




**AmeriCorps**

# **Bridging Differences through AmeriCorps Service: AmeriCorps Member Exit Survey Analysis 2016-2020**

Office of Research and Evaluation  
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## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Citation**

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## Introduction and Background

AmeriCorps' mission is to "improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering".<sup>1</sup> In addition to AmeriCorps's efforts to improve communities and the lives of individuals served, AmeriCorps values the development of its service members and volunteers into empowered and engaged citizens. To that end, AmeriCorps' Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) designed the AmeriCorps Member Exit Survey (MES) to capture members' service experience and attitudes upon their exit from the program.<sup>2</sup> The MES examines members' experience across the three AmeriCorps programs: AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC.<sup>3</sup> Since 2015, nearly 300,000 AmeriCorps members have responded to this survey. From 2016 through 2020, 75% to 80% of members completed the MES each year.

MES data is collected on a rolling basis and is compiled by fiscal year. Members are categorized into their respective fiscal years according to the date of when they finished their service term or departed their program early. Whenever the member departs service, they are given the MES to complete. Although members may begin their AmeriCorps service before turning 18 years of age, responses used in this report are comprised of those who had started their term of service while 18 years of age or older.

Key components of the AmeriCorps service experience are mapped to "pathways" meant to articulate the AmeriCorps member theory of change.<sup>4</sup> Questions featured in the MES broadly fall into these four "pathways" and into an additional five "domains":

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<sup>1</sup> AmeriCorps. "About." <https://americorps.gov/about>.

<sup>2</sup> For questions on this data, analysis, and report please contact the AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) at [Evaluation@cns.gov](mailto:Evaluation@cns.gov).

<sup>3</sup> AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are not represented in the MES; a forthcoming feasibility study to initiate a new participant survey inclusive of both AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers is currently in production.

<sup>4</sup> AmeriCorps. "AmeriCorps Member Theory of Change". 2015.

- **Pathways:**
  - Civic Engagement
  - Bridging Differences
  - “Getting Things Done”
  - Life and Career Skills
- **Domains:**
  - Describing Member Experience
  - Satisfaction with Experience
  - Motivation to Join
  - Post-service Plans
  - Training

This report provides an exploratory overview of the connections between AmeriCorps members’ service and the **Bridging Differences** pathway using responses to the MES by members across all three programs (AmeriCorps State and National/VISTA/NCCC) who ended their terms between the start of fiscal year 2016 to the end of fiscal year 2020 (October 1, 2015, to September 30, 2020).

This report provides an overview of the connections between AmeriCorps members’ service and their aptitude for bridging cultural differences by analyzing their responses to the MES.

### Bridging Differences

Viewed as a key strategy in building stronger and more engaged communities, AmeriCorps service provides an outlet for citizens to be agents of positive change, dedicating themselves to solving community issues and advocating for marginalized groups with the support of local stakeholders. For AmeriCorps members, having *cultural competency* is the ability to work with and within communities of people different from themselves. Practicing cultural competency is one of many ways in which AmeriCorps members bridge differences and unite Americans across the country through their service.

When, in the course of their service placement, AmeriCorps members interact with populations such as the unhoused, impoverished, incarcerated, or socially marginalized, they learn how to work productively with these different groups to produce meaningful outcomes for all. Members also learn to work productively with community members and other AmeriCorps members from different cultural, socioeconomic, or ethnic backgrounds. In other words, AmeriCorps members bridge differences as they serve individuals different from themselves *and* as they serve alongside co-members from differing backgrounds.



*Contact Hypothesis*, a longstanding psychological theory, contributes to the explanation of how AmeriCorps members develop or enhance their ability to successfully serve in diverse groups.<sup>5</sup> The Contact Hypothesis holds that during interpersonal contact between majority and minority groups, given that certain conditions are met, members can effectively overcome prejudices, biases, and preconceived notions of the minority group.

### Bridging Differences Questions in the MES

The *Bridging Differences* pathway is represented in the MES by just Question 7 with four corresponding sub-questions (7a through 7d):

*Question 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.
- 7b) I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds.
- 7c) I respect the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds.
- 7d) I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds.

Each of the four sub-question's available responses include:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Graphs featured in this report demonstrate the changes (or lack thereof) seen in the proportions of members that answered with the two most affirmative selections of each question's available response options ("Strongly agree" and "Agree") over time. For example, the graphs for Question 7a display the percentage of members that responded with "Strongly agree" or "Agree", providing the percentage of individuals overall who responded that they agree with the question's text.

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<sup>5</sup> Allport, Gordon Willard, Kenneth Clark, and Thomas Pettigrew. "The nature of prejudice." (1954).

Brown, Rupert, and Miles Hewstone. "An integrative theory of intergroup contact." (2005).  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(05\)37005-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(05)37005-5).

## Demographic Disaggregation

AmeriCorps collects programmatic information and demographic data from its members. Data and graphs in this report are therefore disaggregated by eight different demographic and programmatic indicators, including:

### 1. By Program

- AmeriCorps State and National, NCCC, VISTA

### 2. By Age Group

- 18-24, 25-44, 45-64, 65+

### 3. By Gender

- Male, Female, No Answer

### 4. By Ethnicity

- Hispanic or Latino, Not Hispanic or Latino, No Response

### 5. By Race

- Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian or Asian American, Multiracial, Null, Other Race, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White

### 6. By Focus Area

- Education, Healthy Futures, Disaster Response, Veterans & Military Families, Environmental Stewardship, Economic Opportunity, Not sure/does not apply

### 7. By Education Level

- Associates Degree, College Graduate, Graduate Degree (e.g. MA, PhD, MD, JD), High School Diploma/GED, Less than High School, Some College, Technical School / Apprenticeship / Vocational, Unknown

### 8. By Teamwork

- Worked on a team, Did not work on a team

By disaggregating responses to the MES by a variety of demographic indicators, this analysis detects which factors are correlated with the largest variations in the data. Variables listed above were selected based on the most readily available demographic data collected of all members and together serve as an exploratory examination of MES data. More detail explaining the usage of *Teamwork* as an indicator is featured in the section titled *Bridging Differences According to Teamwork*.

Graphs shown later in the report are titled by number of question, and then by the corresponding number associated with the demographic indicator above. For example, the graph looking at Question 7c disaggregated by Race is titled "7c.5".

## Key Takeaways

Although there are minor variations across all years and demographics, the proportion of all members reporting an aptitude for cultural competency is quite

high, regularly including 90% or more members across all years and demographic/programmatic categories.

Overall, AmeriCorps members display quite high levels of enjoying, respecting, and feeling confident when interacting with other cultures regardless of how the data is disaggregated – either by program, demographics, or if a members had served on a team (i.e., teamwork).

Key Findings Listed by indicator:

- **Program**
  - Across all years, VISTA reported slightly higher percentages of members responding affirmatively to the four questions than Americorps State and National or NCCC members. That said, no program in any year ever saw less than 89% members responding affirmatively to all questions.
- **Age**
  - The proportion of 18- to 24-year-old members that reported enjoying, respecting, and interacting with other cultures is higher than all other age groups. Members aged 65 and up reported the highest proportion of members who respect the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds, however.
- **Gender**
  - Female AmeriCorps members and members who did not identify their gender consistently exhibited higher proportions of members displaying cultural competency than male AmeriCorps members across all years and questions. The lowest reported percentage of members was still very high, with 90% of males reporting that they enjoyed exploring other cultures.
- **Race**
  - Across all years and questions, Asian or Asian-American members reported the highest percentage of members who enjoyed exploring differences, as well as enjoying interactions with and respecting the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds. White AmeriCorps members reported slightly less confidence in interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Regardless of these differences, when disaggregating by race, all members report very high levels of cultural competency.

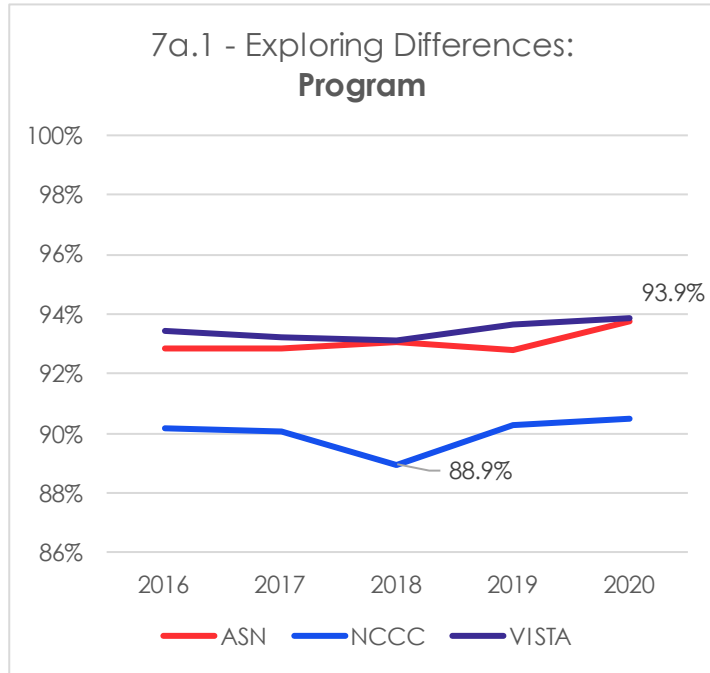


- **Ethnicity**
  - Hispanic or Latino members reported slightly higher proportions of cultural competency than non-Hispanic or Latino members across all four categories. That said, even after disaggregating by ethnicity, all groups overwhelmingly responded in agreement to all four questions.
- **Education Level**
  - Across all years and questions, AmeriCorps members with at least a high school degree or higher reported greater levels of cultural competency as compared to members with either less than a high school degree or a technical degree. Members with less than a high school degree or a technical degree were the only groups that had reported less than 90% in agreeing that they enjoyed exploring other cultures and felt confident in interacting with people from different backgrounds.
- **Focus Area**
  - Although disaggregating by focus areas showed all members reporting fairly high levels of cultural competency, members in the Healthy Futures focus area reported slightly larger percentages than other focus areas across all questions and years. Members who did not know their focus area or felt a focus area did not apply to their service consistently reported the lowest levels of cultural competency across all questions.
- **Teamwork**
  - Teamwork is by far the greatest correlate to any differences seen in members' levels of cultural competency. The percentage of members displaying cultural competency was always higher for members who identify as working on a team during their AmeriCorps service as compared to members who claimed to work alone. Non-team AmeriCorps members reported enjoying exploring other cultures 10 - 14% less than those who worked on teams and were 8 - 10% less confident in interacting with other cultures than those who had served on teams.



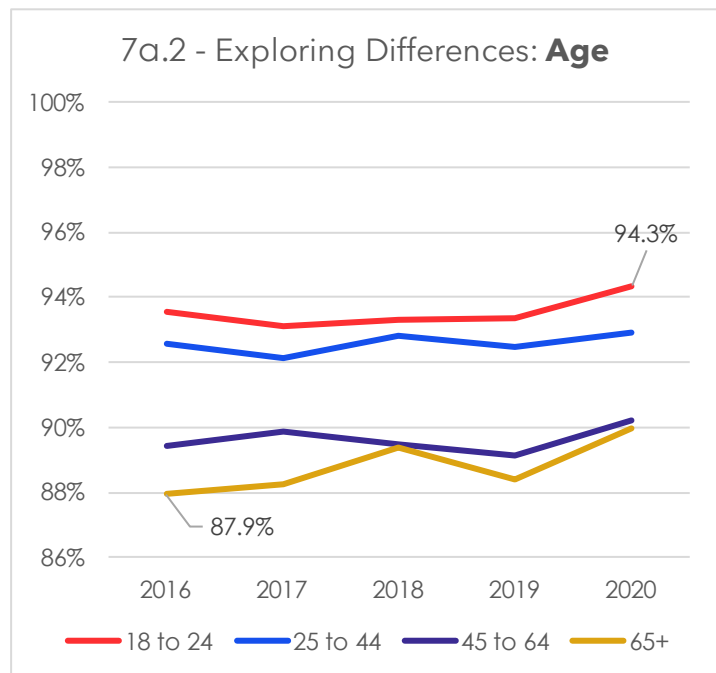
## Exploring Differences Between Coworkers and/or Friends from Different Cultures

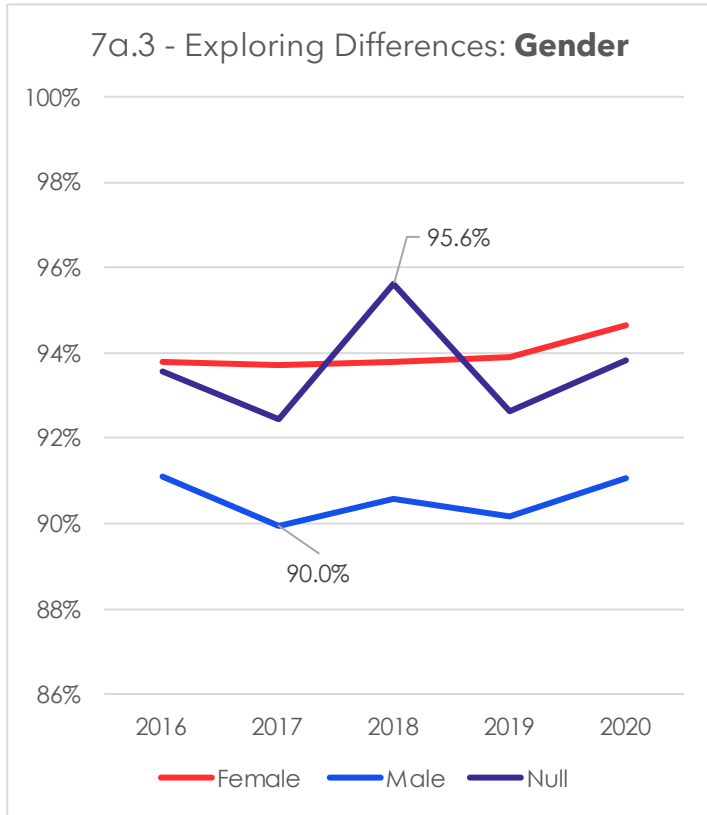
Question 7a) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: I enjoy exploring differences between co-workers and/or friends from different cultures or background from me



**Program:** Over 88% of AmeriCorps members in each stream of service enjoy exploring differences between their co-workers and friends from different cultures and backgrounds. This high level of enjoying other differences remained mostly consistent from 2016 to 2020. AmeriCorps state and national and VISTA members steadily topped NCCC members in this area.

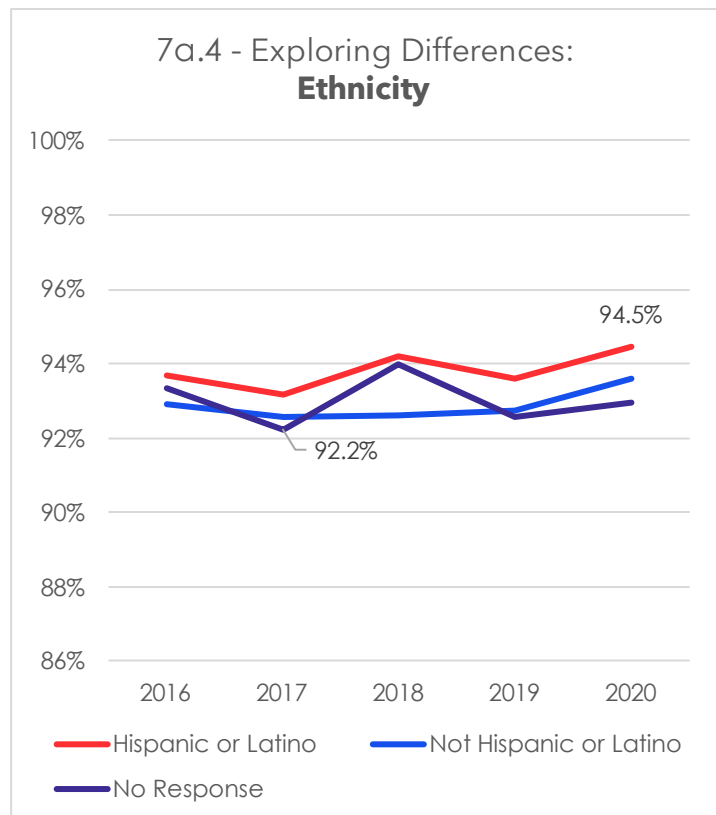
**Age:** For all observed years, members between the ages of 18 to 44 reported enjoying exploring the cultures and backgrounds of friends and co-workers most out of all other age groups. The percentage of members enjoying exploring differences is inversely related to age: as members get older a smaller (although still fairly large) proportion of members enjoy exploring differences between their coworkers and/or friends from different cultures.

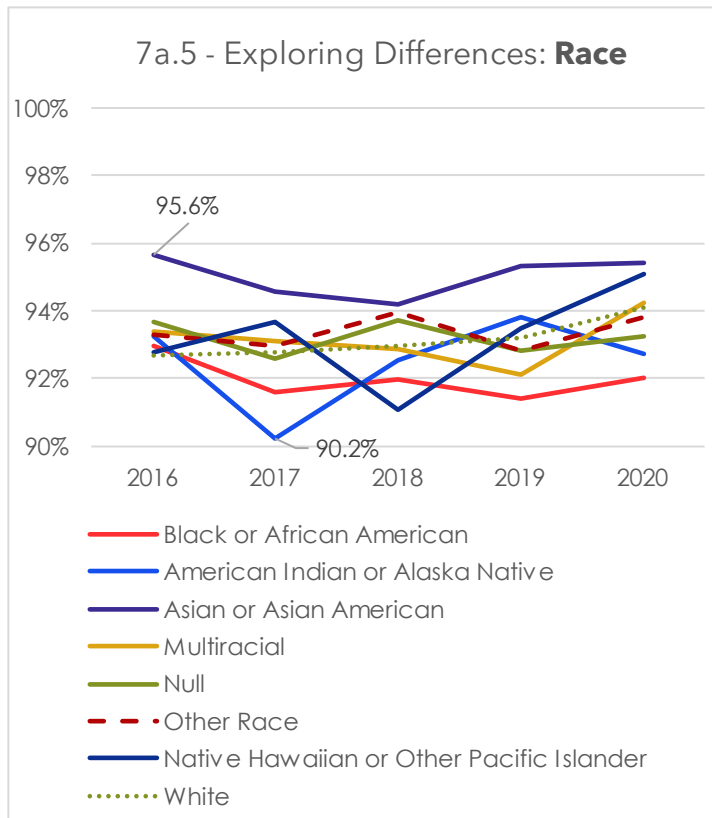




**Gender:** From 2016 to 2020, female members consistently reported enjoying exploring differences between the backgrounds and cultures of their coworkers more than male members, although this proportion remains fairly high (90% or greater) for all populations for all years. To note, participants are given two options to respond for gender: Male or Female; data may exclude non-gender conforming AmeriCorps members. Nonetheless, members who did not report their gender consistently reported higher percentages in enjoying exploring differences than men.

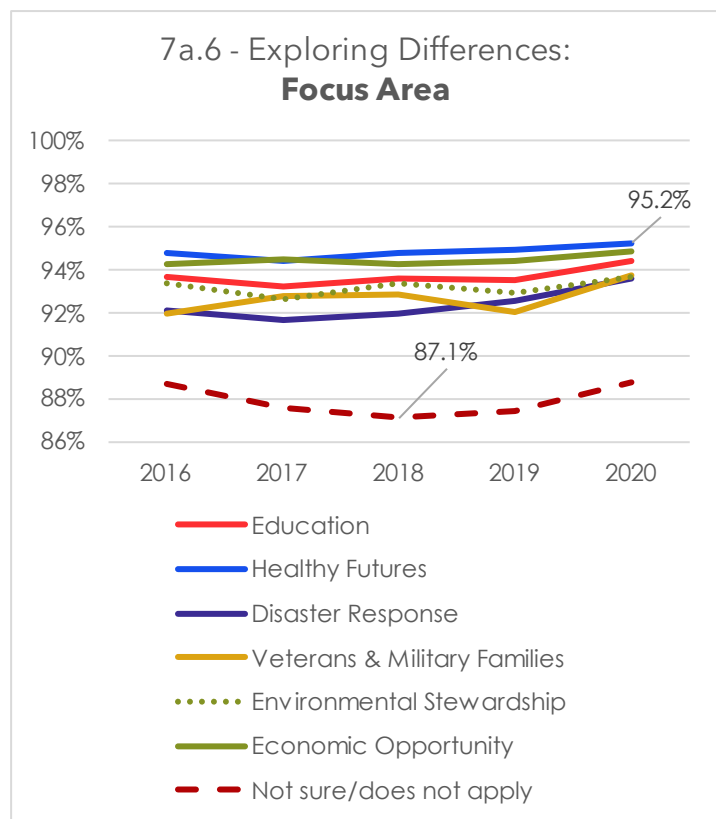
**Ethnicity:** Hispanic or Latino AmeriCorps members expressed slightly more enthusiasm in exploring differences between the backgrounds of coworkers and friends than those members reporting as not Hispanic or Latino or members who did not respond to their ethnicity at all. Proportions for all groups have remained fairly steady, although in 2020 all groups displayed an increase in the proportion of those expressing they enjoy exploring other cultures.



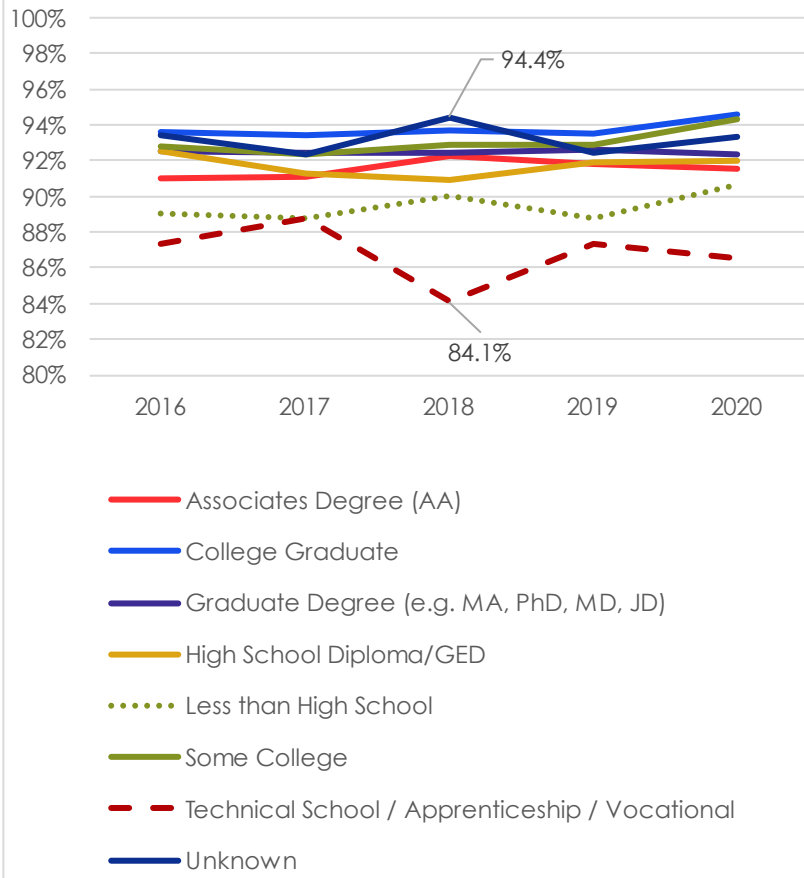


**Race:** Asian or Asian American members from 2016 to 2020 reported the highest percentage of members who enjoyed exploring differences between coworkers of different backgrounds. In 2017, American Indian or Alaska Native members displayed the lowest proportion, but even so still remained above 90%. All groups reported very high proportions of members that enjoy exploring differences.

**Focus Area:** The Healthy Futures focus area followed by the Economic Opportunity focus area displayed the highest percentage of members who enjoy interacting with people of different cultures and backgrounds. Members unsure of their service's focus area consistently reported the lowest proportion of members that enjoyed exploring differences, whereas all other focus areas experienced over 90% of its members answering this question affirmatively across all years.



### 7a.7 - Exploring Differences: Education Level

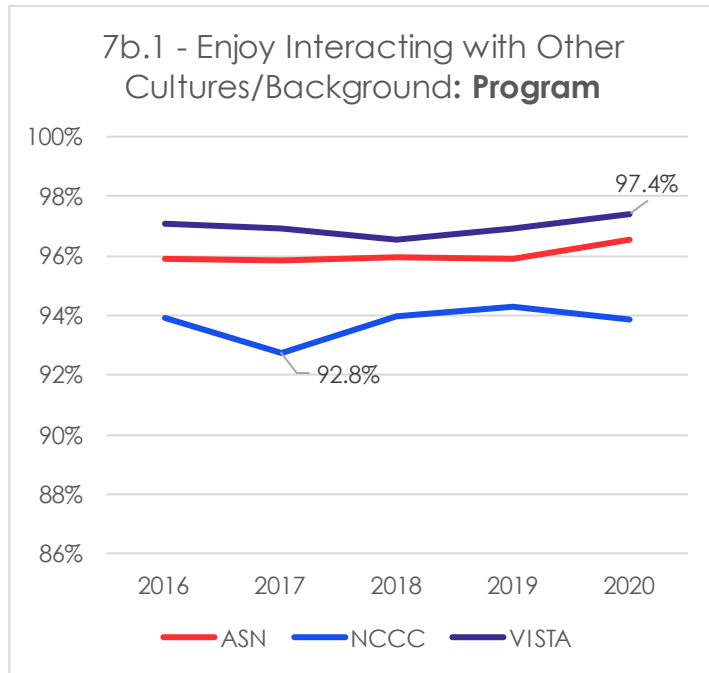


### Education Level:

Members who reported having a college degree or some college education were most likely to enjoy exploring differences between the backgrounds and cultures of their coworkers and friends. This is followed by members with associates degrees, graduate degrees, and high school graduates. Members reporting technical school/apprenticeship/vocational school as their highest educational attainment consistently reported the lowest proportion of members who enjoy exploring differences in cultures and differences.

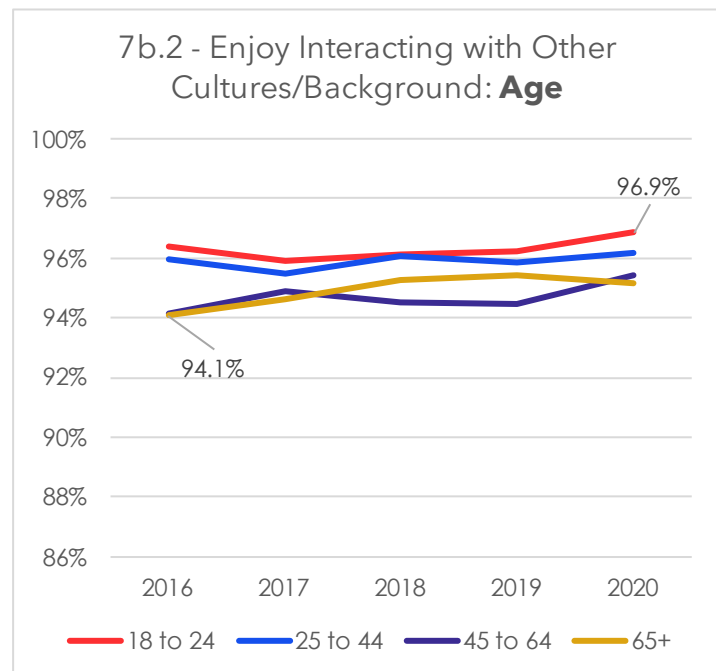
## Interacting with People from Different Cultures and Backgrounds

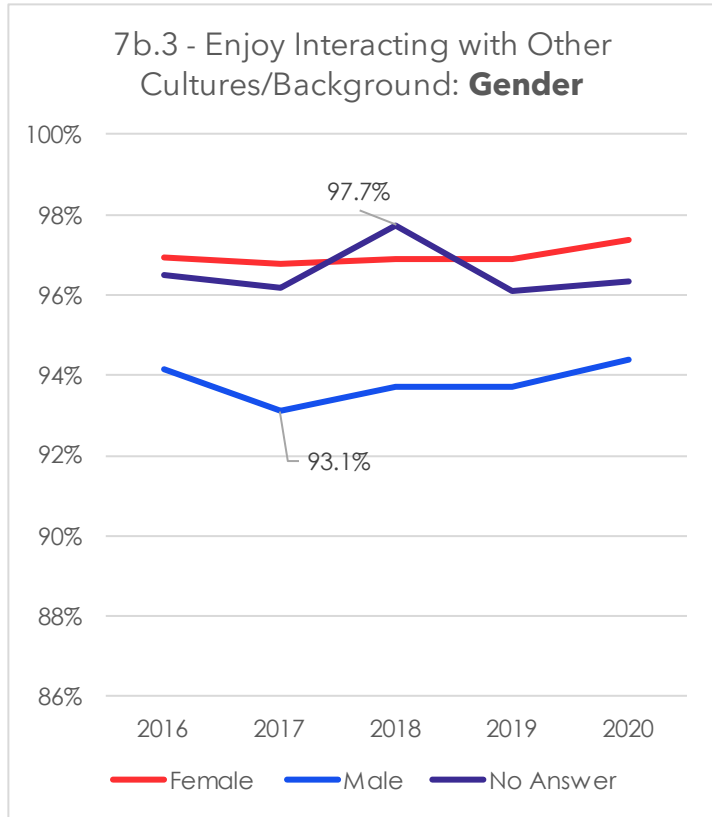
Question 7b) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds



**Program:** From 2016 to 2020, over 92% of members in all service streams reported enjoying interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds. For all years, VISTA members led all service streams in its favorable responses to this question, with 96.5 to over 97% of members each year. The proportion of NCCC members reporting that they enjoy interacting with people from different cultures fell slightly below Americorps State and National and VISTA each year, but still remained quite high.

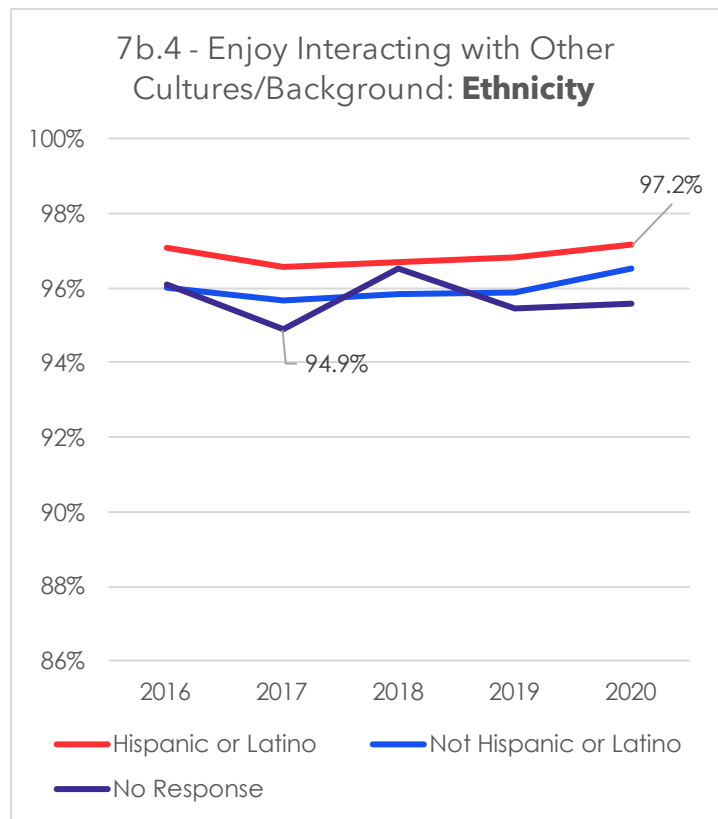
**Age:** The age groups of 18 to 24 and 25 to 44 reported the highest percentage of members that enjoyed interacting with people of different cultures and backgrounds. Across all years and age groups, this proportion of members that report they enjoy interacting with people different from themselves remained consistently high, ranging between 94 and 97%.

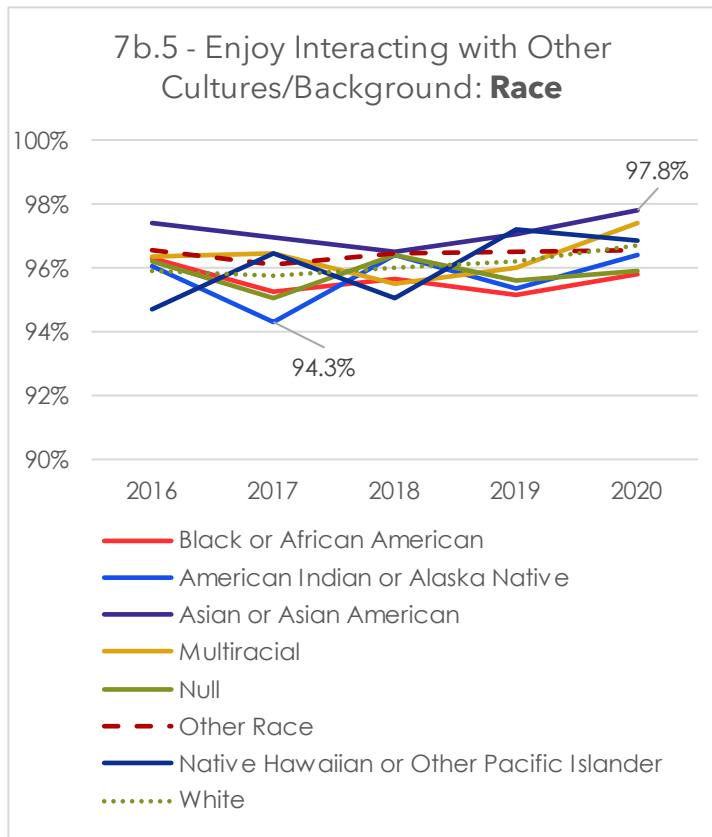




**Gender:** Female members consistently reported enjoying interacting with people from different cultures around 3 percentage points higher in than male members. At least 96% of females and members who did not specify a gender stated they enjoyed interacting with people of different cultures and backgrounds for all years. Comparatively, between 93 and 94% of male members reported enjoying interacting with people from other cultures for all years.

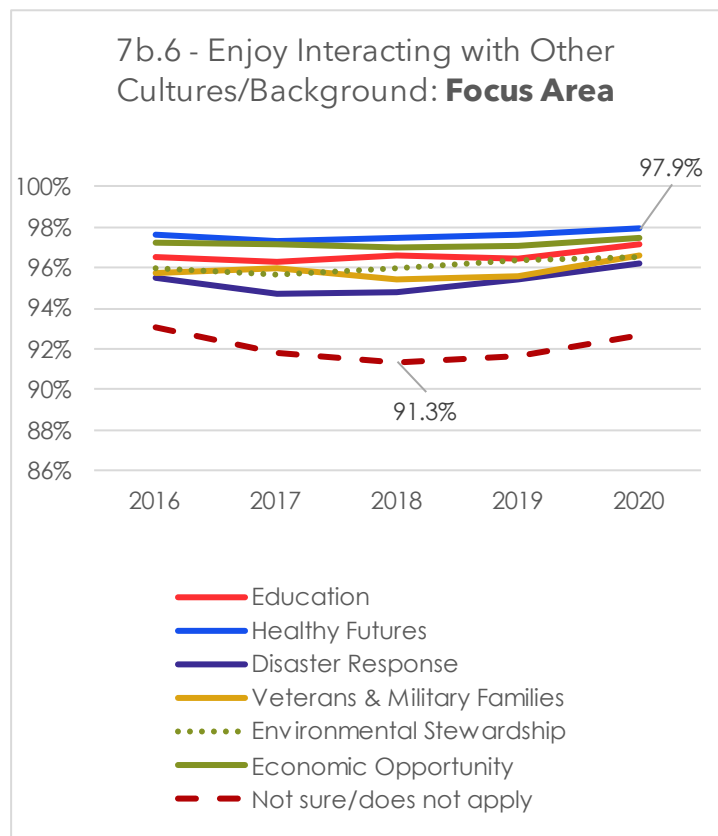
**Ethnicity:** Each year, Hispanic or Latino Members reported around one percent point higher than non-Hispanic or Latino members in enjoying interacting with people of different cultures and backgrounds. This difference remained relatively steady from 2016 to 2020, with the proportion of members not identifying their ethnicity only slightly increasing or decreasing between 2016 and 2020.





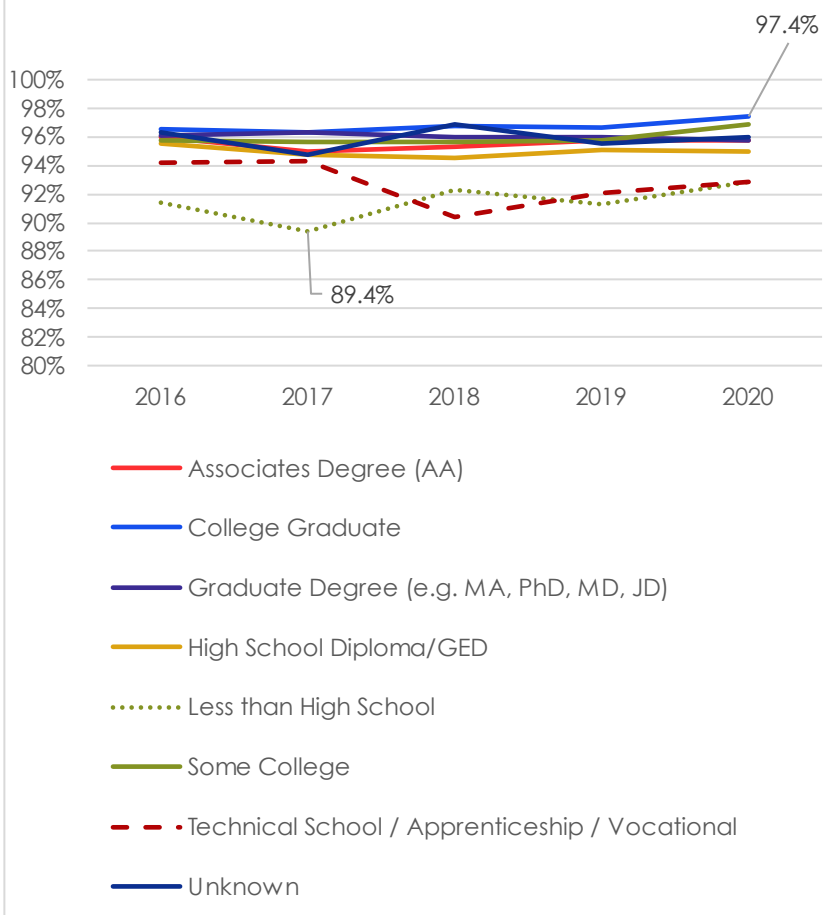
**Race:** All racial groups for all years reported consistently high proportions of members that enjoy interacting with people of different cultures and backgrounds. Between 96 and 97% of Asian or Asian American members reported enjoying interacting with people of different backgrounds and cultures, the highest among all groups. The proportion of Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander members that reported enjoying interacting with other cultures fluctuated between 94 to 97% during 2016 to 2020.

**Focus Area:** While members in all AmeriCorps focus areas reported high levels of enjoying interacting with people of different cultures and backgrounds each year, members serving in the Healthy Futures focus area remained the highest percentage from 2016 to 2020. AmeriCorps members who were unsure of their service’s focus area reported the lowest relative percentage for all years, although were still over 91% for all years.





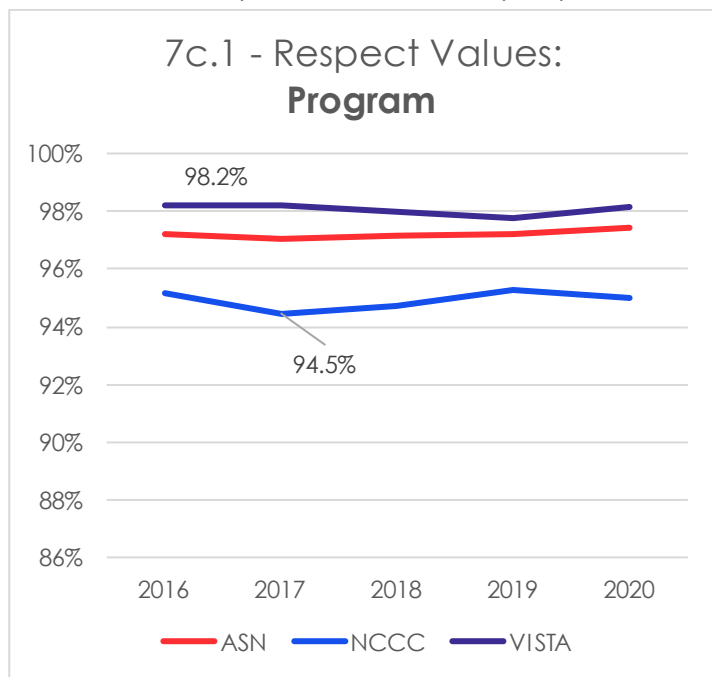
### 7b.7 - Enjoy Interacting with Other Cultures/Background: **Education**



**Education:** Across all years, approximately 96% of members with a High School Diploma/GED, Associates Degree, College or Some College, or a Graduate degree reported that they enjoy interacting with people of different backgrounds and cultures. These proportions have remained fairly constant from 2016 to 2020. Between 89 to 94% of members with either less than a high school education or a technical degrees expressed enjoying interacting with people of different cultures and backgrounds - 2 to 7 percentage points lower than the other educational groups.

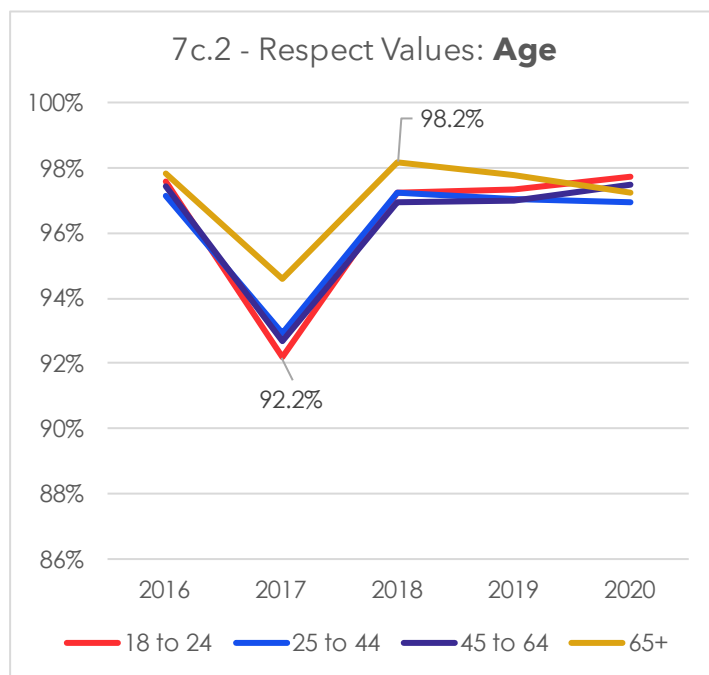
## Respecting the Values of People from Different Cultures and Backgrounds

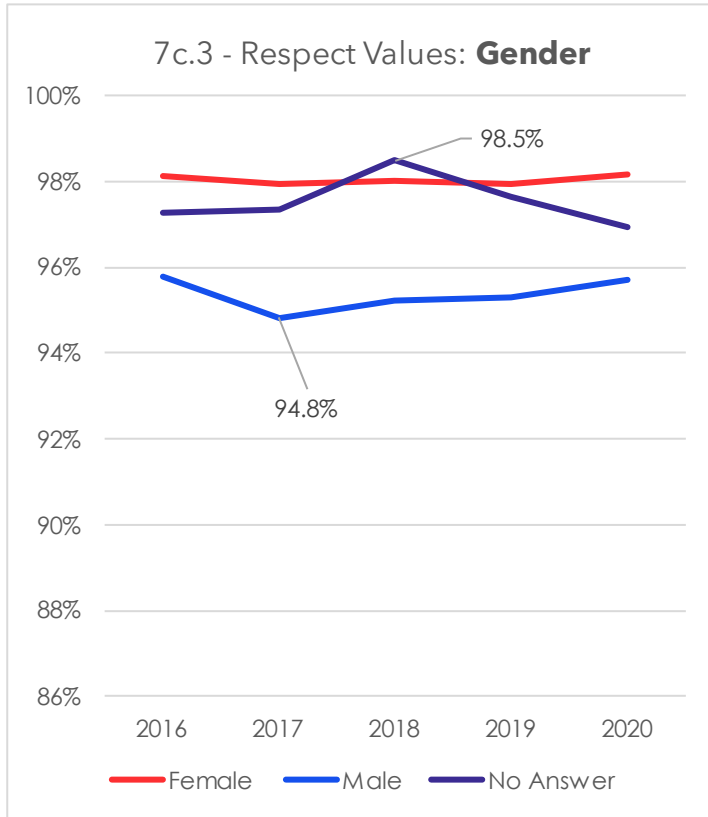
Question 7c) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: I respect the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds.



**Program:** Across all years, VISTA members reported the highest proportion of members who feel they respect the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds. AmeriCorps State and National and NCCC members still report high levels of respecting others' values, with the lowest proportion in any program during any year still being almost 94.5%.

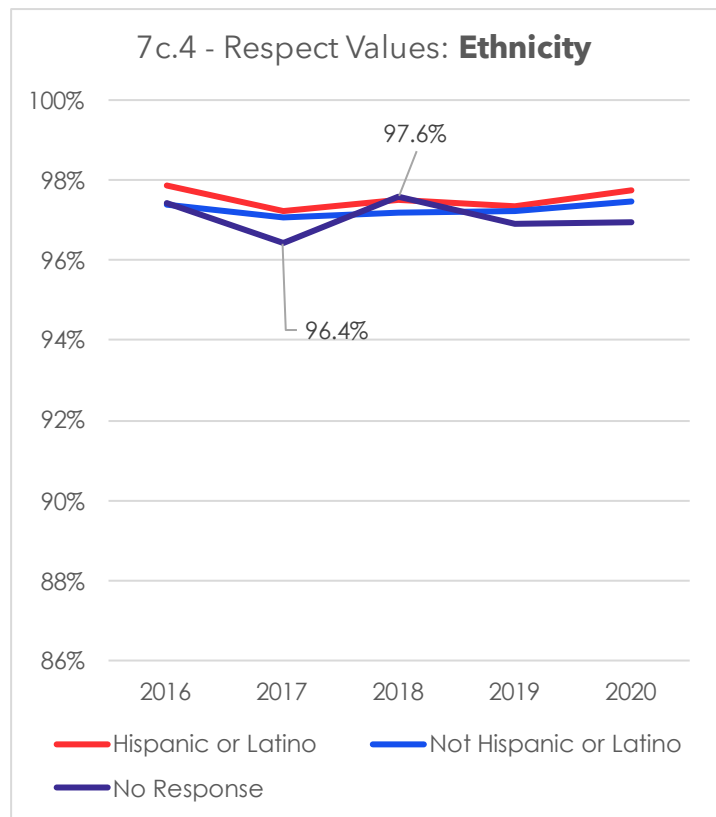
**Age:** Except in 2020, the highest proportion of members who state they respect the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds were aged 65 and over. In 2017 there was a noticeable decline in percentage points across all age groups (a decrease of approximately 5 percentage points), but by 2018 these percentages increased back to levels previously shown in 2016. The proportion of members reporting they respect others' values remained as high through 2020.

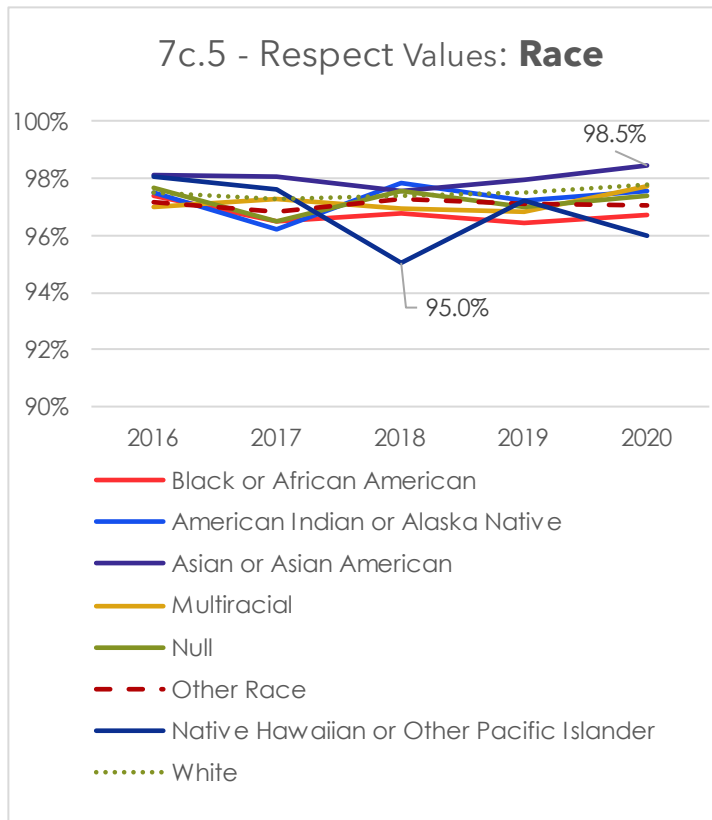




**Gender:** 98% of female members from 2016 to 2020 reported respecting people from different cultures and backgrounds. Members who did not identify their gender followed, and actually reported the highest proportion of members across all years in 2018 with 98.5% of members respecting values of others. Although still a large percentage, the lowest proportion of members that reported respecting values of people from different cultures and backgrounds was male members in 2017 at 94.8%.

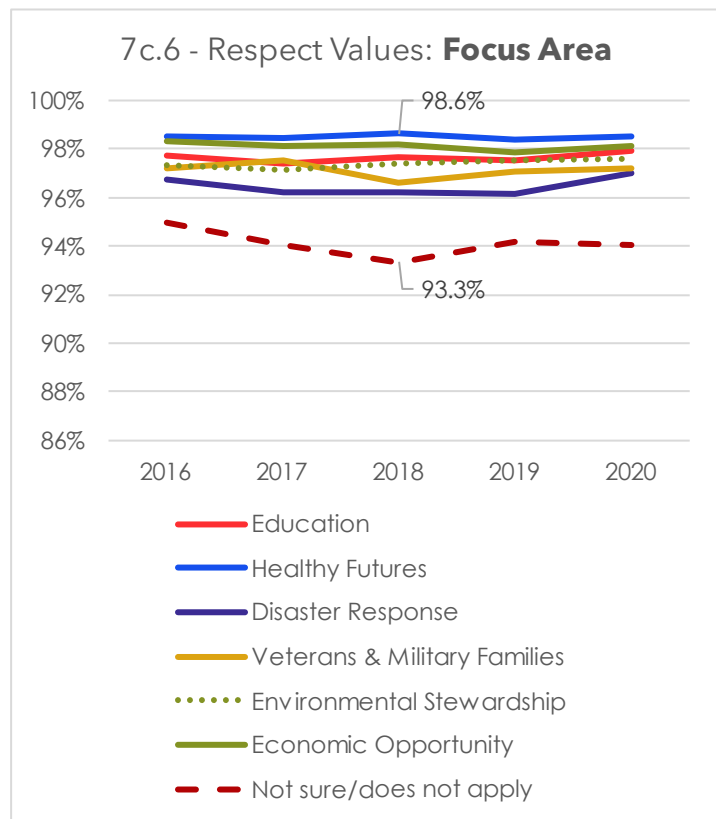
**Ethnicity:** A marginally higher percentage of Hispanic and Latino AmeriCorps members reported respecting the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds than did non-Hispanic or Latino members or members that did not specify their ethnicity. Even disaggregated by ethnicity, the lowest proportion of members is 96.4% of members that did not identify their ethnicity.



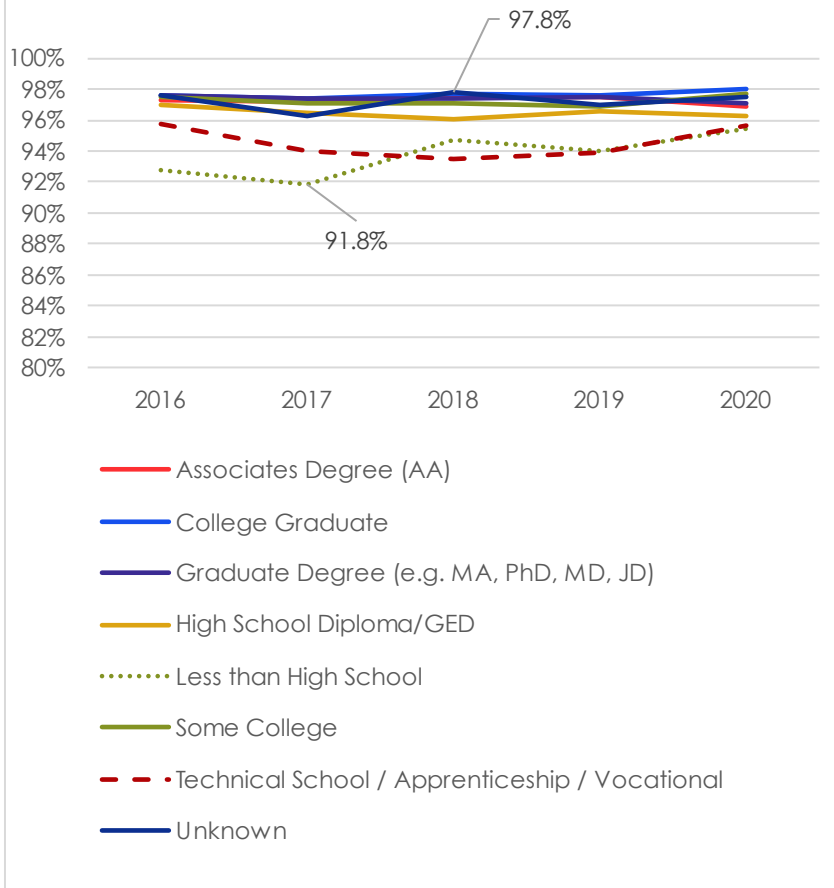


**Race:** Every year except for American Indian or Alaska Native members in 2018, the highest percentage of members reporting they respect the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds were Asian or Asian American members. The percentage of Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander members reporting respecting others' values notably dropped from 97 to 95% in 2018, but then increased the following year. Over 95% of members across all races reported respecting others' values.

**Focus Area:** Members serving in the Healthy Futures focus reported the highest percentage of members who respect the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds at 98% of members. The lowest percentage (between 93 and 95% from 2016 to 2020) of members that reported respecting others' values were those that did not identify the focus area of their AmeriCorps service.



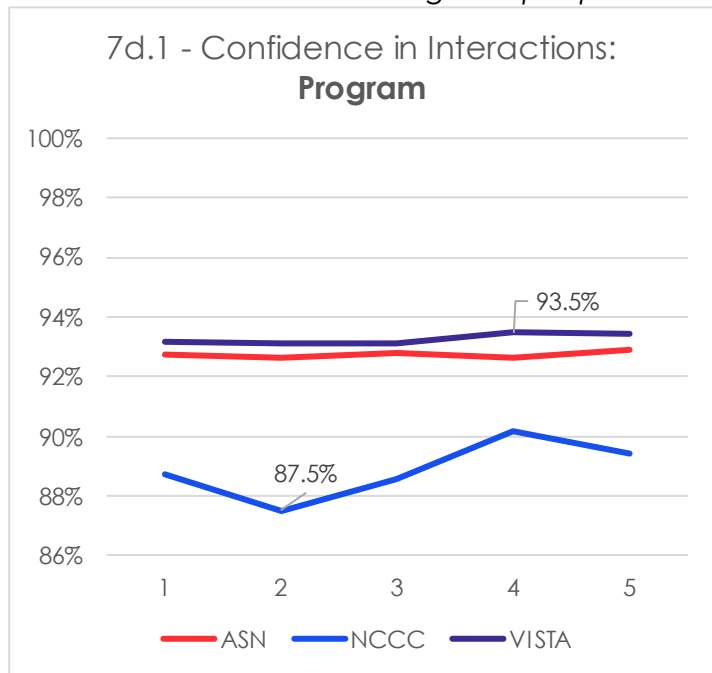
### 7c.7 - Respect Values: **Education Level**



**Education Level:** Between 91 to 95% of AmeriCorps members with either less than a high school degree or technical degree reported respecting the values of people with different cultures and backgrounds, whereas over 95.5% of members with a high school degree or higher reported the same. Regardless of education level, all members across all years reported high levels of respecting others' values.

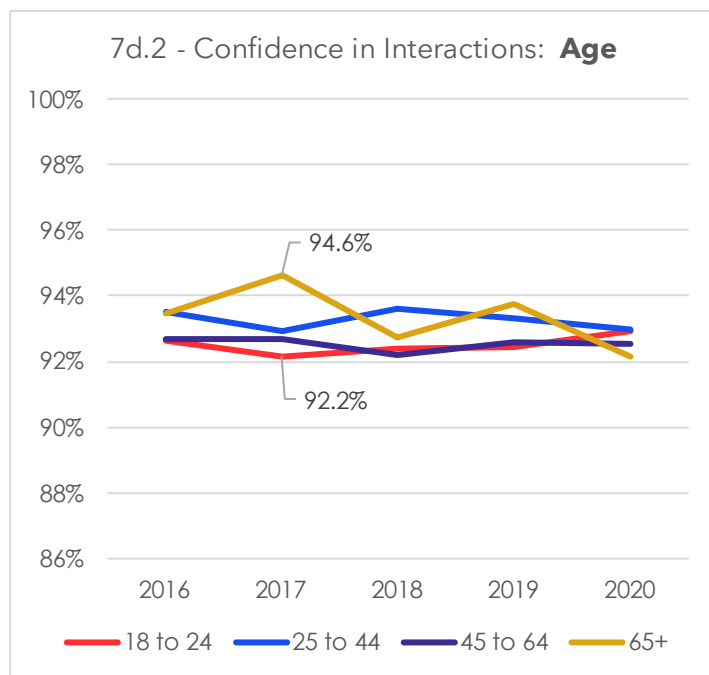
## Confidence in Interacting with People from Different Cultures and Backgrounds

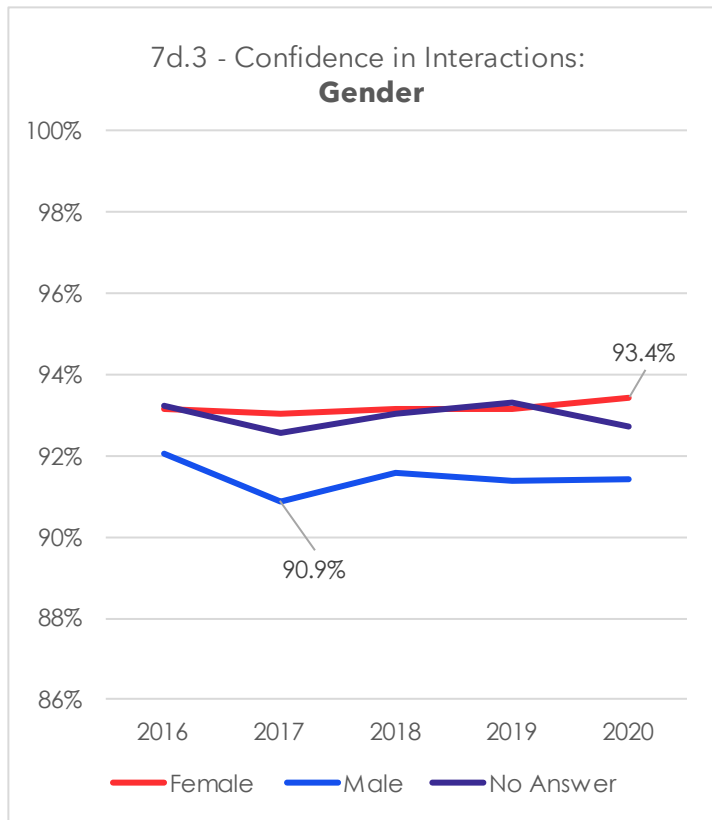
Q7d) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds.



**Program:** VISTA members reported a marginally higher proportion of members that feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds over Americorps State and National members. VISTA and Americorps State and National members' proportions remained consistently high from 2016 to 2020 while NCCC members reporting confidence in their interactions ranged as low as 87.5 to 90%.

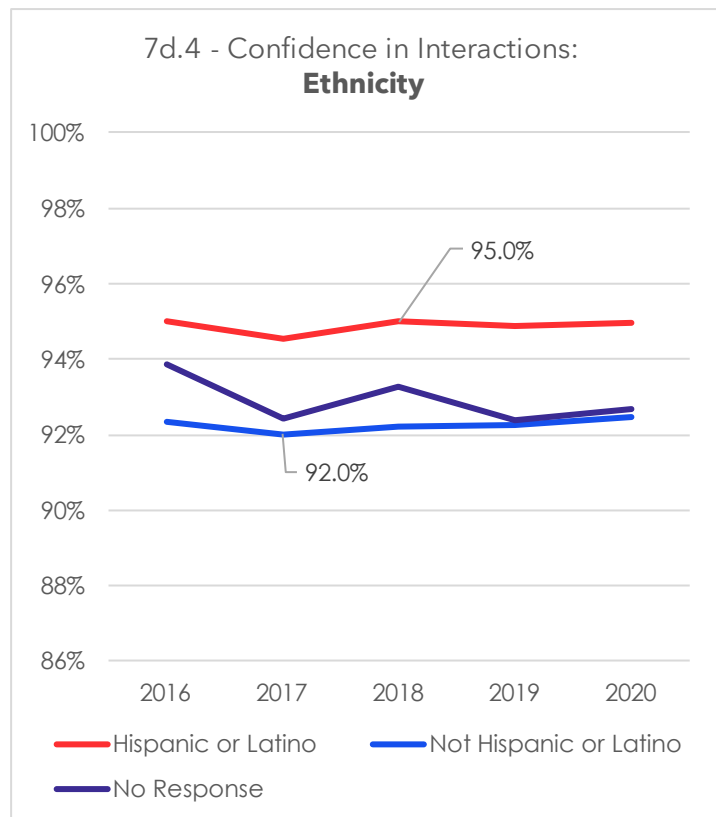
**Age:** Members aged 25 to 44 years old and members aged 65 and older alternated as to who reported having the highest percentage of members who felt confident interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Overall, more than 92% of members in each age group felt confident in their interactions with other cultures across all years.

