

# NATIONAL SERVICE AND THE ARTS

## STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN NATIONAL SERVICE INITIATIVES AND THE ARTS TO ADDRESS UN-MET COMMUNITY NEEDS IN AMERICA

---

### ACTION NEEDED

---

We urge Congress to:

- **Support the Serve America Act (S. 277), the reauthorization of the National & Community Service Trust Act, that will strengthen opportunities for national service through increased volunteers and competitive grant programs for nonprofit organizations to conduct community service programs.**
- **Amend the National & Community Service Trust Act to specifically include community arts projects and nonprofit cultural organizations as eligible national service programs.**
- **Support the creation of a national Artists Corps consisting of young artists trained to work in low-income schools and communities. Promote partnerships with private nonprofit initiatives in the arts, such as the Music National Service Initiative, [www.musicnationalservice.org](http://www.musicnationalservice.org), which trains and deploys skilled musicians to work in public schools and low income communities, healthcare and therapeutic settings, and in the public domain with citizens of all ages.**

### TALKING POINTS

---

- The Serve-America Act (S. 277), introduced by Sens. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT) on January 16, 2009 to reauthorize the National & Community Service Trust Act, will increase the number of volunteers to 250,000, establish competitive grants for nonprofit organizations for community service programs, help place individuals age 50 or older with nonprofit organizations to carry out projects in specified areas of national need, and create a Volunteer Generation Fund program awarding competitive matching grants to nonprofit organizations to increase the availability and capacity of volunteers.
- Arts organizations and art-related projects have a proven record of filling un-met community needs through the Corporation for National and Community Service programs:
  - AmeriCorps members have helped to build and administer summer arts camps in rural communities, designed and painted murals in low-income city districts, and strengthened programming at local arts councils.
  - Learn and Serve America has partnered with arts organizations to strengthen arts education and community service education in the public schools in Florida.
  - RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) members, under the SeniorCorps Program, have toured Delaware teaching art and music to children in after-school activities.
- Nonprofit arts organizations have received volunteers to assist with operational support and programming in addition to grants to help plan and develop community art initiatives.
- The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNS) works to fill various unmet needs in such areas as education, housing, healthcare, and community development. The arts bring individuals of all ages together, increase communication across cultural and ethnic boundaries, strengthen public education, and bring joy and entertainment to millions of Americans. Together, National Service and the arts create a powerful force, demonstrating the ability for Americans to take initiative, tap into their creative forces, and work together to address a broad array of unmet needs in our country.

### BACKGROUND

---

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNS) is an independent federal agency created to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in volunteer service through three umbrella organizations: AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and Senior Corps. AmeriCorps consists of AmeriCorps\*VISTA, AmeriCorps\*State and National, and AmeriCorps\*NCCC, while Senior Corps consists of the RSVP, Foster Grandparent, and Senior Companion programs. These service initiatives are administered by an extensive web of national and state offices,

*(continued)*

## **BACKGROUND (CONT'D)**

governor-appointed state service commissions, and regional offices. Nonprofit art organizations, schools, colleges, and local agencies are all eligible to receive volunteers and/or financial assistance from the Corporation for National and Community Service.

In 2008, CNS volunteers created murals, poetry, and dance with children from low-income housing; increased fundraising, public relations, and programming for a community art center; and brought the visual arts, dance, and theater to the mentally and physically disabled and the elderly. To date, AmeriCorps programs have benefited over 2,000 nonprofit organizations, Learn and Serve America has connected with over 1,000 schools and higher education institutions, and Senior Corps programs have supported over 12,000 nonprofit organizations.

### **FY 2008 Appropriations for the Corporation for National & Community Services = \$856,331,000.**

|                               |               |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| AmeriCorps*State and National | \$256,805,000 |
| National Senior Service Corps | \$213,785,000 |
| AmeriCorps*Vista              | \$93,800,000  |
| Learn and Serve America       | \$37,459,000  |
| AmeriCorps*NCCC               | \$23,782,000  |

## **EXAMPLES OF ARTS-RELATED RECIPIENTS OF NATIONAL SERVICE SUPPORT**

### **DELAWARE - Art Goes To School, Inc., Delaware Valley Region**

Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) 2007

Multiple RSVP volunteers traveled around the Delaware Valley Region to teach art appreciation classes to elementary school children.

### **FLORIDA - ArtSouth and the Miami-Dade County Public Schools**

Florida Learn & Serve Program 2006–2007

\$48,669 Florida Learn & Serve Grant to support the partnership between the nonprofit organization ArtSouth and the Public School system, affecting 4,000 students.

### **FLORIDA - Playwriting Class at Southside Fundamental Middle School, St. Petersburg**

Florida Learn & Serve Program 2006–2007

\$5,350 Renewal Project Grant to support 95 students in grades 6-8 to conduct a community arts education project.

### **MARYLAND - Community Art Corps, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore**

AmeriCorps\*State Grant Recipient 2003–2007

\$50,000 grant in 2003 increasing each year to a \$238,811 grant in 2007 to partner graduate students from the Maryland Institute College of Art with nonprofit arts organizations throughout the Baltimore area to create art-oriented programs for youth and residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods.

### **NEW MEXICO - VSA North Fourth Arts Center of New Mexico, Albuquerque**

AmeriCorps\*State Grant Recipient 2007

\$220,610 Competitive Grant to help more than 20 AmeriCorps\*VISTA volunteers serve as Artist-Teachers and Assistance Artist-Teachers that use creative expression to enhance the lives of the mentally and physically disabled and elderly.

### **NEW YORK - Arts and Education Project, Westcott Community Center, Syracuse**

AmeriCorps\*VISTA Program Support 2005, 2007

Four AmeriCorps\*VISTA volunteers to assist with community arts and education projects.

### **PENNSYLVANIA - KIC Program, Landis Community Outreach Center, Lafayette College**

AmeriCorps\*VISTA Program Support 2007

One AmeriCorps\*VISTA volunteer to design and implement arts programming that connects Lafayette College students with children of a nearby low-income housing project.

### **VERMONT - Rockingham Arts and Museum Project, Bellows Falls**

AmeriCorps\*State Program Support 2007

One AmeriCorps volunteer to coordinate artists in community service projects and develop community art programs.