

**August 2020 LETTER TO THE EDITOR TOOLKIT**

Letters to the editor (LTEs) are a great tool for letting elected officials and other local leaders know what matters to local residents. By submitting a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, you can let others in your community know why national service matters to you – and why it should matter to them, too.

This August, we are asking national service supporters to submit a Letter to the Editor in their local newspaper expressing support for the CORPS Act and urging congressional leadership to include the funding and provisions of the CORPS Act in the next stimulus package. The CORPS Act is a bipartisan bill that would expand AmeriCorps and strengthen Senior Corps to support communities with COVID-19 response and recovery.

To submit your own LTE we recommend that you start with the template LTE provided in this toolkit. Also included are tips on effectively writing and placing an LTE.

We’re here to help! Please contact Amanda Hooper, Senior Director of Advocacy and Outreach at ahooper@cityyear.org with any questions or to let us know how your outreach goes.

### **Tips for writing and placing an effective LTE**

1. **Local matters**. Make sure that your letter has local information (e.g. talk about how AmeriCorps/Senior Corps/national service has helped your city or community).
2. **Share your expertise.** Include your relevant qualifications to the topic in your letter (e.g. if you’re an AmeriCorps alum or run an AmeriCorps program, say so; if your organization hosts Senior Corps volunteers, talk about your program, etc.).
3. **Be timely. Congress is working on the next stimulus bill now, so time is of the essence.** Please plan to submit your LTE no later than August 21, 2020.
4. **Keep your letter short, focused, and interesting**. In general, letters should be 150 words or less and focus on 1-2 main points. Include interesting facts, relevant personal experience, and any local connections to the issue. Wrap your letter up by explaining what you think needs to happen now by making a call to action. If your letter is longer than 150 words, it will likely be edited or not printed (visit your paper’s website for specific word guidelines).
5. **Follow the paper’s directions**. Information on how and to whom to submit a letter-to-the-editor is usually found right on the letters page in your paper. This often includes guidelines on what the paper looks for in LTEs. Follow these guidelines to increase the likelihood that your letter will be printed. If you can’t find the information you need, call the paper and ask how to go about submitting a letter.
6. **Include your contact information**. Be sure to include your name, address, and daytime phone number. The paper will contact you before printing your letter. Do not include attachments in your email.
7. **Share your letter to the editor on social media.** Once your letter is published, share the link to the letter on social media. This will help spread the word about national service and its role in your community. Make sure to use the hashtags #Stand4Service and #CORPSAct

### **Template LTE on CORPS Act – August 2020**

Dear Editor,

As talks between the White House and Congress stall, Americans are still grappling with the crippling impact of the pandemic. To move our country forward, we need to bring Americans together to help communities respond to and recover from COVID-19. A bipartisan group of U.S. senators have a plan to do just that through the CORPS Act, which would expand and strengthen AmeriCorps to provide critically needed services and give Americans purpose-driven work, a living stipend, and help to pay for college.

Since the outbreak, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members in [name of community] have been expanding food pantry capacity, tutoring students, and helping patients receive proper health care and access to social services. But we need more boots on the ground. Congress should include the funding and provisions from the CORPS Act in the coronavirus aid and economic stimulus package.  It’s a bipartisan solution to an urgent problem.

NAME

ORGANIZATION (if appropriate)

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER