

CNCS Research & Evidence Webinar Series Transcript
March 21 National Service Employment Webinar

OPERATOR: Welcome and thank you for standing by. All participants are on "Listen Only" until the question and answer of today's conference. To ask a question, press Star-One on your touchtone phone, record your name, and I will introduce you. This call is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. I would like to now turn the call over to Dr. Andrea Robles. Ma'am, you may begin.

ANDREA ROBLES: Okay, thank you so much. So hi, everyone. Thanks so much for joining us today - especially for those you in the middle of a spring snowstorm on the East Coast, which is what we're in right now. My name is Andrea Robles and I work for the Office of Research and Evaluation at the Corporation for National and Community Service. And for those of you who are listening to one of our webinars for the first time, I want to mention that our office objectives are to support our agency's mission by building knowledge on civic engagement, volunteering, and national service. We conduct in-house research but also fund research through competitive grants to researchers, scholars, and dissertators at

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institutions of higher education and we also support research and evaluation of our programs and grantees.

Just to strive to share and use our research findings in several ways, including research reports on our evidence exchange (that you can find on our website, an annual research summit, and a quarterly newsletter. Our webinar series is another way to share cutting-edge research like what you will hear from today. And today, we are especially fortunate to hear about two exciting studies that were conducted by two of our 2015 Research Grantees.

But before I move into introducing our speakers for today, I'd like to cover a few housekeeping details. As the Operator said, all participants will be in listen-only mode until the question and answer session following the presentation. As mentioned earlier, this webinar is being recorded, and we will post it online after the presentation, probably in about a week or two.

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So I believe that takes care of our housekeeping items. For today's webinar, we will have introductory comments by Dr. Peter Levine, who is the Associate Dean for Research and Lincoln Filene Professor of Citizenship & Public Affairs in Tufts University's Jonathan Tisch College of Civic Life. That's quite a mouthful. His most recent book is *We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For: The Promise of Civic Renewal in America*.

This will be followed by two presentations: One, from our Tufts University grantee, entitled "The Impact of National Service on Employment Outcomes," which includes Peter Levine; Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, Director of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, also known as CIRCLE; Jodi Benenson, who is an Assistant Professor at the School of Public Administration at the University of Nebraska, Omaha; Noorya Hayat, who is a Researcher at CIRCLE at Tufts University.

The Second presentation is from our 2015 Arizona State University grantee, AmeriCorps: Transformation

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through Service and the Presenter will be David Schlinkert, Morrison Institute, Arizona State University. And he is a Policy Analyst. And finally, we will have some concluding remarks from Chester Spellman, who is Director, for AmeriCorps State and National

So after the speakers' presentations, we will conclude with a Q&A. For those of you who are listening in for more than one webinar, one of our goals is to be able to make our research and findings accessible and useful to academics as well as practitioners and our grantees. So please feel free to ask any questions or provide comments. We will also be sending out a post-webinar survey, so please let us know your thoughts on this webinar or any ideas for future webinars.

So now, I will hand this over to Dr. Peter Levine. Thank you.

PETER LEVINE: Thanks, and sorry to give you a tongue twister of a title there. Actually, we all have complicated titles, so it's incredible. Hi, everyone,

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welcome to the webinar. I'm just going to make a couple of quick remarks and then actually turn over the substance to my colleagues. So these remarks are kind of about the importance of the overall topic. And one way in would be to say that in 2013, the Corporation for National Service itself, the Research Department, put out a really important study called "Volunteering as a Pathway to Employment," which is easy to Google. We can probably share the link. And it was a study that found that basically people who volunteered were much more likely to get jobs if they didn't have a job at the time that they volunteered, than comparable people who didn't volunteer. In fact, volunteering seemed to boost your chance of getting a job by 27%, a big increase.

And it makes sense conceptually because volunteering is work. You know, you're working for a goal. You're working with other people. You're accountable. You're delivering something. And it puts you in networks and connections with other people and it's something also that you can say you've done. So there are a lot of ways in which volunteering helps the person who

volunteers. Of course, volunteering also helps the people who receive the service and that's usually foremost on the volunteer's mind. But it's important that volunteering also helps the person who volunteers and it's an important reason for programs like the Corporation for National and Community Service and its various programs because they're doing a double good thing by helping both those who are served and those who serve.

But that report also raised a bunch of questions. It didn't just answer everything because questions included: Under what circumstances do people get jobs after they've volunteered? How exactly? Does it matter how they present the service that they've undertaken? Also, what kind of service, and, in particular, what about AmeriCorps service because the volunteering study was much broader. It was any kind of volunteer service. But what service in an AmeriCorps program?

So the Corporation made several grants to external researchers like us to pursue some of these questions

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and both of these presentations today will be relevant. And so, actually, that concludes my framing comments because then I want to turn things over to my own colleagues to talk about our study. So that's Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, Jodi Benenson, Noorya Hayat, and they'll be talking about the impact of National Service on employment outcomes. So take it away, guys.

JODI BENENSON: Great. Well, thank you, Peter. This is Jodi Benenson and I'm going to kick us off with a little bit of background on one of two studies that we are going to be talking to you about today. And then, Noorya is going to is going to be talking a little bit about the second study that we did.

But first, I want to make sure to acknowledge our fantastic research team, who without their work and support, we would not have been able to share these results with you today. So this is a great team and we've been supported again by CNCS and a variety of other educational institutes and centers out there and people.

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Peter did a really nice job of providing some background around why it's important to pursue this line of research and this particular study. You know, he noted CNCS's 2013 study that found strong evidence, right, that people without jobs have better odds of becoming employed if they volunteer. And there's this other research out there that shows among young people, teenagers and other young adults who participate in community service, actually have much better education and employment outcomes than their peers, especially at-risk young people who have participated in programs like Youth Build or the National Guard Challenge and other types of programs out there.

But, as we know, correlations do not prove causation and young people who serve may have personality traits or other factors -- there are other risk factors at play, like social capital that Peter mentioned, that may also play into why somebody may have these sort of outcomes out there. And there's also been some research that's been done by CIRCLE in collaboration with the National Conference on

Citizenship that has found that communities with higher levels of civic engagement actually recover their employment levels more rapidly after the recession of 2008 and 2009 than communities who were similar except in their civic engagement levels.

But something that we are really focusing on for this study is that there is some evidence out there that hiring managers see volunteering as a relevant experience to consider when making employment decisions. And Deloitte's does a volunteer impact survey every year and what they do is they survey human resource executives. Basically, what they find is that respondents say that volunteerism provides benefits to the organization and that field-based volunteering can potentially increase a job candidate's chances to be hired.

However, this is where the challenge comes in. You know, much of the research in this area is based on surveys of managers who make think they want to hire who have some sort of volunteering experience, even though volunteering may or may not matter in reality.

So the purpose of our study is really to employ a randomized field experiment to answer this broad question that you can see here in red. What is the effect of listing AmeriCorps on one's resume on receiving a callback for a job? And the outcome that we are most interested in in the first study that I'm sharing today is the likelihood of being selected for an interview by a real hiring manager. And, again, although the existing research is very significant on this topic, this randomized study using resumes is a crucial next step because it is a very stringent method. We know that when we are taking surveys or when respondents are taking surveys around volunteerism, they may get a more socially desirable answer. And also, we want to make sure that we are uncovering potential biases that may be at play as we are evaluating the likelihood of a callback for a job.

So what we did was we used a method that has been used in previous research that has successfully used resumes and job application materials to uncover

labor market biases and discrimination related to factors like race, gender, disability, and other factors that have not actually yet investigated the impact of national service. And that's where we come in.

So what we did was we randomly assigned resumes and cover letters based on national service and other factors. And we identified two metro areas. We applied for real jobs using resumes and cover letters that we created in Boston and Chicago and we applied it for jobs in two fields. These fields are sales jobs and administrative jobs. And what we did was we defined resume and cover letter criteria. And we did was we essentially randomly assigned resumes and cover letters based on national service and other factors, as you can see here, like education, the quality of the resume, race, and gender. And we wanted to make sure that half of the resumes and cover letters had national service on them and the others did not. And we'd be more than happy to go into the details about how we differed the national

service and the non-national service job descriptions in the Q&A portion.

And what did from there, as I mentioned, is we created resumes and cover letters and created a search and application process, where we applied, again, for real jobs using websites like Indeed.com, Career Builder, Simply Hired, and Idealist.org. And we applied for jobs in both the nonprofit and private sectors. Overall, we collected two waves of data. We applied for 2,010 jobs in Boston and Chicago during those two waves of data collection during the Summer of 2016 and the Summer of 2017. And what I'm going to do is share a little bit about what we found.

So, as you can see here in Figure 1, of the 2,010 jobs we applied for, we received callbacks from 409 jobs or 20% of jobs. And you can see that here in the blue color. And as you see in the little note below, we consider callbacks to be an interview requested and this is either a callback we received via an email or over the phone. But it could also be somebody showing high interest or showing low

interest or somebody who may, for instance, ask for some additional materials or for a follow-up, a survey to be filled out, etc. But the majority of the callbacks that we received, 86%, were interviews that were requested from these fictitious applicants.

It should also be noted that of the job applications sent, the callback rate was 20% for both the jobs where we used resumes that had national service on them and where we used resumes and cover letters that had no service on them. So there was not a significant difference between the resumes and cover letters and when it comes to callbacks based on national service overall.

But we wanted to dig a little deeper into these findings and so what you can see here in Figure 2 is what we do is we do a deep dive into the 409 callbacks we received or that 20% that we saw on the previous slide. And what we can see here is -- you know, we were really interested in looking at labor market characteristics like whether or not the job was something in the for-profit or nonprofit sector

in Chicago or Boston or a judge that was an administrative or sales job. And we were also very interested in looking at whether or not the candidates had a high school degree on their application materials or a college degree. And what we find is that there is a significant difference when it comes to these different types of characteristics. We can see there's a big gap between callbacks when it comes to high school versus college, for-profit versus nonprofit, etc.

But once we add in national service, you can see here if you look at the blue, those are the resumes that have national service on them and the red are those that do not have national service on them. There's actually not a significant difference once we add in service here just overall. For instance, you can see that callbacks for both service and non-service resumes hovers around about 16% for students with a high school degree and the couple of college students with national service on their resumes is a little higher, but not by much. And we also see a higher number of callbacks in the nonprofit sector jobs in

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Boston and sales jobs from applicants with national service on their resumes being a little higher, but not significantly higher. Though it is really important to point out those trends.

And what I want to do is specifically take a moment to look at one of these factors, which is education. As seen in the previous figure, one of the biggest difference we saw when it came to callbacks was around education. And so if we do actually dive in a bit further and look at education and control for factors such as race, gender, the city, the sector, and occupation, we actually see that there is a significant difference when it comes to callbacks based on education.

So here what we're seeing is that the likelihood of getting a callback for a job is a little higher if you have national service on your resume for individuals who have been both have a high school and a college degree. So you can see whether or not they have service on their resumes, either yes or no. And you can see that for those in the little blue color

on the bottom, those who have the high school degrees and people who have a Bachelor's degree or college degree, you can see it kind of tilting upward, which shows that there has been an increase in the estimated marginal means or really the callbacks based on those different categories.

But what we do see there's a large gap there. So we do see that the callback percentage is significantly higher for individuals who do have that Bachelor's degree. And later on in our presentation, Kei is going to discuss, you know, the implications of this important finding for national service. Andrea is going to spend a little bit of time shortly talking about some different perspectives of education in our supplemental studies.

But one thing I wanted to make sure to also mention, especially given the previous research that has used this particular type of field experiment and audit study to examine factors like race and gender, I wanted to make sure to just briefly touch upon some trends we have found based on factors such as race,

ethnicity, and gender. Because we did, as I mentioned, was we randomized the resumes and cover letters in how we sent things out based on racial, ethnic, and gender sounding names. And, although we applied for an equal number of jobs in these categories, callback percentage was different.

So, for instance, the callbacks were higher for female sounding names than those with male sounding names. When it comes to race and ethnicity, the callbacks received, it was the highest for Latino sounding names, followed by Asian, White, and Black sounding names, which is consistent with the previous research that demonstrates that having a Black sounding name potentially could be a result of some sort of discrimination within a broader labor market.

And then finally, we are starting to kind of break things down. The nice thing is we have a large enough sample that we can break things down by gender, race, and ethnicity. And we see that of the callbacks received, the callbacks were the highest for Asian males and Latino females, with Asian male sounding

names and Latino female sounding names. And the callbacks were the lowest for individuals that had Black and Asian sounding names and males with White sounding names. So we plan to dig into these findings a little further, but do find that these findings are consistent with previous research that looks at discrimination in the labor market.

Next, I am going to turn it over to Noorya who is going to talk a little bit on our supplemental study.

NOORYA HAYAT: Hi everyone. So, as Jodi mentioned, we received two grants from CNCS. And the second grant we received was a supplemental grant to understand the perceptions of hiring managers regarding AmeriCorps list experience. So this study we designed has three elements. The first element was that we sent out a survey to hiring managers. This included hiring managers and the employers of national service network as well. And we also purchased a private list of HR managers that we sent out the survey as well. So overall, we received around 72 responses from hiring managers across 26 states and the response was evenly divided between employers who were in the

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Employers of National Service network and those who were outside the network. And around two-thirds of the respondents were from the nonprofit sector.

The next element of the study was that we recruited hiring managers from the survey to have an in-depth interview about AmeriCorps service and their perceptions about it. And we ended up having 13 in-depth interviews, 8 of which were from hiring managers and the Employers of National Service.

The third element for the study was that we did a field experiment similar to what Jodi talked about. But this time we sent two fictitious resumes and cover letters, one with service and one without service, to each of the organizations in the Employers of National Service network if they had an open job. So overall, we reached 78 organizations among the Employers of National Service network and we sent two resumes, one with service and one without service to those organizations. Next slide.

So talking about our findings a bit. First, our results from the hiring manager survey shows that employers believe that most people pursue AmeriCorps service because they genuinely want to help others, learn about causes and communities, and grow as a leader. So you can see more than two-thirds actually employers see that most people pursue national service because they genuinely want to give back to their communities and grow as a leader. And this is closely followed by their perception that a lot of these people are young people and recent college graduates who really want to give back to their community. Next slide.

So another finding we saw from our hiring manager survey was this graph that you see here where you can see that most employers, as Peter said in the beginning, thought that volunteering and AmeriCorps both really develop competencies like character, collaboration, interpersonal communication in candidates. However, you can see the red bars show that employers that actually chose AmeriCorps as an experience that develops these competencies, they

were more likely to choose AmeriCorps over volunteering as an experience that develops skills and competencies, particularly leadership, accountability, adaptability, and responsibility in candidates. And this was particularly true for a lot of non-profit employers.

Next slide. So for our next element of the study where we did in-depth interviews, we had a comprehensive discussion with hiring managers about an AmeriCorps resume for an entry level position in their organization. We showed them a resume and had them walk through the resume with us and talk to us about their perceptions, what stood out to them, and why would they hire this candidate if they did. So our major findings showed that most employers preferred a candidate that had a skillset they could use and they did not really have to train that candidate. So they specifically looked for hard and soft skills that could match their organization. Another finding that we saw was that if the hiring manager was familiar with AmeriCorps service, it definitely stood out to them. And they would make

connections on how that experience would fit in with their organizations, what competencies fit and how they would ask questions. So they realized that AmeriCorps VISTA particularly because that's a resume we showed them, had devolved more competencies than an ordinary position in the same organization would.

We also found out that since most of our employers that we talked to were from the nonprofit sector, they did seek out a cover letter with the resume. And they wanted more details on both the cover letter and resume that showed how this candidate would fit in the organization through detailed skills and experiences and that would show the candidate's personality, especially on how they would fit in their organization. So they looked for more of a narrative particularly in the cover letter.

And, lastly, we found again, as Jodi mentioned in the first study, that a college degree was really important to employers and that trumped mostly candidates that did not have a college degree. Most employers said that an Associate or a Bachelor's

degree signaled some qualities to them, such as professionalism, writing competence, determination, etc. So a college degree was used as a signal for a lot of these competencies that employers were looking for.

We probed further as well on this and some employers did say that they would look at a candidate without a college degree if they had real life professional experiences and skills and could display employment maturity that would fit in with an entry level position in their organization. Next slide.

So lastly, our field experiment was where we sent two resumes, one with service on it and one without service on it, to open jobs in the Employers of National Service Network. And this graph, as you can see, shows the total rate of callbacks that we got were 13% from the entire study. Next slide.

So for this study, our major finding is that if a service resume was used, a candidate was more likely to get a callback. And, as you can see, the blue bar

shows that 17% of the time when a service resume was used, the candidate received a callback from an organization within the Employers of National Service. And 8% of the time, when a non-service resume was used, that a candidate received a callback.

So I hand it over to our director, Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, to talk about the implications from both our studies.

KEI KAWASHIMA-GINSBERG: Thank you, guys. I think it was great and I hope you can hear me. Okay, so I'll keep it pretty quick because I know you want to save time for Q&A and many of the things I'm about to say already came up so I'll stay brief. But one of the major findings here I think is that the employers really rely very heavily on college degree, not just college experience, as a signal and assumption about what kind of implicit qualities and even characters are coming through the job candidates. And so I think there's a lot of need for educating employers about what sort of skills and assets that the candidates

with really diverse backgrounds can bring,
particularly with national service background.

The second finding that's not actually stated as much here is that the research team had a lot of trouble actually finding jobs that are publicly available for those who are without college experience earlier in the study, to the point we had to adjust the criteria at one point in the middle of the study. And what that tells us is that a) there is perhaps a different pathway for young people who do national service and not necessarily going to college for employment and economic security. So we'd like to find out more about that. We hear about those things and more anecdotally than entirely through the study.

And another major finding that came through from Noorya's findings is that building familiarity and relationships with national service employers through Employers of National Service really builds a strong pathway toward employment for the national service alums. I think this finding was very, very clear. So to us, it told us the value of investing in

relationship building with these major employers across the country.

And, finally, I think, we really do need to further explore and understand what other ways young people who are getting national service experience are able to gain opportunities for employment. Because one of the things that was in the findings was that the national service alone wasn't necessarily promoting probability of employment, at least in the general rule, unless the employer was very familiar with national service.

I'll close there and thanks for your attention.

ANDREA ROBLES: Thank you. Well, thank you to the Tufts team and if you have any immediate questions, you could put it in the chat or please just state it for the Q&A. So now I'm going to turn it over to David Schlinkert from the Morrison Institute, our Arizona State University. David?

DAVID SCHLINKERT: Hi, everybody. Let's see if I can get this loaded up here. Here we go. The AmeriCorps Experience Transformation through Service. My name is

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David Schlinkert. I'm with the Morrison Institute for Public Policy. I wanted to start off real fast and just and to say thank you to Dr. Robles and Roshney [sic] for supporting our research and ICF for putting on this webinar. I think it's a great way to share our findings in a more public forum. And I also wanted to thank all of the public servants. I see there's quite a few people online here and it was a great opportunity for me to work on this project for the last year because I got to see and listen to a lot of different people and their experiences. And from a lot of the feedback we got from the alumni and the supervisors, there's quite a bit of dedication on the part of service members. So thank you for that.

As everybody here knows, AmeriCorps been going on for 24 years. It was built to create a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility. And in 2016, we did a study that wanted to look at three different research questions. Are AmeriCorps host sites hiring their own service members? Is the AmeriCorps program creating a pipeline to employment? And how are AmeriCorps programs contributing to their

host sites? And these bullet points are our main findings from the first year. It's about 83% of host sites hired at least one member. And more than half of the positions were full-time. AmeriCorps found an employment pipeline either their host site and organization or other alumni. And AmeriCorps contributed in a host of ways to the organizations they were serving with.

So this year we wanted to expand the study to see if what we found in Arizona was true across country. We looked at five different states: Nevada, Washington, Minnesota, Tennessee, and Massachusetts. This year we wanted to focus on some of the same issues, but we had three additional questions: What are the benefits for service members and organizations? What challenges face the AmeriCorps programs? And are AmeriCorps programs hiring AmeriCorps alumni? And, if so, at what rate?

We did this through a mixed message research design. So we conducted 367 phone surveys with host site supervisors, 15 virtual focus groups, 10 of which

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with present AmeriCorps supervisors and 5 with past alumni, and we conducted 18 phone interviews with state commissioners.

Just as a quick disclaimer for the researchers in the audience, the survey data is not representative of each state because it's a small pool in each of those states.

So the major findings for the members, they found it a very transforming and rewarding experience. It was a great opportunity for personal and professional growth and they built a lot of opportunities in terms of career exploration and it was a catalyst for continuing education and giving back to their community. We'll go through these more in detail.

One of the major findings: the stat was 87% of sample organizations have either hired their AmeriCorps member or helped them gain employment. I don't know why the slides are jumping ahead. I apologize. Help them gain employment elsewhere and over 160

supervisors offered recommendations and/or letters of reference for their AmeriCorps members.

So these next two slides are probably the most valuable of the presentations. A number of AmeriCorps members hired after their service term. On the left here you see 37% hired one, 39% two or three, and about a quarter hired four or more alumni, which is pretty substantial, between 2012 and 2016. Now the types of jobs created when sample organizations do hire former AmeriCorps members, they are most likely to be hiring into full-time positions compared to part-time. About 20% part-time, 58% full-time, and 22% both.

And this is a proportion of new or replacing positions. So our host site is hiring somebody to fill a job that's already existing or they're bringing on increasing organizational capacity. And about 37% are adding positions. So this is helping generate more employees and more AmeriCorps staff members onsite. About 40% were replacing and 16% were both.

So we have a lot of direct feedback from members and from supervisors and we'll start with members. They found it an incredibly rewarding experience. They found that it made them a better person as you'll see in the quote on the slide. And they felt that they could give back to their community, especially one of the biggest selling point was everybody loved working with kids. We heard that a lot. That really made them happy about what they were doing if they can contribute to changing kids' opinions and helping them learn new things.

The five biggest skills that members thought they picked up were critical thinking skills, increased their employment options, how to handle themselves in a professional workplace, how to plan their ideas and kind of set up a day-to-day work schedule and it helped change their perspective. Now this was especially true in members that were serving in underserved communities. It helped them realign how they viewed the world.

Now this next quote is a little long, but I think it kind of highlights the four steps that we kept hearing and we thought was a great progression that the AmeriCorps program provided for members. It helped them find their niche in the community, found a problem they were passionate about solving, encouraged them to go back to school to learn the skills they needed to work on that problem, and to gain the better knowledge of the situation and the more macro level factors that were involved in the problem they solved. And it led to people working in a field that was directly related with their AmeriCorps experience.

So that's kind of the four-part progression for members and this was indicative of a lot of the interviews we conducted.

And supervisors played a pivotal role in AmeriCorps' success and supervisors contributed in a lot of different ways to helping AmeriCorps members move on to the next phase of their career. The major ways they provided support were networking, helping them

make professional connections, forwarding specific jobs and connecting them to other employment opportunities. And then there was a lot of technical assistance, like help with resumes, references, interview preparation. And we had one supervisor comment that their second full-time job was writing letters of recommendation for members. And I thought that was great.

Supervisors consistently said that without AmeriCorps members, they would not be able to do what they were currently doing. Their service provision is wholly based upon AmeriCorps members and organizations felt that this allowed them to expand and serve more people that the missions of their organizations were trying to serve.

And this quote kind of highlights that. As far as thinking about how integral Corps members are to our work, I mean, they are completely there, 100% of the people who carry out the work that our organization is trying to do. And I really think that sums up the

sentiment from a lot of different supervisors when we interviewed them.

The admiration for AmeriCorps members, supervisors felt that AmeriCorps members were high caliber. They had a dedication to service and they really wanted to help people. And I think this was very well outlined in the Tufts survey where I think it was 58% of people were just there to help give back to their community and really wanted to be a genuine influencer of public good. And I think that this directly speaks to that.

So a lot of supervisors said that they kind of taught them two things: the networking really helped create like an AmeriCorps pipeline, a pipeline to employment. And it also taught members the importance of strong network connections. So if you work hard and you really go above and beyond, it will pay off because people are going to notice it and want to pick up your talent and skills. The ones you pick up through the AmeriCorps program and then be able to use those in the workforce.

