



## Template – Grasstops Customized Letter

(Updated June 20, 2024)

*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 your program serves.*
- *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 reach out to Shanelle Oliver, Director of Advocacy and Outreach ([soliver2@cityyear.org](mailto:soliver2@cityyear.org)).*

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 2025 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.

In its 30th anniversary year, AmeriCorps is in jeopardy of shrinking by 44% and without increased appropriations, more than 34,000 AmeriCorps and 6,000 AmeriCorps Seniors positions will be eliminated. At a time of extraordinary demand in local communities, this will turn the clock back 25 years and will cripple a national service infrastructure built over three decades.

Since 2021, the AmeriCorps agency has been effectively leveraging \$1 billion in supplemental funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to add AmeriCorps positions and increase AmeriCorps member living allowances to try and cover a participant’s basic expenses during their service term. ARPA helped to make long overdue strategic investments in the AmeriCorps program and in FY23, nonprofit, faith, and community-based organizations were competitively awarded grant funding to support more than 75,000 AmeriCorps and 143,000 AmeriCorps Seniors positions, and to increase their living allowances to \$11/hour and \$4/hour respectively.

Today, the ARPA funds are winding down and without additional appropriations in FY25, there will be a significant reduction in AmeriCorps’ footprint which will destabilize – or close – hundreds of community-based organizations that utilize AmeriCorps members. The Corporation for National and Community Service has already started to decrease AmeriCorps member positions in FY24, reducing services and programs that constituents in both rural and urban communities count on. Increased funding in FY25 is necessary to ensure that current cuts to service positions do not become permanent or deeper, and protect the strategic investments that were made with ARPA funds.

AmeriCorps is one of the federal government’s best investments. 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 WOULD IMPACT YOUR WORK OR JEOPARDIZE SERVICE YOUR COMMUNITY/THEIR CONSTITUENTS RELIES UPON.]

We understand that Congress is facing challenging budget decisions, but we hope you will support \$1.5 billion in funding for AmeriCorps programs and the National Service Trust fund in FY25. 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]