

AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation

# Impact Evaluation of AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Program (NCCC)

February 2021

# Welcome!

Impact Evaluation of AmeriCorps NCCC



OFFICE OF  
RESEARCH AND  
EVALUATION



**AmeriCorps**

**We'll get started in just a couple of minutes.**

**Please be advised that there is no dial-in for this webinar; all audio is provided directly through the Adobe Connect platform.**

# Introductory Remarks

## Impact Evaluation of AmeriCorps NCCC



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# Speaker

## Impact Evaluation of AmeriCorps NCCC



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# Evaluation Objectives



Identify how participation in NCCC promotes leadership qualities and skills among its Members and strengthens the communities in which NCCC Members serve.

## Leadership Development

- Determine how participation in NCCC promotes leadership qualities and skills (professional skills, life skills, teamwork, and civic engagement)

## Member Retention

- Understand factors that promote retention and minimize member attrition

## Strengthening Communities

- Understand how NCCC strengthens communities where Corps Members serve
- investigate and define what strengthening communities means in the context of NCCC



# Leadership Development and Member Retention



## Design Overview

Mixed methods quasi-experimental design;  
multiple data collection time points



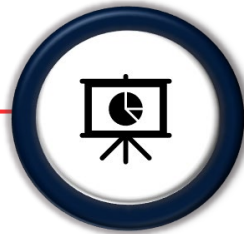
## Interview and Focus Group Participants

NCCC Members, Team Leaders and staff, sponsors and  
community stakeholders



## Survey Participants

Current NCCC Members and Team Leaders, Members who  
leave early, accepted applicants who decline to serve



## Data Sources

Surveys, interviews, focus groups, administrative data  
on Members' service projects

# Data Collection Timeline

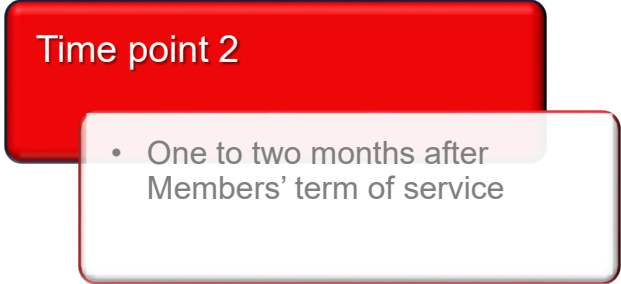
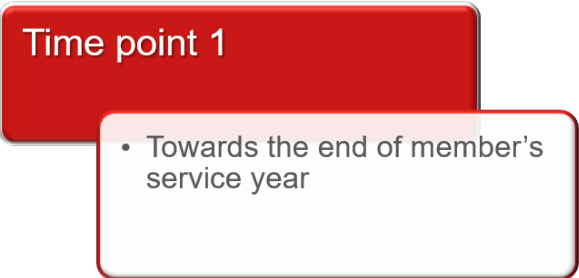


## Leadership Development and Member Retention

### Survey



### Interviews and Focus Groups



# Theory of Change - Leadership



Participants successfully complete their trainings and service projects and receive the support and mentoring from staff, team leaders and sponsors, then they can improve on four core outcomes



Gain professional skills



Develop life skills



Able to work as a team



Engage in civic life



# Short Term Leadership Outcomes



Upon completion of NCCC service

## Professional Skills

- Hard & soft skills to succeed in workplace
- Continuing education
- Education & service awards

## Life Skills

- Plan, prepare, execute, and assess an endeavor
- Attitude of action or change orientation to the world
- Positive self-orientation, self-efficacy

## Work as a Team

- Effective communication
- Awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills in dealing with people different from oneself
- Employ positive team behavior

## Civic Engagement

- Knowledge related to civic participation
- Civic orientation and civic attitudes, knowledge of civic opportunities and outlets.

# Medium Term Leadership Outcomes



One year after completion of NCCC service

## Professional Skills

- Career choices, affirmed career interests
- Complete education requirements
- Usage of education awards

## Life Skills

- Belief in positive self-orientation and sense of self-efficacy

## Work as a Team

- Demonstrate positive team behavior
- Ability in dealing with people different from oneself

## Civic Engagement

- Belief in the ability to affect change through civic action
- Belief in civic participation and civic orientation and attitudes

# Cultural Competency Measures



## Time point 1, 2 and 3 (Likert scale questions)

- Communicate ideas to other people, listen to other people's opinions, collaboration, resolve conflicts thru discussion & dialog
- Courteous & respectful, understanding other people's ideas & opinions, encourage different point of views, encourage participation
- Finding solutions to unexpected problems, forming relationships with groups different from oneself.



## Time point 2 (open ended responses)

- Importance of serving with Members from diverse backgrounds
- Personal definition of diversity
- Recommendations to attain a diverse pool of NCCC Members

# Data Collection Progress

## Leadership Development Study



Region/Class	Treatment					Comparison				
	Corps Members Roster	Completed & Partial with sufficient information	Partial incomplete information	Refusal	Completion rate	Contacted	Completed & Partial with sufficient information	Partial incomplete information	Refusal	Completion rate
NC Winter CL 26A	174	114	7	8	70%	171	87	10	18	57%
SN Winter FEMA CL 26A	166	132	10	6	86%	235	116	7	5	52%
SW Summer CL 26B	91	61	4	2	71%	64	32	3	3	55%
PC Summer CL 26B	132	95	3	6	74%	296	175	2	5	60%
SN Summer CL 26B	160	117	9	2	79%	134	69	4	6	54%
NC Summer CL 26B	81	47	5	1	64%	76	40	2	2	55%
PC Fall CL 27A	229	178	8	10	81%	154	99	5	7	68%
SW Fall CL 27A	243	187	11	10	81%	179	115	5	11	67%
NC Winter CL 27A (in progress)	268	175	14	4	71%	152	81	0	0	53%
SN Winter FEMA CL 27A (in progress)	155	30	0	0	19%	87	28	0	0	32%
<b>Total Participants</b>	<b>1699</b>	<b>1136</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>1548</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>57%</b>

Note: The distribution of participants is preliminary. A small minority of participants might transfer to another class or region. We review and reclassify these cases as appropriate.

# Data Collection Progress

## Member Retention Study



	Early Exit Contacted	Completed & Partial with sufficient information	Partial incomplete information	Refusal	Completion rate
NC Winter CL 26A	55	27	0	0	49%
SN Winter FEMA CL 26A	41	18	0	1	44%
SW Summer CL 26B	17	10	0	1	59%
PC Summer CL 26B	27	16	0	1	59%
SN Summer CL 26B	7	2	0	0	29%
NC Summer CL 26B	9	5	0	0	56%
PC Fall CL 27A	10	7	0	0	70%
SW Fall CL 27A	23	3	0	1	13%
NC Winter CL 27A (in progress)					
SN Winter FEMA CL 27A (not yet started)					
<b>Total Early Exit</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>47%</b>

Note: The distribution of participants is preliminary. A small minority of early exit participants might join another class following their exit. We review and reclassify these cases as appropriate.

# Change in Participants Incentives



- Increase incentive to \$40 for comparison participants.
- Provide incentive to participants for completing a short survey upon early exit from NCCC.
- Provide incentive to de-activated Corps Members to participate in a follow-up phone interview after their term of service.
- Provide incentive to early exit to participate in a follow-up phone interview.



# Change in Incentives and the Completion Rate



- Comparison participants leadership development study
  - ✓ Prior to change, over a period of 7-8 weeks, completion rate at 43% (NC winter 2020) and 26% (SN FEMA winter 2020)
  - ✓ After change, over a period of 3 weeks, 1 follow-up email or phone contact - 20% (NC winter 2020). Over a period of 7-8 weeks, 4 follow-up emails or phone contacts – 32% (SN FEMA winter 2020)
  - ✓ NC winter 2021 over a period of 6 weeks – 53%
- Early exit member retention study
  - ✓ Prior to change, over a period of 5 to 6 months, completion rate at 43%
  - ✓ After change, over a period of 3 months, completion rate at 55%

