Results from the National Student Clearinghouse Data Match

New Methods for Assessing AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes

April 27, 2016

Submitted by:
Abt Associates
55 Wheeler Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

Authors
Matthew Zeidenberg, Ph.D.
Brian Freeman
Eric Friedman
Allan Porowski

Results from National Student Clearinghouse Data Match

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Established in 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) helps more than five million Americans improve the lives of their fellow citizens through service. The AmeriCorps program engages more than 80,000 Americans per year in intensive service at nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups across the country. CNCS's program theory is that members who commit a year or more of their lives to serving their nation through AmeriCorps are likely to continue contributing to the country's well-being through life-long civic engagement and service-oriented careers (CNCS, 2015a).

CNCS's research strategies to date have generated important information about alumni outcomes. A longitudinal study of AmeriCorps members who served in 1999-2000 found that eight years after their service, alumni had high levels of civic engagement in their communities, as measured by public service, volunteering, or other community activities (CNCS, 2008b). A study of three generations of VISTA members across the program's history found positive civic engagement (voting, volunteering) and employment outcomes (labor force participation, income) (CNCS, 2008a). Findings from a 2015 CNCS pilot alumni outcomes survey indicate that the majority of AmeriCorps alumni perceive that the program had a positive influence on their future civic engagement, career-oriented soft skills, sense of community, and career pathways (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2015b).[1]

Abt Associates has been hired to build on CNCS's previous work on the alumni outcomes survey and address three research questions:

1. In what ways do national service experiences influence members' career pathways, civic engagement, development of soft and hard career skills, and sense of community?

2. How do member outcomes vary by life stage and by types of service experiences?

3. What are the educational and employment outcomes of AmeriCorps alumni, and does national service serve as a pathway to educational and employment success?

To address a portion of the third research question, Abt executed a match of a sample of three cohorts of AmeriCorps alumni (who completed their last term of service in 2005, 2010, and 2013) to postsecondary enrollment and graduation records held by the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). The NSC is a non-profit organization that collects data on student enrollment, degree earned, and other credential completion from most institutions of higher education in the country. The NSC has the most extensive database of enrollments and credentials available.[2] Over 3,600 colleges and universities, enrolling 98 percent of all students in public and private institutions, provide data to the clearinghouse. While the NSC does not cover 100 percent of postsecondary enrollments, CNCS and Abt decided the coverage was high enough to allow for meaningful conclusions to be drawn from the results of a data match. This memo describes the NSC matching process and the educational outcomes returned for AmeriCorps alumni (postsecondary enrollment, highest degree, and major), disaggregating by program, cohort, and several demographic characteristics.

---

[1] http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/RB_AlumniOutcomesSurvey_Overview_0.pdf

[2] NSC does not collect full transcript data.

We found high levels of enrollment and degree completion for alumni in the NSC match. Virtually all alumni enrolled at some level. Female alumni and those with higher levels of prior education had higher overall levels of enrollment. Alumni with two terms of service had the highest levels of enrollment and educational attainment. AmeriCorps alumni had significantly higher levels of degree attainment than did the general adult population in the United States. Female alumni had higher degree attainment than male alumni across the board, except for doctorates. The most common major associated with an alumnus' highest degree was education, followed by social sciences, public administration and social services, business, and health professions.

2. Methodology

This section describes the methodology employed for obtaining and analyzing NSC data on postsecondary enrollment and degree attainment for AmeriCorps alumni. Section 2.1 explains the coverage of the NSC data, section 2.2 describes the sample selection and matching process, and section 2.3 explains how the study team categorized degree titles and majors.

2.1 NSC Enrollment and Graduation Coverage

Despite their extensive coverage, the NSC data have some limitations (Dynarski et al., 2013). Not all institutions participate, and participation has been increasing over time, so coverage is worse as one looks back over time. Therefore, the postsecondary enrollment of older alumni and alumni from the 2005 cohort are more likely to be missing from NSC. The coverage rate is highest for public institutions (virtually universal at this point), and lowest for for-profit institutions, although their participation is increasing.[3] In addition, only a subset of schools that submit enrollment information also submit degree/other credential information (through a product called DegreeVerify). According to a recent NSC report, DegreeVerify covered only 84 percent of the postsecondary enrollments of a six-year cohort of students starting college in Fall 2009 (Shapiro et al., 2015). All NSC matches contain missing and incomplete data and will therefore underestimate the educational attainment of AmeriCorps' alumni population, since alumni not matched to NSC enrollment records will be counted as not having been enrolled in postsecondary education.[4]

2.2 Sample Selection and Matching Process

Abt sent the NSC data on a random sample of AmeriCorps alumni from the 2005, 2010, and 2013 cohorts. While technically feasible, Abt did not submit the entire universe of AmeriCorps alumni records from those cohorts because the NSC charges per record submitted, and matching the entire universe would be cost-prohibitive. The random sample was stratified by cohort (2005, 2010, or 2013 alumni) and by program (AmeriCorps State and National [ASN], National Civilian Community Corps [NCCC], and Volunteers in Service to America [VISTA]) so that all of the alumni programs are represented.

The AmeriCorps alumni file provided to Abt by CNCS contains 86,222 records. To be eligible for the NSC match, a record had to have a date of birth and an eligible total term length and last term length.[5] Of the 86,222 alumni in the master file, 79,344 alumni (91 percent) were eligible for the NSC match and were included in the sampling frame (see Exhibit 1).

---

[3] Coverage of private for-profit schools in the NSC was only 48% in 2003, but it rose to 72% in 2014.

[4] Except for the for-profit sector, the coverage rate for NSC data was still high (80-95% depending on the sector) for records that are 10 years or older. See Figure 2a in Dynarski et al. (2013).

[5] Terms less than or equal to 84 days or greater than the number of days since the member turned 16 were considered ineligible. Also, the last term length needed to be greater than zero so that the alumni were correctly associated with the last AmeriCorps program (ASN, VISTA, NCCC) in which they served.

Exhibit 1. Eligibility for National Student Clearinghouse Data Match

Category	Number
Alumni file	86,822
No date of birth	2
Ineligible last term length	111
Ineligible total term length	6,728
Ineligible last and total term length	637
Eligible for NSC match	**79,344**

Exhibit 2 outlines the sample size for each program and cohort stratum. The cells are optimally allocated to minimize the sum of the minimum detectable differences for the six comparisons (three pairwise cohort comparisons and three pairwise program comparisons), with equal importance given to cohort and program comparisons. Standard errors on proportion point estimates range between 1% and 3%.

Exhibit 2. Sample Size for National Student Clearinghouse Data Match

Cohort	Program			Total
	ASN	**NCCC**	**VISTA**	
2005	568 (2%)	219 (3%)	214 (3%)	1,001 **(2%)**
2010	614 (2%)	226 (3%)	271 (3%)	1,111 **(2%)**
2013	581 (2%)	226 (3%)	231 (3%)	1,038 **(2%)**
Total	**1,763 (1%)**	**671 (2%)**	**716 (2%)**	**3,150 (1%)**

NOTE: standard errors on 50% proportion estimates are presented in parentheses.

Within strata, the sample was selected using a systematic random sample with implicit stratification. The sampling frame was sorted by key variables related to post-service educational outcomes: education award amount, prior education level, gender, and state with missing data included (e.g., sex would consist of female, male, and missing) and, at the lowest level, by a randomly generated number. State was included because average socioeconomic status and access to higher education vary by state. Starting from a random point, every 1 in x cases were selected, where $x = 1/f_h$.[6] This procedure reduces design effects compared to a simple random sample by ensuring proportional representation of groups within the stratum. Since some of the nine strata had more alumni than others, the smaller strata (in the NCCC program) were sampled at higher rates than the larger ones (ASN and VISTA). We applied inverse probability of selection weights to ensure that the data are representative of the overall population of AmeriCorps alumni (see Exhibit 3).

---

[6] $f_h = n_h/N_h$ where n is the sample size from

Exhibit 2 and N is the population size for each of the $h = 1, 2, ..., L$ strata.

Exhibit 3. Population Size, Sample Size, and Analytic Weight

Program	Cohort	Population Size	Sample Size	Analytic Weight (Population/Sample)
ASN	2005	17,628	568	31
ASN	2010	24,954	614	41
ASN	2013	18,483	581	32
NCCC	2005	883	219	4
NCCC	2010	730	226	3
NCCC	2013	1,307	226	6
VISTA	2005	4,491	214	21
VISTA	2010	6,294	271	23
VISTA	2013	4,574	231	20
Total		**79,344**	**3,150**	

The NSC StudentTracker database, which includes both enrollment and credential data, can be queried in one of two ways: using a combination of name and date of birth, or using Social Security Number (SSN). SSN matches require consent, which would be infeasible to collect in this case. Dynarski et al. (2013) report that the NSC's confidential and proprietary matching algorithm is conservative in that it tends to err on the side of omitting matches ("false negatives") rather than including potentially erroneous matches ("false positives"). The other factor that affects the availability of NSC information is the "FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) privacy block." When we conduct a name and date of birth query, we are relying on the fact that, under FERPA, enrollment and graduation information is by default considered "directory information" that can be made public. However, students have the right to request that this disclosure of directory information to the public be blocked (i.e., to Abt and other researchers). An SSN match with consent overcomes the FERPA block, but we would consider the non-response bias inherent in obtaining consent through a survey to be a much more severe problem than the FERPA blocks.

AmeriCorps alumni records were matched to the NSC StudentTracker database on full name and date of birth. After doing whatever cleaning appeared necessary (e.g. apparent typos in first names, for instance changing "Mchael" to "Michael"), we submitted data to NSC in the format that they require. All enrollment and graduation records found for these individuals were returned to us, less records subject to FERPA blocks. Of the 3,150 alumni submitted, NSC did not return data for 568.[7] However, 338 of the 568 alumni were subject to FERPA blocks (18 at the school's request, and 320 at the student's request; see Exhibit 4). The FERPA block rate among the sampled AmeriCorps alumni is notably higher than the block rate for the NSC database as a whole (11 percent versus 4 percent, respectively). Among the 230

---

[7] In the student-level dataset returned to Abt, there were 565 alumni without any enrollment records, not the 568 reported in the match summary. NSC explained that FERPA block requests apply only to a single postsecondary institution. If a student attends one institution and chooses to block their record, then moves on to another institution and does not block their record at the second institution, records from the second (unblocked) institution will appear in the dataset. In the summary report a student is considered FERPA-blocked only if there is a FERPA block for their first postsecondary institution. For example, if Student A goes to Hometown University and transfers to Homeland Tech, then places a block at Homeland Tech, only Student A's enrollment at Hometown University will be reported, and Student A will not be counted as FERPA-blocked. If Student B goes to Hometown University and blocks their records but transfers to Hometown Tech and does not, Student B will be counted as FERPA-blocked, but Student B's enrollment at Hometown Tech will be reported (K. Mason, NSC StudentTracker Client Coordinator, personal communication, April 12, 2016).

unmatched alumni not subject to FERPA blocks, we are unable to distinguish between true negatives (those individuals who did not attend postsecondary education) and false negatives (those individuals who did attend, but whose name appears in a different form or who attended a school that does not report to the NSC).

Exhibit 4. Alumni Matched to National Student Clearinghouse Data

Alumni Category	Number	Percentage
Alumni submitted	3,150	100%
No matches reported	568	18%
FERPA block (student)	*320*	*10%*
FERPA block (school)	*11*	*<1%*
Not found in NSC	*230*	*7%*
Alumni with enrollment data reported	**2,582**	**82%**

2.3   Coding Degrees and Majors

In the NSC database, a student's degree title and major field of study are reported in text fields provided by the graduating institutions. There is no coding of these text fields. Therefore, the study team reviewed and manually coded the degree and major text fields.

All NSC graduation records contain a text field describing the degree type. The AmeriCorps alumni sample dataset contained 467 unique degree names, which one member of the study team manually coded into one of six categories (Certificate, Associate's Degree, Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, Doctorate,[8] or Unknown). Another member of the study team reviewed and verified the codes.

Both enrollments and degrees can have associated majors. Enrollment majors are the major associated with the degree that the student is pursuing, which may change over time (and from record to record). For enrollment records, two major text fields, which describe the major in words that are not consistent from school to school, and two corresponding CIP (Classification of Instructional Programs) codes are available.[9] However, only 20.5 percent of the enrollments in the matched dataset list a first major and one percent list a second major. Therefore, we do not report on enrollment major.

Degree majors are the field in which a degree is awarded, like a B.A. in English or an M.S. in Chemistry. There are four major text fields for graduation records, since people can graduate with double or even triple or quadruple majors. However, the fourth major text field is missing for all graduation records. The first degree major text field is listed in 85.9 percent of the graduation records, and very small numbers of graduation records have second (5.7 percent) and third (0.24 percent) majors. Therefore, only first graduation majors are reported.

There are 3,295 graduation records. For 1,988 of the 3,295 graduations (60 percent), both the first major text field and first major CIP code are non-missing. For an additional 841 graduations (26 percent of the total), the first major text field is non-missing but not the first major CIP code is missing.[10] These 841

---

[8] This includes all forms of doctorate that we found in the data, including PhDs, MDs, and JDs.

[9] CIP codes provide a standardized taxonomy of instructional program fields of study. For more detail and a list of codes, see https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/cip2000/

[10] There are no graduation records where the first major text field is missing and the first major CIP code is non-missing.

graduation records include 437 distinct degree major text descriptions. One member of the study team manually coded these 437 degree majors to one of the 60 high-level two-digit CIP codes (or unknown), and another member of the study team reviewed and verified the codes. After the manual codes were completed, we were able to report the two-digit CIP codes for first degree major for 86 percent of graduation records in Exhibit 45 on page 29 (the remaining graduation records do not include any information on first degree major).

<div style="background-color:red; color:white">

3. Data Analysis

</div>

This section presents descriptive summaries of the postsecondary enrollment and graduation data returned by NSC. Section 3.1contains tables on enrollment rates and durations, section 3.2 contains tables on postsecondary institutional types, and section 0 contains tables on highest postsecondary degrees earned.

3.1 Postsecondary Enrollments

The following tables show statistics on postsecondary enrollment of our sample of AmeriCorps alumni. Each table contains median and mean weeks of enrollment for the entire sample and for those who actually enrolled, according to NSC records.[11] It also includes the shares of the population, and the number, that enrolled. The population numbers are relative to our overall NSC sampling frame of 79,344 alumni, of which our 3,150 alumni matched are representative. As described above, the nine cohort-program combinations were sampled at different rates from the sampling rate, so weights were used to calculate the population values from the sample. They are subject to the caveats on FERPA blocks and NSC non-coverage which we have described, which means that the NSC enrollments do not capture all enrollments.

Exhibit 5 shows statistics on all enrollments found in the NSC match, irrespective of when they occurred, by cohort and overall. For all enrollments, the rate of enrollment was highest for NCCC, lowest for VISTA. Note that the total weeks of enrollment is much higher when we look at the entire span of time, as opposed to only in or after the exit year in Exhibit 6, as we would expect. For all alumni, enrollments were found at a rate of 80.2 percent, and alumni that did enroll enrolled for a median of 182.6 weeks. Since about 10 percent of the sample was blocked due to students' FERPA privacy requests, and there are also some students whose records do not appear in the NSC sample due to coverage issues, we suspect that the true enrollment figure is about 10-15 percent higher, about 90 percent in this case.

Exhibit 5. All Enrollments Found, by Program and Overall

| | | | | Weeks of Enrollment | | | |
| | | | | Everyone | | Enrolled Only | |
Program	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
ASN	61,065	49,136	80.5%	152.3	148.7	182.7	184.8
NCCC	2,920	2,567	87.9%	136.0	139.2	148.6	158.3
VISTA	15,359	11,914	77.6%	157.0	149.5	189.0	192.7
Overall	79,344	63,618	80.2%	152.3	148.5	182.6	185.2

Exhibit 6 shows enrollment in or after alumni's exit year from the program, by program and overall across all programs. The table shows that enrollment in or after the exit year was highest for ASN and lowest for VISTA. It also shows that that the percent of alumni with enrollments found in or after their

---

[11] Most U.S. institutions of higher learning use semesters of approximately 15-16 weeks or quarters of approximately 10-11 weeks. This varies a bit from institution to institution. A full academic year of instruction (not including the summer) is two semesters or three quarters, or 30-33 weeks. See the U.S. Department of Education's paper on Credit Systems, downloadable at https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/us/credits.doc

exit year, overall, was 58.7 percent, and that the alumni that did enroll were enrolled for a median of 74.9 weeks.

Exhibit 6. Enrollment In or After the Exit Year from AmeriCorps, by Program and Overall

| | | | | Weeks of Enrollment | | | |
| | | | | Everyone | | Enrolled Only | |
Program	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
ASN	61,065	37,202	60.9%	24.1	54.6	71.9	89.6
NCCC	2,920	1,920	65.7%	44.7	64.9	85.1	98.7
VISTA	15,359	7,433	48.4%	0.0	47.2	79.9	97.5
Overall	79,344	46,555	58.7%	17.9	53.5	74.9	91.2

Exhibit 7 shows statistics on enrollment rates and length of enrollments by cohort. The oldest cohort shows the most weeks of enrollment, for those enrolled, but the lowest enrollment rate. It is possible that enrollment rates are driven by NSC coverage (i.e., poorer coverage for older cohorts); therefore we should not over-interpret these findings.

Exhibit 7. All Enrollments Found, by Cohort

| | | | | Weeks of Enrollment | | | |
| | | | | Everyone | | Enrolled Only | |
Cohort	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
2005	23,002	17,180	74.7%	135.3	142.6	185.9	190.9
2010	31,978	26,007	81.3%	154.1	153.2	189.4	188.4
2013	24,364	20,431	83.9%	158.6	148.0	175.0	176.5

Exhibit 8 shows enrollments in or after the exit year, by cohort. The enrollment rate and weeks of enrollment is highest for the oldest (2005) cohort, and lowest for the newest (2013) cohort. There are two countervailing effects at work; the older cohorts are less likely to show up as enrolled in NSC data, as NSC coverage has improved over time, but the oldest cohort also has longest period of possible enrollment. It appears that the second effect may be more prevalent in these data.

Exhibit 8. Enrollment In or After the Exit Year from AmeriCorps, by Cohort

| | | | | Weeks of Enrollment | | | |
| | | | | Everyone | | Enrolled Only | |
Cohort	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
2005	23,002	15,166	65.9%	46.7	79.0	99.4	119.8
2010	31,978	19,040	59.5%	17.4	51.2	69.6	86.0
2013	24,364	12,349	50.7%	6.0	32.6	62.0	64.3

The following tables are by cohort for each program. We start, in

Exhibit 9, with all enrollments for the ASN cohorts. Here, we see a slight increase in the rate of enrollment for more recent cohorts, from 75.5 percent for the 2005 ASN cohort to 83.6 percent for the 2013 ASN cohort.

Exhibit 9. All Enrollments Found, by Cohort, ASN

| | | | | Weeks of Enrollment | | | |
| | | | | Everyone | | Enrolled Only | |
Cohort	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
2005	17,628	13,314	75.5%	137.1	143.6	187.0	190.2
2010	24,954	20,361	81.6%	154.1	153.3	192.6	187.9
2013	18,483	15,461	83.6%	157.4	147.4	173.5	176.2

Exhibit 10 shows enrollments since the exit year with the ASN cohorts. These show a decline in such enrollment with later cohorts, probably driven mainly by the fact that these later cohorts have had less opportunity to enroll.

Exhibit 10. Enrollment In or After the Exit Year from AmeriCorps, by Cohort, ASN

| | | | | Weeks of Enrollment | | | |
| | | | | Everyone | | Enrolled Only | |
Cohort	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
2005	17,628	11,980	68.0%	47.9	80.7	94.9	118.7
2010	24,954	15,647	62.7%	25.1	52.0	65.6	83.0
2013	18,483	9,576	51.8%	10.9	33.2	62.0	64.1

Exhibit 11 contains information on all enrollments for the NCCC cohorts. These cohorts had a very high rate of enrollment relative to alumni from other programs; enrollment rates are somewhat higher for the older cohorts, as are total weeks of enrollment.

Exhibit 11. All Enrollments Found, by Cohort, NCCC

| | | | | Weeks of Enrollment | | | |
| | | | | Everyone | | Enrolled Only | |
Cohort	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
2005	883	823	93.2%	166.9	181.6	177.5	195.0
2010	730	675	92.5%	143.4	146.2	154.1	158.1
2013	1,307	1,070	81.9%	106.9	106.6	129.3	130.3

In Exhibit 12, we present the NCCC cohorts' enrollment in or after the Exit Year. There has been a decrease in the enrollment rate and the median number of weeks of enrollment in more recent cohorts, probably driven mainly by the fact that older cohorts have had a longer time since exit to enroll. In fact, since NSC coverage has improved over time, the enrollment difference may be understated; alumni in older cohorts are more likely to have enrolled in postsecondary education when NSC coverage was lower than it is today, so their enrollments are more likely to be missing from the NSC dataset.

Exhibit 12. Enrollment in or after the Exit Year from AmeriCorps, by Cohort, NCCC

| | | | | Weeks of Enrollment | | | |
| | | | | Everyone | | Enrolled Only | |
Cohort	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
2005	883	689	78.1%	91.7	106.2	115.4	136.1
2010	730	536	73.5%	64.2	70.5	91.4	96.0
2013	1,307	694	53.1%	10.6	33.9	61.6	63.8

Exhibit 13 presents the total enrollment statistics for the VISTA cohorts. In terms of total enrollment, there has been an increase in the enrollment rate for the more recent cohorts compared to the older ones, while the numbers of weeks of enrollment for the three cohorts are similar. Again, the differences are amplified by the fact that the older cohorts have worse coverage.

Exhibit 13. All Enrollments Found, by Cohort, VISTA

| | | | | Weeks of Enrollment | | | |
| | | | | Everyone | | Enrolled Only | |
Cohort	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
2005	4,491	3,043	67.8%	118.8	130.8	184.6	193.1
2010	6,294	4,970	79.0%	158.0	153.5	189.5	194.4
2013	4,574	3,901	85.3%	177.7	162.3	188.6	190.3

Exhibit 14 presents the enrollment rates and weeks of enrollment in or after the exit year for the VISTA cohorts. There is a declining enrollment rate for the more recent cohorts, as well as a decline in the weeks of enrollment. Again, this is probably largely due to the fact that the more recent cohorts have had less time to enroll.

Exhibit 14. Enrollment in or after the Exit Year from AmeriCorps, by Cohort, VISTA

| | | | | Weeks of Enrollment | | | |
| | | | | Everyone | | Enrolled Only | |
Cohort	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
2005	4,491	2,497	55.6%	27.2	67.2	101.7	120.9
2010	6,294	2,857	45.4%	0.0	45.7	84.9	100.6
2013	4,574	2,079	45.5%	0.0	29.6	61.9	65.2

Exhibit 15 gives the statistics on total enrollments by the amount of the education award used. Those alumni who did not use the award enrolled at much lower rates. The other groups enrolled at very high but comparable rates, in the high-80% to the low-90% range. There appears to be a positive but weak relationship between the amount of the award used and the number of weeks of enrollment, as generally those who used more of the award had more weeks of enrollment, although the number of weeks declines slightly for the highest category .

Exhibit 15. All Enrollments Found, by Amount of Education Award Used

| | | | | Weeks of Enrollment | | | |
| | | | | Everyone | | Enrolled Only | |
Amount of Education Award Used	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
None	26,939	16,266	60.4%	35.9	87.5	141.3	144.9
$1-2,500	9,537	8,205	86.0%	152.3	152.9	169.3	177.7
$2,501-5,000	20,701	18,698	90.3%	182.1	179.8	195.3	199.1
$5,001-7,500	9,646	8,907	92.3%	182.3	182.6	190.6	197.7
$7,501-10,000	9,714	8,897	91.6%	211.7	199.6	223.4	218.0
$10,001+	2,807	2,646	94.3%	204.3	194.8	210.3	206.6

Exhibit 16 gives the statistics on enrollments in or after the exit year, by the amount of the education award used. The table shows no systematic relationship between these enrollments and the amount of the award used, except for those who used no award. As one might expect, those who used no award had a much lower rate of enrollment than all of the other sub-groups.

Exhibit 16. Enrollment In or After the Exit Year from AmeriCorps, by Amount of Education Award Used

Amount of Education Award Used	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Weeks of Enrollment			
				Everyone		Enrolled Only	
				Median	Mean	Median	Mean
None	26,939	9,909	36.8%	0.0	27.6	54.7	75.1
$1-2,500	9,537	6,620	69.4%	33.3	63.6	73.4	91.6
$2,501-5,000	20,701	14,355	69.3%	46.7	70.9	90.3	102.2
$5,001-7,500	9,646	6,366	66.0%	45.4	56.6	76.1	85.8
$7,501-10,000	9,714	7,471	76.9%	60.0	78.8	80.9	102.5
$10,001+	2,807	1,834	65.3%	31.4	41.9	68.9	64.2

Exhibit 17 shows statistics for total enrollments by gender. This table shows that women had higher rates of enrollments and more weeks of enrollment than men.

Exhibit 17. All Enrollments Found, by Gender

Gender	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Weeks of Enrollment			
				Everyone		Enrolled Only	
				Median	Mean	Median	Mean
Male	23,814	18,532	77.8%	130.0	134.3	164.9	172.5
Female	50,669	41,154	81.2%	161.0	156.3	189.9	192.4

Exhibit 18 shows enrollment statistics for the exit year or later by gender. Women enrolled at higher rates and if they enrolled, had more weeks of enrollment than men. This mirrors national trends of higher female participation in higher education.

Exhibit 18. Enrollment In or After the Exit Year from AmeriCorps, by Gender

Gender	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Weeks of Enrollment			
				Everyone		Enrolled Only	
				Median	Mean	Median	Mean
Male	23,814	13,208	55.5%	16.0	50.0	73.6	90.1
Female	50,669	30,706	60.6%	30.4	56.7	76.1	93.5

Exhibit 19 shows total enrollments by age at program entry. This shows that the 23-29 age group had the highest total level of enrollment, both in terms of their enrollment rate and weeks enrolled. This may be because members of this group were college graduates when they entered AmeriCorps, since this includes the ages of traditional college graduates.

Exhibit 19. All Enrollments Found, by Age at Program Entry

Age at Program Entry	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Weeks of Enrollment			
				Everyone		Enrolled Only	
				Median	Mean	Median	Mean
17-22	24,429	19,071	78.1%	128.7	130.1	165.0	166.7
23-29	38,980	34,780	89.2%	184.0	177.8	196.1	199.2
30-39	7,155	5,323	74.4%	121.0	149.8	188.6	201.3
40+	8,780	4,444	50.6%	9.6	68.8	95.0	136.0

Exhibit 20 shows enrollments in or after the exit year by age at program entry. We see a decline in the rate of enrollment and the median weeks of enrollment as participants with each older age group, which is most likely due to lower NSC coverage rates going back 10-15 years or more. This is likely because the older age groups are more likely to be composed of people who are already college graduates and therefore are less likely to go back to school.

Exhibit 20. Enrollment In or After the Exit Year from AmeriCorps, by Age at Program Entry

Age at Program Entry	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Weeks of Enrollment			
				Everyone		Enrolled Only	
				Median	Mean	Median	Mean
17-22	24,429	16,332	66.9%	47.1	71.2	92.6	106.4
23-29	38,980	23,074	59.2%	17.6	48.5	66.6	82.0
30-39	7,155	3,952	55.2%	15.4	49.5	60.9	89.6
40+	8,780	3,198	36.4%	0.0	30.1	56.4	82.5

Exhibit 21 shows total enrollments by the prior education level that was included in the AmeriCorps alumni sample data provided by CNCS. Those with bachelor's or graduate degrees show the highest level of enrollment, while those with any degree show the highest number of weeks of enrollment. It is interesting that those with associate degrees have the highest median number of weeks of enrollment, which seems to indicate that this group is relatively unsuccessful, compared to the other two groups with degrees, at converting weeks of enrollment into postsecondary success (in terms of a bachelor's degree or higher). However, we should wary of drawing any conclusions due to the large size of the group with an unknown prior education level.

Exhibit 21. All Enrollments Found, by Prior Education

Prior Education	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Everyone		Enrolled Only	
				Median	Mean	Median	Mean
Less than HS	2,299	841	36.6%	0.0	23.1	36.0	63.0
HS or equivalent	4,609	3023	65.6%	24.4	53.1	58.6	81.0
Vocational Training	554	329	59.3%	36.1	37.6	57.7	63.4
Some College	8,422	7117	84.5%	140.4	145.5	163.0	172.2
Associate Degree	1,546	1211	78.3%	176.3	168.6	213.9	215.3
Bachelor's Degree	25,393	22946	90.4%	184.9	180.8	193.7	200.1
Graduate Degree	3,708	3243	87.5%	193.1	184.4	202.7	210.8
Unknown	32,813	24907	75.9%	137.3	143.4	189.1	188.9

Exhibit 22 looks at enrollment in or after the exit year by prior education. Those with some college enrolled at the highest rate (perhaps to complete college), followed by those who did not report prior education (the "unknown group"). However, it is difficult to draw many conclusions from the enrollment rates of these groups, due to the large size of the unknown group.

Exhibit 22. Enrollment In or After the Exit Year from AmeriCorps, by Prior Education

Prior Education	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Weeks of Enrollment			
				Everyone		Enrolled Only	
				Median	Mean	Median	Mean
Less than HS	2,299	792	34.5%	0.0	17.1	18.6	49.7
HS or equivalent	4,609	2,258	49.0%	0.0	32.7	48.0	66.7
Vocational Training	554	140	25.3%	0.0	12.7	46.0	49.9
Some College	8,422	5,815	69.0%	46.7	61.4	82.0	88.9
Associate Degree	1,546	826	53.4%	14.6	41.1	65.7	76.9
Bachelor's Degree	25,393	13,921	54.8%	16.4	40.6	65.6	74.0
Graduate Degree	3,708	1,640	44.2%	0.0	33.3	60.0	75.3
Unknown	32,813	21,163	64.5%	34.6	70.6	86.0	109.5

Exhibit 23 shows statistics on all enrollments by number of terms served. Those alumni who served two terms have the highest rate of enrollment. They also have the highest total weeks of enrollment.

Exhibit 23. All Enrollments Found, by Number of Terms Served

Number of Terms Served	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Weeks of Enrollment			
				Everyone		Enrolled Only	
				Median	Mean	Median	Mean
1	48,047	37,173	77.4%	141.1	136.9	172.3	176.9
2	27,492	23,478	85.4%	181.0	171.4	203.6	200.7
3	2,999	2,410	80.4%	150.0	138.7	173.4	172.6
4	714	485	67.9%	65.3	102.7	92.6	151.3
5	92	71	77.3%	14.6	72.9	53.7	94.4

Exhibit 24 shows the enrollment statistics for the exit year or later by number of terms served. Again, those alumni who served two terms have the highest enrollment of this type.

Exhibit 24. Enrollment In or After the Exit Year from AmeriCorps, by Number of Terms Served

Number of Terms Served	Overall N	Enrolled N	Percent Enrolled	Weeks of Enrollment			
				Everyone		Enrolled Only	
				Median	Mean	Median	Mean
1	48,047	26,527	55.2%	16.3	50.1	74.9	90.7
2	27,492	17,951	65.3%	34.6	61.9	77.3	94.8
3	2,999	1,668	55.6%	16.3	38.8	57.4	69.7
4	714	390	54.5%	21.9	30.1	54.7	55.2
5	92	20	21.4%	0.0	25.0	116.9	116.9

3.2   Postsecondary Institution Types

Exhibit 25 shows the institution type associated with each alumnus's enrollments, by program and overall. The largest group of alumni had multiple types of schools in their enrollments. If they attended only one type of school, it was most likely to be a four-year public school. NCCC alumni had the highest rate of attendance at community colleges (two-year public schools), while VISTA alumni had the lowest.

Exhibit 25. Institution Type of Enrollments, by Program and Overall

Program	No Enrollment	Two-Year Public Only	Four-Year Public Only	Four-Year Private Only	Two-Year Private or Less than Two Year Only	Multiple Types
ASN	19.5%	11.1%	15.0%	10.8%	0.2%	43.3%
NCCC	12.1%	16.8%	17.9%	9.6%	0.0%	43.7%
VISTA	22.4%	4.7%	19.3%	15.2%	0.4%	38.0%
Overall	19.8%	10.1%	15.9%	11.6%	0.2%	42.3%

Exhibit 26 shows the institution type of enrollments by cohort. The largest group of alumni attended multiple types of school. The pattern for ASN cohorts shown in Exhibit 27 is similar. The pattern for the NCCC cohorts in Exhibit 28 and VISTA cohorts in Exhibit 29 also shows high rates for multiple types of schools. The two most recent VISTA cohorts make relatively high use of four-year public schools alone.

Exhibit 26. Institution Type of Enrollments, by Cohort

Cohort	No Enrollment	Two-Year Public Only	Four-Year Public Only	Four-Year Private Only	Two-Year Private or Less than Two Year Only	Multiple Types
2005	25.3%	11.5%	13.5%	11.0%	0.6%	38.1%
2010	18.7%	8.9%	16.1%	10.7%	0.1%	45.5%
2013	16.1%	10.3%	17.8%	13.5%	0.1%	42.1%

Exhibit 27. Institution Type of Enrollments, by ASN Cohort

Cohort	No Enrollment	Two-Year Public Only	Four-Year Public Only	Four-Year Private Only	Two-Year Private or Less than Two Year Only	Multiple Types
2005	24.5%	12.9%	13.2%	10.4%	0.5%	38.6%
2010	18.4%	10.1%	14.7%	9.1%	0.2%	47.6%
2013	16.4%	10.8%	17.0%	13.6%	0.0%	42.2%

Exhibit 28. Institution Type of Enrollments, by NCCC Cohort

Cohort	No Enrollment	Two-Year Public Only	Four-Year Public Only	Four-Year Private Only	Two-Year Private or Less than Two Year Only	Multiple Types
2005	6.8%	8.7%	20.1%	11.9%	0.0%	52.5%
2010	7.5%	17.3%	18.6%	8.8%	0.0%	47.8%
2013	18.1%	22.1%	15.9%	8.4%	0.0%	35.4%

Exhibit 29. Institution Type of Enrollments, by VISTA Cohort

Cohort	No Enrollment	Two-Year Public Only	Four-Year Public Only	Four-Year Private Only	Two-Year Private or Less than Two Year Only	Multiple Types
2005	32.2%	6.5%	13.6%	13.1%	0.9%	33.6%
2010	21.0%	3.3%	21.8%	17.0%	0.0%	36.9%
2013	14.7%	4.8%	21.6%	14.7%	0.4%	43.7%

Exhibit 30 shows the institution type of enrollments by the amount of the education award used. Again, multiple types are common; those using no award have lower levels of overall enrollment. No other patterns stand out.

Exhibit 30. Institution Type of Enrollments, by Amount of Education Award Used

Amount of Education Award Used	No Enrollment	Two-Year Public Only	Four-Year Public Only	Four-Year Private Only	Two-Year Private or Less than Two Year Only	Multiple Types
None	39.6%	13.4%	13.7%	7.6%	0.5%	25.3%
$1-2,500	14.0%	14.2%	16.0%	7.3%	0.0%	48.6%
$2,501-5,000	9.7%	7.5%	18.4%	13.1%	0.3%	51.0%
$5,001-7,500	7.7%	6.6%	20.0%	19.1%	0.0%	46.6%
$7,501-10,000	8.4%	7.4%	13.6%	14.0%	0.0%	56.6%
$10,001+	5.7%	4.7%	12.5%	21.0%	0.0%	56.0%

As shown in Exhibit 31, there appear to be only small differences by gender in the types of institutions used, except that men use two-year publics only at a higher rate. This probably reflects men's lower levels of educational attainment generally (DiPrete and Buchman, 2013).

Exhibit 31. Institution Type of Enrollments, by Gender

Gender	No Enrollment	Two-Year Public Only	Four-Year Public Only	Four-Year Private Only	Two-Year Private or Less than Two Year Only	Multiple Types
Male	22.2%	13.2%	15.9%	9.8%	0.4%	38.6%
Female	18.8%	8.6%	16.4%	11.7%	0.2%	44.3%

Exhibit 32 shows institution type by age. The youngest and oldest groups use community colleges (only) at higher rates, and the middle two groups use four-year publics (only) at a higher rate.

Exhibit 32. Institution Type of Enrollments, by Age at Program Entry

Age at Program Entry	No Enrollment	Two-Year Public Only	Four-Year Public Only	Four-Year Private Only	Two-Year Private or Less than Two Year Only	Multiple Types
17-22	21.9%	15.7%	13.9%	10.0%	0.5%	37.9%
23-29	10.8%	5.6%	17.9%	14.1%	0.1%	51.5%
30-39	25.6%	8.9%	17.6%	5.3%	0.0%	42.6%
40+	49.4%	15.2%	11.1%	10.4%	0.5%	13.4%

Exhibit 33 shows institution type by prior education. As prior education goes up, so does usage of four-year public schools (only) and four-year private schools (only), except for a dip in four-year private schools for those with graduate degrees. Those with less education are more likely to have attended community college, which makes sense.

Exhibit 33. Institution Type of Enrollments, by Prior Education

Prior Education	No Enrollment	Two-Year Public Only	Four-Year Public Only	Four-Year Private Only	Two-Year Private or Less than Two Year Only	Multiple Types
Less than HS	63.4%	20.3%	9.1%	4.2%	0.0%	3.0%
HS or equivalent	34.4%	34.7%	9.2%	4.7%	0.0%	17.0%
Vocational Training	40.7%	27.7%	7.9%	1.0%	0.0%	22.7%
Some College	15.5%	18.4%	19.2%	5.0%	0.2%	41.8%
Associate Degree	21.7%	8.8%	13.8%	11.2%	0.0%	44.5%
Bachelor's Degree	9.6%	1.1%	19.1%	16.8%	0.0%	53.3%
Graduate Degree	12.5%	3.8%	20.3%	13.8%	0.0%	49.5%
Unknown	24.1%	11.2%	13.8%	10.8%	0.5%	39.7%

Exhibit 34 shows the institution type by number of terms served. There is not much of a pattern here. Those who served five terms are much more likely to have attended community college (only) or a four-year public school (only), but the small number of alumni who served five terms means these numbers are less meaningful.

Exhibit 34. Institution Type of Enrollments, by Number of Terms Served

Number of Terms Served	No Enrollment	Two-Year Public Only	Four-Year Public Only	Four-Year Private Only	Two-Year Private or Less than Two Year Only	Multiple Types
1	22.6%	10.3%	16.2%	11.0%	0.3%	39.7%
2	14.6%	9.2%	15.6%	12.7%	0.3%	47.6%
3	19.6%	14.8%	15.9%	12.7%	0.0%	37.0%
4	32.1%	8.9%	8.9%	8.9%	0.0%	41.2%
5	22.7%	21.4%	34.4%	0.0%	0.0%	21.4%

3.3　Highest Postsecondary Degrees

Exhibit 35 shows the highest degree found in the NSC data, by program and overall. VISTA participants have the highest rate of both bachelor's degree attainment and master's degree attainment. Overall, 31.9 percent of AmeriCorps alumni had a bachelor's degree, 18.2 percent a master's degree, and 3.6 percent with a doctorate, according to NSC. This is a total of 53.7 percent of alumni with a bachelor's degree or higher. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 32.5 percent of adults aged 25 or older in the U.S. had a bachelor's degree or higher in 2015.[12] Thus the AmeriCorps alumni are considerably better educated than the population at large. Also, the NSC degree percentages are undercounts of the true level of educational

---

[12] https://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/education/data/cps/2015/tables.html

attainment, because NSC coverage is incomplete and the coverage rates are lower for degrees than for enrollments (see section 2.1).