Supervisors overall said they prefer to hire AmeriCorps members. Basically, what some of them would say is that it's a yearlong internship. They get to learn about you, your strengths, your weaknesses. And they know from the beginning what your goals are, what you want to become, and they know that you're in this for the public service and the public good. You're not out to make money. They really want to see that you're behind the mission and that you already understand what you're going into.

All of these bubbles we kind of touched on here. But if you look at the top left and right, this is kind of the start point for host site supervisor and alumni and this is kind of the process that leads to the employment of service members through the AmeriCorps network. So take one of these, for example, the personal and professional development of alumni. They get the career exposure and exploration. They have access to the resources and the networks of the supervisor and then they get plugged into these

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networks and are able to find employment upon leaving the AmeriCorps program.

We left a little time at the end of each of the surveys to talk a little bit about feedback. We'll start with the members and then do a slide on the supervisors. Feedback and evaluation -- a lot of the service members felt that their direct supervisor might be in touch with them, but they wanted more feedback. They wanted to be able to give their opinion to people higher up in CNCS. And I told them that's what this project was. So they were all very excited that this was going on because they wanted to feel like what they were learning could be disseminated to other organizations and other alumni or other members that were starting out.

The two in the middle here, the blurry job duties and inconsistent communication -- I think a lot of this is just due to starting a new job and being there for one year. I think there's sometimes AmeriCorps didn't know where they really fit. Were they supposed to be a volunteer, an intern? Do they meet with staff? How

do they get to know the lay of the land? And I think a lot of that is due to just starting a new job.

And then the last one is stipend and housing. They found it very difficult, especially in urban areas, to be able to make it work on the stipend that's given. And in rural communities there was a lot of issues with housing in terms of getting people like if the organizations didn't provide a lot of support, it was difficult for them to find housing and be able to afford it on their own.

The main challenge for AmeriCorps supervisors -- we used qualitative analysis and this is the number of times that these issues were referenced in an aggregate. So the first two here that you see going all the way up to 40 references each was the stipend recruitment and vettings. And those are very similar. So the supervisor would say the recruitment and vetting is they would get quality candidates but it's hard to entice them with the stipend the way that it was. And then right around 22, you see fiscal management compliance as the third highest, not

complaint, but area for improvement. They said it was sometimes very challenging to keep up with all of the requirements for the AmeriCorps program. And it was very onerous on them to try to keep up with everything that they needed to be completing to keep their program running.

So we actually opened up the end of the interviews to recommendations from the individuals themselves. And a lot of service members or alumni said that they encourage peer-to-peer collaboration networks. And this I think was due to generate more institutional legacy. So if you have a turnover of an AmeriCorps member every year, it's difficult for a new person to come in without that overlap to say, "This is what's been done. This is what we're trying. This is the direction we're heading." So I think some members felt like they were recreating the wheel every year and this would be a good way to either get them talking to members in other organizations or be able to speak to alumni that have already come out of the program in terms of what works best and what they could do to start off in their role.

Increased stipends according to cost of living. This I put in there -- I know that federal grants are what they are and that's probably not going to change, but they said maybe cost of living adjustments for people living in larger cities because it was especially difficult. And facilitate direct communication between communities and state commissioners. And when you talk to state commissioners, they do do a lot of this. But I think members wanted to see more of an effort or wanted to have more direct communication with people higher up at CNCS.

And I know we'll do Q&A at the end, but I wanted to put these two questions out there for people to think about. Do these findings reflect your experiences with the AmeriCorps program? And there are other benefits and challenges that we did not address in this presentation.

So if you want more information, please feel free to email me directly. I can send the report to you and that'll wrap it up for us. Thank you very much.

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ANDREA ROBLES: Thank you so much, David. So now I'm going to turn it over for some remarks with Chester Spellman who's Director for the AmeriCorps State National. Chester?

CHESTER SPELLLMAN: Thank you so much. Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for having me and thank you for participating in this call. I'd also like to thank our speakers for presenting and for conducting this very valuable research. And I would also like to thank Dr. Mary Hyde and the CNCS Research Evaluation Team for their leadership. In AmeriCorps State National, we really appreciate the strong partnership that we have with the Office of Research and Evaluation. I'll just make my remarks very brief. We want to leave time for Q&A. But really just say how in AmeriCorps State National, we're very excited about the research from Tufts and Arizona State University. This research on the employment of members is of, obviously, great interest to us and is extremely relevant just in the work that we do here internally. But also for our rentees and the broader national service field.

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One of the things that stood out to me during this call is just that as I've been traveling, I've been in my role for a little over six months now and as I've been traveling the nation and meeting with members and programs. I've heard a lot about just this topic of employment anecdotally and it's great to have the research to really just confirm and backup what has been shared with me just from individual members.

So again, this is really exciting and we look forward to supporting in AmeriCorps State National Dr. Hyde and working together to just highlight this exciting research. So thank you for having me.

ANDREA ROBLES: Thank you. So, Lauren, do you mind going back to that original slide with those two questions? And that could be for both presentations as people have from the audience have something they want to say about either of those questions. But in the meantime, how about we open it up for some Q&A. So is the Operator there.

