



Template – Grasstops Customized Letter (Updated August 9, 2024)

Your AmeriCorps program has many 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.

You can download a Word document version of the letter template [here](#).

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 – for example, would it better to use the letterhead for your program or one of your board members' organizations? We recommend using the letterhead that will get the most attention from your lawmakers.*
- *We recommend you address this letter and send copies to your senators and all 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 do not require ink or e-signatures. You can simply add the name, title, and organization of each signatory after the closing.*
- *When the letter is ready to submit – we recommend you email copies to the lawmaker's Chief of Staff and their State Director AND send a copy by physical mail to the Washington DC office. You can call the congressional office to ask for those staffers' names and email addresses. Please note that regular mail is very delayed getting to congressional offices, so we ask that you make sure to email it as soon as possible.*
- *If you need assistance, please reach out to Sarah Aldridge, Director of Congressional Affairs (sarah.aldridge@cityyear.org).*

CUSTOMIZABLE TEMPLATE

Dear [MEMBER OF CONGRESS NAME],

We are writing on behalf of [ORGANIZATION NAME], located in [DISTRICT/STATE], to convey the value of AmeriCorps to our community and to ask you to provide \$1.5 billion for the AmeriCorps operating accounts and the National Service Trust Fund in fiscal year 2025.

[INSERT 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 or 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 provides to the community.]

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

The House and Senate have written vastly different versions of the FY25 Labor-HHS-Education funding bill, but neither provides sufficient resources to maintain AmeriCorps' footprint. Most damaging is the House bill, which includes devastating and disproportionate cuts to national service funding, including eliminating support for AmeriCorps State and National, NCCC, State Service Commissions, and AmeriCorps education awards. This threatens the heart and soul of AmeriCorps, and would eliminate more than 71,000 AmeriCorps service positions.

The Senate bill provides a modest increase in funding for AmeriCorps – a step in the right direction – but their allocation would only support 55,000 AmeriCorps members, about 23,000 fewer positions than the agency awarded one year ago. This is also a significant cut in AmeriCorps positions and would undermine the work of [ORGANIZATION NAME] and the thousands of nonprofits across the country that utilize AmeriCorps to power their local programs and deliver services that Americans count on.

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 taxpayer dollars. In fact, this public-private partnership yields more than \$17 in benefits for every \$1 invested by Congress.

To protect AmeriCorps service positions, Congress should appropriate \$1.5 billion in FY25 for AmeriCorps program operating accounts and the National Service Trust Fund. Anything less will result in fewer AmeriCorps members and fewer individuals served, resources our community cannot afford to lose.

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

We understand that Congress is facing challenging budget decisions, but we hope you will support \$1.5 billion in funding for AmeriCorps in FY25 so our community can continue to count on AmeriCorps for help where it's needed most.

Sincerely,

[NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION]

[NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION]

[NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION]