

Spotlight On: Bridging Differences

What is the Member Exit Survey (MES)?

AmeriCorps members are asked to take a survey to capture insights about their service experience and attitudes upon exit from their program.

Over 350,000 AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC members have completed the MES since April 2015.

What do we mean by “Bridging Differences?”

The AmeriCorps Member Exit Survey includes questions that align to four pathways of the AmeriCorps member experience: bridging differences, civic engagement, life and career skills, and ‘getting things done’. The bridging differences pathway describes members’ cultural competency: the ability to work with and within communities of people different from themselves, interacting with populations such as the unhoused, impoverished, incarcerated, or socially marginalized and serving alongside co-members from differing backgrounds (such as different cultural, socioeconomic, or ethnic backgrounds).

Four survey questions provide information about the bridging differences pathway of the AmeriCorps members experience. This fact sheet provides an overview of the findings on this pathway; for more detail, read the [full report](#).

How do AmeriCorps members bridge differences?

On surveys taken between 2016 - 2020, the vast majority of departing AmeriCorps members agreed that they:

Enjoy exploring differences between co-workers and/or friends from different cultures and backgrounds



93%

Respect the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds



97%

96%



Enjoy interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds

93%



Feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds

CONSISTENT PATTERN ACROSS SUBGROUPS

The proportions of survey respondents that agreed with these survey questions were similar across AmeriCorps programs, the focus area in which their service fell under, and respondent demographic characteristics like race, age, gender, and ethnicity.

SERVING AS PART OF A TEAM

AmeriCorps members who reported working on a team more regularly during their service were more likely to demonstrate cultural competency on the MES compared to members who worked on teams less often during their service period.

About the Office of Research and Evaluation

The [AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation \(ORE\)](#) assists AmeriCorps and its partners in collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data and insights about AmeriCorps programs and civic life in America.

About AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism, provides opportunities for Americans to serve their country domestically, address the nation’s most pressing challenges, improve lives and communities, and strengthen civic engagement. Each year, the agency places more than 250,000 AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in intensive service roles; and empowers millions more to serve as long-term, short-term, or one-time volunteers. Learn more at <https://americorps.gov/>.