Exhibit 35. Highest Degree Found in NSC Data, by Program and Overall

Program	No Degree Recorded	Unknown Degree	Certificate	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate
ASN	41.4%	1.4%	0.8%	3.7%	30.8%	18.1%	3.8%
NCCC	43.6%	3.2%	0.9%	6.0%	32.9%	11.2%	2.2%
VISTA	34.8%	2.1%	0.8%	2.8%	35.9%	20.3%	3.3%
Overall	40.2%	1.6%	0.8%	3.6%	31.9%	18.2%	3.6%

Exhibit 36 shows the highest degree found in the NSC data, by cohort. The more recent cohorts are increasingly likely to have a bachelor's degree as their highest degree. However, this may be simply because they have had less time to attain a master's degree.

Exhibit 36. Highest Degree Found in NSC Data, by Cohort

Cohort	No Degree Recorded	Unknown Degree	Certificate	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate
2005	45.8%	2.0%	0.8%	3.7%	21.4%	20.1%	6.2%
2010	38.4%	1.1%	0.9%	3.2%	31.7%	20.5%	4.1%
2013	37.3%	2.0%	0.7%	4.1%	41.9%	13.5%	0.5%

Exhibit 37 shows the highest degree attained in the NSC data for the ASN cohorts. The pattern here is similar to the cohorts overall, since ASN is by far the largest program.

Exhibit 37. Highest Degree Found in NSC Data, by ASN Cohort

Cohort	No Degree Recorded	Unknown Degree	Certificate	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate
2005	46.3%	1.9%	0.7%	3.5%	21.5%	19.5%	6.5%
2010	40.1%	0.8%	1.0%	3.3%	29.8%	20.8%	4.2%
2013	38.6%	1.7%	0.7%	4.5%	41.1%	12.9%	0.5%

Exhibit 38 shows the highest degree attained in the NSC data for the NCCC cohorts. Here, we see a decline in both bachelor's and master's degrees in the latest (2013) cohort. Again, this is likely due to the fact that the latest cohort has had less time to get a degree.

Exhibit 38. Highest Degree Found in NSC Data, by NCCC Cohort

Cohort	No Degree Recorded	Unknown Degree	Certificate	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate
2005	26.0%	3.7%	2.3%	5.9%	32.4%	23.7%	5.9%
2010	37.6%	2.7%	0.9%	6.6%	37.6%	12.8%	1.8%
2013	58.8%	3.1%	0.0%	5.8%	30.5%	1.8%	0.0%

Exhibit 39 shows the highest degree attained in the NSC data for the VISTA cohorts. The latest cohort has a higher bachelor's degree attainment rate than the other two programs; master's degree attainment is similar among the three cohorts. Some of this difference is due to improving NSC coverage.

Exhibit 39. Highest Degree Found in NSC Data, by VISTA Cohort

Cohort	No Degree Recorded	Unknown Degree	Certificate	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate
2005	47.7%	1.9%	0.9%	3.7%	19.2%	21.5%	5.1%
2010	32.1%	1.8%	0.7%	2.6%	38.7%	19.9%	4.1%
2013	26.0%	2.6%	0.9%	2.2%	48.5%	19.5%	0.4%

Exhibit 40 shows the highest degree attained in the NSC data, by the amount of the education award used. Those using the most ($10,000 or more) have the highest rate of bachelor's degree attainment and the second highest rate of master's degree attainment. However, this is the smallest group. The largest group used no award, and the second largest group used $2,501-$5,000.

Exhibit 40. Highest Degree Found in NSC Data, by Amount of Education Award Used

Amount of Education Award Used	No Degree Recorded	Unknown Degree	Certificate	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate
None	65.2%	1.4%	0.7%	2.8%	22.5%	6.2%	1.2%
$1-2,500	41.5%	2.4%	1.1%	6.0%	32.0%	14.8%	2.0%
$2,501-5,000	26.5%	1.4%	0.5%	4.6%	38.4%	22.3%	6.3%
$5,001-7,500	23.1%	2.6%	1.5%	1.8%	42.5%	24.8%	3.6%
$7,501-10,000	22.8%	1.0%	1.0%	3.7%	28.9%	35.7%	6.9%
$10,001+	15.8%	0.8%	0.0%	2.3%	47.6%	32.4%	1.1%

Exhibit 41 shows the highest degree found in the NSC data by gender. Women have highest rates of bachelor's degree and master's degree receipt than men, but men lead in doctorates.

Exhibit 41. Highest Degree Found in NSC Data, by Gender

Gender	No Degree Recorded	Unknown Degree	Certificate	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate
Male	48.0%	1.0%	0.2%	3.0%	29.0%	13.6%	5.0%
Female	36.3%	1.9%	1.2%	4.0%	32.9%	20.5%	3.1%

Exhibit 42 shows the highest degree found in NSC data by age at program entry. The 23-29 group leads in bachelor's, master's, and doctorates. The over 40 group has much lower recorded educational attainment levels than the other groups, perhaps in part because they have the worst coverage in NSC, since they are likely to have gotten any education the longest time ago.

Exhibit 42. Highest Degree Found in NSC Data, by Age at Program Entry

Age at Program Entry	No Degree Recorded	Unknown Degree	Certificate	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate
17-22	51.9%	1.6%	0.7%	4.7%	25.9%	11.4%	3.7%
23-29	24.1%	1.9%	0.6%	2.0%	42.3%	24.6%	4.5%
30-39	47.2%	1.7%	1.8%	5.3%	23.0%	17.8%	3.1%
40+	73.5%	0.4%	1.0%	6.2%	9.6%	9.1%	0.3%

Exhibit 43 shows the highest degree found in the NSC data by prior education level. This table largely shows consistency between the two measures, although not every degree reported by participants in their prior education level is showing up in the NSC match results due to incomplete NSC coverage of degrees. In addition, prior education level is unknown for about 45 percent of alumni.

Exhibit 43. Highest Degree Found in NSC Data, by Prior Education

Prior Education	No Degree Recorded	Unknown Degree	Certificate	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate
Less than HS	98.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	1.0%	0.0%
HS or equivalent	87.6%	1.6%	2.1%	6.4%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Vocational Training	81.5%	5.7%	10.9%	0.7%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Some College	62.4%	0.9%	2.2%	7.4%	22.6%	4.1%	0.5%
Associate Degree	40.3%	5.4%	3.9%	25.7%	21.6%	3.0%	0.0%
Bachelor's Degree	15.0%	1.8%	0.2%	1.1%	58.8%	20.3%	2.8%
Graduate Degree	20.1%	1.6%	0.6%	2.0%	12.9%	55.4%	7.4%
Unknown	44.8%	1.5%	0.6%	3.6%	23.0%	20.8%	5.6%

Exhibit 44 shows the highest degree found in the NSC data by terms served. Those who served two terms have the highest level of education in terms of a bachelor's degree or higher.

