

Office of Research and Evaluation

AmeriCorps Member Exit Survey – Technical Webinar

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What is the MES?

- Why the MES is conducted
- When it started
- Ins and Outs/Technical points
- Number of survey takers (by completion rate, program)

Theoretical Background

- Member Theory of Change
- Cultural Competency
- Civic Engagement
- Life and Career Skills
- "Getting Things Done"
- Other domains

Analysis and Use

- Different ways to analyze the data
- Available/forthcoming analyses
- Open Data Platform
- Who can use this work

What is the AmeriCorps Member Exit Survey (MES)?





Background on the AmeriCorps MES

“the purpose of the member exit survey is to collect information about AmeriCorps members’ experiences for the purpose of monitoring progress towards the agency’s strategic goals around member development”

OMB Justification Part A



Ins and Outs of the MES



- Current iteration began in 2015
- 31 numbered questions
 - 108 total questions including sub-questions
- MES offered on rolling basis
- Members are offered the MES for as many terms of service in which they participate
- No compensation for taking the survey
- Data analysis inclusive of members aged 18+ only
- Members take the survey in the MyAmeriCorps portal upon exiting service
 - Exiting service is both:
 - Finishing term, or
 - Exiting early
 - 180 days to take survey once it appears in portal
 - Most members take survey within a couple months

MES Completion Rates by Program (2015-2022)



COMPLETION COUNTS								
FISCAL YEAR	ASN		VISTA		NCCC		TOTAL COMPLETED	TOTAL N
	Complete	Total N	Complete	Total N	Complete	Total N		
***2015	28283	47799	4338	5292	738	995	33359	54086
2016	40790	55451	7094	7994	1606	1813	49490	65258
2017	41139	54580	7412	8449	1622	1796	50173	64825
2018	40245	53296	7423	8477	1292	1497	48960	63270
2019	41202	53135	6802	8242	1175	1425	49179	62802
2020	39110	49173	6017	7826	953	1428	46080	58427
2021	39016	47970	6321	8219	896	1256	46233	57445
2022	34541	43692	5026	6888	970	1268	40537	51848
TOTALS	304,326	405,096	50,433	61387	9,252	11,478	364,011	477,961
COMPLETION RATES								
FISCAL YEAR	ASN		VISTA		NCCC		Completion Rates (All programs/year)	
***2015	59.2%		82.0%		74.2%		61.68%	
2016	73.6%		88.7%		88.6%		75.84%	
2017	75.4%		87.7%		90.3%		77.40%	
2018	75.5%		87.6%		86.3%		77.38%	
2019	77.5%		82.5%		82.5%		78.31%	
2020	79.5%		76.9%		66.7%		78.87%	
2021	81.3%		76.9%		71.3%		80.48%	
2022	79.1%		73.0%		76.5%		78.2%	
Total Response Rate as of FY2022							75.71%	

***note: 2015 Data only spans from April 2015 – Sept 2015

MES Completion Rates by Service Completion (2017-2022)



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
FINISHED SERVICE						
Completed survey	44672	42824	42527	26901	32162	29849
Did not complete survey	6992	6743	6025	4770	4846	5049
TOTAL FINISHED SERVICE	51664	49567	48552	31671	37008	34898
DID NOT FINISH SERVICE						
Completed survey	5480	6074	6638	19158	14052	10660
Did not complete survey	7556	7333	7485	7476	6303	6135
TOTAL DID NOT FINISH SERVICE	13036	13407	14123	26634	20355	16795
FINISHED SERVICE						
Completed survey	86.5%	86.4%	87.6%	84.9%	86.9%	85.5%
Did not complete survey	13.5%	13.6%	12.4%	15.1%	13.1%	14.5%
TOTAL FINISHED SERVICE	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
DID NOT FINISH SERVICE						
Completed survey	42.0%	45.3%	47.0%	71.9%	69.0%	63.5%
Did not complete survey	58.0%	54.7%	53.0%	28.1%	31.0%	36.5%
TOTAL DID NOT FINISH SERVICE	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Theoretical Background of the MES

Pathways & Domains





AmeriCorps Member Theory of Change (TOC)

Vision:

- Creation of empowered and prepared citizens
 - More civically engaged
 - Will work to strengthen their communities
 - Dedicated to improving the lives of those in their community

Four Pathways to Achieving Vision:

- Participants develop along four pathways essential in developing empowerment and preparation necessary to be a change-oriented, active community member



MES *Pathways*

Cultural Competency

Civic Engagement

Life and Career Skills

“Getting Things Done”

Cultural Competency



- Member ability to work with and within diverse groups
- The act of uniting different or disparate groups to achieve a common goal
- **Contact hypothesis:**
 - *During interpersonal contact between majority and minority group, given certain conditions are met, members can effectively overcome prejudices, biases, and preconceived notions of the minority group*
 - Intergroup contact necessitates creating “equal status”
 - Requires mutually interdependent relationship (i.e., a cooperative achievement of a joint goal)

Civic Engagement



- **Civic engagement:** the constellation of activities in which individuals engage to “make a difference” in their communities
 - Participation within and beyond electoral politics at all geographic levels
 - Volunteerism
 - Activities like attending public meetings and belonging to organizations
 - Neighbors doing favors for each other
- AmeriCorps provides opportunities for citizens to be agents of positive change/ “*force multipliers*”:
 - Solving issues with the support of local stakeholders
- National service has potential to shape members’ long-term civic attitudes and behaviors

Life and Career Skills



- Broadening or enhancing the ability to work productively and effectively, both in the workplace and in the community
 - Hard skills, such as project management
 - Soft skills, such as strategic thinking
- Members seeking employment in public serving roles may be better positioned to influence community change from positions of relative power
- **Educational Attainment Pathway:**
 - Enhancing members' ability to obtain higher education and training
 - Education award incentive
 - Creating more educated populace to tackle community issues

“Getting Things Done”



- Instilling motivation to solve problems, and promoting the ability to take initiative in planning, preparing, executing, and assessing an endeavor
 - Hands on experience with consequential and deliberate action, carrying much of the responsibility expected in the “real world”
- Members develop a **change and action orientation** to the world, and a positive self-orientation and sense of self-efficacy
- Service occurs for many members during critical period of life known as “emerging adulthood”
 - The member service placement offers exposure to a new ideas and experiences when they actively seek answers to questions of personal identity and beliefs



MES *Domains*

Motivation to Join

Describing Experience

Satisfaction with Experience

Training

Post-Service Plans

Analyses and Use of the AmeriCorps MES



How ORE Conducts Analysis



- ORE typically analyzes data by fiscal year (Oct 1 – Sept 30)
 - Members are put into a specific fiscal year by **service end date**
 - *Examples:*
 - If a member starts service on September 1st, 2016, serves a full-term, and leaves service on July 27th, 2017, they would be a part of the FY2017 dataset
 - If a member starts service on March 13th, 2022, but left service early after a month on April 24th, 2022, they would be a part of the FY2022 dataset
- ORE uses service end date to account for any current events or seasonality affecting when members leave, such as a presidential election occurring during a given fiscal year

How ORE Conducts Analysis (cont.)

Data disaggregation:



Demographically:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Age Group
- Educational Attainment

Programmatically:

- AmeriCorps State and National
- AmeriCorps NCCC
- AmeriCorps VISTA
- Focus Area of service
- Term Type

By specific questions

- Did a member serve in a team setting?
- What are a member's post-service plans?

Features of ORE Analyses



ORE Analyses feature:

- Full reports, one-pagers, FAQ documents
- Use of graphics, graphs, appendices
- Can provide top-level findings of aggregated data (avoiding PII issues)

Incorporation of other national/local level data from separate sources:

- National voter data (ex: Tufts University's voting data)
- US Census' Current Population Survey (CPS) and Civic Engagement and Volunteering Supplement (CEV)





Completed Analyses

- Bridging Differences (Cultural Competency) (2016 – 2020)
 - Disaggregated by program, demographics, teamwork
- Civic Engagement (2017 – 2021)
 - Disaggregated by program

(reports on AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange)



Bridging Differences (2016-2020)



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

Bridging Differences (2016-2021) (cont.)



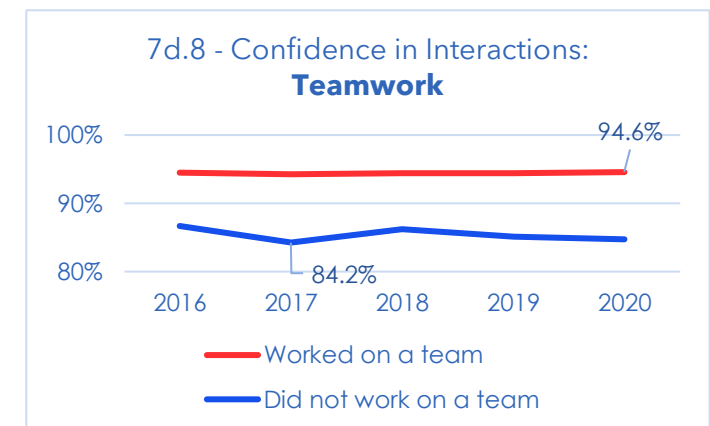
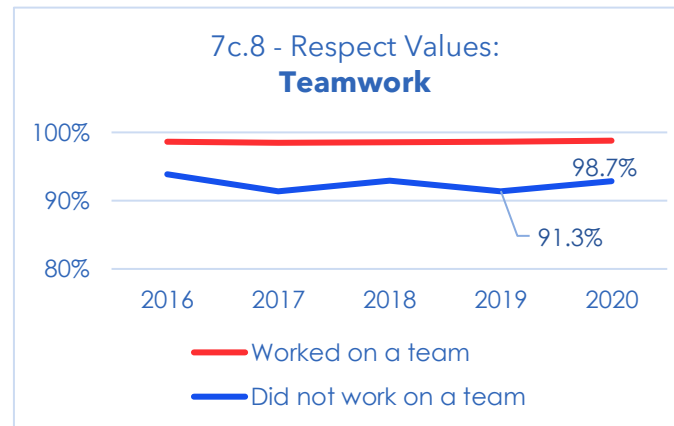
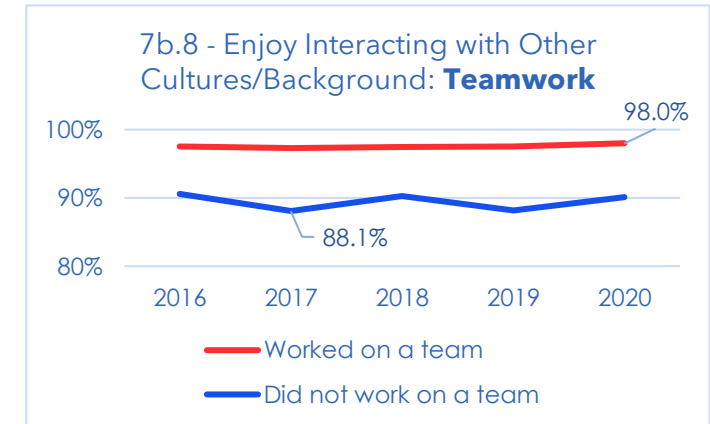
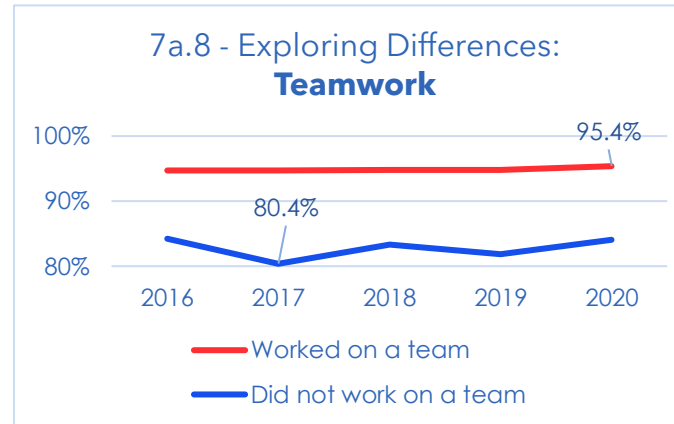
Question 7) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

a) I enjoy exploring differences between co-workers and/or friends from different cultures or background and me.

b) I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds.

c) I respect the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds.

d) I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds.



Civic Engagement (2017-2021)

Top level findings



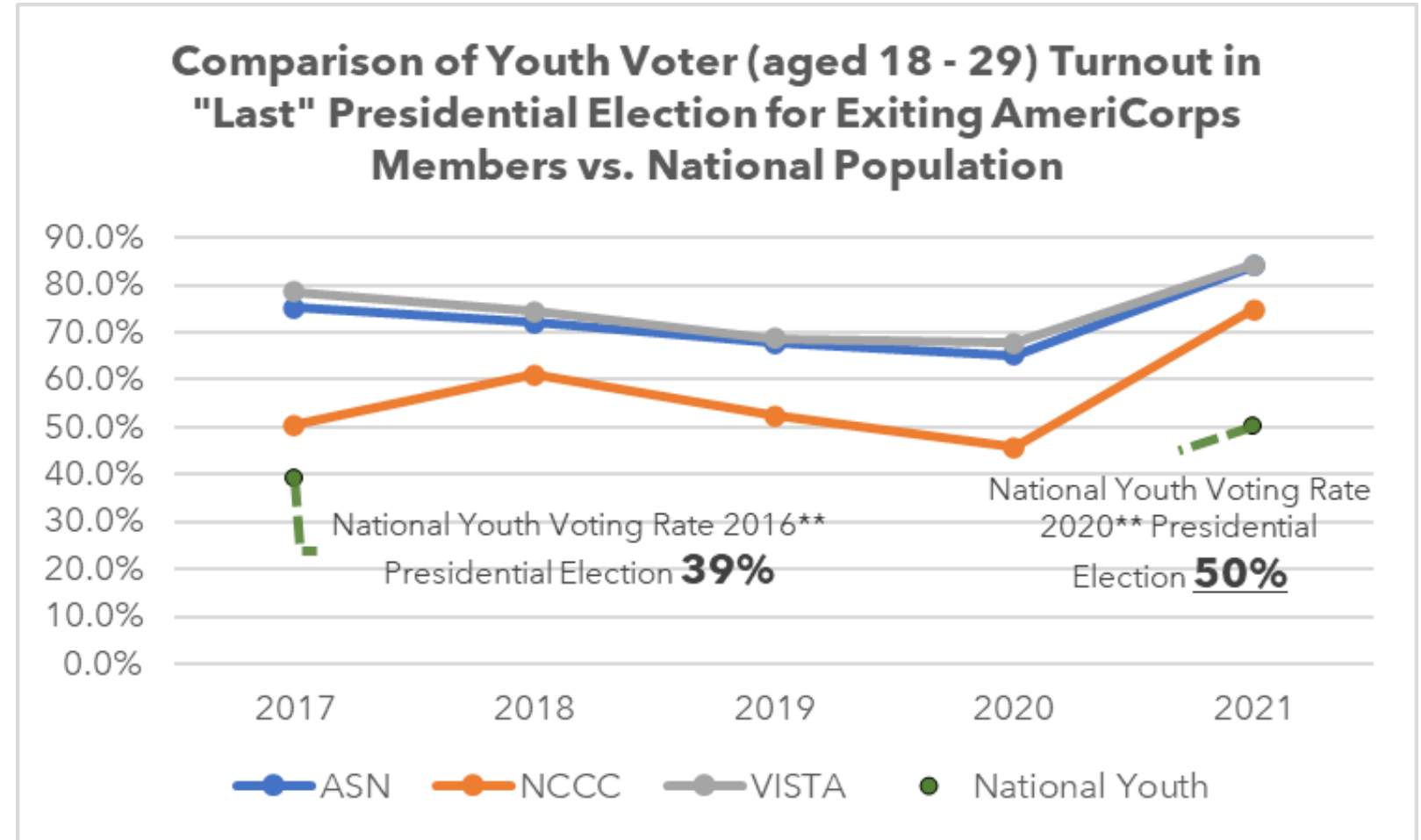
- **Increased community engagement:** most members across all programs reported a higher likelihood of participating and volunteering in their communities after having served in AmeriCorps, though there was a slight decrease amongst all members from 2020 to 2021.
- **Increased frequency of discussing sociopolitical issues:** starting in 2019, all members reported a decrease in how often they discussed and linked larger political, social, local, or national issues to their communities compared to previous years, although levels increased past pre-2019 levels starting in 2020.
- **High levels of attachment and obligation to their community:** the majority of ASN and VISTA members expressed a strong personal attachment to their community from 2017 through 2021
- **High levels of member confidence to adequately address community concerns:** most members felt they could do something about a problem in their community by:
 - creating plans
 - getting others to care about the problem,
 - organizing meetings
 - expressing one's views in front of a group
 - contacting elected officials

Civic Engagement (2017-2021) (cont.)

Voting patterns



AmeriCorps members aged 18-29 vote in presidential elections more than the general population of the same age





Forthcoming Analyses

- Life and Career Skills (2017 – 2022)
- Responses by Service Completion
- Motivation to Serve
- Analyses by state



MES Data Coming to the Open Data Platform (ODP)



- MES data will be placed onto AmeriCorps' Open Data Platform (ODP)
- Will provide top-level findings and summary tables for all questions in the survey
- Data dictionary and FAQs to be included
- Denote which questions belong to which pathways and which domains
- <https://data.americorps.gov/> to access AmeriCorps' available datasets

Example of data summary tables by program, Question 7 of MES:

7) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.						
7a) I enjoy exploring differences between co-workers and/or friends from different cultures or background and me.						
Strongly Agree or Agree	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
All	0.926387	0.929282	0.928739	0.936995	0.93678	0.930477
ASN	0.926487	0.930354	0.928199	0.937524	0.936573	0.929146
NCCC	0.899448	0.88701	0.902521	0.904713	0.899448	0.900407
VISTA	0.931703	0.930828	0.936545	0.938752	0.943326	0.945394
7b) I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds.						
Strongly Agree or Agree	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
All	0.957505	0.960174	0.960208	0.965771	0.964067	0.959209
ASN	0.956629	0.959639	0.959201	0.965166	0.963109	0.957606
NCCC	0.928265	0.927748	0.942857	0.938462	0.929282	0.940041
VISTA	0.968725	0.968679	0.969291	0.974052	0.974863	0.973875
7c) I respect the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds.						
Strongly Agree or Agree	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
All	0.970641	0.972393	0.972307	0.974969	0.973141	0.969919
ASN	0.969733	0.9717	0.97194	0.974592	0.972115	0.968605
NCCC	0.947885	0.940046	0.952941	0.949744	0.948066	0.944106
VISTA	0.98062	0.981741	0.977878	0.981442	0.982982	0.983893
7d) I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds.						
Strongly Agree or Agree	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
All	0.924202	0.927087	0.926898	0.928998	0.92631	0.921766
ASN	0.925247	0.927781	0.926314	0.928985	0.926114	0.920839
NCCC	0.87431	0.876249	0.901681	0.894359	0.879558	0.881098
VISTA	0.929297	0.93216	0.934798	0.934625	0.934114	0.935965

MES on the ODP



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Welcome to AmeriCorps Open Data

AmeriCorps, the federal agency, brings people together to tackle the country's most pressing challenges through national service and volunteering. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities. AmeriCorps helps make service to others a cornerstone of our national culture. [Learn more about AmeriCorps.gov](#). Explore this site to view data that shows how AmeriCorps brings out to best of America.




Data Catalog


Maps


Charts and Graphs



Who can use the AmeriCorps MES Data?

- AmeriCorps staff
- State Service Commissions
- Policymakers





Conclusion: AmeriCorps MES is a wealth of information about AmeriCorps members

Large number of survey responses

- 350k+ responses
- Can disaggregate by demographics, program, timeframe, and more
- Details the member experience over time

MES gets to bottom of impact on members

- Is integral to agency's strategic goal of member development
- Fully addresses AmeriCorps member **Theory of Change**
- Examines how members feel about their service

The MES can be used to improve the service experience

- Stakeholders can use MES findings to inform future policies and programming
- Members get opportunity to be heard and influence positive changes for members after them

For more information

- Please contact the AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation's email dedicated to the AmeriCorps Member Exit Survey:
 - AmeriCorpsMES@cns.gov

