

National Community Service Act

INTRODUCTION

In 1990 embracing the words of the late Martin Luther King Jr., "Everyone can be great because everyone can serve," Congress passed the National and Community service Act. On November 16, 1990 it was signed into law by the President. To accommodate certain constitutional objections raised by the President, the act was amended by P.L. 102-10 and signed into law on March 25, 1991. A compromise among the Senate, House and Administration the Act was designed to strengthen the American ethic of community service and to help translate this ethic into meaningful action. Under the Act, state and local governments, schools, colleges and nonprofit organizations are eligible to receive funding for full and part time service programs. In the following pages an outline of the Act has been provided.

The Act also created the Commission on National Community Service to administer the Act. The Commission was appointed on July 22, 1991. The National Commission met for the first time on September 25, 1991. A second Commission meeting was held on October 20 & 21, 1991. The Commission expects to provide \$73 million to eligible service programs in fiscal year 1991, including \$22.5 million for school and community based youth and college programs, \$22.5 million for youth corps, and \$22.5 million for state sponsored full and part time service programs, with \$5.5 million yet to be allocated.

Draft regulations regarding the appropriation of funds are expected to be released in mid November. A final draft of the regulations are expected to be ready by mid January of 1992. Applications for the funds will be due shortly after this time.

AN OVERVIEW

COMMUNITY SERVICE LEGISLATION

A new legislation and private initiatives offer a broad range of service opportunities for American citizens, with priority on youth and older adults as volunteers.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

The National and Community Service Act of 1990 contains three key Titles:

Title I NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE STATE GRANT PROGRAM

Provides broad opportunities for service by citizens of a state. Programs funded include those for school-aged youth, college students, and school drop-outs. Also, funding is available for full- and part-time service corps for persons over the age of 15.

Authorizations (Note: the FY 1991 appropriation for all programs matches the authorization):

\$ 56 million in FY 1991
\$ 95.5 million in FY 1992
\$105 million in FY 1993

Title II MODIFICATION OF EXISTING PROGRAMS

Requires the federal Department of Education to work with institutions of higher education to more widely publicize the student loan deferral program that encourages college graduates to serve in nonprofit organizations. Also the legislation creates Youthbuild, a program that involved young people in the building and rehabilitation of home and service sites (providing health, recreation, child care) for low-income families.

Authorizations:

\$1 million in FY 1991
\$2 million in FY 1992
\$5 million in FY 1993

Title III POINTS OF LIGHT FOUNDATION

Authorizes a new private quasi-governmental foundation, closely associated with the activities of the White House, to stimulate service geared toward significant social problems. Two initiatives already supported are "StarServe" and the "One to One Project."

Authorizations

\$ 5 million in FY 1991
\$ 7 million in FY 1992
\$10 million in FY 1993

The grant programs are administered by a Federal Commission on National Service. The members of the Commission are appointed by the President. The Commission will establish the rules and regulations regarding the applications for funding and the evaluation criteria of the funded programs.

ANALYSIS

The next section analyzes the legislation answering these questions:

- What is the overall intent?
- What funding is available?
- How can organizations receive funds?
- What types of programs can be funded?
- What special requirements or priorities must be included in the programs?

A CLOSER LOOK

NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ACT

TITLE I NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE STATE GRANT PROGRAM

Intent. This grant program is designed to expand service opportunities for citizens in their communities, with special priority given to involving youth and older Americans.

Funding. \$54 million is authorized for FY 1991 for the state grant program. States are required to provide a 10% match in FY 1991, a 20% match in FY 1992, and a 30% match in FY 1993.

States may apply to the Commission on National service to fund any or all of the programs authorized in the legislation. If states do not apply for funds, then local agencies may apply directly to the National Commission for funding of certain program. These are identified in the description that follow.

Program. Programs created under this Title represent a continuum of service opportunities for youth, college students and young adults, and older Americans. The programs include school-based and community partnerships, college service programs, and full- and part-time human service and conservation corps.

SCHOOL-AGED SERVICE FOR STUDENTS AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH

Intent. The goal of this program is to provide all young people with an opportunity to serve their community, whether they are students or have dropped out of school. The legislation also encourages adults to become more involved as volunteers in schools.

Funding. A total of \$16.5 million is authorized for this program and the higher education program (a description of this program follows). The Commission on National Service will decide what portion of the funds will be available to states for the school-aged service program. Funds for this program will be administered by the state department of education and are allocated to states based on one of two criteria: 1) if the annual appropriation is less than \$20 million, then states apply directly to the Commission for funding on a competitive basis; or 2) if the appropriation is more than \$20 million, then the funds are allocated to states according to a formula. If states do not offer school-aged service programs and do not apply to the National Commission for funding, then local agencies may apply directly to the Commission for local program support.