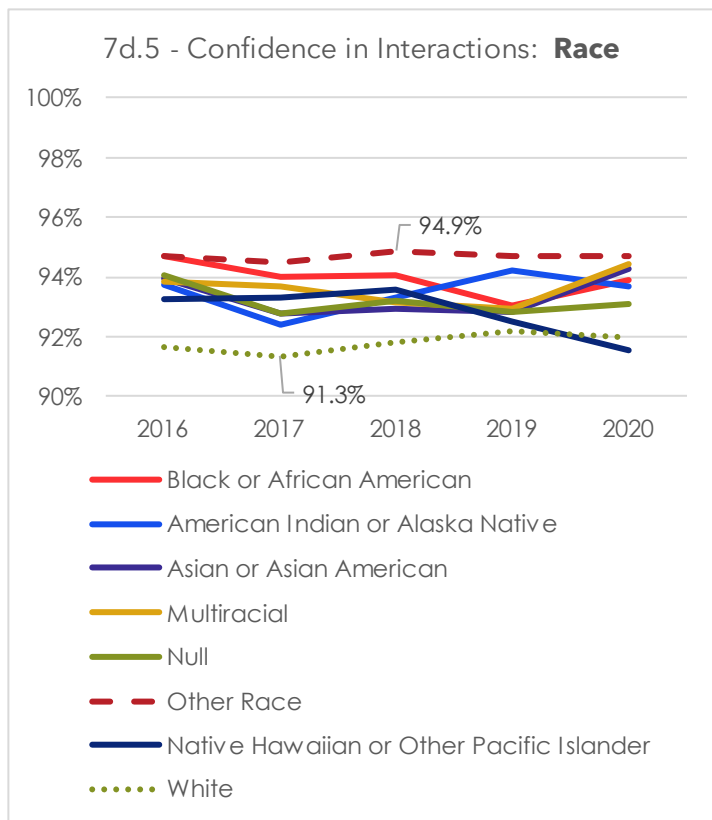




**Gender:** Female AmeriCorps members and members not providing their gender reported a higher percentage of feeling confident in interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds as compared to male AmeriCorps members. These differences only varied between 1 to 2 percentage points between 2016 to 2020, however.

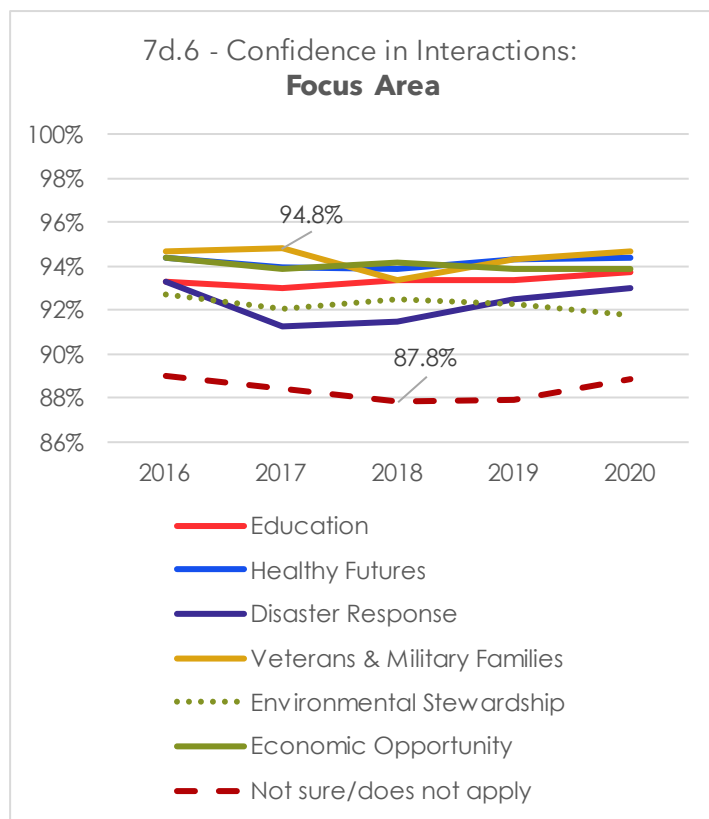
**Ethnicity:** Between 94.5 to 95% of Hispanic or Latino members reported feeling confident when interacting with people of different cultures and backgrounds. Non-Hispanic or Latino members were close behind with between 92 and 92.5% of members reporting feeling this confidence each year. Members who did not report their ethnicity fit between both groups each year.





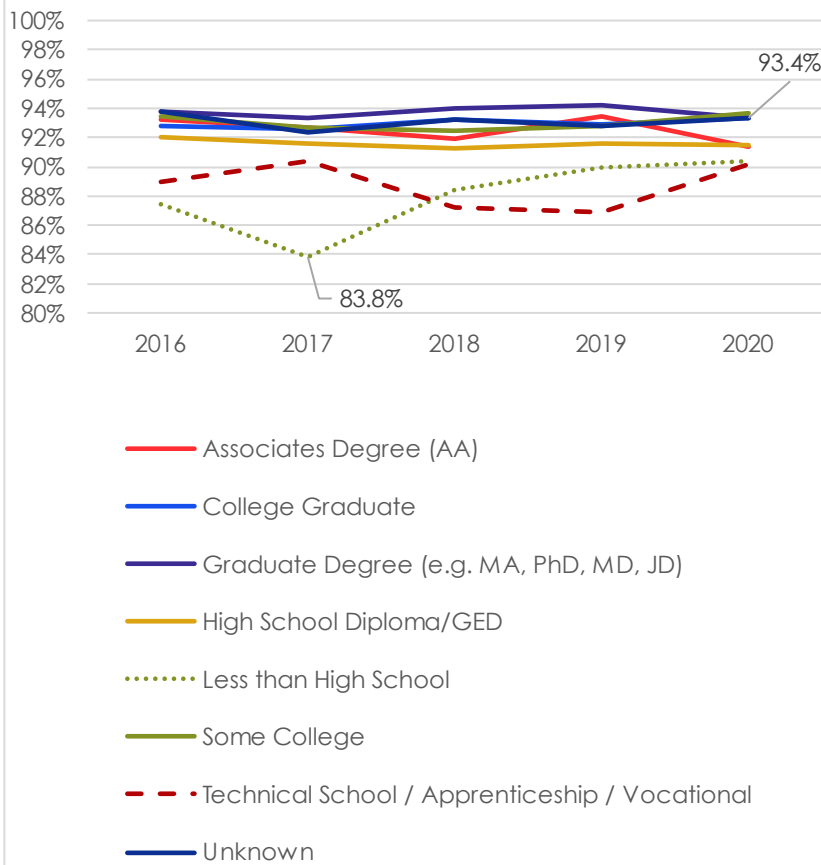
**Race:** Members identifying their race as “Other” consistently reported the highest percentage of feeling confident in interacting with other cultures whereas other races fluctuated in position year to year. White AmeriCorps members generally reported the lowest percentage of members feeling confident in their interactions with others, although all groups still reported fairly high percentages each year all above 91%.

**Focus Area:** AmeriCorps members in the Veterans and Military Families focus area reported the highest percentage of members who felt confident in interacting with people from differing cultures and backgrounds every year except for 2018 in which they fell from 95 to 93%. All other focus areas except for those members unsure of their focus area remained above 91% from 2016 to 2020.





7d.7 - Confidence in Interactions:  
**Education Level**



**Education Level:** 93% of members with a high school degree or higher reported feeling confident while interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Between 83.8 (a dip in 2017) to 92% of members with less than a high school degree or technical degree felt confident in their interactions, however; these are some of the lowest percentages reported across all questions, years, and groups.

## Bridging Differences According to Teamwork

Disaggregating responses by whether a member served on a team can be used to assess the likelihood of a member having served alongside others different from themselves. Examining the presence of teamwork in a member's service term and how it relates to their perceived notions of cultural competency is rooted in the ideas proposed by the Contact Hypothesis where the more frequently an individual interacts with non-majority populations the more that individual will reduce their prejudices of said group.

Had a member not served on a team, the odds of that member interacting with other backgrounds and cultures could hypothetically be lower than a member who regularly served alongside other members. Whereas all AmeriCorps members could serve diverse populations as part of their service terms, members serving on teams could hypothetically increase the frequency by which they interact with individuals different from themselves as they travel, cook, coordinate, lodge, complete projects, and so on together with their teams. Given not all AmeriCorps service is person-facing, some AmeriCorps members' only regular human interaction may be with their teams.

Using responses to Question 5e in the MES as a proxy to whether or not members served on a team, the graphs in this section examine how the presence of teamwork in one's service experience leads to different MES responses. These graphs show that *Teamwork* appears to be the clearest factor by which the answers to these questions in the MES differ, with members having served on teams clearly reporting higher levels of cultural competency than those who had not served on teams. For some sub-questions in some years, the difference between members on teams and those not on teams reaches upwards of 10 percentage points.

All said however, all members regardless of having served on a team/in a team setting still report high levels of the cultural competency needed to bridge differences and unite communities.

## Determining Which AmeriCorps Members Served on Teams

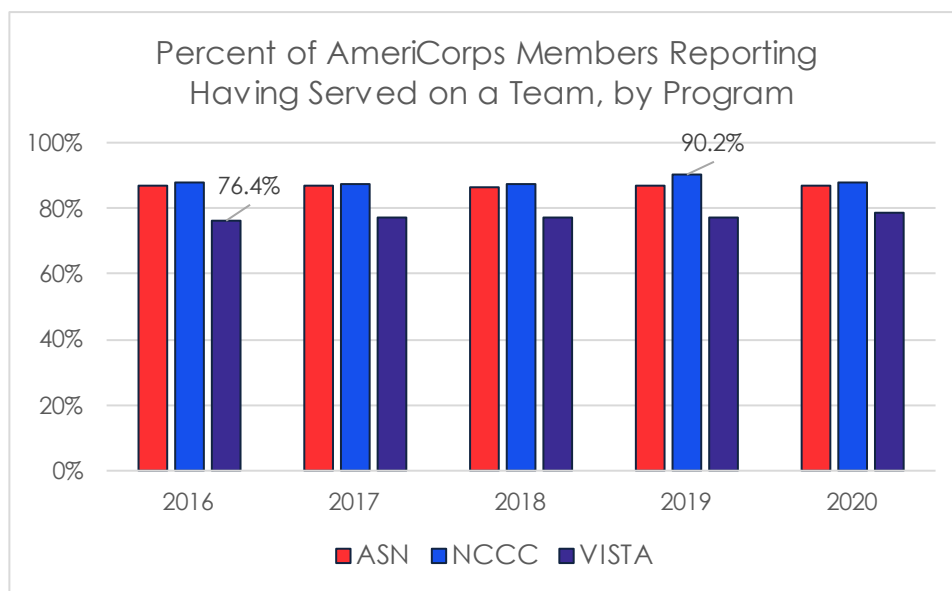
To determine whether a member identified themselves as having served on a team, their response from the Member Exit Survey question 5e was used as a proxy:

*Question 5) During your AmeriCorps service, how frequently did you do the following activities listed below?*

- 5e) Work on a team for a common purpose

If the volunteer responded with "Very often" or "Often" to this question, they were counted as being on a team, but if they responded "Rarely" or "Never", they were instead counted as *not* being on a team. Those members who responded with the response "Sometimes" were not included in either group.

AmeriCorps State and National and NCCC members reported higher percentages of serving on teams than their VISTA counterparts, although across all years over three quarters of all members regardless of service stream reported regularly serving in a team setting. Each year, 86 to 90% of all AmeriCorps State and National and NCCC members reported serving on teams.

