

2017-2018 AmeriCorps\*Texas Grantee  
**Communications Toolkit**

**Supplement:  
National Service Recognition Day**

March 19, 2018

NATIONAL  
SERVICE  
**RECOGNITION**  
DAY



Corporation for  
**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE** 



Dear Grantees,

National Service Recognition Day (Formerly Mayor and County Day of Recognition) is a bipartisan, nationwide effort to encourage public officials and local leaders across the country to recognize the national service programming in their jurisdictions.

The main goals for National Service Recognition Day (NSRD) are to:

- Allow local leaders an opportunity to thank national service participants serving in their community
- Highlight the impact of AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers on local communities
- To encourage decision makers and local leaders to support national service programming as solutions to local challenges

To this end, we are providing this supplemental communications toolkit including templates, talking points and best practices to provide resources to help you amplify this message and engage with your audience and local news outlets. The templates in this toolkit can be used “as-is” to increase your organizational communications capacity or can be modified to fit within your existing communications strategies.

For additional communications resources and downloadable logos, [visit CNCS's National Service Recognition Day resources page](#). To view the updated list of participating public officials, click here: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/Recognitionday>

In Service,

*The AmeriCorps\*Texas Team*

OneStar Foundation

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## **KEY MESSAGES**

### **AMERICORPS WORKS FOR TEXAS by:**

- **Getting things done:** Every day in communities across Texas, AmeriCorps members address the most pressing challenges facing our cities and counties – from educating students for the jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and expanding economic opportunities to helping communities recover from disasters.
- **Creating future leaders:** AmeriCorps members gain new and useful skills, advance their education and become more connected to their communities. As a result of their service, members are more likely to engage in civic activities such as volunteering and voting and are more likely to go into public service careers such as teaching, public safety, and social work.
- **Encouraging local control:** With the backing and support of a bipartisan board of Texans, OneStar Foundation selects strong organizations to administer AmeriCorps programs throughout the state. Funds are awarded to nonprofits, school districts, institutions of higher education, and local governments in Texas communities most familiar with the challenges and needs facing their fellow Texans.
- **Strengthening nonprofits and the volunteer sector:** AmeriCorps members help faith-based and community organizations expand programs to provide direct services to those vulnerable Texans who are most in need, including at-risk children and low-income families.

### **SERVICE AS A SOLUTION -THE AMERICORPS PROGRAM:**

- **Is cost-effective:** Given the many challenges facing our communities – and the fiscal constraints facing government at all levels – state and local officials are increasingly turning to national service as a cost-effective solution to meet local needs.
- **Utilizes data and evidence:** AmeriCorps\*Texas ensures maximum return on public investment by utilizing data and evidence to improve efficacy and strengthen programs that respond to Texas's critical social challenges.

## **TALKING POINTS**

### **Statewide AmeriCorps\*Texas talking points:**

- AmeriCorps\*Texas engages nearly 3,000 men and women in intensive service each year at hundreds of locations across Texas, including nonprofits, schools, public agencies and community and faith-based groups.
- AmeriCorps\*Texas programs harness some of the best qualities of Texans — innovation, hard work, service to others and community involvement — to find solutions that work for our state.
- Service to others is a hallmark of the American (and Texan) spirit and central to how we address challenges.

### **National Service Recognition Day talking points:**

- National Service Recognition Day is a nationwide, bipartisan effort to recognize the positive impact of national service, to thank those who serve and to encourage more citizens to give back to their communities.
- Over [UPDATED NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING TEXAS OFFICIALS] leaders across the state of Texas are joining together to recognize the national service members and volunteers who make a difference in their community.
- Over 33,000 AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers serve in Texas.

### **Localized talking points:**

- [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] is among the [NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING TEXAS OFFICIALS] Texan leaders who recognize the tireless work and commitment of our AmeriCorps members, providing services to communities across [GEOGRAPHIC AREA].
- We would like to thank [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] and [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] as they recognize the dedication of our AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers on National Service Recognition Day! Today, they are joined by leaders across the state in supporting national service programs like ours as we provide effective solutions to local challenges! In [GEOGRAPHIC AREA], our

members provide [DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES] to [NUMBER AND DESCRIPTION OF BENEFICIARIES] each year!

- National service programs continue to improve lives and communities in [JURISDICTION] with [NUMBER OF MEMBERS] AmeriCorps members and [NUMBER OF SENIOR CORPS VOLUNTEERS] Senior Corps volunteers currently serving (Use information from regional “At a Glance” report, emailed to you from OneStar).

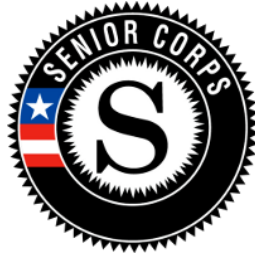
**REMINDER:** Localized talking points are suggestions. Please insert language specific to programs in your area to highlight the impact within individual communities. Public officials need to know the localized impact of national service programs and how your services affect their constituents. Be specific. If possible, incorporate narratives into the points. Numbers need to be humanized.

- **Example:** Judge Nelson Wolff is among the 580 Texan leaders who recognize the tireless work and commitment of our AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers, providing tutoring and mentoring services to hundreds of children in classrooms across north Texas.
- **Example:** We would like to thank Mayor Steve Adler and State Senator Eddie Lucio as they recognize the dedication of our AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers on National Service Recognition Day! Today they are joined by leaders across the state in supporting national service programs like ours as we provide effective solutions to local challenges. In Austin, our members provide permanent housing support to over 500 hundred adults experiencing homelessness each year!

## **TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL NSRD EVENTS**

- **Publicize the Event:** Send the details of your event to OneStar's Manager, AmeriCorps\*Texas, Jaclyn Kolar ([jaclyn@onestarfoundation.org](mailto:jaclyn@onestarfoundation.org)) so OneStar can help advertise the event.
  - **Send out a press release** with details of the event (template included) 3-5 days before the event. Consider **sending a media advisory** (template included) inviting the local press to attend 5-7 days before the event (if applicable).
  - **If public officials will be attending your NSRD event, coordinate press invitations (media advisories) with the public official's office** as not all officials prefer press at site visits. Ensure that all parties agree on the presence of press so no one is caught-off guard.
- **Build a Crowd:** National Service Recognition Day is an amazing opportunity to engage a large number of local national service members and alumni. As you recruit attendees, think big and include the entire national service family (VISTA, NCCC, Senior Corps) and invite OneStar staff and board members. OneStar has sent out national service regional contacts, if you have not received this information please reach out to Jaclyn Kolar.
- **Brand the Event:** When branding your event, make sure to think of the visuals that will be present, including city or country logos and AmeriCorps or Senior Corps logos.
- **Amplify the Event:** Let everyone know your event was a success! Share photos on social media to amplify the reach of your event. See social media tips below.

## PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE



(add grantee logos)

Date: April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018

Contact: [MEDIA CONTACT]

Telephone: [PHONE]

Email: [EMAIL ADDRESS]

Website: [ORGANIZATION WEBSITE]

### **[PUBLIC OFFICIAL] Joined [ORGANIZATION(S)] in Recognizing the Impact of National Service on [JURISDICTION]**

City, State— [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] joined more than [UPDATED NUMBER OF OFFICIALS] local leaders across the country in a nationwide, bipartisan initiative to highlight the impact of national service in addressing local problems.

“National service is a vital resource for [JURISDICTION],” said [ORGANIZATION OFFICIAL]. “AmeriCorps members help tackle some of the toughest challenges in Texan communities. Over [UPDATED NUMBER OF TEXAS OFFICIALS] leaders across the state of Texas, including [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] in [JURISDICTION] have committed today to show their support for our AmeriCorps members, exceptional citizens who are helping to make [JURISDICTION] stronger, safer and healthier.”



[PUBLIC OFFICIAL] participated in [SPECIFIC NSRD ACTIVITIES].

Given the many challenges facing communities, local leaders are increasingly turning to national service as a cost-effective strategy to meet local needs. More than [NUMBER OF MEMBERS IN JURISDICTION] AmeriCorps members serve in [JURISDICTION], providing vital support by [LIST SERVICE ACTIVITIES].

[ADD PARAGRAPH OR EXAMPLE HIGHLIGHTING HOW NATIONAL SERVICE HAS HELPED CARRY OUT LOCAL PRIORITIES IF APPLICABLE].

National Service Recognition Day is a nationwide, bipartisan effort to recognize the positive impact of national service, to thank those who serve, and to encourage more citizens to give back to their communities. This day is sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, and Cities of Service.

##

[ADD ORGANIZATIONAL BOILERPLATE MESSAGE]

OneStar Foundation is the Governor-designated National Service Commission in Texas and administers the AmeriCorps State grant program. Governor-appointed board members oversee the legal and policy governance of the AmeriCorps\*Texas program portfolio. Learn more at [www.onestarfoundation.org](http://www.onestarfoundation.org).

AmeriCorps is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency for volunteering, service, and civic engagement. The agency engages millions of Americans in citizen service through its AmeriCorps and Senior Corps

programs and leads the nation's volunteering and service efforts. For more information, visit [www.NationalService.gov](http://www.NationalService.gov).

-- end--



## MEDIA ADVISORY TEMPLATE



(add grantee logos)

## MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date:

Contact: [MEDIA CONTACT]

Telephone: [PHONE]

Email: [EMAIL ADDRESS]

Website: [ORGANIZATION WEBSITE]

### **[PUBLIC OFFICIAL] to join [ORGANIZATION] in Recognizing Impact of National Service on [AREA]**

Who:

What:

Where:

When:

Why: [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] will join [ORGANIZATION(S)] and [UPDATED NUMBER OF TEXAS OFFICIALS] leaders across the state of Texas in a day of recognition to highlight the impact of AmeriCorps and Senior Corps on [AREA].

[PUBLIC OFFICIAL] will participate in National Service Recognition Day by [INSERT SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES HERE].

Given the many challenges facing communities, local leaders are increasingly turning to national service as a cost-effective strategy to meet local needs. More than [NUMBER OF MEMBERS IN JURISDICTION] AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers serve in [JURISDICTION], providing vital support by [LIST SERVICE ACTIVITIES].

[ADD PARAGRAPH OR EXAMPLE HIGHLIGHTING HOW NATIONAL SERVICE HAS HELPED CARRY OUT LOCAL PRIORITIES IF APPLICABLE].

National Service Recognition Day is a bipartisan effort to recognize the positive impact of national service, thank those who serve, and to encourage citizens to give back. The effort is sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, and Cities of Service. For more information, visit [NationalService.gov/RecognitionDay](http://NationalService.gov/RecognitionDay).

###

## **BEST PRACTICES FOR CONNECTING WITH LOCAL NEWS OUTLETS**

- **Think big AND small:** In addition to the large news outlets, target local community newspapers, stations, and blogs, which are often more accessible and are more likely to feature local human-interest stories than major news outlets.
- **Contact the right people:** Do your research. Learn the correct way to submit press releases and media advisories to the news outlet including the correct contact person and contact information. Ensure they would be interested in your topic by reviewing their sections and content. If possible, target specific journalists who specialize in your content area.
- **Build relationships with local news outlets:** Start building long term relationships with local journalists by inviting them to newsworthy events (see the media advisory template).
- **Tie your press release to local events and concerns:** Whenever possible, tie the press release to relevant, local topics or local priorities. Is your area experiencing increased food insecurity and your AmeriCorps program is part of the city-wide solution to help families avoid hunger? Is your AmeriCorps program part of the long-term recovery strategy for a coastal county in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey? Make sure you mention it in your press release and give relevant examples and details.
- **Make it easy:** Include all the necessary information in your press release and include graphics if applicable (infographics, pictures, logos, videos, etc.). Additionally, make sure that your press release is free of typos or grammatical errors. This will ensure that the outlet has all the necessary components to easily run your story.

## EMAIL TO PUBLIC OFFICIAL TEMPLATE

**Subject:** National Service Recognition Day (April 3)

Dear [PUBLIC OFFICIAL TITLE AND NAME]:

I'm writing from a local organization and AmeriCorps program, [ORGANIZATION NAME], to share an exciting opportunity coming up this spring for local leaders to help recognize the important contributions of national service (AmeriCorps and Senior Corps) members and volunteers, through National Service Recognition Day on **April 3, 2018**.

Every day in communities across Texas, AmeriCorps members address the most pressing challenges facing our cities and counties – from educating students for the jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and expanding economic opportunities, to helping communities recover from natural disasters.

As you may know, we have AmeriCorps members placed in your area you serve as [POSITION TITLE/SERVICE DESCRIPTION] at [SERVICE LOCATION].

National Service Recognition Day is a nationwide, bipartisan effort to recognize the positive impact of national service, to thank those who serve, and to encourage more citizens to give back to their communities. This initiative is sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, and Cities of Service, along with local AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs and our Texas partners at the OneStar Foundation and CNCS Texas State Office. Last year, over 540 leaders across the state, and over 4,500 leaders nationwide, recognized national service members and volunteers within their own communities. This day offers you an opportunity to highlight the

national service members and volunteers who are making a difference in your community.

Can we count on you to sign on as a participating leader on April 3, 2018? Participation is easy and flexible. We are asking leaders to issue proclamations, hold public events and/or use traditional and social media to highlight the impact of national service in their communities. You would be joining 460 leaders in Texas who have already committed to participating in National Service Recognition Day 2018.

There are many possible ways to celebrate National Service Recognition Day. Your office could:

- Issue a proclamation naming April 3rd, the first Tuesday in April, as “National Service Recognition Day.
- Use Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and other social media outlets to thank those who serve
- Visit a national service program – serve as an AmeriCorps member or Senior Corps volunteer for a day!
- Invite national service members and volunteers to your office for a roundtable on service
- Issue a press release highlighting the impact of national service in your city
- Join a local AmeriCorps or Senior Corps program in a service project
- Take a group photo with national service members or volunteers in your local area

I am also attaching some helpful resources including:

- Proclamation Template
- National Service Recognition Day 2018 Fact Sheet

Please sign up online at the following link so that we can track participation on the state and national levels: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/national-service-recognition-day/register-here>.

Thank you for your leadership, and please let us know if you need additional resources or information. We look forward to working with your office to highlight the impact of national service in our community.

Best regards,

[APPROPRIATE LEADERSHIP SIGNATURE]



## **PROCLAMATION TEMPLATE**

### **National Service Recognition Day – April 3, 2018**

WHEREAS, service to others is a hallmark of the American character, and central to how we meet our challenges; and

WHEREAS, the nation's [*COUNTIES/CITIES/TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS*] are increasingly turning to national service and volunteerism as a cost-effective strategy to meet their needs; and

WHEREAS, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps participants address the most pressing challenges facing our communities, from educating students for the jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to fighting the opioid epidemic, to responding to natural disasters, to supporting veterans and military families; and

WHEREAS, national service expands economic opportunity by creating more sustainable, resilient communities and providing education, career skills, and leadership abilities for those who serve; and

WHEREAS, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps participants serve in more than 50,000 locations across the country, bolstering the civic, neighborhood, and faith-based organizations that are so vital to our economic and social well-being; and

WHEREAS, national service participants increase the impact of the organizations they serve, both through their direct service and by managing millions of additional volunteers; and

WHEREAS, national service represents a unique public-private partnership that invests in community solutions and leverages non-federal resources to strengthen community impact and increase the return on taxpayer dollars; and

WHEREAS, national service participants demonstrate commitment, dedication, and patriotism by making an intensive commitment to service, a commitment that remains with them in their future endeavors; and

WHEREAS, the Corporation for National and Community Service shares a priority with local leaders nationwide to engage citizens, improve lives, and strengthen communities; and is joining with the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, Cities of Service, and local leaders across the country for National Service Recognition Day on April 3, 2018.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, *[COUNTY OFFICIAL/MAYOR NAME]*, County Official/Mayor of *[COUNTY/CITY]*, do hereby proclaim April 3, 2018, as National Service Recognition Day, and encourage residents to recognize the positive impact of national service in our community, to thank those who serve; and to find ways to give back to their communities.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE AND TEMPLATES**

### **Social Media Accounts to Follow and Tag:**

- OneStar Foundation
  - o Facebook: [@OneStarFoundation](#)
  - o Twitter: [@OneStarFdn](#)
  - o Instagram: [@OneStarFoundation](#)
  - o Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/89699113@N03/sets/>
  - o LinkedIn: [OneStar-Foundation](#)
- AmeriCorps\*Texas
  - o Facebook: [@AmeriCorpsTexas](#)
  - o Instagram: [@AmeriCorpsTX](#)
- CNCS
  - o Facebook: [@AmeriCorps](#) and [@NationalService](#)
  - o Twitter: [@AmeriCorps](#) and [@NationalService](#)
  - o Instagram: [@NationalService](#)
  - o Tumblr: [NationalService.Tumblr.com](#)
  - o Snapchat: [NationalService](#)
  - o LinkedIn: [Corporation for National and Community Service](#) and [AmeriCorps](#)

### **Best practices:**

- Tag public officials in posts when appropriate.
- Include photos in your posts (action pictures, showing impact and branded with the AmeriCorps logo).
- Use the NSRD hashtag: #NationalServiceWorks.
- Use AmeriCorps\*Texas hashtags: #ServeTX, #AmeriCorpsTX
- Include links for relevant content such as links to press releases, information on websites, events, etc.

### Sample Facebook posts

- [LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICIAL] joined [UPDATED NUMBER OF TEXAS OFFICIALS] local Texan leaders in thanking AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers across the state. Every day national service participants address the most pressing challenges facing our local communities – from educating students for the jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and expanding economic opportunities to helping communities recover from disaster. For more information about National Service Recognition Day, visit [NationalService.gov/RecognitionDay](https://NationalService.gov/RecognitionDay) #NationalServiceWorks #ServeTX
- We would like to thank [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] for recognizing the dedication of AmeriCorps members including ours, whose daily commitment to [RELEVANT ISSUE LANGUAGE] helps make our community a better place for Texans to live.
- Over [UPDATED NUMBER OF TEXAS OFFICIALS] local Texan leaders have joined a nationwide effort today to recognize the tireless work and commitment of national service members and volunteers, including our AmeriCorps members. Our AmeriCorps members provide [DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES] to [NUMBER AND DESCRIPTION OF BENEFICIARIES] across [JURISDICTION]. #NationalServiceWorks #ServeTX
- Today is National Service Recognition Day and [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] joined us at [VENUE] to recognize the commitment of national service members in [JURISDICTION], including our [NUMBER OF MEMBERS] AmeriCorps members who provide [DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES]. #NationalServiceWorks #ServeTX

### Sample Twitter posts:

- Thank you [PUBLIC OFFICIAL with Twitter handle if possible] for recognizing the dedication of AmeriCorps members including ours, whose daily

commitment to [RELEVANT ISSUE LANGUAGE] helps make our community a better place to live. #NationalServiceWorks #ServeTX

- Over [UPDATED NUMBER OF TEXAS OFFICIALS] local Texan leaders have joined a nationwide effort to recognize the tireless work and commitment of national service members and volunteers, including our AmeriCorps members! #NationalServiceWorks #ServeTX
- Today is National Service Recognition Day and [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] joined us at [VENUE] to recognize the commitment of national service members in [JURISDICTION], including our [NUMBER OF MEMBERS] AmeriCorps members! #NationalServiceWorks #ServeTX
- National service programs continue to improve lives and communities in [JURISDICTION] with [NUMBER OF MEMBERS] AmeriCorps members and [NUMBER OF SENIOR CORPS VOLUNTEERS] Senior Corps volunteers currently serving. Join us today in recognizing their commitment! #NationalServiceWorks #ServeTX (Use information from regional “At a Glance” report, emailed to you from OneStar).

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