Funds may be used to pay for the supervision of participants, program administration, training, transportation, insurance, and reimbursement for the out-of-pocket expenses of participants.

Program. Programs and activities that may be funded under this section are:

- State planning and capacity building. States may use 10% of the funds received under this section to improve the ability of their agencies and communities to deliver volunteer service programs. Funding can be used for training, design of service-learning curriculum, research and evaluation, and outreach and dissemination of information. These activities can be delivered by the state department of education or by contract to other agencies.
- School-based service learning programs. At least 60% of a state's grant under this section must provide assistance to local applicants for the implementation, operation, or expansion of school-based service learning programs. service-learning programs must:
 - Provide students with an opportunity to learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated in collaboration with the school and community;
 - Be integrated into the students' academic curriculum and provide structured time for a student to think, talk or write about what the student did or saw during the service activity;
 - Equip students to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities; and
 - Enhance what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community and to help foster the development of a sense of caring for others.

Grants are available to partnerships of local educational agencies and community organizations. The partnerships must include a nonprofit organization and may include a for-profit business.

- Community service programs targeted to out-of-school youth. These funds are earmarked for young people who fall outside the school system, using positive service experiences as incentives to get them back into school. At least 15% of a state grant must be used to fund these community-based programs for youth. Partners must be public or private nonprofit organizations that will make service opportunities available. Schools and for-profit businesses can be involved in the program.
- School-based adult volunteer and partnership program. Not more than 10% of these funds are earmarked for programs that involve adult volunteers within the school system, especially those that include a partnership with a business group and benefit disadvantaged youth. Educational agencies must be involved in the partnership.

Other partners can be public or private nonprofit organizations or for-profit businesses.

Requirements. Eligible programs must meet specific criteria outlined in the legislation. Many of the requirements reflect "principles of good practice" identified by practitioners and academicians in the fields of education, youth development, community development and voluntarism (refer to the program section, pgs. 25-26). For example, priority will be given to school-based service learning and community service programs that involve participants in the program design, target low-income youth and involve students from diverse backgrounds, are integrated into the academic program, and focus on substance abuse or school dropout prevention. With regard to adult volunteer programs, priority will be given to applications that involve older Americans or parents as volunteers; include business as a partner; and focus on substance abuse and school dropout prevention, nutrition education, or the improvement of basic skills and reduction of illiteracy. Also, programs must explain how local partnerships will be developed, the extent to which disadvantaged children receive services, and the training and supervisory elements of the program.

HIGHER EDUCATION INNOVATIVE PROJECTS FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

Intent. The purpose of this program is to encourage the involvement of young people in community service during their college years.

Funding. There is no separate appropriation for the Higher Education Innovative Projects. Funds for these projects are part of the allocation for the school-aged service programs. The exact amount available for this program will be determined by the National Commission on Service. Application for funding are made directly to the National Commission and applicants must demonstrate either an in-kind or cash match equal to 50% of the grant.

Program. The range of activities that may be funded is broad, including community service projects designed by students, service integrated into the college curriculum, and training for teachers and other community leaders on how to design and implement service programs. Program applicants may be either higher education institutions or public and private nonprofit organizations working in partnership with higher education institutions.

FULL-TIME YOUTH SERVICE CORPS

Intent. This program encourages the expansion of full-time or summer youth human service or conservation corps for young adults (15-25 years of age). Corps programs are comprehensive and meet participants' educational, social, and employment needs.

Funding. The FY 1991 authorization is \$16.5 million. States and several federal agencies (including the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Director of ACTION) are eligible to apply for grants from the Commission. If a state does not apply for funding, local agencies may apply directly to the Commission. federal funds may not exceed 75% of the total program costs.

Program. Full-time youth corps programs provide involve young people, ages 16-25 a living allowance and training and education services. The summer programs are limited to youth 15-21 years of age. Priority in both programs is given to individuals without high school diplomas and disadvantaged youth.

The legislation encourages the development of youth corps to perform a variety of activities. Conservation corps undertake such projects as: the conservation and rehabilitation of wildlife, parks and recreation areas; tree planting in rural and urban areas; road and trail maintenance; emergency relief for natural disasters; energy conservation; and improving access to public facilities for persons with disabilities. Human service corps activities include work in governmental agencies, nursing homes, senior citizen centers, child care centers, schools, and nonprofit social service agencies. Of particular importance are projects that improve public facilities, provide literacy training to the economically disadvantaged, teach drug and alcohol use awareness, and address issues of poverty.

Funds are provided for pre-service, in-service, and post-service training and educational opportunities. Programs may enroll a limited number of participants who would otherwise not be eligible to participate, but who possess unique skills related to the projects of the corps. These people may include older Americans. Programs may use 2% of the funds to conduct joint programs with senior citizen's organization to serve as mentors for corps members.

NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Intent. This section of the legislation authorizes demonstration projects that provide service opportunities for adults (17 years of age and over) who do not meet the eligibility requirements of the human service/conservation corps programs, specifically employed adults and college-bound youth. There is a special emphasis on involving older Americans in volunteer service.

Funding. The FY 1991 authorization for this program \$16.8 million. States must apply to the National Commission for funding. The application may be part of a single grant request under the National and Community Service Act of 1990. The states must pay \$2,500 for full-time and \$1,000 for part-time participants, an amount which will be matched by the National Commission. In FY 1991, only eight states will be eligible to receive funding for demonstration projects.

Program. Participants will perform services that meet either educational, human, environmental, or public safety needs, especially those related to poverty. States may limit the type of service to a particular category of need, consistent with state priorities. There are three options for state programs, which may be administered through grants or contracts to public or private nonprofit organizations (at least two of the states receiving funding must include all three types of programs):

- Full-time. Participants perform community service for either one or two years, serving not less than 40 hours per week. They must have a high school diploma or agree to achieve the equivalent during the service period. They will receive a living wage stipend and a post-service benefit of \$5,000 per year of service, with half paid by the Commission and half by the state. The benefit must be used to pay for student loans, education, or training.
- Part-time. Participants perform community service for not less than three years, serving two weekends each month and two weeks during the year. Priority is given to applicants who are currently employed. A post-service benefit of \$2,000 is paid annually, half from the Commission and half from the state. The benefit must be used for a first home, or payment of student loans or tuition for postsecondary education.

- Special Senior Service. Participants over 60 years of age may participate in demonstration service projects. If volunteering full-time, they are eligible for the living wage stipend; if part-time, volunteers may receive a pro-rated stipend. These volunteers are not eligible for the post-service benefit.

INNOVATIVE AND DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Intent. This section of the legislation expands volunteer activities beyond the school and community-based partnerships, full- and part-time service corps, and national demonstration projects. Model programs are also created that serve Peace Corps and VISTA volunteers, youth living in rural communities, and retired persons.

Funding. Congress created but did not authorize funding for these special programs. In the event that funding becomes available, the Commission on National Service will award the grants.

Program. Program areas created under this section of the legislation are:

- Governor' Innovative Service Programs. States may apply for grants to develop demonstration projects, conduct research, and provide technical assistance, training, and staff development to expand service programs.
- Peace Corps. The Commission may make grants to the director of the Peace Corps or ACTION to fund the last two years of undergraduate study for fifty college students. In exchange for the education benefit, the students serve three years as Peace Corps or VISTA volunteers.
- Additional volunteer programs. The Commission may provide funding for a variety of model service programs involving youth in rural communities, connecting foster grandparents with Head Start programs, and developing employer-based retiree volunteer programs.

TITLE II MODIFICATION OF EXISTING PROGRAMS

Intent. This Title creates "Youthbuild," a program that involves young people in the rehabilitation of housing or community facilities. In addition, this Title requires the federal government to actively publicize a student loan deferment program for college graduates involved in community service.

Funding. In FY 1991, \$1 million is authorized for the federal ACTION agency to expand Youthbuild. There is no funding authorized for the education campaign to promote the student loan deferment.

Program. Youthbuild provides disadvantaged young adults with opportunities to meet the needs of the homeless and low-income families while acquiring valuable job skills. Youth participants rehabilitate housing for the homeless or community facilities that provide health, education, and social services for low-income people. Participants must be between 16-24 years of age, have dropped out of school, and have reading and mathematics skills below the 8th grade level. Full-time participants serve between 6 and 18 months and receive a living wage stipend.

Program. Peace Corps and VISTA volunteers are able to defer payments or student loans while they are participating in the service program. Although a similar provision applies to certain college graduates working in a nonprofit organization, very few students take advantage of the program because it is not widely publicized. The legislation requires the Department of Education to publicize the deferment to students and college financial aid offices. Nonprofit organizations may receive the information by contacting local college financial aid offices.

TITLE III POINTS OF LIGHT FOUNDATION

Intent. the legislation fulfills the President's commitment to expanding volunteer service activities by creating a private quasi-governmental foundation. The Points of Light Foundation will work with the White House Office of National Service.

Funding. The FY 1991, \$5 million was authorized for the Points of Light Foundation.

Program. The Foundation will serve as a catalyst to expand the public commitment to voluntarism through increased media coverage and by connecting the private sector to specific initiatives.