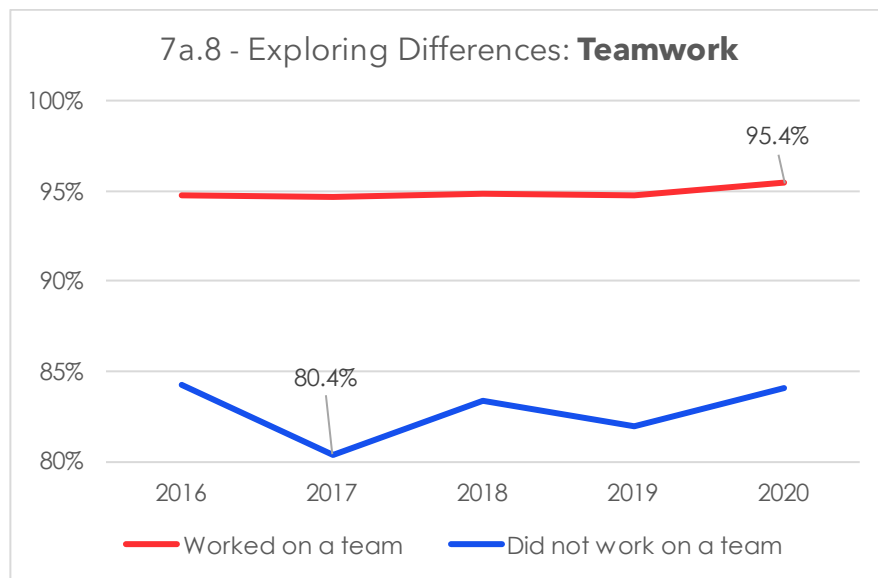


*Figures derived from responses to Question 5e: During your AmeriCorps service, how frequently did you do the following activities listed below? "Work on a team for a common purpose."*

## Exploring Differences Between Coworkers and/or Friends from Different Cultures - Teamwork

Question 7a) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: I enjoy exploring differences between co-workers and/or friends from different cultures or background from me:

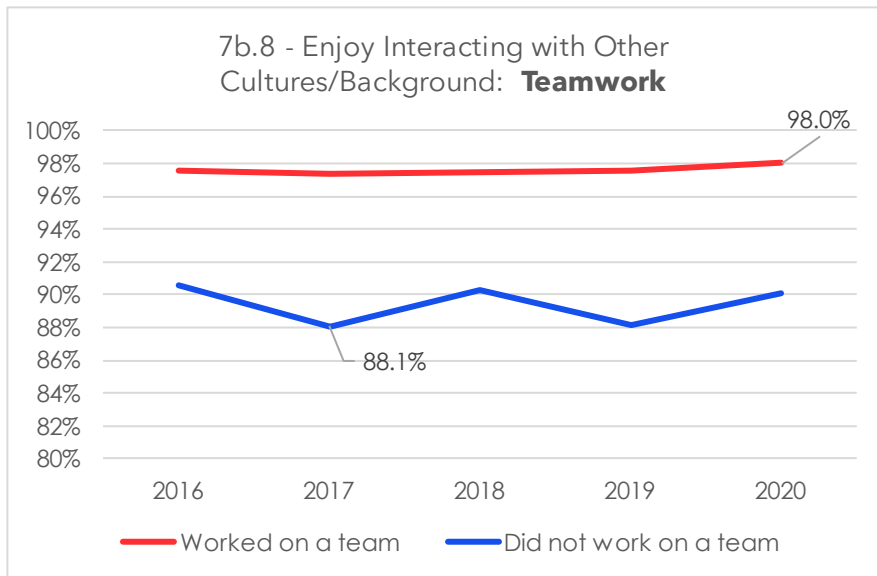
**Teamwork:** Members who identified as serving on a team reported a higher proportion (approximately 95%) of members who enjoy exploring differences between cultures and backgrounds compared to members who did not identify as serving on a team. The 80.4% of members who did not work on a team in 2017 represent the smallest proportion of members that reported enjoying interacting with other cultures/backgrounds in any group during any year across this entire report.



## Interacting with People from Different Cultures and Backgrounds - Teamwork

Question 7b) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds:

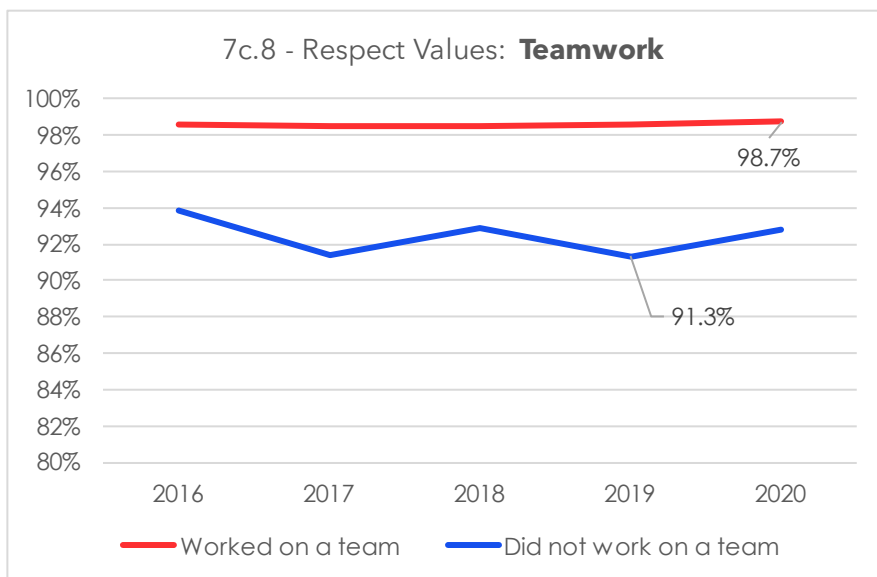
**Teamwork:** 97 to 98% of AmeriCorps members who served on a team during their service reported enjoying interacting with people of different cultures and backgrounds. Only 88 to 90% of AmeriCorps members who did not serve on a team reported the same. Serving in a team-based setting corresponds to a very high level of enjoying interacting with people of different cultures and backgrounds. (continued on next page)



### Respecting the Values of People from Different Cultures and Backgrounds - Teamwork

Question 7c) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: I respect the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds.

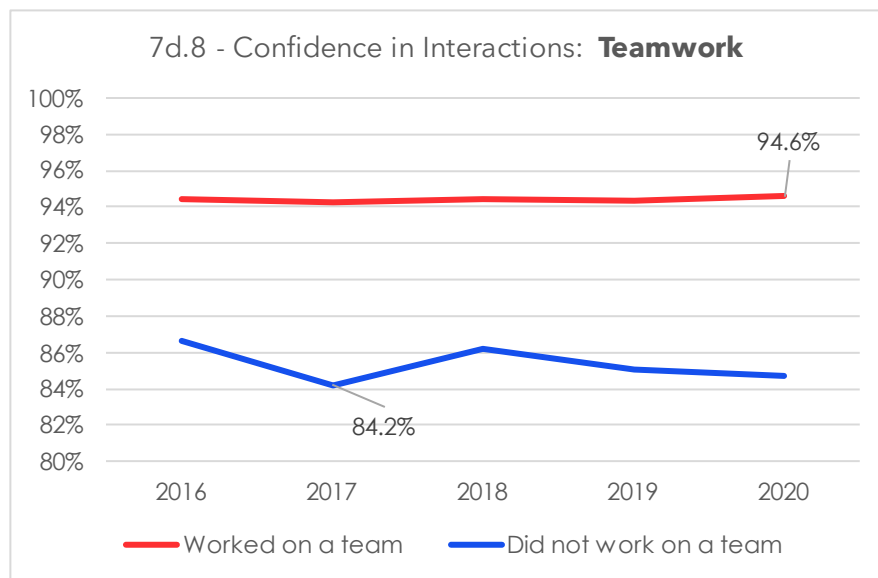
**Teamwork:** Over 98% of members who identified as serving on a team reported respecting the values of people from differing cultures and backgrounds. Participants who did not serve on team reported respecting others' values around 5 to 7 percentage points less during the same time frame.



## Confidence in Interacting with People from Different Cultures and Backgrounds – Teamwork

Q7d) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds.

**Teamwork:** 94.5% of members who identified as serving on a team reported feeling confident in interacting with people of different cultures and backgrounds. Members who did not serve on a team reported feeling confident in their interactions approximately 8 to 10 percentage points less each year.



## Conclusions and Considerations

Overall, regardless of how the data is disaggregated, AmeriCorps members report high levels of cultural competency. Members overwhelmingly:

- Enjoy exploring differences between co-workers and/or friends from different cultures or background and me.
- Enjoy interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds.
- Respect the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds.
- Feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds.

Slight differences between demographic groups exist, but no disaggregation provided particularly large differences amongst groups other than when disaggregating data according to *Teamwork*. **Members who reported serving on teams reported noticeably greater levels of cultural competency than those who had not.** Examining the role of teamwork across all AmeriCorps programs can help inform the overall efforts of AmeriCorps to unite and bridge differences amongst both members and communities served.

There are two factors to consider when interpreting findings from this report, the first being that AmeriCorps members who elect to partake in an AmeriCorps service term may already be more civically engaged and culturally aware/competent than individuals in similar populations that do not serve with AmeriCorps. Therefore, responses to the MES may only be representative of a population that largely exhibits cultural competency already.

The second consideration is that like any other survey respondents, members that take the MES may respond to survey questions in ways they believe would be seen more positively by others. Known as social-desirability bias, survey respondents may provide answers that overreport their actual beliefs and feelings so as to come across as more “socially acceptable”.<sup>6</sup>

Although members may be drawn to AmeriCorps service because of some degree of existing cultural competency or curiosity and may overreport their actual beliefs and feelings, AmeriCorps integrates bridge-building activities into a member’s service experience regardless. The *Bridging Differences* questions in the MES ask about attitudes/dispositions of members on how they engage with others, but the tangible skills needed to become a culturally competent individual are learned, practiced, and maintained through AmeriCorps service. AmeriCorps provides the throughline from thinking about equity and diversity to providing an avenue by which said skills can be practiced by individuals as agents of positive change uniting and improving their communities during *and* after their service.

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<sup>6</sup> Callegaro, Mario. “Social Desirability.” *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods*. (2008). <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412963947>

## Appendix: Percentage of Affirmative Responses by Question, Year, and Program

Respondents could answer each of the four sub-questions of Question 7 using one of five options on a Likert scale. The tables below show the percentages of members that responded with either of the two affirmative responses per question (i.e. “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”), by each demographic indicator.

<b>Question 7a) Percentage of Affirmative Responses by Question, Year, and Program</b>									
Q7a) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: <b>I enjoy exploring differences between co-workers and/or friends from different cultures or background and me.</b>									
<i>By Program</i>					<i>By Age:</i>				
<i>Strongly agree or Agree</i>					<i>Strongly agree or Agree</i>				
Year	Americorps State and National	NCCC	VISTA	Year	18 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65+	
2016	92.8%	90.2%	93.5%	2016	93.5%	92.6%	89.4%	87.9%	
2017	92.8%	90.1%	93.2%	2017	93.1%	92.1%	89.9%	88.3%	
2018	93.0%	88.9%	93.1%	2018	93.3%	92.8%	89.5%	89.4%	
2019	92.8%	90.3%	93.7%	2019	93.4%	92.5%	89.1%	88.4%	
2020	93.8%	90.5%	93.9%	2020	94.3%	92.9%	90.2%	90.0%	
<i>By Gender</i>					<i>By Ethnicity</i>				
<i>Strongly agree or Agree</i>					<i>Strongly agree or Agree</i>				
Year	Female	Male	Null	Year	Hispanic or Latino	Not Hispanic or Latino	No Response		
2016	93.8%	91.1%	93.6%	2016	93.7%	92.9%	93.3%		
2017	93.7%	90.0%	92.5%	2017	93.2%	92.6%	92.2%		
2018	93.8%	90.6%	95.6%	2018	94.2%	92.6%	94.0%		
2019	93.9%	90.2%	92.6%	2019	93.6%	92.7%	92.6%		
2020	94.6%	91.1%	93.8%	2020	94.5%	93.6%	93.0%		
<i>By Race</i>									
<i>Strongly agree or Agree</i>									
Year	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian or Asian American	Multiracial	Null	Other Race	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	
2016	93.0%	93.3%	95.6%	93.4%	93.7%	93.3%	92.8%	92.7%	
2017	91.6%	90.2%	94.6%	93.1%	92.6%	93.0%	93.7%	92.8%	
2018	92.0%	92.5%	94.2%	92.9%	93.7%	94.0%	91.1%	92.9%	
2019	91.4%	93.8%	95.3%	92.1%	92.8%	92.8%	93.5%	93.2%	
2020	92.0%	92.7%	95.4%	94.2%	93.2%	93.8%	95.1%	94.1%	



