



## Template – Grasstops Customized Letter

(Updated September 20, 2023)

*Your AmeriCorps program has a lot of stakeholders: your board members, service partners, philanthropic supporters, the Chamber of Commerce, your mayor and city council members, service beneficiaries, AmeriCorps alumni, and more. These respected members of your community can be policy influencers, and if activated, they can validate the importance of your work and AmeriCorps.*

*A well-crafted letter from these local stakeholders and champions can be an effective tool to communicate AmeriCorps' unique value to your community and the importance of federal funding.*

*This template letter should be customized, and you can invite your executive leadership or local champions to sign on.*

*A few tips for completing and sending this letter:*

- *As you customize the content for the letter, you should discuss whose letterhead you want to use.*
- *We recommend that you address this letter and send copies to both of your senators and to all of the representatives whose congressional districts you serve.*
- *If you want to reference the total number of AmeriCorps members serving in your state, this data point can be found in your state's [National Service Report](#).*
- *Letters, like this one, do not require wet ink or e-signatures. You can simply add the name, title, and organization for each signatory after the closing.*
- *When the letter is ready to submit – we recommend you send a copy by physical mail to the Washington DC office AND email copies to the lawmaker's Chief of Staff and their State Director. You can call the congressional office to ask for those staffers' names and email addresses.*
- *If you need assistance, please contact Ray AlQaisi ([raymond.alqaisi@cityyear.org](mailto:raymond.alqaisi@cityyear.org)), Director of Congressional Affairs at Voices for National Service.*

Dear [MEMBER OF CONGRESS],

We are writing on behalf of [ORGANIZATION NAME], located in [OFFICIAL'S DISTRICT/STATE], to convey the value of AmeriCorps to the community and express our support for fiscal year 2024 funding.

[INSERT HERE 2-3 SENTENCES ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION:

- Provide a brief description of your program or organization, with a link to any public-facing website.
- Explain how AmeriCorps funding and AmeriCorps members help your organization deliver tangible impact in the state or congressional district, i.e. "Because of AmeriCorps, we are able to..."
- Use relevant data and statistics to show the benefits your program is providing the community.

[YOUR ORGANIZATION] is just one of many local nonprofits that is harnessing the power of AmeriCorps members to help address some of the region’s most pressing social and economic challenges. Across [STATE], there are [#] of AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors working hand in hand with local partners to respond to natural disasters, tutor students, combat hunger and homelessness, fight the opioid epidemic, help seniors live independently, support veterans and military families, and much more.

The House and Senate have proposed FY24 funding levels for AmeriCorps that are vastly different. The House Labor-HHS Appropriations bill cuts the service agency’s budget by 50% - the lowest level in nearly three decades. It also eliminates all funding for AmeriCorps education awards, undermining a fundamental commitment that if you serve in AmeriCorps, you will earn money to help pay for college or to pay back student loans. The House proposal would eliminate tens of thousands of AmeriCorps positions, a resource this community cannot afford to lose.

While the Senate bill is comparatively a step in the right direction, it still falls short of what is needed to fund planned increases to the AmeriCorps member living allowances and maintain AmeriCorps’ footprint across the country. AmeriCorps living allowances will be increasing in FY24, a strategic and necessary investment that we support wholeheartedly. It was also endorsed by a sizable, bipartisan group of senators and representatives earlier this year. But without sufficient funding by Congress, the living allowance increase will trigger a 35% cut in awarded service positions and a reduction in services that AmeriCorps members provide. Last year, AmeriCorps awarded funding to place more than 75,000 individuals with nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations. But without an increase in FY24 appropriations, the national service agency will only be able to support 49,000 service positions next year, a loss of more than 26,000 AmeriCorps members.

AmeriCorps is one of the federal government’s best investments. AmeriCorps members offer community organizations the people power they need to solve locally-determined challenges – and AmeriCorps grants are matched by funds from private, philanthropic, and local sources, increasing the impact of the taxpayer dollars. In fact, this public-private partnership yields more than \$17 in benefits for every \$1 invested by Congress.

AmeriCorps is a proven, cost-effective, and popular program and it is making a tangible difference in this [CITY/REGION/STATE]. [ADD A SENTENCE EXPLAINING HOW CUTS TO AMERICORPS COULD IMPACT YOUR WORK OR JEOPARDIZE SERVICE YOUR COMMUNITY RELIES UPON.]

We understand that Congress is facing challenging budget decisions as the result of the debt deal, but we hope you will support increased funding for AmeriCorps. No community that depends on AmeriCorps for hands-on and high-impact services should lose this vital resource.

Sincerely,

[NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION]

[NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION]

[NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION]

[NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION]