

Knowledge Management Education State of the Practice Report

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*Value of thought.
Value of solution.*



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Introduction	1
School Readiness for Economically Disadvantaged Young Children.....	1
State of the Practice for School Readiness	1
Educational and Behavioral Outcomes for K-12 Students.....	1
State of the Practice for Educational and Behavioral Outcomes for K-12 Students	2
Literacy Tutoring.....	2
Preparation for and Prospects of Success in Post-secondary Education.....	5
State of the Practice for Preparation and Prospects of Success in Post-secondary Education....	6
Conclusion	7
Appendix A: Eligibility Criteria for National Service Review	8
Appendix B: Inclusion Criteria for the State of the Practice Brief	10
Appendix C: Levels of Evidence.....	11
Levels of Evidence for Individual Studies	11
Overall Levels of Evidence Determinations for Focus Areas.....	11
Appendix D: Included Studies.....	12
School Readiness.....	12
K-12 Education.....	14
Literacy Tutoring.....	14
Teach For America	17
Post-secondary Preparation and Prospects for Success	21

State of the Practice National Service Education Initiatives



Introduction

This brief highlights successful strategies identified in impact studies of national service programs with positive findings in the Education priority area. The aim of this brief is to provide program staff and funders with insights into successful programs and strategies for using national service participants to support education outcomes. A systematic search to identify published academic and grey literature following a predetermined search and review protocol identified 332 documents pertaining to CNCS-supported education programs. There were 69 documents in the identified literature that described education program impact studies¹. Of these, 11 documents summarizing 10 high-quality studies of successful education programs were analyzed for this report. See Appendix A for overall eligibility criteria, Appendix B for inclusion criteria for this brief, Appendix C for definition of the Level of Evidence categories, and Appendix D for an annotated bibliography for each of the studies reviewed in this brief.

School Readiness for Economically Disadvantaged Young Children

To facilitate school readiness for economically disadvantaged young children, CNCS supports members, participants, and volunteers to develop or engage in practices that include teaching, small group and one-on-one tutoring, and/or providing education-related support services. Priority measures of impacts for this area address: 1) the social and emotional development of young children; 2) literacy skills; and/or 3) numeracy (math) skills.

State of the Practice for School Readiness

Positive impacts were found in two quasi-experimental (QED) studies on the effect of CNCS programs on school readiness (Table 1).

¹ The most rigorous impact studies in each of the three focus areas were selected for review. The majority of the 69 impact studies were in the K-12 focus area. Six studies providing strong evidence for two successful strategies in this domain were selected. Literature on school readiness and post-secondary preparation and success was less robust; four studies with preliminary, moderate, or strong evidence of success in these areas were selected.

Table 1: School Readiness Summary

Program	Study Design Type	Positive Outcomes	Program Components
Minnesota Reading Corps PreK	QED- Groups formed by matching	Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted small group and one-to-one interventions Focused on 5 literacy outcome areas Whole class literacy enrichment
Jumpstart	QED – Non-equivalent comparison groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy Social-emotional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-to-one and small group settings Biweekly 2-hour long sessions during school year Implemented in community-based, early education, and child care settings

Minnesota Reading Corps PreK AmeriCorps members provide whole-class literacy enrichment for all students, as well as targeted small group and one-to-one interventions focusing on: 1) conversational skills; 2) vocabulary and background knowledge; 3) book and print rules; 4) phonological awareness; and 5) alphabet knowledge. A rigorous quasi-experimental study of the *Minnesota Reading Corps PreK* program revealed statistically significant improvements in each of the five areas of focus. A key to the program’s success is the coordination of whole-class instruction with one-to-one interventions. Additionally, the program uses a common teaching system and structured language and literacy education strategies that support maintenance of program implementation fidelity.

Jumpstart engages AmeriCorps members to provide an education intervention focusing on language, literacy, initiative, and social skill acquisition in one-to-one and small group settings in biweekly two-hour long sessions during the school year. The program is implemented in community-based, early education, and child care center settings. Members spend six hours a week in children’s classrooms assisting teachers or working with students. A quasi-experimental evaluation found *Jumpstart* participant groups made gains on measured school readiness indicators relative to an unmatched comparison group. Measured growth in literacy and social-emotional development was statistically significantly greater than the gains made by comparison group children. This study described program characteristics, but did not indicate which program components were key to achieving positive outcomes. Although three different *Jumpstart* modifications (traditional one on one *Jumpstart* programming, *Jumpstart* programming with additional in-classroom *Jumpstart* group support, and in-classroom *Jumpstart* support only) were tested in the study, all appeared to be relatively equal.

Educational and Behavioral Outcomes for K-12 Students

To improve educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools, CNCS supports members, participants, and volunteers engaged in: 1) teaching, tutoring, and/or mentoring; 2) providing supportive services to assist school staff; 3) providing extended learning programs in cooperation with school systems; and 4) delivering other types of school improvement support. Additionally, CNCS members, participants, and

volunteers engage in service-learning projects and provide assistance to higher education institutions and alternative teacher certification programs (e.g., *Teach for America*) to increase the number of teachers and teaching aids working in low-achieving schools. The priority measure of impact for this strategy is improved student academic performance.

State of the Practice for Educational and Behavioral Outcomes for K-12 Students

Two strategies yielded positive impacts in K-12 academic outcomes: 1) literacy tutoring; and 2) alternative teacher certification through *Teach for America*.

Literacy Tutoring

Three randomized controlled trials (RCT) of programs incorporating AmeriCorps volunteers demonstrated improvements in literacy outcomes (Table 2).

In the *Reading Partners* program, AmeriCorps members coordinate instruction provided by non-national service volunteer tutors recruited from the community. Participating tutors consist of high school, college or graduate students, and working, unemployed, transitioning or retired adults. Tutors provided regular individualized one-to-one reading instruction using a structured curriculum. Additionally, *Reading Partners* AmeriCorps members serve as outreach coordinators, tasked with recruiting volunteers to staff each program site. A randomized controlled trial of *Reading Partners* demonstrated a positive and statistically significant impact on student reading comprehension, fluency, and sight word reading efficiency. The success of *Reading Partners* was attributed to a structured curriculum that allows system-wide implementation fidelity and for tutors to begin implementation with little prior formal preparation. Additionally, communication structures are in place to help ensure that student learning is not interrupted when a different individual conducts the tutoring or if a session is rescheduled due to student or tutor absence.

Table 2: Literacy Tutoring Summary

Program	Study Design Type	Positive Outcomes	Program Components
Reading Partners	RCT	Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AmeriCorps members as outreach coordinators / volunteer recruiters • One-to-one tutoring by non-national service volunteer tutors • Evidence-based structured literacy curriculum • Communication systems ensure disruptions (e.g., new tutors, missed sessions) do not interfere with progress
Experience Corps	RCT	Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-to-one tutoring by AmeriCorps volunteers • Evidence-based structured literacy curriculum • Dosage (> 35 sessions) led to greater outcomes
Minnesota Reading Corps	RCT	Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-to-one tutoring by AmeriCorps volunteers • Evidence-based structured literacy curriculum

In *Experience Corps*, members provide one-to-one literacy tutoring to first through third grade students using a structured curriculum. An RCT of *Experience Corps* revealed overall significant positive effects on students' literacy performance. Additional analysis revealed stronger effects (Effect Sizes (ES).13 to .17 vs. ES = .004 to.07) for participants who received the program model's recommended standard of at least 35 sessions.

Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) members provide whole-class literacy enrichment for all students in participating classrooms, as well as targeted small group and one-to-one emergent literacy interventions. Members individually tutor 15-18 students daily, providing a set of prescribed, research-validated activities. An RCT of *MRC* found that kindergarten, first, and third grade students who received *MRC* tutoring achieved significantly higher literacy assessment scores than students who did not. The evaluation found no significant differences in student outcomes based on the characteristics of tutors. The study authors attribute the success of the program, despite the diversity of tutors, to training, supervisory/coaching supports, and scripted, proven interventions, which allow a range of volunteers without a background in the education field to significantly impact student literacy performance.

Teach for America, a member of the AmeriCorps national service network, recruits individuals who have an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university to serve as teachers for two years at *TFA* partner public schools in low-income communities. Once selected for a *TFA* position, candidates may be eligible to enroll as a member of AmeriCorps. *TFA* teachers receive five weeks of intensive training in a summer program that includes a student teaching component. *TFA* is the most studied of the Education programs identified in the literature search.²

Three randomized controlled trials of *Teach for America (TFA)* found that students in *TFA* classes performed as well or better than students in non-*TFA* classes (Table 3).

² Teach for America was by far the most frequently studied national service program, representing over half of the 75 impact studies in the Education focus area. The majority of these were QEDs with non-equivalent comparison groups.

Table 3: Teach for America Summary

Year	Study Design Type	Positive Outcomes	Population	Program Components
2004	RCT	Math	1 st through 5 th graders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly selective program, accepting less than 20% of applicants • Teachers have strong academic background, but may have no training in education or prior teaching experience • Intensive 5-week summer training includes practice experience • Professional development throughout the year, sometimes including additional coursework
2013	RCT	Math	6 th through 12 th graders	
2015	RCT	Literacy (subgroup)	Study on pre-K through 5 th graders, small but significant improvement in literacy only found in pre-K through 2 nd grade students	

Since 2004, three RCT evaluations of the impact of *TFA* teachers on student academic outcomes have been conducted. The first two evaluations determined *TFA* teachers have a statistically significant positive impact on student math achievement. The first study also found that positive effects in math performance were even more pronounced when *TFA* teachers were compared to other non-traditionally certified teachers ($ES = .26$ vs. $.15$). The third RCT, which was conducted in the first two years of a large effort to scale-up the *TFA* program, did not find an advantage in reading or math overall, though it did identify a positive *TFA* impact on student reading achievement for a subgroup of younger students. In all three cases, programs shared the same features, which are considered to be essential to program success: a highly selective admissions process, an intensive 5-week summer training that includes a student teaching component, and additional pre-service training and professional development throughout the year. Although *TFA* teachers recruited through the scale-up differed demographically in some ways than previous *TFA* members, due to an intentional effort to recruit high-performing students with more diverse backgrounds, selection criteria did not change, and those accepted to the program had similar undergraduate GPAs and SAT scores.

In the third study, though the authors did not find evidence of different implementation of program components in the first two years of the scale-up, they did note decreasing satisfaction among *TFA* members with the summer institute and other pre-service training. It is also noted that, in the first two studies, a high percentage of teachers in the control group were not traditionally certified and a low percentage had attended selective schools, while in the third study, only 15 percent of non-*TFA* teachers were not traditionally certified, and 40 percent had attended selective schools.

Overall, the studies investigating the impact of *TFA* indicate that students in *TFA* classes generally perform as well or better in math than students in other classes, particularly when *TFA* teachers are compared to other novice teachers. For example, there are several quasi-experimental studies utilizing administrative data that indicate that math scores for students of *TFA* teachers are either comparable or better than scores of students from non-*TFA* teachers matched for level of experience³. In general experience has a positive effect for both *TFA* and non-*TFA* teachers. However, *TFA* program impacts on reading are inconclusive, as some studies have found that students in *TFA* classes perform as well or better on measures of reading, while others have found that they perform worse than students in other classes. *TFA* teachers' high rate of attrition is also a concern for researchers⁴. *TFA* does fulfill a need of supplying teachers in typically hard to staff schools that may otherwise have a high proportion of non-traditionally certified teachers, but there is debate regarding the long-term sustainability and impact of *TFA* teachers on school performance.

Preparation for and Prospects of Success in Post-secondary Education

To support improved prospects and preparation for post-secondary education for economically disadvantaged students, CNCS programs include mentoring, counseling, academic, enrollment, and retention support activities. Priority measures of impact for this strategy are: 1) the provision of counseling and guidance associated with skills needed for college preparation and success; 2) student application for and enrollment in a post-secondary institution; and 3) student continuation to a second year of post-secondary education.

³ Xu, Zeyu, Jane Hannaway, and Colin Taylor. *Making a Difference? The Effects of Teach For America in High School*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute, March 2008.; Henry, Gary T., Kevin C. Bastian, C. Kevin Fortner, David C. Kershaw, Kelly M. Purtell, Charles L. Thompson, and Rebecca A. Zulli. Teacher Preparation Policies and Their Effects on Student Achievement. *Education Finance and Policy*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2014, pp. 264–303.

⁴ Heilig, J. V., & Jez, S. J. (2014). *Teach For America: A return to the evidence*. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center.

State of the Practice for Preparation and Prospects of Success in Post-secondary Education

Positive impacts on post-secondary preparation were found in one randomized controlled trial and in one quasi-experimental study (Table 4).

Table 4: Post-secondary Preparation and Success Summary

Program	Study Design Type	Positive Outcomes	Program Components
College Possible	RCT	College application and enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches for low-income students provide SAT and ACT test preparation, and guidance on college applications, financial aid, and transition to college • 320 hours of service in two-year after-school program starting junior year of high school • Students apply to program and perform community service in exchange for services • High schools provide coaches with office space full-time Monday -Friday for office hours and classroom space after school for lessons
National College Advising Corps (NCAC)	QED – Non-equivalent comparison groups	Knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to college application and enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College graduates placed as advisers in underserved high schools • Students may choose to meet with adviser; high school seniors are most likely to do so • Advisers typically meet regularly with primary school contact, which is most commonly school guidance counselor • Advisers receive training on multiple topics

College Possible AmeriCorps members serve as coaches who guide high school students through the key aspects of preparing for college, including SAT and ACT test preparation, admissions, and financial aid consulting. High schools provide coaches with office space for office hours during the week and classroom space after school hours for instruction. Low-income students apply as high school sophomores and are provided with 320 hours of support in their junior and senior year. Students perform eight hours of community service per year. An RCT found *College Possible* to have significant positive effects on the number of students applying for and enrolling in four year colleges.

The *National College Advising Corps (NCAC)* program utilizes recent college graduates, including AmeriCorps members, to serve as full-time college advisers in America's underserved high schools. Advisers collaborate with teachers and administrators to tie college plans into the life of a school and devise creative approaches to reach and connect with students, including assisting students with the college admissions process and assisting families with Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms. A QED study of NCAC advisers using a non-equivalent comparison group demonstrated positive effects in multiple areas, including student college aspirations, the use of a fee waiver for college applications, and knowledge of

financial aid. A greater impact occurred for first-generation college students than non-first generation students.

Conclusion

As revealed through a substantial literature review, CNCS-supported programs serving in the Education priority area with positive outcomes for their service recipients share several characteristics, including intensive, individualized one-on-one or small group support operating in concert with educational settings where participants are already located.

A common trait of the programs using national service volunteers to improve children's school readiness is the provision of learning support by volunteers within a child's current educational setting (e.g., classroom). Volunteers provided this support in both one-to-one and small group settings. Consistent with the current knowledge base, the provision of support within the current educational setting is beneficial for student outcomes because it allows volunteers to: 1) enable teachers to better differentiate and individualize instruction for all children; and 2) provide more intensive support for those who require it, in an environment where children are already comfortable.

Three literacy programs demonstrated positive outcomes in K-12 settings. Common among *Reading Partners*, *Experience Corps*, and *Minnesota Reading Corps* was the use of an evidence-based structured literacy enrichment curriculum delivered by volunteers to students in one-to-one settings. Implementing a structured curriculum can allow for efficient training, and partially mitigate differentiation in volunteer pedagogical skill and content knowledge. Additionally, structured programs allow implementers greater ability to monitor and maintain program fidelity.

Teach for America places college graduates with strong academic backgrounds in low-income traditionally hard to staff schools. *TFA* teachers, who many not have any education training or experience, receive short but intensive training that includes a practice component. *TFA* attributes its effectiveness to a combination of strategic recruitment, a highly selective process for determining which applicants have the greatest chances of succeeding, intensive short-term pre-training, and ongoing support and professional development. Research has indicated that *TFA* generally has a positive or neutral effect on student math performance, but that its effects on reading performance are more mixed. One study noted that effects of *TFA* are more positive when compared to non-traditionally certified teachers. *TFA* may be particularly important for subjects such as secondary math and science that face particularly high shortages of certified teachers in disadvantaged schools. Studies have also identified challenges in terms of *TFA* teacher satisfaction and retention.

Programs demonstrating improvements in post-secondary preparation used national service volunteers to provide one-on-one support to students within high schools. Similar to programs to improve school readiness, both *College Possible* and *NCAC's* provided services within the current educational setting, which may have been a key component. However, no program components were explicitly identified as being integral to success.

Appendix A: Eligibility Criteria for National Service Review

1. **The document is factual** (versus opinion⁵).
 - The document is referring first-hand to research findings, using original or secondary data collection, a synthesis of the literature, or a systematic review/meta-analysis.
 - The document is not an Op-Ed, testimonial, or marketing material.

2. **The study is relevant to CNCS-sponsored National Service or CNCS.**
 - The study is conducted on a program that, at the time of the study, engaged AmeriCorps State/National, NCCC or VISTA Members, Senior Corps Volunteers, or was funded by SIF or a SIF Grantee. A program refers to an ongoing service and does not include short term special initiative projects.
 - The study is conducted on a program model that *currently engages* AmeriCorps members or Senior Corps volunteers, even if the study itself does not identify or include specific program sites with AmeriCorps members or Senior Corps volunteers (e.g., studies of *Reading Partners*, *City Year*).⁶
 - The program's outcomes are applicable to CNCS. The study investigates the effectiveness of volunteers or national service programs in the focus areas of Education, Economic Opportunity, Healthy Futures, Environment, or Disaster Services and Response.

3. **The document is in English.**

4. **The document is a final report** for the program, project or evaluation rather than an interim or progress report.⁷

5. **The document was published after 1990 but before the search kickoff date** (February 1st 2015), is a seminal document as indicated by citations in post-1990 literature, or was recommended for inclusion by a key stakeholder.

⁵ Factual documents report data or other information in a manner that is subject to empirical verification. Opinion documents pass judgment on the value or merit of a set of facts or circumstances based on a set of evaluative criteria that are not strictly subject to empirical verification (e.g., based on moral or political considerations).

⁶ It is anticipated that the review would not include any study of a program that, although it could be adapted for national service, is not currently funded by CNCS, with the exception of evidence based practices that could be applied in a national service context found in online clearinghouses.

⁷ Final reports summarize information about a program or intervention at the end of the program or intervention's life or at the end of a major cycle in the program or intervention's life (e.g., at the end of a funding period). By contrast, an interim report provides information on the status of a program or intervention at an intermediate juncture in its lifecycle. Information provided in an interim report does not contain complete information on results, as the program or intervention is still underway at the time when the report was written.

- 6. The document does not duplicate information** from a previously screened source. Where duplicate information is identified, two sources will be listed as a single citation and only the latest source will be reviewed.

Appendix B: Inclusion Criteria for the State of the Practice Brief

The documents in this report represent a subset of documents chosen for complete review in the accompanying Education State of the Science Brief. Documents were selected for inclusion this Education State of the Practice brief if they:

1. Reported positive outcomes related to one of the three key areas of education addressed by CNCS⁸:
 - a. Improve school readiness⁹ for economically disadvantaged young children,
 - b. Improve educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools, and
 - c. Improve the preparation for and prospects of success in post-secondary education institutions for economically disadvantaged students;
2. Were among the most rigorous studies demonstrated positive outcomes within one of the three key areas; and
3. Clearly described national service volunteers' role(s) in program implementation.

⁸ Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). (2011). *The Corporation for National and Community Service Strategic Plan 2011-2015*. Washington, DC.

⁹ School readiness refers to preparation for kindergarten which includes multiple indicators assessed across developmental and behavioral domains, including but not limited to physical wellbeing, health and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language development, cognitive development, and age-appropriate skills and behaviors.

Appendix C: Levels of Evidence

Levels of Evidence for Individual Studies

Strong evidence means the study incorporates a design that can support causal conclusions for the specific program with the highest level of confidence (i.e., very high internal validity). This would include well-designed and well-implemented experimental studies conducted on the proposed program.

Moderate evidence means the study can support causal conclusions for the program studied with moderate confidence (i.e., those that take steps to increase internal validity). This would include well designed and conducted quasi-experimental studies or correlational research with strong statistical controls for selection bias and for discerning the influence of internal factors. An example of research that meets the standards would be a well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study that compares outcomes between the group receiving the intervention and a matched comparison group (i.e., a similar population that does not receive the intervention).

Preliminary evidence includes non-experimental studies such as those that seek to demonstrate improvement in program participants over time on one or more intended outcomes or an implementation (process evaluation) study used to learn and improve program operations. Examples of these include: 1) outcome studies that track program participants through a service pipeline and measure participants' responses at the end of the program; and 2) pre- and post-test research that determines whether participants have improved on an intended outcome. This level also includes RCTs and QEDs with significant threats to validity, such as evidence of selection bias.

Pre-preliminary evidence would include studies reporting quantitative or qualitative data from program staff, program participants, or beneficiaries that have been used for program improvement, performance measurement reporting, and/or tracking. An example could be gathering feedback from program participants following their service year.

Overall Levels of Evidence Determinations for Focus Areas

In determining the overall level of evidence for specific focus areas (e.g., School Readiness), we selected the highest level at which there were multiple studies supporting positive outcomes.

Appendix D: Included Studies

School Readiness

2369 Markovitz, C.; Hernandez, M.; Hedberg, E.; Silbergliitt, B. (2014). *Outcome evaluation of the Minnesota Reading Corps PreK program*. Chicago, IL: NORC at the University of Chicago.

Intervention name	Operating program/ organization name	Relationship to national service/CNCS	Evaluator or evaluating organization name	Location(s) of the study
Minnesota Reading Corps PreK	ServeMinnesota Action Network	ANCS	NORC at the University of Chicago	Minnesota
<p>This quasi-experimental evaluation assessed the whether children in the <i>Minnesota Reading Corps PreK</i> program exhibited greater gains in literacy than children in a matched comparison group. The study was performed in 25 <i>MRC PreK</i> sites in Minnesota and 25 matched sites. The <i>MRC PreK</i> program recruits, trains, places, and monitors AmeriCorps members, who implement evidence-based literacy interventions for at-risk preschool children, using a Response-to-Intervention framework.</p> <p>The final sample included 1534 students, approximately 52% of whom were White, 11% Black, 7% Asian, 8% Hispanic, and 9% Other. A small percentage were Dual Language Learners. Participants in the <i>MRC PreK</i> program had significantly higher scores than children in matched comparison sites on five IDGDI outcomes measures for 4- and 5-year old students: 1) letter sound fluency, 2) rhyming fluency, 3) letter name fluency, 4) picture name fluency, and 5) alliteration fluency. Effect sizes ranged from .40 to .72. Despite a small sample size, significant effects were also found for three-year old participants in measures of rhyming fluency and picture name fluency. Overall, the study provides moderate evidence for these findings.</p>				

1357 Miller, S. (2008). *2007-2008 Evaluation of Jumpstart in California*. Sacramento, CA: California Jumpstart.

Intervention name	Operating program/ organization name	Relationship to national service/CNCS	Evaluator or evaluating organization name	Location(s) of the study
Jumpstart	Jumpstart	ANCS	Shelby Miller	California
<p>This quasi-experimental evaluation attempted to determine if <i>Jumpstart</i> participants show greater gains than comparison group children over the program year on a measure of language, literacy, initiative, and social relational skill development. The sample for this study consists of 891 pre-school age children from 10 program sites in California, 58% of whom were Hispanic, of which 25% were Spanish only speakers. <i>Jumpstart</i> provides an educational intervention for preschool-age children who are attending community-based, early education and child care programs including Head Start centers and pre-kindergarten classes. AmeriCorps members provided an educational intervention focusing on language, literacy, initiative, and social skill acquisition during two-hour long sessions twice a week during the school year in community-based, early education, and child care centers. Members spent six additional hours a week in the children’s classrooms assisting teachers or working with children.</p> <p>This report on the evaluation of <i>Jumpstart</i> in California is based on the School Success Checklist obtained at the beginning and end of the school year. Results indicated <i>Jumpstart</i> participant groups made gains on the School Success Checklist total and its two subscales on literacy and social-emotional development that were significantly greater than the gains of the non-matched comparison group children. Overall, the study provides preliminary evidence for these findings.</p>				

K-12 Education

Literacy Tutoring

2365 Jacob, R.T., Armstrong, C., Willard, J.A., (2015). *Mobilizing volunteer tutors to improve student literacy: Implementation, impacts, and costs of the Reading Partners program*. New York, NY: MDRC.

Intervention name	Operating program/ organization name	Relationship to national service/CNCS	Evaluator or evaluating organization name	Location(s) of the study
Reading Partners	Communities in Schools	SIF & ASN	Robin Tepper Jacob, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan Catherine Armstrong and Jacklyn Altuna Willard, MDRC	California, New York, Washington DC

This randomized controlled trial assesses the effectiveness of *Reading Partners* in improving literacy outcomes. The sample for this study consists of *Reading Partners* programs located in 19 schools in California, New York, and Washington, DC, in which *Reading Partners* had been in operation for at least one year. AmeriCorps members serve as Site coordinators who oversee instruction provided by volunteer tutors (not AmeriCorps) members. Tutors provide regular individualized one-to-one reading instruction utilizing a structured curriculum. AmeriCorps members also serve as Outreach Coordinators, tasked with recruiting volunteers to staff each program site.

Within each of the study schools and within grade groups, students in 2nd-5th grade who needed assistance in reading were randomly assigned to the *Reading Partners* program or to an “as-is” control condition. A total of 1,265 students were assigned, and the final sample included 1,166 students. The treatment and control group demonstrated baseline equivalence and did not differ in attrition. Participants in the study were in low-income communities and included a high percentage of minority (Hispanic) students. The study team administered three reading assessments measuring reading comprehension, fluency, and the ability to read sight-words efficiently.

Reading Partners had a positive and statistically significant impact on all three measures of student reading proficiency, with effect-size impacts of 0.10 on reading comprehension scores, 0.09 on reading fluency, and 0.11 on sight-word reading. An examination of growth between the beginning and end of the year on two of these three assessments shows that both groups scored higher in reading comprehension and fluency at the end of the year than they did at the beginning of the year, but that growth on these two assessments was greater for the program group than for the control group. On the sight-word reading test, there was no growth among the control group but positive growth for the *Reading Partners* group. Overall, this study provides strong evidence for these findings.

2492 Center for Social Development (2009). *Evaluation of Experience Corps: Student Reading Outcomes*. St. Louis, MO: Washington University in St. Louis.

Intervention name	Operating program/ organization name	Relationship to national service/CNCS	Evaluator or evaluating organization name	Location(s) of the study
Experience Corps	Experience Corps	ASN	Center for Social Development at Washington University Saint Louis’s Brown School of Social Work	Boston, New York City, Port Arthur Texas

This randomized controlled trial assesses the effectiveness of the *Experience Corps (EC)* program in improving student literacy outcomes. Twenty-three schools in Boston, New York City, and Port Arthur, Texas, participated in the study. *EC* members provide one-to-one literacy tutoring using a structured curriculum to 1st through 3rd grade students. Students referred by teachers as needing assistance in reading at the beginning of the school year were randomly assigned to the *EC* program or a control condition.

The total sample included 825 students. A slight majority of students were African American, and a large majority qualified for free or reduced lunch. Data for the study came from standardized reading tests: (a) the Woodcock Johnson word attack subscale (WJ-WA), the Woodcock Johnson passage comprehension subscale (WJ-PC), and (b) the Peabody Picture Vocabulary test (PPVT-III). At the beginning and end of the academic year, teachers completed assessments of grade-specific reading skills and classroom behavior. Analysis of pretest data showed that the *EC* students and control groups were equivalent on all measured characteristics. Referred students were poor readers based on the WJ-PC measure, which found that half of the students referred to *EC* perform as low as or lower than 84% of the students their age nationwide, and 12% score worse than 97% of the population.

About half of the *EC* students received 30 to 49 sessions, and the mean number of sessions was 45. Three-quarters of the students received over 35 sessions, which represents about one session a week throughout the program period. Students in the *EC* group made over 60 percent more progress in word attack and passage comprehension and 40 percent more progress on grade-specific reading skills. Improvements compared to control group members were statistically significant, with ES.13 for passage comprehension, (p=.04) and ES.16 for grade specific reading (p=.004). The group difference for word attack was marginally significant, with ES.10 (p=.07). Overall, the study provides strong evidence for these findings.

2366 Markovitz, C.; Hernandez, M.; Hedberg, E.; Silberglitt, B. (2014). *Impact evaluation of the Minnesota Reading Corps K-3 program*. Chicago, IL: NORC at the University of Chicago.

Intervention name	Operating program/ organization name	Relationship to national service/CNCS	Evaluator or evaluating organization name	Location(s) of the study
Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC)	ServeMinnesota Action Network	ACNS	Carrie E. Markovitz, Ph.D., Principal Research Scientist, NORC at the University of Chicago Marc W. Hernandez, Ph.D., Senior Research Scientist, NORC at the University of Chicago Eric C. Hedberg, Ph.D., Senior Research Scientist, NORC at the University of Chicago Benjamin Silberglitt, Ph.D., Director of Software Applications, TIES	Minnesota
<p>This randomized controlled trial assesses the effectiveness of the <i>Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC)</i> in improving student literacy outcomes. Twenty-three schools that had fully implemented the <i>MRC K-3</i> program for at least two consecutive years participated in the study. In this program, AmeriCorps members provide whole-class literacy enrichment for all students, and targeted small group and one-to-one emergent literacy interventions. Members individually tutor 15-18 students daily, providing a set of prescribed, research validated activities.</p> <p>In total, 1,341 students participated, with approximately equal distribution between White, African American, and Hispanic; and approximately 30% Dual Language Learner. Each eligible student in each grade within a school was matched with another eligible student based upon their Fall benchmark score, each member of the pair was randomly assigned to a condition, and the matched pair was removed from the analytic sample if the treatment participant did not receive tutoring or if either member didn't receive assessments. AmeriCorps members collected general outcome measure data using the AIMSweb literacy assessments. Kindergarten, first and third grade students who received <i>MRC</i> tutoring achieved significantly higher literacy assessment scores than students who did not. The magnitude of <i>MRC</i> tutoring effects differed by grade, with the largest effects found among the youngest students (i.e., Kindergarten and first grade students), and the smallest effects among the oldest students (i.e., third grade students). Overall, the study provides strong evidence for these findings.</p>				

Teach For America

1682 Decker, P.T., Mayer, D.P., & Glazerman, S. (2004). *The effects of Teach for America on students: Findings from a national evaluation*. Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty.

Intervention name	Operating program/ organization name	Relationship to national service/CNCS	Evaluator or evaluating organization name	Location(s) of the study
Teach for America	Teach for America	Some TFA members receive AmeriCorps education awards.	Paul T. Decker, Daniel P. Mayer, Steven Glazerman Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.	Nationwide
<p>This randomized controlled trial assesses the effectiveness of <i>Teach for America (TFA)</i> teachers on student achievement. The sample consisted of 17 schools with 37 blocks, 100 classrooms, and nearly 1,800 students. Comparisons of outcomes of students taught by <i>TFA</i> teachers with outcomes of students taught by non-<i>TFA</i>, or control, teachers in the same schools and at the same grades occurred. For the analysis, “control teachers” included all teachers in the study who were not <i>TFA</i> corps members at the time of the study or at any time in the past. “<i>TFA</i> teachers” included all teachers who entered the profession through <i>TFA</i> —both current <i>TFA</i> corps members in their first two years of teaching, and alumni (former corps members) who were still teaching. The main source of data for this study was a set of achievement tests we administered in the fall (pre-test) and the spring (post-test) of the study year (2002-2003), including an abbreviated form of the mathematics and reading subtests of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS).</p> <p><i>TFA</i> teachers had a positive impact on math achievement and no impact on reading achievement. The size of the impact on math scores was about 15 percent of a standard deviation, equivalent to about one month of instruction. No impacts on other student outcomes such as attendance, promotion, or disciplinary incidents were identified, but <i>TFA</i> teachers were more likely to report problems with student behavior than were their peers. Overall, the study provides strong evidence for these findings.</p>				

170 Antecol, H., Eren, O., & Ozbeklik, S. (2013). The effect of Teach for America on the distribution of student achievement in primary school: Evidence from a randomized experiment. *Economics of Education Review*, 37, 113-125.

Intervention name	Operating program/ organization name	Relationship to national service/CNCS	Evaluator or evaluating organization name	Location(s) of the study
Teach for America (TFA)	Teach for America	Some TFA members receive AmeriCorps education awards.	Heather Antecol of The Robert Day School of Economics and Finance, Claremont McKenna College and IZA Ozkan Eren of the Department of Economics, Louisiana State University Serkan Ozbeklik of The Robert Day School of Economics and Finance, Claremont McKenna College	Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, New Orleans and the Mississippi Delta
<p>This study used secondary data collected from 2001-2003 during Mathematica’s Policy Research Incorporated National Evaluation of <i>Teach for America</i> (2004). It used fixed effect quantile regression (FEQR) to examine the effects of having a <i>TFA</i> teacher on test scores across the entire achievement distribution of primary school students (N = 1710) in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The study generally found that <i>TFA</i> teachers neither help nor hurt students in terms of reading test scores. Positive and statistically significant effects of <i>TFA</i> across the math achievement distribution were found for the full sample and the effects were fairly uniform. A similar distributional effect of <i>TFA</i> was found within student gender, although the FEQR estimates for female students were two to three times larger than for male students. Evidence existed of heterogeneity in the effects of <i>TFA</i> for Hispanic and black students and for students taught by novice teachers. Finally, the effect of <i>TFA</i> is homogeneous across the math achievement distribution irrespective of certification type. Overall, this study provides further support for the strength of findings reported in Decker, Mayer, & Glazerman (2004).</p>				

2270 Clark, M.A., Hanley S.C., Silva, T., McConnell, S., Sonnenfeld, K., Erbe, A., & Puma, M. (2013). *The effectiveness of secondary math teachers from Teach For America and the Teaching Fellows programs (NCEE 2013-4015)*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Intervention name	Operating program/ organization name	Relationship to national service/CNCS	Evaluator or evaluating organization name	Location(s) of the study
Teach for America	Teach for America	Some TFA members receive AmeriCorps education awards.	Melissa A. Clark , Hanley S. Chiang , Tim Silva , Sheena McConnell , Kathy Sonnenfeld , & Anastasia Erbe, Mathematica Policy Research Michael Puma, Chesapeake Research Associates	Nationwide
<p>This randomized controlled trial assesses the effectiveness of <i>Teach for America</i> secondary math teachers in improving student math achievement. The study examined the effectiveness of <i>TFA</i> teachers, comparing secondary math teachers from <i>TFA</i> with other secondary math teachers teaching the same math courses in the same schools. The <i>TFA</i> study sample consisted of 4,573 students, 111 classroom matches, 136 math teachers, 45 schools, and 11 districts in 8 states.</p> <p>In each participating school, evaluators identified “classroom matches” — two or more classes covering the same middle or high school math course at the same level, with at least one class taught by a <i>TFA</i> teacher and at least one class taught by another teacher, referred to as a comparison teacher, who did not enter teaching through a highly selective alternative route. In each classroom match, students were randomly assigned at the beginning of the school year to a class taught by a <i>TFA</i> teacher or a class taught by a comparison teacher. Student math achievement was measured by math assessments administered at the end of the school year in which the students were randomly assigned. For students in grades 6 to 8, scores were obtained on state-required assessments. For students in grades 9 to 12, we administered end-of-course math assessments developed by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA).</p> <p>On average, students assigned to <i>TFA</i> teachers scored higher (by 0.07 standard deviations) on end-of-year math assessments than students assigned to comparison teachers. This difference in math scores was equivalent to an increase in student achievement from the 27th to the 30th percentile. This difference also translated into an additional 2.6 months of school for the average student nationwide. Overall, this study provides strong evidence for these findings.</p>				

2269 Clark, M.A., Isenberg, E., Liu, A.Y. (2015). *Impacts of the Teach For America Investing in Innovation Scale-Up*. Washington, DC: Teach for America

