | Supervisory skills training |
| National Youth Leadership Council | Service-learning T/TA exchange |
| Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) | Educational Success and support for America Reads programs |
| United Cerebral Palsy Associations/Access AmeriCorps | Disability issues |
| United Way of America | Organizational development and program management |
| Walker & Company, LLP | Financial management |

Source: Office of Training and Technical Assistance, Department of Evaluation and Effective Practices, Corporation for National Service.

Customer Satisfaction

In an annual customer satisfaction survey, conducted by an independent contractor, AmeriCorps grantees and sub-grantees rated the quality of training and technical assistance provided by the

| TABLE 35. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Key Indicators for 1999 | | | |
| Key Indicators | Goal | Result | Goal Met? |
| Number of State Commissions trained in using WBRS, the Internet-based, data reporting system. Source: <i>Aguirre International</i> . | 9 | 43 | YES |
| Number of NSLI classes held for grantee staff. Source: <i>Consolidated Training Accountability Report. NSLI. Corporation for National Service</i> . | 40 | 33 | NO |
| Number of grantee staff members trained by NSLI. Source: <i>Consolidated Training Accountability Report. NSLI. Corporation for National Service</i> . | 1,750 | 1,122 | NO |
| Number of applicants to AmeriCorps. Source: <i>VISTA Applicant and Placement Data Base. NCCC Applicant and Placement Database. Office of AmeriCorps Recruitment. Corporation for National Service</i> . | Baseline to be set | VISTA=3576 NCCC=2654 | Not applicable |
| Number of colleges & universities in America Reads. Source: <i>America Reads America Counts. U. S. Department of Education</i> . | 1,200 | 1228 | YES |

Corporation T/TA providers (see Figure 25). The survey comprised two samples: (1) 80 grantees and sub-grantees with a response rate of 69 percent; and (2) 293 programs with 74 percent responding.

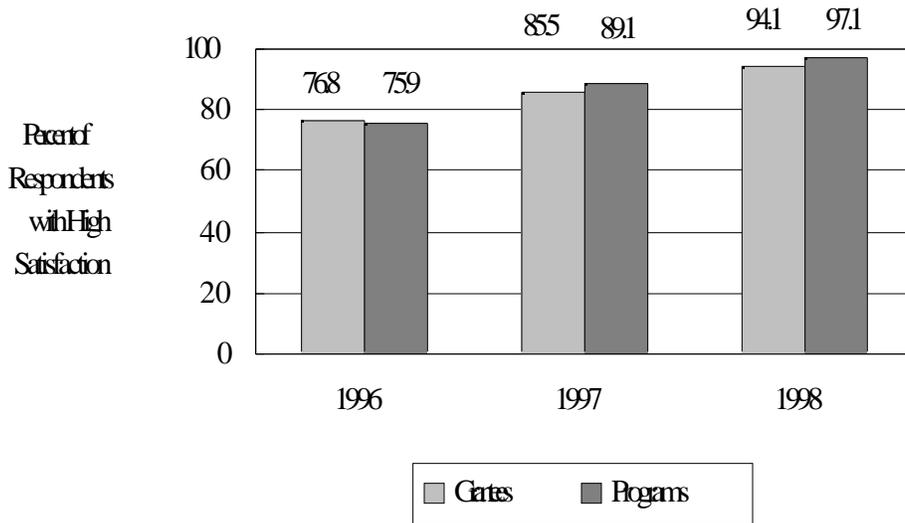
The Corporation made a concerted effort the past four years, since the first customer survey took place, to make training and technical assistance more responsive to the needs of grantees. The satisfaction levels of grantees with Corporation training and technical assistance support have gone up every year. In the most recent survey, completed in 1999 and covering program year 1998-1999, nine out of ten grantees expressed high satisfaction with training and technical assistance services provided by the Corporation.

National Service Leadership Institute

Recognizing the correlation between high quality national service programs and effective leadership, the Corporation created the National Service Leadership Institute in 1995. The Institute serves as the Corporation's primary leadership development resource, providing courses, workshops and technical assistance to prepare individuals to be effective program managers and

facilitators of community change. Since its inception, the Institute has conducted over 100 programs serving over 4,000 national service leaders.

FIGURE 25. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
1996-1998



Source: Macro International. 1999. *1998 Customer Satisfaction Survey*. Calverton, MD.

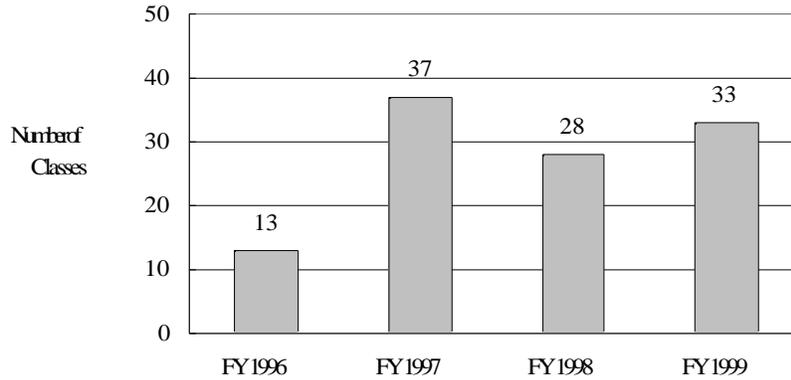
The Institute’s flagship program is the National Service Executive (NSE) Program. The Institute offers the NSE several times each year. It consists of a 5_ day basic course complemented by a three-day follow-up component six months later. The NSE curriculum challenges national service leaders to see themselves not only as program managers, but also as catalysts for change and community involvement. The curriculum focuses on management and leadership styles, building collaborative agreement, managing meetings effectively, multi-group strategic planning, leveraging diversity, and leading change processes.