OPERATOR: Yes, thank you. To ask a question, please press Star-One on your touchtone phones, unmute your

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phone, record your name clearly after the prompt and I will introduce you for your question. Again, that's Star-One to ask a question. If you need to withdraw your question, you may press Star-Two. Please standby for incoming questions.

ANDREA ROBLES: Okay, thank you. And in the meantime, we have a question so I'm just going to ask it of both sets of presenters. So the person says, "I believe that you said the study was limited to Boston and Chicago, two large urban areas. Are there thoughts about or plans to study how volunteering in national service increase employment outcomes in smaller areas, especially rural areas?"

KEI KAWASHIMA-GINSBERG: This is Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg and I can maybe jump in really quickly. We don't have a study or data on that, but one thing we do have is that we know that in rural areas the nonprofit density scope is pretty low, meaning that unlike urban areas where one nonprofit that may not be able to create a hiring pathway for an AmeriCorps or they have for a year, maybe would approach another nonprofit in the same area. And that, I think, is pretty common given a few studies which is great to

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hear. But in rural areas, I can imagine that might be slightly harder. And that's one of the reasons why we said it's important to sort of have a digital pathway for all kinds of use including rural area use stuff out there.

ANDREA ROBLES: Thank you, any other thoughts from the speakers? Okay. Any Q&A from --

OPERATOR: Currently there are no questions in the queue. Again, if you would like to ask a question, you may press Star-One.

ANDREA ROBLES: Okay. So Mary Hyde, are you on the line?

MARY HYDE: I am.

ANDREA ROBLES: Hi. So from our Director, any thoughts or questions that you may have?

MARY HYDE: The only comment I would make is to sort of echo Chester's closing remarks there and to just acknowledge how important this sort of circle of information is. So, you know, sort of having our researchers go out there, bringing it back to folks, asking the questions, giving the opportunity for this information to feed into the operations of AmeriCorps State National. And I know in Chester's relatively short time here, he is incredibly receptive to

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feedback from the field and I know he's going to take this information and it will be taken seriously. So I think that is the objective at the end of the day, that we create this information not just for the sake of having it, but for also using it to improve member experiences and to improve the utility of it in communities who access the resource. So that's the only addition I would make.

ANDREA ROBLES: Okay, thank you. Operator, any questions.

OPERATOR: There are no questions in the queue.

ANDREA ROBLES: I would love to hear from the audience in terms of whether these findings reflect your experiences either as an AmeriCorps grantee and a staff member or if there are any former alum on the call. I mean, like Chester said, we hear this in the field in terms of the kind of professional development and employment opportunities that come people's way. But this research is able capture that in a more systematic way. So, David, you mentioned when you were doing the focus groups and I asked of the Tufts group too, that there was energy around what people had learned and their time. Can you talk about that a little bit more?

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PETER LEVINE: Yeah, so we're talking about what they learned during their service term?

ANDREA ROBLES: Yeah, and how they felt it helped them in terms of their future prospects.

PETER LEVINE: I think it depended on the individual. I think that the slide that Tufts put up that showed the different categories which had as they went -- there was college experience, wanting to get a job. You got a little bit of all of those. And some of it was people just kind of figuring things out. I think some of their slides show the people that just had a high school degree. It was something to do that led to something more and made them passionate about something. So I think the impetus for joining change is very varied. But once people are in, I think they kind of find their niche. It's very exploratory and I think you see a lot of direction come out of it.

So someone that may not have had a career goal is all of a sudden, "Oh, hey, I really am passionate about this. I want to go back to school." And I think that's where the transformation in our title came from is it was members, whether they had a defined

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goal or not, were able to leave with something tangible, like kind of a purpose. And I think that's what everybody's looking for out of a job. So it was a very defining moment for a lot of people.

ANDREA ROBLES: And at Tufts, I know you spoke to the Employers National Service. Anything distinctive as well besides what you've presented to us?

PETER SCHLINKERT: Other folks might want to weigh in but I'll just say, I think, you know, big picture here what we see is that the best -- I mean, people might disagree, but my read is the best pathway for AmeriCorps and the strongest and most impressive pathway for AmeriCorps deployment is sort a little bit inside the family. It's Employers of National Service and it's the former AmeriCorps directors of the program you're in. In big crowded labor markets like Boston and Chicago there's some advantages than just merely the brand. But there's also a lot of work for everybody in the field, including us to do, to kind of strengthen the pathway there. Because while there are some advantages, it's also ways in which education, for example, is trumping service. So I think there's a lot of good news here but I also

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think there's a set of things we can make progress on in terms of the big labor markets. But my colleagues might have more to add on that, more specifically on the Employers of National Service part.

NOORYA HAYAT: I can add because for the Employers of National Service study, when we talk to a lot of employers, it echoes what Peter said. We showed the employers knew about AmeriCorps or an AmeriCorps alum that really jumped out to them. So they really understood what 1700 service meant, what kind of commitment and dedication this kind of candidate would bring. And they would really, you know, focus on that.

On the other hand, if they didn't know about it or we asked them in the interview of how a colleague who doesn't know about National Service would look at this resume, that's where they were like hesitant of how this would apply even if they Googled it. How would -- they wouldn't get the nuance of this AmeriCorps service that an alum or an Employers of National Service organization would. So that did come out in our interviews.

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So I think a lot of outreach about service and how it can affect would be one way. And the other that Peter said, that college degree still trumps a lot of other credentials that candidates have, including service on their resume.

ANDREA ROBLES: Thank you. So I have a few questions that have come in. One of the biggest employment benefits of AmeriCorps VISTA is noncompetitive hiring status for federal employment. What was the thought process behind not including federal employers in the study? And I think that has more to do with the Tufts study.

JODI BENENSON: Yeah, this is Jodi. I can briefly touch on that. Really, it would be it was our ability to more easily apply for jobs in the nonprofit and private sectors without having to go through areas like background checks and things like that that are often required in the federal employment hiring process. And so it was mostly for that reason and for kind of ethical services in that area as well.

Also, but I will say that many of the jobs we applied for, at times we would start applying for a job and

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we'd have to kind of maybe stop halfway through if there was something that we did not feel aligned with our values as it pertained to the protocol that we put together for the Institutional Review Board. And so really, it was mostly due to the difference in requirements for federal employers compared to those in the nonprofit and private sectors.

ANDREA ROBLES: So we have a comment: "My name's Amy Roth. I'm an AmeriCorps alum who is now Deputy Director of Oklahoma AmeriCorps, the Oklahoma Commission. I also helped cofound and direct the two successful AmeriCorps programs in my state. AmeriCorps is definitely the catalyst for getting my Master's Degree and for my career in the nonprofit national service realm." So speaking to whether these findings reflect their experiences.

OPERATOR: We do have two questions over the phone. Okay, the first question is from Amy Roth. Your line is open.

AMY ROTH: Oh, hi. No, I didn't have a question. I just wanted to comment about how AmeriCorps has definitely framed my entire career and helped me to become a leader within my community and state. And I was able

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to obtain my Master's Degree as a result, which I don't know if I would have done that had I not served in AmeriCorps way back in the 90's. So it's definitely been the catalyst for everything I've done in my career and I'm so appreciative for the opportunity to continue to serve in a leadership capacity through AmeriCorps.

ANDREA ROBLES: Thank you.

OPERATOR: Our next question is from Somata [sic]. Your line is open.

SOMATA: Hello, everybody. My name is Somata Hakim and I actually have a question and a comment. I wanted to share with you that I had done AmeriCorps about two decades ago and basically what I would like to say, so I'm an attorney by training. I've shifted careers and I'm now a culture strategy consultant. So part of my job is creating inclusive workspaces. And there's a huge trend right now, not just from a nonprofit perspective, but also from a for profit perspective, looking at social responsibility. And what does it mean to have empathy in the workplace and how that relates to leadership. And this is something that I see in my job across all industries in Texas. So it's

really interesting because I would say it all started for me when I did AmeriCorps. I worked in a program in Portland, Oregon and I was working with homeless population and [unint.] population, visiting people in their single room occupancies and really seeing a whole side of this world that I had never really been exposed to. And it was definitely a diverse population as well.

So those kind of experiences really have come through for me and they've influenced my perspective in my legal career and the work I did there and also now as a consultant. I bring these stories and still to this day. So taking this research, definitely I'm going to be bringing that up when I'm talking to leaders and executives and organizations.

On the other side of it as well, you know, millennials and the next generation are expecting organizations to be looking at a cause or at least contributing in terms of social responsibility in general. And the more people we employ that bring that experience and that lens at least of public

service and basically creating a more just and equitable work environment as a result of these experiences. I think that's really important. So I want to thank you very much. I'll be definitely bringing up this research in all areas of my work.

My question was specifically about there was a slide that talked about trends by race, ethnicity, and gender. And I thought this was a really interesting slide for my work. So my main question on that is are these specifically when you were looking at callbacks for people who had college degrees? Or does this apply across those that had high school degrees and college degree and we divided that by race, ethnicity, and gender? Thank you.

ANDREA ROBLES: Thanks very much. Tufts?

OPERATOR: There are no further questions in the queue.

JODI BENESON: Thank you. This is Jodi. I'm briefly answer that question. That's a great question. And as I mentioned earlier those are preliminary findings and they were the holistic group. So it was everybody, the 2010 participants. And so I think a great next step will be dividing up these callback

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findings by factors like education and some of the other labor market characteristics that we talked about. But thank you for that question. It's a helpful reminder of why we need to be disaggregating this information further.

ANDREA ROBLES: Well, thank you so much to all of you. It is already 3:02, but I want to make sure that your institutes are listed in the chat. We'll have the recording up and if there are any comments or questions in terms of this webinar or for the future, like I said, if you have any ideas, please put it into the post webinar. So anyway, thanks, and have a good day, everyone.

OPERATOR: This concludes today's conference. Thank you for your attendance. You may disconnect your...

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