Intervention name	Operating program/ organization name	Relationship to national service/CNCS	Evaluator or evaluating organization name	Location(s) of the study
Teach for America	Teach for America	Some TFA members receive AmeriCorps education awards.	Melissa A. Clark, Eric Isenberg, Albert Y. Liun, Libby Makaowsky, & Marykate Zukiewicz Mathematica Policy Research	Nationwide
<p>This randomized controlled trial assesses the effectiveness of <i>Teach for America (TFA)</i> teachers in improving academic outcomes, after a major expansion effort of the <i>TFA</i> program. The final sample included 10 states, 13 school districts and other <i>TFA</i> placement partners, 36 schools, and 156 teachers (66 <i>TFA</i> and 90 comparison teachers). The sample of <i>TFA</i> teachers was limited to those recruited in the first two years of the scale-up, who were in their first or second year of teaching at the time of the study, whereas the comparison teachers included both novice and experienced teachers teaching in the same schools and grades as the <i>TFA</i> teachers. In total, 3,724 students were randomly assigned to classes and outcome test score data was obtained for 2,153 students.</p> <p>In the lower elementary grades (prekindergarten through grade 2), students were assessed using reading and math assessments from the Woodcock-Johnson III achievement test. In the upper elementary grades (3 to 5), in which annual reading and math assessments were required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act, evaluators collected state assessment data from district records. Evaluators also collected prior years' test scores from state assessments when available, along with other student background characteristics End-of-year test scores of students assigned to the <i>TFA</i> teachers and those assigned to the comparison teacher were compared.</p> <p>On average, the <i>TFA</i> teachers in our sample were as effective as comparison teachers in both reading and math, including both novice and traditionally certified teachers. In both subjects, differences in test scores between students assigned to <i>TFA</i> teachers and those assigned to comparison teachers were not statistically significant. <i>TFA</i> teachers in lower elementary grades (prekindergarten through grade 2) had a positive, statistically significant effect on student reading achievement of 0.12 standard deviations, or about 1.3 additional months of learning for the average student in these grades nationwide. Overall, this study provides strong evidence for these findings.</p>				

Post-secondary Preparation and Prospects for Success

2526 Avery, Christopher (2013). *Evaluation of the College Possible Program: Results from a Randomized Controlled Trial* Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Intervention name	Operating program/ organization name	Relationship to national service/CNCS	Evaluator or evaluating organization name	Location(s) of the study
College Possible	College Possible	ASN	Christopher Avery Harvard Kennedy School of Government	Minneapolis and St. Paul Minnesota

This randomized controlled trial assesses the effectiveness of the *College Possible* program in increasing students' applications and enrollments to post-secondary institutions. The *College Possible* program provides two years of college preparatory work for high school juniors and seniors, including SAT and ACT test preparation services, college admission and financial aid consulting, and guidance in the transition to college. The study included 239 students from eight high schools.

Students applied to participate in the program in their sophomore year. Since the program had only 800 places and 900 qualified applicants, the last 101 were admitted to the program on a randomized group-by-group basis designed to admit a predetermined number from each high school. The remaining students were placed on a wait list, and 33 were admitted from this waitlist in a separate randomization procedure to fill new spots. There were slight differences between the first and second treatment groups in terms of household income and program participation. The majority of the overall sample was female (60%) and Hmong (60%). *College Possible* attendees were not significantly more likely to enroll in college, but were 15% more likely to enroll in 4-year colleges than control group members. Overall, this study provides strong evidence for these findings.

2442 Evaluation and Assessment Solutions for Education, LLC (2013). *National College Advising Corps 2011-2012 Evaluation Report. Module 1: The NCAC Difference*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Intervention name	Operating program/ organization name	Relationship to national service/CNCS	Evaluator or evaluating organization name	Location(s) of the study
National College Advising Corps	National College Advising Corps	SIF & ASN	Eric Bettinger, Antonio L. Antonio, Brent Evans, Jesse Foster, Brian Holzman, Hoori Satikian, Stanford University Eileen Homg, EASE – Evaluation and Assessment Solutions for Education	Nationwide

This quasi-experimental study examines the differences between post-secondary preparation in students who visited *National College Advising Corps (NCAC)* advisers and students who did not, according to a self-reported survey. Of 72,883 students nationwide were invited to participate in the survey these, 30,546 (42 percent) responded. These responses represent 168 schools across nine states and 13 partner institutions. Slightly more than half of the respondents were female, and 76% were first-generation college goers. Overall, 72% of the sample came from an underrepresented minority group (i.e., Black, Hispanic, Other, or Multicultural), including 38% identifying as Hispanic. The survey primarily targeted seniors who were making college decisions. Students were surveyed in April and May of 2012. The survey asked students about their college plans, to reflect on their academic preparation throughout high school, and about what college-going information they received and from whom they received it.

Results indicate seniors who have compared to those who have not met with the *NCAC* adviser at their school, students who have met with the *NCAC* adviser were: 22% more likely to aspire to attend college early in their education careers; 107% more likely to take 3 or more ACT/SAT prep courses; 198% more likely to attend financial aid workshops; 54% more likely to visit colleges 3 or more times; 40% more likely to take the ACT/SAT; 62% more likely to submit the FAFSA; 99% more likely to use a fee waiver for college applications; 42% more likely to apply to a college/university; 73% more likely to apply to a 4-year institution of higher education; 67% more likely to be accepted to a college/university; 84% more likely to be accepted to a 4-year institution of higher education; and 31% more likely to be committed to attending college in the fall (as indicated by having submitted a deposit to a college/university). There were greater effects for first-generation college students who met with an *NCAC* advisor than others. Since this study used non-equivalent comparisons, causality cannot be determined, as student characteristics likely contributed to differences in outcomes. Overall, this study provides preliminary evidence for these findings.