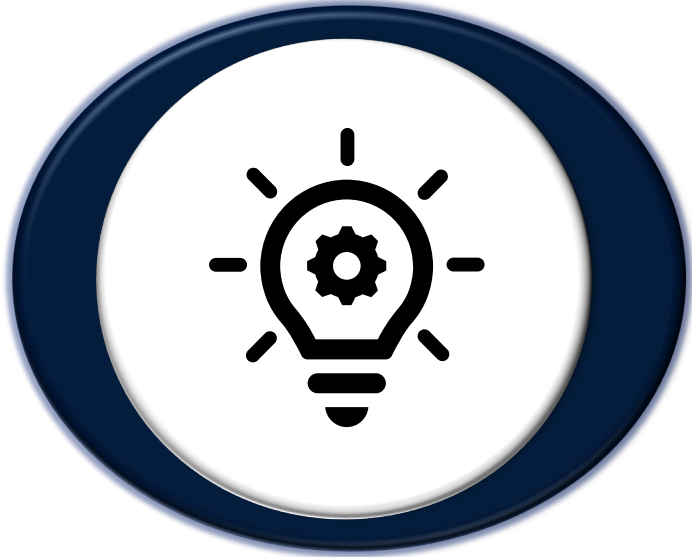


# Leadership Development Study

## Challenges encountered and solutions implemented



# External Shock Due to Pandemic



## Solution

- Added survey questions to gather information from participants.
- Modify focus groups and interview protocols.
- Statistical analysis and adjustments to account for external shock.

## Challenge

- Pose threat to the study's internal validity.
- Participants may not be impacted equally.



# Tracking and Monitoring



Track and monitor all participants so that each participant is counted once through the entire study.



Since this is a national longitudinal study across four regions covering multiple NCCC classes, individual's status may change from being in the comparison group to accepting and serving as a Corps Member.



Some Corps Members may also exit one class and enroll in a subsequent class in a different region. For example, a Corps Member exits the Winter Class and enrolls in the next Summer Class in a different region.



# Strengthening Communities Study

# Strengthening Communities



## Exploratory Study Design Overview

Exploratory mixed methods consisting of review of documentation from completed and current projects, case studies of selected current projects



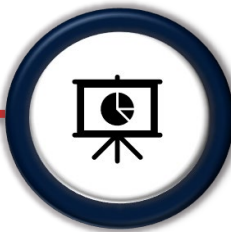
## Administrative Data Review

Quantitative overview of project outputs, analysis of project information, recommendations for data collection instruments



## Case Studies

A selected number of completed and current projects will be the subjects of in-depth case studies, including review of documents, site visits, focus group and interviews



## Primary Data Collection

Service projects database, site visits with interviews, focus groups, phone interviews, and participatory research methods

# Primary Data Collection



## In-depth comprehensive case studies

Site visits, ethnographic techniques, review of NCCC service projects database, service projects documentation, and multiple interviews and focus groups.



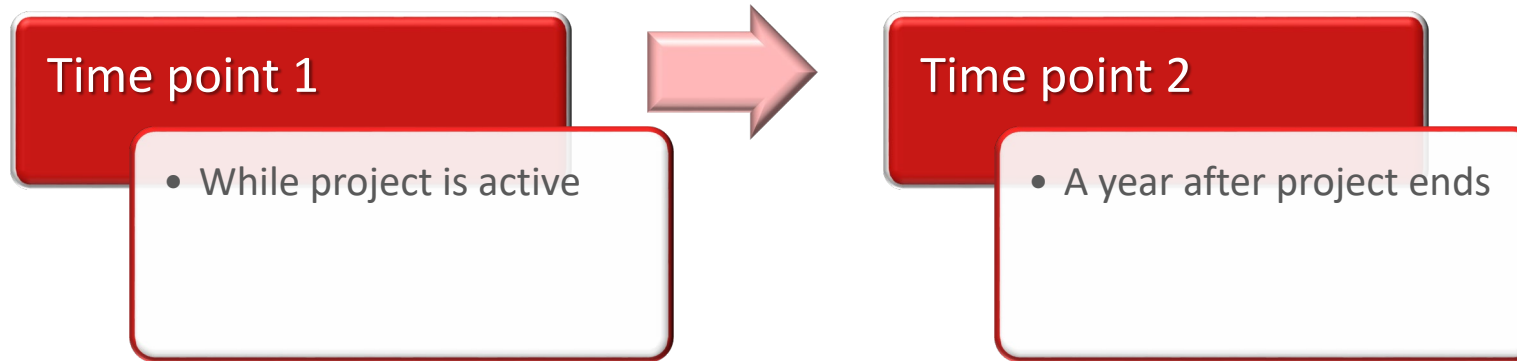
## Restricted case studies

- Conduct remote interviews, review of NCCC service projects database, service projects documentation.

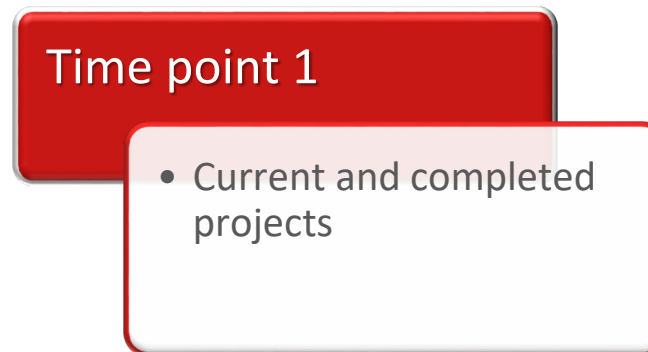
# Primary Data Collection Timeline



## In-depth Case Studies of Current Projects - Interviews and Focus Groups



## Restricted Case Studies of Completed and Current Projects - Interviews



# Document Outputs and Outcomes of NCCC Service Projects



- ✓ Outputs: Increased number of volunteers; increased partnerships between organizations; improved physical infrastructure for community-serving agencies
- ✓ Short-term Outcomes: Increased volunteer engagement; more help to establish connections, or increase connections, between community-serving organizations; greater ability to serve more beneficiaries
- Intermediate Outcomes: Increased efficiency and effectiveness of community-led volunteer efforts; increased ability of community serving organizations to leverage community assets; increased capacity of community and government agencies to serve community members, including ability to serve greater numbers of clients, to serve the needs of existing clients more holistically, and/or to deliver existing services more efficiently and effectively
- Long-term Outcomes: Increased organizational and interorganizational capacity to serve community needs; increased community member health and well-being (e.g., due to ability to use trails, reduced exposure to mold).



Given the short time frame for the proposed data collection, intermediate and long-term outcomes will not be measured, but can be explored prospectively with key stakeholders

# Service Projects Database



- Includes all service projects completed since 2012
- Captures key data about NCCC service projects such as project issue area, characteristics, sponsor organization information, and accomplishments and goals
- Service projects goals and outcomes are thematically coded, and key outcomes are systematically categorized. The thematic classification of service projects goals and outcomes reveal service projects' community and member impacts
- SPD will be used in this evaluation to:
  - Identify service projects for case studies
  - Examine association between the service projects experiences, leadership skills and retention

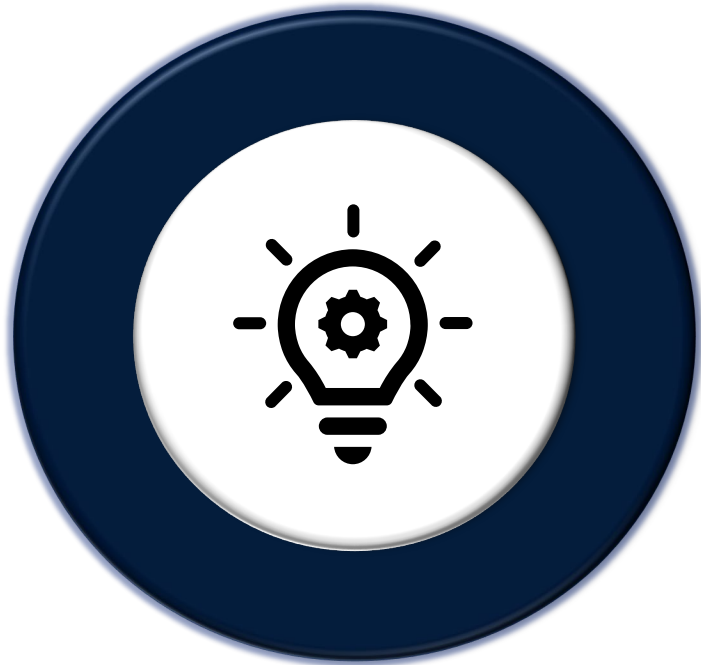




# Strengthening Communities Study

## Potential Challenges and Planned Solutions

# External Shock Due to Pandemic



## Solution

- Modify focus groups and interview protocols.
- Added survey questions to gather information from Corps Members and Team Leaders.

## Challenge

- Potential shift in types and characteristics of service projects.
- Potential shift in community stakeholders served.





# Ongoing Data Collection Activities and Next Steps

# Ongoing Data Collection Activities



## Survey Administration

- NC Winter Class 27A & SN FEMA Winter Class 27A (baseline)
- First Follow-up Survey
  - SN FEMA Winter Class 26A
  - Planning for SW, SN, NC, & PC summer Class 26B

## Focus Group & Interview

- SN FEMA Winter Class 26A
- Planning for SW, SN, NC, & PC Summer Classes 26B
- Planning for PC & SW Fall Classes 27A

## Case Studies

- Analyze the service projects database
- Select service projects for case studies
- Retrieve, review and code service projects documents
- Conduct interviews

# Next Steps



- Baseline survey for the leadership development and retention studies
- Begin data collection for the strengthening communities study - Select 12 service projects for case studies, review service projects documents, conduct interviews
- Timeline
  - July 2021 - Preliminary results based on baseline survey for the leadership development study
  - September 2021 – Preliminary results of the analysis of the 12 service projects
  - September 2021 - Office of Research and Evaluation webinar presentation on the preliminary results for the leadership development study



# Next Steps Leadership Development Study

Research Questions, Data Sources and Sample, analysis

# Base Year Analysis



Research Questions	Data sources/Sample	Description of analysis	Analysis
<p>1. What is the profile of NCCC members, including their demographic characteristics, sources to learn about NCCC, and motivations for serving? How do members perceive the NCCC experience prior to the start of their service? How do Traditional Corps and FEMA Corps differ?</p>	Baseline survey / sample of members.	Examine members' background characteristics, incoming leadership skills, motivation, sources where and how they learn of NCCC, knowledge and perception of serving with NCCC (the degree of mismatch in how they perceive the service experience).	Descriptive analysis, chi-square test, t-test; latent class analysis (LCA) to identify types of members base on motivation, sources where members learn about NCCC.
<p>2. How do NCCC members differ in interpersonal skills, life skills, including attitudes and behavior in group settings prior to the start of service compare to youth of similar background who do not serve with NCCC? How do Traditional Corps and FEMA Corps differ?</p>	Baseline survey / two groups: members and accepted applicants who do not serve (comparison group)	Examine how members differ from comparison group in background, interpersonal skills, life skills; establish baseline equivalence between the two groups using propensity score methods to construct matched comparison cases.	Descriptive analysis, t-test or non-parametric test (e.g., Wilcoxon signed-rank test) to assess differences in observed characteristics; propensity score methods.



# Next Steps Strengthening Communities

Research Questions, Data Sources and Sample, analysis



# Research Questions, Data Sources and Analysis



Research Questions	Data sources / Sample	Description of analysis	Analysis
<p>1. How do NCCC projects strengthen communities? How is success in strengthening communities defined by different stakeholders? How do community members perceive Traditional NCCC and FEMA Corps? How do NCCC members affect sponsoring and partnering organizations ability to serve and strengthen communities?</p> <p>2. What are some lessons learned to strengthen communities? What do members, sponsors and site supervisors, and community stakeholders believe are the most important factors influencing the ability for NCCC teams to strengthen communities? What are some of the direct, indirect, unintended, and long-term effects of NCCC's presence and project work on communities? How can these be assessed, increased, or reduced in the future?</p> <p>3. Which approaches and projects have been most or least effective for the goals of strengthening communities? How do sponsoring and partnering organizations perceive project success? Are some project types more likely to lead to community benefits? What testable hypotheses can be formed to guide impact research investigating the relationship between project, sponsor, and community characteristics and community strengthening?</p>	<p>Sample of active projects / Review of administrative data; comprehensive and restricted case studies of sample projects; CNCS service projects database</p>	<p>Analysis of service projects database to examine characteristics of service projects over time; quantitative reporting of administrative data will be descriptive and will focus on project and sponsor characteristics and project outputs. Qualitative analysis will include individual case descriptions, analysis and reporting of emergent themes within each case (within-case analysis), and thematic analysis across cases (cross-case analysis). Case studies will also include descriptive quantitative data relevant to each project using the service projects databases.</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis; descriptive analysis; bivariate and multivariate</p>

# Closing Remarks

## Impact Evaluation of AmeriCorps NCCC



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# Q&A

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## Questions?

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