In 1999, the Institute conducted an extensive survey to identify the specific skills necessary to be a successful leader of a national service program. These competencies provided the framework for developing a *Multi-rater Survey Instrument* used to provide participants with individualized assessments of their leadership effectiveness. The Institute upgraded its leadership curricula to reflect these service competencies more closely and refined all of its training designs. Overall, participants responded favorably to the Institute’s programs in 1999, consistently awarding the trainers and curricula high marks for excellence.

The number of classes at NSLI increased in fiscal 1999 by 18 percent over the previous year (see Figure 26), but two situations, which arose during the year, limited the Institute's ability to meet the 40-class target. First, the Institute experienced unanticipated vacancies in several essential positions, including that of the Director who also served as a Senior Trainer. Second, part way through the year, the Institute decided that some functions performed under contract could be done more effectively and at a lower cost. For example, the Institute no longer contracts out for trainee assessments, but rather uses a process designed and administered by its staff. The

Institute had its full complement of staff at the beginning of fiscal 2000 and fully expects to meet its performance target.

FIGURE 26. NUMBER OF NATIONAL SERVICE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE TRAINING CLASSES HELD FOR GRANTEEES IN 1999



Source: Consolidated Training Accountability Report. National Service Leadership Institute. Corporation for National Service.

Training Results

In general, the Corporation’s training efforts, as well as those conducted by local programs with grant funds, are having direct benefits for members. An evaluation completed in 1999 (Aguirre 1999) found that:

- The AmeriCorps experience improves an individual’s performance on a range of skills and abilities necessary to succeed in the workplace. Seventy-five percent of AmeriCorps members reported gains in life skills, which included communication skills, interpersonal skills, analytical problem-solving, understanding organizational systems, and information technology.
- These benefits occur for all AmeriCorps members, including those with the least developed skills when entering the program. In fact, the study found gains are most dramatic among those entering with the least developed skills.

“My year in AmeriCorps made me realize I want to devote my life to improving the education of children in our society, particularly those with language barriers and other special needs.” Rachel Wittenberg, from Rochester, N.Y., who served in a Big Brothers/Big Sisters program in Tucson, Arizona.

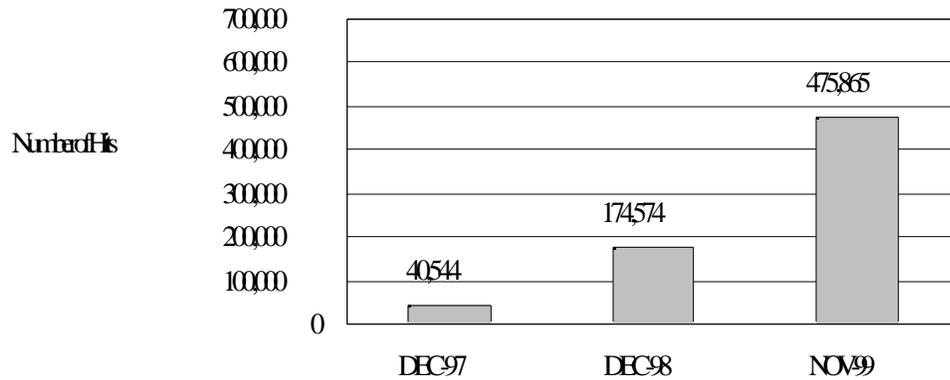
AmeriCorps Recruitment

AmeriCorps Recruitment, Selection, and Placement (RSP) is responsible for the recruitment, selection, and placement of all nationally recruited AmeriCorps*VISTA members, and all AmeriCorps*NCCC members. Selection and placement includes interviewing and evaluating for appropriate skills, legal clearances, suitability, references, and, in the case of NCCC, medical status. RSP also supports overall AmeriCorps recruitment by publicizing the program and

referring individuals to AmeriCorps*State and National programs through recruiters, the 1-800 contractor, and the AmeriCorps recruitment web pages.

In fiscal 1999, total inquiries to the 1-800 number were 82,427, compared with 97,695 in fiscal 1998. This decrease represents a strategic shift toward advertising and marketing which directs individuals to the AmeriCorps web site. Hits against the Corporation's AmeriCorps website have increased tenfold over the last two years (see Figure 27).

FIGURE 27. HITS ON THE AMERICORPS WEBSITE
1997-1999



Source: AmeriCorps Recruitment. Corporation for National Service.

In fiscal 1999, the Corporation enhanced the AmeriCorps recruitment web pages, including adding an AmeriCorps application that can be downloaded. Advertising and marketing efforts targeted the recruitment of more minorities and males for branches of AmeriCorps.

Due to concerns about reaching all individuals with a potential interest in joining AmeriCorps, the 1-800 telephone service will continue to provide program information, brochures, and applications.

In 1999, applications to join the AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps numbered 2,654 and exceeded available positions by 3:1. AmeriCorps*VISTA applications submitted centrally totaled 3,526 in fiscal 1999 compared to 2,939 the previous year.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Grants

Six years ago, President Clinton signed the King Holiday and Service Act, establishing the King Holiday as a day of service. As a senator from Pennsylvania, Harris Wofford co-sponsored the King Holiday and Service Act with Congressman John Lewis (D-GA). Since that time, thousands of organizations have supported the effort to encourage all Americans to make the King Holiday a day on, not a day off; a day of action, not apathy, in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.

In 1999, the Corporation awarded grants to more than 120 communities to enable them to conduct service activities on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in January 2000. Examples of service projects on that day were:

- In Atlanta, Georgia, Hands on Atlanta helped transformed abandoned lots into safe spaces, painted the house of senior citizens, prepared and distributed food, and cleaned up and beautified the area around the King Center.
- In Concord, New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Job Training Council helped recruit 500 volunteers to distribute furniture to needy families and paint rooms in a homeless shelter, among other projects. This was the first year that New Hampshire observed the Martin Luther King Holiday.
- In Baltimore, Maryland, the Greater Homewood Community Corporation used its grant to lead parents and children in a variety of culturally focused activities, including readings from African-American authors and presentations on Dr. King's life and teachings. Public elementary schools received donations of books relating to African-American history

Disability Programs

In fiscal 1999, the Corporation's technical assistance efforts assessed program needs with the goal of increasing the number of individuals with disabilities participating in national service programs. A technical assistance contractor supported program efforts to reach out to individuals with disabilities and to support the provision of accommodations necessary to join national service programs.

The Corporation's flexibility to demonstrate new approaches to including members with disabilities in national service programs is limited by the existing authorizing legislation; amendments to that legislation are under consideration in the Congress. Major outreach and training activities are scheduled for 2000. For example, a national conference occurred in January. AmeriCorps*State and National, AmeriCorps*VISTA, and the Senior Corps all report about 10 percent of the total number of individuals enrolled as having disabilities.

National Service Fellows

In the second year of the National Service Fellowship program, the Corporation made twelve awards (including one joint award) to individuals who proposed a project that would further the mission of the Corporation and, more broadly, the service field. The awards each covered a nine-month period and allowed the recipients to immerse themselves in a project (see Table 36 for a listing of the projects and their outcomes).

The award recipients came from a diverse range of vocational and academic backgrounds with several recently completing service as AmeriCorps members. They ranged from college graduates to doctorates. Several fellows were at early stages of their service careers and others were in mid-career or nearing retirement eligibility. Coupling this diversity with a Corporation support structure promoting dialogue among fellows increased the depth and breadth of their final products. The Corporation's web site now hosts their products where they are readily accessible by practitioners.

TABLE 36. PRODUCTS OF THE NATIONAL SERVICE FELLOWS PROGRAM IN 1999

| Title | Description |
|--|--|
| <i>Challenges and Strategies for Success with Service-Learning in Preservice Teacher Education</i> | Analysis of common challenges facing those seeking to integrate service-learning into teacher education programs, coupled with successful strategies for overcoming those impediments. |
| <i>Recruiting Male Volunteers: A Guide Based on Exploratory Research</i> | Assessment of factors that increase male volunteering in service programs, with concrete approaches to designing programs. |
| <i>Service to Citizenship: Engaging AmeriCorps Members as Active Citizens</i> | Focuses on promoting citizenship among AmeriCorps members. Includes a field-tested manual and other training materials on citizenship. |
| <i>Service Strategies and Programs to Help Incarcerated Youth: A Training Program for Volunteers</i> | Inspired by an AmeriCorps*VISTA project in Puerto Rico, provides training materials for engaging Foster Grandparents in support of incarcerated juveniles. |
| <i>The Dialogue Guide</i> | Manual and web site on interracial dialogue as a tool for creating understanding and collaboration among the diversity of individuals involved in national service. |
| <i>Partnerships that Work: National Service and Business in Welfare-to-Work</i> | A report and plan on involving community workers and business in welfare-to-work partnerships, particularly in conjunction with AmeriCorps. |
| <i>Be Part of the Equation: A User's Guide to Arts in Community Service</i> | Provides a comprehensive picture of exemplary arts in community service programs based on nationally conducted interviews. |
| <i>Inclusion: An Activity Guide to Inclusion of People with Disabilities</i> | Provides information and training on including people with disabilities in AmeriCorps. |
| <i>National Service and the Internet: Building Bridges to Collaboration</i> | Examines how the Internet can be a tool to implement Unified State Plans, and provide resources to assist states in expanding their use of the Internet. |
| <i>If All Youth Served: Empowering Youth to Build Community Through Service</i> | Provides an assessment and a tool kit on involving youth more broadly in service. |
| <i>Organizational Networks on the Ground: Six Case Studies of Indiana AmeriCorps Programs</i> | Focuses on inter-organizational collaborative networks among Indiana programs supported by AmeriCorps. Includes the nature and quality of those networks, their growth, and this understanding can inform national service policy. |
| <i>Recruitment Diversity: Identifying and Developing an Applicant Pool</i> | Provides an analysis of AmeriCorps recruitment in Florida as well as a model incorporating a variety of strategies and techniques to enhance and diversify the applicant pool. |

Source: Department of Program Planning and Integration. Corporation for National Service.

America Reads

The program and evaluation sections of this report describe most of the Corporation's efforts related to literacy, and the specific goal that all children learn to read well and independently by the end of the third grade.

Under this activity, the Corporation has taken several steps to assure high quality programs across the various streams of service. Specifically, in fiscal year 1999, the Corporation funded a technical assistance provider with expertise in the field of literacy. The purpose of this provider contract is to disseminate information, including the latest research, to programs across the country using volunteers, AmeriCorps members, Senior Corps members, high school students, and others to tutor children. This technical assistance provider is a consortium of institutions – Bank Street College of Education and the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, two organizations with considerable expertise in the field.

This consortium trained all national service programs at the beginning of the literacy initiative and conducted intensive, regionally based training this past year. These organizations also provide: ongoing support through a web site with research-based practices and downloadable materials, materials development and distribution, ongoing technical assistance through toll-free access, and limited on-site technical assistance provided by peer experts. During fiscal year 1999, the consortium supported 49 separate training events with over 2,900 participants and responded to over 1,000 technical assistance requests from those implementing literacy programs.

The Corporation works closely with the Department of Education to make sure that the information shared is based on sound research and evaluation. The Corporation has conducted joint training events with the Department. Also, the Corporation's web site directs programs to the web site at the Department of Education, and refers programs to documents produced by the Department of Education, or to materials that have been jointly produced by the Corporation and the Department of Education.

The Corporation also works closely with other organizations such as the National Institute for Literacy and Reading Is Fundamental to make sure that the Corporation makes full use of their expertise. The Corporation promotes use of the results of such professional expertise, including the National Research Council's "Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children."

The University of Pennsylvania's America Reads Partnership with the Drew Elementary School and the Wilson Elementary School in Philadelphia is a university-assisted, student-initiated, community school managed and supported program. The focus is on both school-day and extended-day literacy promotion activities that run from Mondays through Thursdays - 3 to 4:30 p.m. - with over 80 instructional meetings each year. Fifty America Reads work-study university students, most of whom focus their academic study on teaching as well as service-learning students from West Philadelphia High School and elementary school teachers staff the programs. Activities include literacy tutoring, help with homework, and literacy-based enrichment activities.

In addition, the partnership between the Department of Education and the Corporation has helped to support over 1,200 colleges and universities in joining the America Reads Challenge. Under this effort, federal work study students are placed in community service literacy programs, for which training and supervision are conducted locally, with the support of training and technical assistance providers as well as local schools and schools of education.

In summary, the Corporation uses a variety of strategies to rely upon the reading expertise that exists in local communities, and to make sure that all programs have access to training, materials and expertise on a nationwide basis. The Corporation is committed to supporting high quality programs; the training of members and volunteers is necessary to assure that programs achieve the maximum impact.

Most recently, in November, 1999, Abt Associates, under contract to the Corporation, completed an independent descriptive study of AmeriCorps Literacy Programs: State and National (Moss and others 1999). The objectives of the study were to: describe AmeriCorps*State/National programs that conduct educational activities in terms of their programmatic structures and the literacy and tutoring activities they have implemented; identify programs using effective reading/literacy instructional models likely to improve children's reading abilities; and describe the target population receiving services.

The findings of this study relevant to the question of best practices include:

- Almost all literacy programs provide some training to members and volunteers in literacy instruction and in working with children. Typically, about 16 hours of training are provided before and 20 hours are provided during the delivery of literacy services. Training is provided by a combination of staff from the sponsoring agency, the AmeriCorps grantee, the school district, and/or outside experts.
- Three-quarters of the programs conduct formal evaluations to assess the effectiveness of their literacy activities.
- Over half of the tutoring programs report that tutors conduct decoding activities with students (i.e., activities that help beginning readers develop sound-symbol correspondences).
- Most of the tutoring programs incorporate some of the structural and instructional features perceived by educators and researchers as important for positive reading outcomes. The features reported most frequently include:
 - Coordination of tutoring activities with the classroom curriculum;
 - Adequate intensity of tutoring activities—meeting at least twice weekly for at least 1.5 hours/week; and
 - Provision of training to members and volunteer tutors before and during service delivery in two important content areas: 1) reading and tutoring children; and 2) child development.
- Almost half of the tutoring programs use well-known, widely-used instructional models (e.g., Reading Recovery, Reading One-to-One, Success for All).

In short, programs in which AmeriCorps members serve are incorporating best practices into their operations. An impact evaluation is currently underway involving a random sample of these programs to determine the impact on children's reading abilities.

Completed studies have already produced very positive evaluations of outcomes in individual programs. For example, an evaluation of a literacy program in 16 schools of the District of

Columbia, supported by AmeriCorps and service-learning, documented that tutored students demonstrated greater gains on the SAT 9 reading tests than did nontutored students. Tutored students gained nearly twice as much as nontutored students, thus narrowing the gap between lower performing tutored students and their higher performing classmates.

In a book entitled *Social Programs That Work*, a University of Texas researcher documented gains for a Reading One-to-One program. Tutored students gained 0.4 to 0.7 grade equivalents above what they would have attained without tutoring. The program uses college students, AmeriCorps members, and community residents to tutor more than 6,000 students in more than 70 schools across ten school districts (Farkas 1998).

Other researchers found substantial gains in reading subskills, grades, and school success-related attitudes and behaviors because of the Urban School Service Corps. In addition, a final illustration is a study of the Corporation's Experience Corps demonstration program. This study documented the significant benefits on children's reading from an intensive tutoring model conducted by seniors.

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CHAPTER 9. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The Corporation made significant management improvements in fiscal 1999. The most critical financial management initiative was the successful implementation of a new core financial management system. On September 13, 1999, the Corporation went live on American Management Systems' Momentum financial management system. The Corporation met an aggressive schedule to implement the new system, while at the same time improving the quality and completeness of financial management operations. In addition to this major initiative, the Corporation also implemented a new web-based reporting system (WBRS) to assist the Corporation, State Commissions, and subgrantees in their work to control and monitor AmeriCorps grants and AmeriCorps member service. This and other initiatives are discussed in more detail below.

Corporation Action Plan

To ensure that the Corporation accomplished its most critical initiatives in fiscal 1999, the Chief Operating Officer developed a comprehensive Action Plan and used it to monitor the Corporation's efforts to achieve its objectives. Bi-monthly reports on the Corporation's progress in achieving its objectives were provided to the Congress and the Corporation's Inspector General also reported to Congress throughout the year. (The Inspector General also issued an assessment of the Corporation's fiscal 1999 progress in November 1999.)

The Action Plan represents a long-term, dynamic effort to achieve nine broad goals with specific objectives and tasks. It includes goals and objectives related to the six program administration performance indicators included in the Corporation's GPRA Performance Goals:

- Implement a new financial management system by June 30, 1999.
- Obtain an unqualified opinion on the Corporation's fiscal 1999 financial statements.
- Reduce the number of material weaknesses identified in the financial statement audit from eight to four.
- Provide on-line, imaging access to AmeriCorps member records by April 30, 1999.
- Complete the design phase of a single, grants management program that provides stewardship over federal funds in a cost-effective manner.
- Ensure that all Corporation mission-critical systems are Y2K compliant by July 31, 1999.

Financial Management

The Corporation made significant improvements in its financial management operations in fiscal 1999. This included the implementation of a new core financial management system, reorganization of the financial management office, and assigning additional personnel resources to the accounting office to perform these critical duties. The President appointed and the Senate confirmed a new Chief Financial Officer. The Corporation implemented a management control plan, and issued needed Corporation policies and procedures. By the end of fiscal 1999, 16 units had completed their internal controls assessment and eight critical policies and procedures had been updated and issued. As of March 2000, 9 additional policies and procedures have been issued.

The Corporation's old financial management system and other control and accounting problems made financial reporting difficult and operations cumbersome. Until 1999, the Corporation used a system called Federal Success, an antiquated system from the 1980's. Federal Success was a mainframe system that was not Year 2000 compliant. It did not have the capacity to produce the kind of financial statements that had become mandatory under the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990. The system contained several other shortcomings that made it difficult to reconcile subsidiary accounts and maintain proper funds control.

Thus, implementation of the new core financial management system, American Management Systems' "Momentum" was a critically important project for the Corporation. Momentum, a state-of-the-art, commercial off-the-shelf software product, meets the federal government's financial management system standards and is Year 2000 compliant. The Corporation dedicated a significant amount of time and energy to define requirements, configure the system to Corporation needs and transfer accounting data from the old system to Momentum. The effort involved all members of the accounting staff and participation from many other Corporation offices. It was an enormous project and the Corporation was able to accomplish it in record time. Work began on the conversion in late November 1998 and the system went live on September 13, 1999 – in all, the process took about 10 months.

Because of the urgency of the Year 2000 deadline, the Corporation did implement the new system in mid-year. If other options had existed, a mid-year implementation would probably not have been chosen. It made production of the fiscal 1999 financial statements more difficult.

Financial Statement Audit

Achieving an unqualified opinion on a full set of financial statements is the Corporation's goal. Over the past several years, much progress has been made, but more work is needed. The implementation of the new financial management system is a major contribution to the Corporation's financial operations and provides a solid foundation for continued improvement.

The Corporation went from being unauditible to receiving a qualified opinion on its fiscal 1997 Statement of Financial Position. Shortly thereafter, the fiscal 1998 audit results continued to show improvement – the Corporation received an unqualified opinion on its fiscal 1998 Statement of Financial Position and a disclaimer on the other two statements. The audit also identified eight material weaknesses.

The Corporation received its fiscal 1999 audit results in March 2000. The fiscal 1999 Statement of Financial Position was unqualified, and the other two statements were disclaimed. According to the auditors, material weaknesses were reduced from eight to five. The three areas that the auditors no longer deemed to be material weaknesses are: financial systems, the National Service Trust, and revenue from reimbursable agreements.

The Corporation believes that additional progress has been made in several other material weaknesses, specifically, the general control environment and financial management and reporting. In its Management Control Report, the Corporation identified three material weaknesses, differing from the Inspector General in those two areas.

National Service Trust

The National Service Trust provides funds for education awards for eligible participants who complete service under AmeriCorps. The award can be used to repay qualified student loans; pay for the cost of attendance at an institution of higher education; pay expenses for an approved school-to-work program; and repay eligible interest expense. The Trust database maintains information on over 150,000 AmeriCorps members who have or are in the process of earning the education award. The Corporation needs to maintain records and serve the on-going needs of these members, a workload that is growing at approximately 20 percent per year. With no new employees to handle this work, the Corporation needed to automate the system as much as possible. The first step was to implement an imaging system to input member forms and records and provide electronic access to them.

The Corporation installed an imaging system in the National Service Trust operation which improved data reliability, addressed past audit issues, and reduced labor needed for the rapidly increasing workload associated with the programs. By late March, Corporation staff was imaging incoming enrollment forms for AmeriCorps members instead of manually keying the data into the Trust database. By July 15, 1999, all Trust forms were being imaged and staff could retrieve them electronically.

In addition to this imaging system, the Corporation also began operation of a web-based reporting system (WBRS). Through this system, AmeriCorps programs send their enrollment and other Trust data to the Corporation on-line. This has further decreased errors and increased the reliability of data the Corporation depends on to prepare accurate Trust data for the financial audit. The WBRS system was pilot-tested in fiscal 1999 and full-scale implementation began in fiscal 2000.

Grants Management

The Corporation awards grants under the National and Community Service Act (NCSA) and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA). Currently the Corporation maintains multiple information systems with each providing a portion of the data needed to manage these grants. The Corporation has decided to implement a single, integrated grants management information system for both NCSA and DVSA grants that will fully interface with the new Momentum financial management system. Funds were made available in fiscal 1999 to start this project.

In 1999, the Corporation completed the needs assessment for the system, and will complete the design phase in fiscal 2000. The Corporation could not complete the design of the system in fiscal 1999 because of delays in hiring a Chief Information Officer to oversee this project and other significant technology plans. While the Corporation focused on implementing the new financial management system, it developed an interim grants system for Senior Corps programs.

The Corporation undertook other important grants management projects in fiscal 1999. In consultation with the state commissions, the Corporation developed a State Commission Administrative Standards assessment instrument. The purpose of the State Administrative Standards is to ensure that the state commissions have proper management systems in place and that the Corporation has an effective tool for assessing those systems. The Standards will enable commissions to pinpoint and diagnose their technical assistance needs. In 1999, six state commissions went through the assessment process. All state commissions will be assessed over the next three years.

The Corporation developed new compliance monitoring processes for Senior Corps grants and a monitoring toolkit for AmeriCorps programs. The AmeriCorps Project Director’s Handbook was updated and distributed to all programs. It provides complete operating information and grant requirements for AmeriCorps State and National grants. The Senior Corps Handbooks were also updated to reflect recently published, revised regulations for Senior Corps grants.

Year 2000 Computer Compliance

The Corporation completed its Year 2000 compliance work and made the transition to the year 2000 smoothly. The Year 2000 Contingent Emergency Fund transferred \$800,000 to the Corporation to aid in this effort, which included costs for systems verification and year 2000-related hardware and software upgrades. The implementation of the new financial system, upgrading local and wide area network hardware and software, and upgrading telecommunications support were among the most significant activities.

| TABLE 37. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|------------|
| Key Indicators for 1999 | | | |
| Key Indicators | Goal | Result | Goal Met? |
| Audit opinion for fiscal year financial statements. Source: <i>Audit of Fiscal 1999 Financial Statement. Corporation for National Service.</i> | Obtain an unqualified opinion | Unqualified opinion on Statement of Financial Position – Disclaimer on other 2 statements | NO |
| Reduction in the number of material weaknesses identified in the financial statement audit (Baseline drawn from fiscal 1998 financial statement reports: eight material weaknesses reported) . Source: <i>Audit of Fiscal 1999 Financial Statement. Corporation for National Service.</i> | Reduced by four | Reduced by three ^{cc} | NO |
| Operating status of on-line, imaging access to AmeriCorps member records. Source: <i>Office of Chief Operating Officer. Corporation for National Service.</i> | Operational by 4/99 | Operational by 7/15/99 | YES |
| Operating status of a single, grants management program that provides stewardship over federal funds in a cost-effective manner. Source: <i>Office of Chief Operating Officer. Corporation for National Service.</i> | Design phase begun by 8/99 | Started planning phase | NO |
| Operating status of a new financial management system (“Momentum”). Source: <i>Office of Chief Operating Officer. Corporation for National Service.</i> | Operational by 6/99 | On-line 9/13/99 | YES |
| (Table continued on next page) | | | |

^{cc} The Corporation’s Management Control Report identifies three material weaknesses.

| TABLE 37. PERFORMANCE MEASURES: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Key Indicators for 1999 | | | |
| Key Indicators | Goal | Result | Goal Met? |
| Y2K status of all Corporation mission-critical systems. Source: <i>Office of Chief Operating Officer, Corporation for National Service.</i> | Fully compliant by 7/99 | Fully Compliant By 9/99 | YES |

POSTSCRIPT – A KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Corporation for National Service is initiating steps to improve the quality of information available for measuring performance. These steps include:

- Creating a data sharing policy.
- Identifying additional indicators of program impacts using information in the public domain and evaluation research.
- Pursuing interagency collaborations to leverage prospects for program evaluation
- Incorporating future data development into the new Chief Information Officer's (CIO) responsibilities.

Data Sharing Policy

The Corporation is presently developing a policy that will facilitate its sharing evaluation data with potential users. Among the reasons for developing the policy is to disseminate program-relevant information, make the Corporation's work more transparent to Congress and citizens, and improve the return on investment for the studies it conducts.

The Corporation is developing a formal policy to assure that data are shared in accordance with laws and regulations governing privacy and confidentiality. A review of procedures in other agencies will lead to the development of a policy that reflects effective practices across government.

The data sharing policy will make a variety of data available to users in the research and service communities. One of the first steps after the policy is formally approved will be to make the panel data from the AmeriCorps longitudinal study available to qualified users. The richness of the database will permit data users to study many questions of interest to the national service community. The availability of the AmeriCorps longitudinal data set should advance knowledge about educational attainment, career choices and progress, future service activities, and civic participation.

Much of the customer service information the Corporation has obtained will be available for secondary analysis. This report contains the results of initial analysis of the customer satisfaction data. More fine-grained analysis is being conducted, but additional insights could be obtained from these data if they are available to external users for further analysis.

Outcome Indicators Identification

The Corporation made several strategic choices when it developed the fiscal 1999 indicators. The decision was made to use existing data wherever possible to hold down the costs of the process. The Corporation also chose to focus on outputs and intermediate outcomes that were within its control.

The Corporation is investigating several avenues of new indicators based upon what has been learned in preparing the fiscal 1999 report. One avenue is data currently in the public domain that could be used to monitor the performance of Corporation programs. A variety of such data exists. Among them are the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which might be used to measure impacts of the Corporation's investments in reading and literacy. Other potential sources of indicators are the General Social Survey, which is a representative national sample,

Independent Sector's Biennial Survey of Giving and Volunteering, UCLA Higher Education Institute's Annual Survey of College Freshmen, and the National Commission on Civic Renewal's Index of Civic Health. The Corporation must assess whether any of these sources contain data that would be reasonably valid indicators of program outcomes.

Another avenue for new indicators is the Web-based Reporting System (WBRS). As noted earlier in this report, WBRS became operational at the end of fiscal 1999. It permits AmeriCorps*State and National programs to file many of their reports online. WBRS makes data more accessible, manageable, and timely. WBRS will become a major source of data for the fiscal 2000 Performance Report. In addition, it raises the prospect of creating new indicators from information in the system.

The third avenue for potential new indicators is the Corporation's program evaluations. The Corporation is committed to reviewing completed evaluations to identify potential indicators that could be incorporated into future Performance Reports. The Corporation concurs fully with the U.S. General Accounting Office's^{dd} conclusion that the program evaluations can be a better source for identifying annual or periodic indicators that reflect on the results achieved by Corporation programs.