Exhibit 44. Highest Degree Found in NSC Data, by Number of Terms Served

Number of Terms Served	No Degree Recorded	Unknown Degree	Certificate	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctorate
1	44.0%	1.7%	0.7%	3.8%	32.4%	14.2%	3.2%
2	32.7%	1.1%	0.9%	3.3%	31.3%	25.7%	4.8%
3	43.3%	3.6%	1.8%	3.2%	32.2%	15.7%	0.2%
4	59.9%	4.5%	0.0%	4.5%	17.8%	13.4%	0.0%
5	78.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	21.4%	0.0%	0.0%

Exhibit 45 shows the degree major field associated with the highest degree in the NSC data, overall, by program, and by cohort (The coding of degree majors is described in section 2.3).Only the top ten fields

are listed in the exhibit (a complete list of major fields is provided in a supplementary Excel file provided to CNCS summarizing the NSC match results). Education is the most popular field, although social sciences is the most popular field among VISTA alumni and for the entire 2013 cohort. Other popular fields include public administration and social services, business, and health professions.

Exhibit 45. Major Field of Highest Degree, Overall, by Program, and by Cohort

Major Field of Highest Degree	Overall	ASN	NCCC	VISTA	2005	2010	2013
Education	10.3%	11.9%	4.5%	5.1%	10.9%	11.8%	7.5%
Social Sciences	7.3%	6.3%	6.8%	11.3%	3.2%	7.4%	11.0%
Public Administration and Social Service Professions	4.0%	3.4%	4.3%	6.4%	5.1%	3.8%	3.5%
Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services	3.7%	3.3%	3.9%	5.4%	4.1%	3.8%	3.2%
Health Professions and Related Programs	3.5%	3.6%	2.7%	3.1%	4.3%	4.0%	1.7%
Psychology	2.9%	3.2%	4.2%	1.8%	2.9%	1.9%	4.4%
Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities	2.9%	2.9%	3.7%	2.7%	3.1%	2.7%	2.8%
English Language and Literature/ Letters	2.8%	2.4%	2.3%	4.2%	1.3%	3.5%	3.2%
Legal Professions and Studies	2.4%	2.5%	1.4%	2.4%	3.4%	2.8%	1.0%
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	1.9%	2.0%	2.5%	1.5%	0.9%	1.2%	4.0%
Other Field	15.3%	14.5%	15.6%	18.4%	11.3%	16.5%	17.7%
Unknown or No Degree	43.0%	44.1%	48.0%	37.7%	49.5%	40.7%	40.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

4. Conclusion

While the NSC match proved to have some limitations with incomplete coverage and with a higher than expected rate of FERPA blocks for AmeriCorps alumni in the sample it did produce largely meaningful results. Some of the key findings are as follows:

- There was almost universal enrollment in college among alumni: an NSC rate of 80.2 percent, which is probably about 10-15 percent too low due to coverage gaps and FERPA blocks. The match results showed that 58.7 percent of alumni enrolled in college in their exit year or later according to the NSC match, which again is an underestimate of the true value.
- There was variation in enrollment by cohort and program. The older cohorts had slightly lower enrollment, but this is in least in part explained by reduced coverage by the NSC going back ten or more years. NCCC had the highest enrollment rate (at 87.9 percent) and VISTA the lowest (at 77.6 percent), although both rates are likely 90% or higher after correcting for the FERPA blocks and additional false negatives in the data match results.
- As expected, women had higher enrollment than men, and enrollment rates declined as the age of members at the time of program entry increased, assumedly due to lower NSC coverage in the more distant past.
- As expected, total weeks of enrollment increased with higher reported prior education levels.
- Alumni with two terms of AmeriCorps service had the highest levels of enrollment and educational attainment.
- Most alumni enrolled in multiple types of institutions; if they enrolled in a single type, it was most likely to be a four-year public institution.
- Alumni were found to have a significantly higher level of attainment of bachelor's degrees or higher degrees than the general adult population. Of the three programs, VISTA alumni had the highest rate of four-year college completion and NCCC the lowest, but all three had substantially higher rates than the U.S. adult population.
- Female alumni had higher degree attainment across the board, except for doctorates. Older people had fewer degrees, although this could be more due to lower coverage rates by the NSC for the more distant past.
- Those who had higher prior education levels per the alumni data provided by CNCS also had higher attainment in the NSC data, with discrepancies likely caused by coverage issues, false negatives in the NSC match, and a significant number of FERPA blocks.
- The most common major associated with alumni's highest degree was education, followed by social sciences. The next most common were public administration and social services, business, and health professions.

In conclusion, the NSC match provided rich information about the educational attainment of AmeriCorps alumni, including information about enrollments and degrees, both total and after program exit, as well as detailed information about degree majors. We believe that NSC could serve as a useful resource for CNCS going forward if the agency wants to track the educational outcomes of its alumni. While the coverage for degrees is not quite as good as that for enrollments (for the latter, coverage is becoming close to universal outside the for-profit higher education sector), coverage for both is improving yearly, so the results of any future matches will only get better with time. FERPA blocks and false negative non-matches will continue to cause underestimates of postsecondary outcomes, but their impact is fairly minimal. If program or cohort averages are of interest rather than the outcomes of specific alumni, matches can be completed at relatively low cost with a high degree of statistical precision by using

stratified random samples rather than the full population of alumni. A sample of around 1,000 alumni can generate estimates with standard errors of around 2 percent (margin of error +/- 4 percentage points), and a sample of around 3,000 alumni can generate estimates with standard errors of around 1 percent (margin of error +/- 2 percentage points).

References

Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development (2008a). *Improving Lives and Communities: Perspectives on 40 Years of VISTA Service,* Washington, DC: Author

Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development (2008b). *Still Serving: Measuring the Eight-Year Impact of AmeriCorps on Alumni,* Washington, DC: Author.

Corporation for National and Community Service (2015a). *Request for Quote (RFQ): Expert Consultants – New Methods for Assessing AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes*. Washington, DC: Author.

Corporation for National and Community Service (2015b). AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes: Summary Report. Corporation for National and Community Service. Washington, DC: Author.Corporation for National and Community Service (2015c). AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes: Technical Memo. Corporation for National and Community Service. Washington, DC: Author.

DiPrete, T. A. & Buchmann, C. (2013). The Rise of Women: The Growing Gender Gap in Education and What it Means for American Schools. New York: Russell Sage.

Dynarski, S. M., Hemelt, S. W., & Hyman, J. M. (2013). The Missing Manual: Using National Student Clearinghouse Data to Track Postsecondary Outcomes. Working Paper 19552, National Bureau of Economic Research.

National Student Clearinghouse. (2015). Impact of Directory Information Blocks on StudentTracker Results. Available online: https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/NSC_Directory_Block_Rates.pdf

Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Wakhungu, P.K., Yuan, X., Nathan, A. & Hwang, Y. (2015, November). *Completing College: A National View of Student Attainment Rates – Fall 2009 Cohort* (Signature Report No. 10). Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Available online: https://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport10/