Q7a) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:  
**I enjoy exploring differences between co-workers and/or friends from different cultures or background and me. (Continued)**

By Focus Area

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Education	Healthy Futures	Disaster Response	Veterans & Military Families	Environmental Stewardship	Economic Opportunity	Not sure/does not apply
2016	93.6%	94.8%	92.1%	91.9%	93.3%	94.2%	88.6%
2017	93.2%	94.4%	91.7%	92.8%	92.6%	94.5%	87.6%
2018	93.6%	94.8%	91.9%	92.8%	93.3%	94.2%	87.1%
2019	93.5%	94.9%	92.5%	92.1%	92.9%	94.4%	87.4%
2020	94.4%	95.2%	93.6%	93.7%	93.7%	94.8%	88.7%

By Education Level

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Associates Degree (AA)	College Graduate	Graduate Degree	High School Diploma/ GED	Less than High School	Some College	Technical School / Apprenticeship / Vocational	Unknown
2016	91.0%	93.6%	92.5%	92.5%	89.0%	92.8%	87.3%	93.4%
2017	91.1%	93.4%	92.4%	91.3%	88.8%	92.4%	88.8%	92.3%
2018	92.3%	93.7%	92.4%	90.9%	90.0%	92.9%	84.1%	94.4%
2019	91.9%	93.5%	92.6%	91.9%	88.8%	92.9%	87.4%	92.4%
2020	91.6%	94.6%	92.4%	92.0%	90.7%	94.3%	86.6%	93.3%

By Teamwork

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Worked on a Team	Did not work on a team
2016	95%	84%
2017	95%	80%
2018	95%	83%
2019	95%	82%
2020	95%	84%

**Question 7b) Percentage of Affirmative Responses by Question, Year, and Program**

Q7b) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:  
**I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds.**

By Program

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	AmeriCorps State and National	NCCC	VISTA
2016	95.9%	93.9%	97.1%
2017	95.8%	92.8%	96.9%
2018	96.0%	93.9%	96.5%
2019	95.9%	94.3%	96.9%
2020	96.5%	93.8%	97.4%

By Age:

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	18 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65+
2016	96.4%	96.0%	94.1%	94.1%
2017	95.9%	95.5%	94.9%	94.6%
2018	96.1%	96.0%	94.5%	95.2%
2019	96.2%	95.8%	94.5%	95.4%
2020	96.9%	96.1%	95.4%	95.2%

By Gender

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Female	Male	Null
2016	96.9%	94.1%	96.5%
2017	96.8%	93.1%	96.2%
2018	96.9%	93.7%	97.7%
2019	96.9%	93.7%	96.1%
2020	97.4%	94.4%	96.4%

By Ethnicity

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Hispanic or Latino	Not Hispanic or Latino	No Response
2016	97.1%	96.0%	96.1%
2017	96.6%	95.7%	94.9%
2018	96.7%	95.8%	96.5%
2019	96.8%	95.9%	95.5%
2020	97.2%	96.5%	95.6%

By Race

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian or Asian American	Multiracial	Null	Other Race	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White
2016	96.3%	96.1%	97.4%	96.3%	96.2%	96.6%	94.7%	95.9%
2017	95.3%	94.3%	97.0%	96.5%	95.1%	96.1%	96.4%	95.8%
2018	95.7%	96.4%	96.5%	95.5%	96.4%	96.5%	95.0%	96.0%
2019	95.2%	95.3%	97.0%	96.0%	95.6%	96.5%	97.2%	96.2%
2020	95.8%	96.4%	97.8%	97.4%	95.9%	96.6%	96.9%	96.7%



Q7b) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

**I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds (Continued)**

By Focus Area

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Education	Healthy Futures	Disaster Response	Veterans & Military Families	Environmental Stewardship	Economic Opportunity	Not sure/does not apply
2016	97.6%	95.5%	95.7%	96.0%	97.2%	93.0%	96.5%
2017	97.4%	94.7%	96.0%	95.7%	97.2%	91.8%	96.3%
2018	97.5%	94.8%	95.4%	95.9%	97.0%	91.3%	96.6%
2019	97.6%	95.4%	95.6%	96.4%	97.1%	91.7%	96.5%
2020	97.9%	96.2%	96.6%	96.5%	97.5%	92.7%	97.1%

By Education Level

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Associates Degree (AA)	College Graduate	Graduate Degree	High School Diploma/ GED	Less than High School	Some College	Technical School / Apprenticeship / Vocational	Unknown
2016	96.0%	96.6%	96.0%	95.6%	91.4%	95.8%	94.2%	96.3%
2017	94.9%	96.3%	96.3%	94.7%	89.4%	95.6%	94.3%	94.8%
2018	95.3%	96.7%	96.0%	94.6%	92.2%	95.7%	90.4%	96.9%
2019	95.7%	96.7%	95.9%	95.1%	91.3%	95.7%	92.1%	95.5%
2020	95.7%	97.4%	95.8%	95.0%	92.8%	96.9%	92.8%	95.9%

By Teamwork

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Worked on a Team	Did not work on a team
2016	97.5%	90.6%
2017	97.3%	88.1%
2018	97.5%	90.3%
2019	97.6%	88.2%
2020	98.0%	90.1%

**Question 7c) Percentage of Affirmative Responses by Question, Year, and Program**

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

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

By Program

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	AmeriCorps State and National	NCCC	VISTA
2016	97.2%	95.2%	98.2%
2017	97.1%	94.5%	98.2%
2018	97.2%	94.7%	98.0%
2019	97.2%	95.3%	97.8%
2020	97.5%	95.0%	98.1%

By Age:

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	18 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65+
2016	97.6%	97.1%	97.4%	97.8%
2017	92.2%	92.9%	92.7%	94.6%
2018	97.2%	97.2%	96.9%	98.2%
2019	97.3%	97.0%	97.0%	97.8%
2020	97.7%	96.9%	97.5%	97.2%

By Gender

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Female	Male	Null
2016	98.1%	95.8%	97.3%
2017	97.9%	94.8%	97.4%
2018	98.0%	95.2%	98.5%
2019	98.0%	95.3%	97.7%
2020	98.2%	95.7%	96.9%

By Ethnicity

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Hispanic or Latino	Not Hispanic or Latino	No Response
2016	97.9%	97.4%	97.4%
2017	97.2%	97.1%	96.4%
2018	97.5%	97.2%	97.6%
2019	97.3%	97.2%	96.9%
2020	97.7%	97.5%	96.9%

By Race

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian or Asian American	Multiracial	Null	Other Race	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White
2016	97.4%	97.5%	98.1%	97.0%	97.6%	97.2%	98.1%	97.5%
2017	96.5%	96.2%	98.1%	97.3%	96.5%	96.8%	97.6%	97.3%
2018	96.8%	97.8%	97.6%	96.9%	97.5%	97.3%	95.0%	97.4%
2019	96.4%	97.2%	98.0%	96.8%	97.0%	97.1%	97.2%	97.5%
2020	96.7%	97.6%	98.5%	97.7%	97.4%	97.0%	96.0%	97.8%



7c) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:  
**I respect the values of people from different cultures and backgrounds (Continued)**

By Focus Area

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Education	Healthy Futures	Disaster Response	Veterans & Military Families	Environmental Stewardship	Economic Opportunity	Not sure/does not apply
2016	97.7%	98.5%	96.8%	97.2%	97.3%	98.3%	95.0%
2017	97.4%	98.5%	96.2%	97.6%	97.1%	98.1%	94.1%
2018	97.7%	98.6%	96.2%	96.6%	97.4%	98.2%	93.3%
2019	97.6%	98.4%	96.2%	97.1%	97.5%	97.9%	94.2%
2020	98.0%	98.5%	97.0%	97.2%	97.6%	98.1%	94.1%

By Education Level

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Associates Degree (AA)	College Graduate	Graduate Degree	High School Diploma/ GED	Less than High School	Some College	Technical School / Apprenticeship / Vocational	Unknown
2016	97.3%	97.6%	97.6%	97.0%	92.8%	97.5%	95.8%	97.6%
2017	97.2%	97.4%	97.4%	96.5%	91.8%	97.1%	94.0%	96.2%
2018	97.5%	97.7%	97.4%	96.0%	94.7%	97.0%	93.5%	97.8%
2019	97.5%	97.6%	97.5%	96.6%	94.0%	96.9%	93.9%	96.9%
2020	96.9%	98.0%	97.1%	96.3%	95.4%	97.7%	95.7%	97.5%

By Teamwork

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Worked on a Team	Did not work on a team
2016	98.6%	93.8%
2017	98.5%	91.3%
2018	98.5%	92.9%
2019	98.6%	91.3%
2020	98.7%	92.8%



**Question 7d) Percentage of Affirmative Responses by Question, Year, and Program**

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

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

By Program

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	AmeriCorps State and National	NCCC	VISTA
2016	92.8%	88.7%	93.2%
2017	92.6%	87.5%	93.1%
2018	92.8%	88.6%	93.1%
2019	92.6%	90.2%	93.5%
2020	92.9%	89.4%	93.5%

By Age:

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	18 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65+
2016	92.6%	93.5%	92.7%	93.5%
2017	92.2%	92.9%	92.7%	94.6%
2018	92.4%	93.6%	92.2%	92.7%
2019	92.4%	93.3%	92.6%	93.7%
2020	92.9%	93.0%	92.5%	92.2%

By Gender

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Female	Male	Null
2016	93.2%	92.1%	93.2%
2017	93.0%	90.9%	92.6%
2018	93.1%	91.6%	93.1%
2019	93.2%	91.4%	93.3%
2020	93.4%	91.4%	92.7%

By Ethnicity

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Hispanic or Latino	Not Hispanic or Latino	No Response
2016	95.0%	92.4%	93.8%
2017	94.6%	92.0%	92.4%
2018	95.0%	92.2%	93.3%
2019	94.9%	92.3%	92.4%
2020	95.0%	92.5%	92.7%

By Race

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian or Asian American	Multiracial	Null	Other Race	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White
2016	94.7%	93.7%	94.0%	93.8%	94.1%	94.7%	93.3%	91.7%
2017	94.0%	92.4%	92.8%	93.7%	92.8%	94.5%	93.3%	91.3%
2018	94.0%	93.3%	92.9%	93.1%	93.2%	94.9%	93.6%	91.8%
2019	93.1%	94.2%	92.8%	92.9%	92.8%	94.7%	92.5%	92.2%
2020	93.9%	93.7%	94.3%	94.4%	93.1%	94.7%	91.5%	92.0%



7d) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:  
**I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds (Continued)**

By Focus Area

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Education	Healthy Futures	Disaster Response	Veterans & Military Families	Environmental Stewardship	Economic Opportunity	Not sure/does not apply
2016	93.3%	94.3%	93.3%	94.7%	92.7%	94.4%	89.0%
2017	93.0%	93.9%	91.3%	94.8%	92.0%	93.9%	88.4%
2018	93.4%	93.9%	91.4%	93.4%	92.5%	94.2%	87.8%
2019	93.4%	94.3%	92.5%	94.3%	92.3%	93.9%	87.9%
2020	93.7%	94.4%	93.0%	94.7%	91.7%	93.9%	88.8%

By Education Level

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Associates Degree (AA)	College Graduate	Graduate Degree	High School Diploma/ GED	Less than High School	Some College	Technical School / Apprenticeship / Vocational	Unknown
2016	93.2%	92.8%	93.8%	92.0%	87.4%	93.4%	88.9%	93.8%
2017	92.7%	92.6%	93.3%	91.6%	83.8%	92.7%	90.4%	92.3%
2018	92.0%	93.2%	94.0%	91.2%	88.5%	92.5%	87.2%	93.2%
2019	93.4%	92.9%	94.2%	91.6%	89.9%	92.8%	86.8%	92.8%
2020	91.4%	93.3%	93.3%	91.5%	90.3%	93.6%	90.2%	93.4%

By Teamwork

Strongly agree or Agree

Year	Worked on a Team	Did not work on a team
2016	94.4%	86.7%
2017	94.2%	84.2%
2018	94.4%	86.2%
2019	94.4%	85.1%
2020	94.6%	84.7%