Collaborations

One way of stretching the Corporation's scarce resources for program evaluation and outcome monitoring is to enter into strategic partnerships with other agencies, foundations, nonprofit organizations, and businesses. The Corporation shares common goals with a range of federal agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and U.S. Department of Education. Collaborations across agencies could provide valuable information to the partners at costs lower than would be incurred by an agency operating independently. As reflected in the many collaborations on service programs, the Corporation also shares common interests with nonprofit organizations, foundations, and businesses about the value of service in American society.

In 1999, the Corporation collaborated with the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, to conduct a survey of service learning in K-12. This survey provided data useful for both the Corporation and the Department of Education in describing the extent of service learning and community service in elementary and high schools. The descriptive data in this report are being made available in a public use file for secondary analysis, which may yield further insights about service learning.

One of the Corporation's independent contractors, Westat Inc., identified a possible collaboration because of its evaluation of the Foster Grandparent Program. They suggested that the Corporation consider a formal agreement with the Head Start Bureau to collect data about child outcomes and impacts as part of the Bureau's longitudinal studies. The Corporation is presently exploring such a partnership.

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation's *Learning In Deed: Making A Difference Through Service-Learning* initiative is providing valuable knowledge about the effects of service-learning. The Corporation has several staff, including the Directors of its Department of Service Learning and Office of Evaluation, who are liaisons to this initiative. The Corporation welcomes these non-

^{dd} United States General Accounting Office. Report to Congressional Requestors. *National Service Programs. Two AmeriCorps Programs. Findings and Benefits*. GAO/HEHS-00-33.

governmental partnerships as means for improving the quality of what the Corporation does and strengthening the field of service.

Chief Information Officer Responsibilities

The Corporation appointed its first Chief Information Officer (CIO) in January 2000. The CIO has a full agenda. This new administrative appointment may have an immediate impact in two areas on the ability of the Corporation to gather and use performance information about its programs. First, the CIO will oversee the implementation of a new, comprehensive grant management system. This system will bring together data about the Corporation's programs that now exist in many different places and media. Second, the CIO will be managing expanded use of the Internet for member recruitment, program reporting, and other forms of data collection.

A Concluding Observation

The governance structure within which the Corporation is embedded is relatively unique. The Corporation is responsible to the President, Congress, and a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors has helped steer the Corporation, together with the President and Congress, since it was created in 1993. The Board has taken an active role related to The Results Act because of the Act's centrality in defining strategy, monitoring performance, and assessing results. The Corporation anticipates this Performance Report--and the information systems that support it--will be valuable to the Board of Directors in future deliberations. The Corporation sees the Performance Report as an important step in an iterative process of organizational learning and continuous improvement.

APPENDICES

- A. Data Quality
- B. Relationship of Annual Performance Indicators to the Corporation Strategic Plan

APPENDIX A: Data Quality

The Corporation for National Service recognizes the importance of using and reporting quality data on its performance. The Corporation is committed to creating and using data systems that produce timely, accurate, and useful information for the Congress and the American public. In keeping with this commitment, the Corporation wants users of this report to know the sources of the data it contains.

An assessment of each data source used in measuring performance on the annual performance indicators was conducted in 1999 by the Corporation. Interviews were conducted with the program managers and data managers responsible for each of the data sources. These interviews covered several, key criteria for high quality data, including: timeliness, accuracy, consistency, and usefulness. In addition, interviewers covered pending changes in the data sources and any ideas about how to improve them.

The assessment confirmed what was already understood within the Corporation: the quality of the data varies. Some systems generate data in which the user can place the highest confidence. Generally, the best data derive from financial management systems subject to regular, rigorous audit.

Most systems used in the Corporation derive their data from reports provided by grantees, sub-grantees, and members of national service programs. Some of these reports are subject to corroboration through monitoring of local program performance by Corporation representatives. The Corporation has a strategy for monitoring coverage that includes site visits, program evaluations, and audits.

Not all reports from grantees, however, are subject to external corroboration. While the Corporation has reasonable confidence that the data reported by grantees are an accurate representation of their performance, some caution is advisable.

| TABLE A. QUALITY OF DATA SOURCES FOR ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | |
|---|---|
| Data Sources | Discussion |
| <i>America Reads America Counts. U. S. Department of Education</i> | Each institution signs a formal agreement of participation. These agreements are on file with the U.S. Department of Education, which maintains a database tracking the colleges and universities participating in America Reads America Counts. |
| <i>AmeriCorps*State and National Program Office</i> | A record of each grant award is tracked in a database maintained by the program office. These data may be confirmed by records of funds disbursement maintained by the Office of Accounting. These records are subject to scrutiny from annual financial audits. |
| <i>Citizen Scholars Foundation</i> | The Citizen Scholars Foundation maintains the Presidential Service Scholarships through a contract with the Corporation. Staff in the Corporation's Department of Service Learning manage this contract and monitor the data systems the Foundation uses to track the awards. |
| | (continued on next page) |

**TABLE A. QUALITY OF DATA SOURCES
FOR ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

| Data Sources | Discussion |
|--|---|
| <i>Consolidated Training Accountability Report. NSLI. Corporation for National Service</i> | Training enrollment forms and sign-up sheets are recorded in a database maintained by the National Service Leadership Institute. The data system was created at the suggestion of the Office of the Inspector General to track participation levels. |
| <i>Department of Service Learning. Corporation for National Service</i> | A record of each grant award is tracked in a database maintained by the program office. These data may be confirmed by records of funds disbursement maintained by the Office of Accounting. These records are subject to scrutiny from annual financial audits. |
| <i>Financial Status Reports from Grantee</i> | Senior Corps grantees submit a financial status report (FSR) early in the first quarter of the new fiscal year for the previous fiscal year. Corporation Service Centers, under the direction of the Chief Financial Officer, review and process these reports. Each state office does fiscal reviews of grantees. Each office has a monitoring plan to audit each Senior Corps project once every 3 years; 1/3 of projects each year. Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions receive a stipend paid with federal funds. The data on participation levels is accurate because they are part of a financial record keeping system subject to regular audit. |
| <i>Grants Tracking Database. National Senior Service Corps</i> | A record of each grant award is tracked in a database maintained by the program office. These data may be confirmed by records of funds disbursement maintained by the Office of Accounting. These records are subject to scrutiny from annual financial audits. |
| <i>Learn and Serve America Grantee Project Progress Reports</i> | Grantees submit these reports to the Department of Service Learning at the end of the fiscal year. The reports are reviewed by program staff who check that the data are complete and reasonable. Resources do not permit systematic monitoring or audits of the information provided by grantees. While the process is fairly consistent, the data useful, the timing appropriate, overall the performance data contained in the progress reports must be considered as estimates with a lower level of accuracy than other systems used by the Corporation. |
| <i>National Service Trust Database</i> | The National Service Trust provides a secure repository for education awards earned by eligible AmeriCorps participants. It is based on enrollment and exit data provided by AmeriCorps grantees and members. The data are subject to the scrutiny of annual, systematic, financial audit. The systems used to enter and store the data use edit and range checks. In 1999, the data system used optical scanning techniques to enter the data electronically. |
| <i>NCCC Applicant and Placement Database. Office of AmeriCorps Recruitment. Corporation for National Service</i> | Applicant data are maintained by a contractor and monitored by Corporation staff. The database tracks the status of an applicant from initial submission to final decision. The contractor's work is closely monitored by AmeriCorps*NCCC staff from Corporation headquarters. (continued on next page) |

**TABLE A. QUALITY OF DATA SOURCES
FOR ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

| Data Sources | Discussion |
|---|--|
| <i>NCCC Project Completion Report</i> | Each NCCC project files a plan at the beginning of a project and a completion report with headquarters when the project is over. The completion report is signed by an NCCC staff member knowledgeable about the project and a representative of the community served by the project or the partnering organization. This report summarizes the project's accomplishments. |
| <i>Office of Chief Operating Officer. Corporation for National Service</i> | The performance indicators for Program Administration are qualitative. Performance on the goals is certified by the Chief Operating Officer of the Corporation. This office maintains audit statements, reports, and other documents supporting the performance reports. |
| <i>Office of Evaluation. Corporation for National Service</i> | The Office of Evaluation begins each year with an annual evaluation plan. Most studies are performed by independent research firms working under contract to the Corporation. The Office of Evaluation tracks studies from initiation to completion. This work is guided by a formal Corporation policy on the conduct of evaluations. Copies of completed studies are available from the Corporation. Evaluation technical assistance is provided through Project Star, a division of Aguirre International. The contractor files regular reports with the Corporation detailing the assistance provided. |
| <i>Project Profile and Volunteer Activity Survey</i> | These data are reported bi-annually by all Senior Corps grantees to the Corporation (the data do not go to the State Offices). The data are self-reports from grantees and are not subject to audit or scrutiny through site visits. Because RSVP volunteers do not receive any payment for their service, there is no auditable record of participation. Corporation staff clean the data, subjecting it to edit and range checks. |
| <i>Project Progress Report from Grantee to State Office</i> | Each Senior Corps files an annual work plan with its Corporation State Office. Progress reports are sent to the State Office at least annually, more often for newer grantees. The reports detail the actual progress compared to the plan. The data are subject to corroboration by Corporation State Office personnel as part of their regular schedule of monitoring and site visits. |
| <i>Quarterly Progress Reports from Grantees</i> | Senior Corps demonstration programs file quarterly progress reports with the program manager in Corporation headquarters. Participants in the Seniors for Schools project receive a stipend and sites are required to keep accurate records of participation and funds disbursement. The Corporation program manager monitors these projects on a regular schedule. |
| <i>VISTA Applicant and Placement Database. Office of AmeriCorps Recruitment. Corporation for National Service</i> | This system tracks only those applicants who apply through the national recruitment system. Many VISTAs are recruited locally and do not appear in this database. National applications are processed by the five, regional VISTA placement officers. Counts of applicants are aggregated weekly across each cluster and reported to headquarters. (Table continued on next page) |

**TABLE A. QUALITY OF DATA SOURCES
FOR ANNUAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

| Data Sources | Discussion |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <i>VISTA Cost Share Database</i> | Corporation State Offices keep on file the formal agreements signed with VISTA Cost Share sponsors. Copies are filed with the VISTA office in Corporation headquarters, which maintains a database tracking sponsors, number of proposed cost-shares, and number of enrolled participants supported by cost-share agreements. These data are not subjected to audit or review outside the office collecting and reporting the information. |
| <i>VISTA Management System(VMS)</i> | Data on VISTA projects and volunteers is entered into VMS by Corporation State Offices from various forms and data sources. VMS data is subject to regular financial audit because it is the basic source for VISTA volunteer payroll information. In addition, project information is confirmed by Corporation staff through monitoring and site visits. |

APPENDIX B: Links between Performance Indicators and the Corporation's Strategic Plan

The following table presents the relationship between the strategic goals and the performance indicators for each budget activity. The indicators are listed in the same order they appear in the report, by budget activity. An **X** in the table marks where a strategic goal is related to a performance indicator.