KEY POLICY ISSUES

There are several key policy issues that program sponsors and policy leaders must address in order to develop strong collaborative proposals. These are leadership, program priorities, and funding. In this section, key issues are identified that must be considered in the development of service programs.

STATE LEADERSHIP

Very few states have experience in supporting statewide volunteer service initiatives. Less than twelve states currently fund service programs. In those states where volunteer service is a priority, support from the governor, legislature, and top agency officials have been key. The involvement of community-based organizations have also been crucial. Their participation has allowed states to develop more comprehensive programs that respond to community needs and involve large numbers of volunteers.

Role of state government. The federal legislation allows states to submit a single application to the National Commission for funding of the school-based programs, full- and part-time service corps, and national demonstration projects. If states do not submit an application, then the legislation allows local agencies to apply directly to the Commission for funding. Since funding for the programs is very limited, many states may not respond to the initiative.

State application for federal funds. If they apply for the federal funding, governors must designate the state agency or agencies responsible for submitting the application for funds. The legislation allows, but does not require states to submit a "single" state application for funding. This provision allows a variety of state agencies to submit requests for the various programs. In fact, the legislation requires funding for school-aged children to be administered by the state department of education, but it does not require the department of education to administer the other programs.

In Pennsylvania, where the key official responsible for volunteer service is the secretary of labor and industry, the state program is oriented toward a full-time youth corps. If no single agency is designated to develop the comprehensive plan, then coordination will be a key issue.

In developing the application, the following criteria need to be considered in the state strategy:

- Support for a continuum of service that invites participation by people of all ages.
- Recognition of the role of community-based organization, as experts in working with volunteers and providers of services.
- Integration of service as a response to critical state and community needs.
- Involvement of young people, older Americans, and active volunteers.

Note: Applications for the college-based program must be made directly to the National Commission. Most of these applications will be made by institutions of higher education, although community-based agencies may also apply for funding. College programs should complement the overall strategy, resulting in a coherent system allowing young people to volunteer at any age.

Coordination and consultation with interested parties. The legislation encourages states to appoint a state advisory committee. If a state advisory committee is designated, then membership on the committee should be broad and diverse. In addition, strong state application will depend on the involvement of all key payers in both designing the application and delivering the programs.

Enhancing private initiatives. State strategies should involve leaders from programs funded through private initiatives. State plans should complement these efforts by enhancing but not duplicating these programs.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Leadership for the creation of service program must be developed at the community level. The strength of the state applications for funding will rely on the ability of communities to involve a large number of people and organizations in the planning process, develop a service strategy that reflects a continuum of service opportunities for people of all ages, and maximize public and private funds from the local, state, and national levels.

Developing local programs -- applying to the state for funding. Local communities will need to work with the state agency or agencies responsible for submitting the application to the National Commission for federal funds. The success of community plans will depend on the participation of agencies which have a track record in the development of volunteer and youth development programs. The most competitive proposals will be those that demonstrate collaboration among agencies, and those that coordinate services and programs for children, youth, and older adults.

Coordination and consultation. The federal legislation requires communities to form local advisory committees in order to receive funding for the school- and community-based programs. The advisory committee must include representatives of community-based agencies, those receiving service, youth serving agencies, youth, parents, teachers, school administrators, agencies that serve older adults, school board members, labor, and business. The role of the committee could be expanded to provide leadership on the development of programs in response to the other initiatives.

PROGRAM AND FUNDING PRIORITIES

States and communities will need to identify priorities for programs and funding as service initiatives are developed. The federal legislation gives broad discretion to the states to identify priorities. A key issue for states will be whether to operate programs statewide and manage the limited funds at the state level or target the funds to community-based programs.

Program strategies. The federal legislation does not mandate program priorities, however the National Commission is required to give priority to school- and community-based programs that focus on substance abuse or school dropout prevention. Therefore, states could target the federal funds toward programs that respond to pressing state priorities. For example, states may view the service initiatives as part of an effort to increase the effectiveness of public education. Others may choose to target the service funds toward "youth at-risk" programs that combine service with job skill development and employment training.

Funding strategies. States and communities will receive funding for the private initiatives directly from the sponsoring agencies. With regard to the federal funding, the legislation does not stipulate how funds will be spent at the local level. States may follow a competitive bid process and conceivably could fund very few projects; or states could decide to operate statewide programs that don't target the funds to the communities but respond to statewide priorities.

NATIONAL RESOURCE AND COLLABORATION ORGANIZATION

ACTION

1100 Vermont Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20525
202-634-9135

Jean Burkhardt, Consultant
709A W. 25th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55405
612-870-7338

Campus Compact
25 George St., Box 1975
Providence, RI 02912
401-863-1119

Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL)
386 McNeal Hall, University of Minnesota
St. Paul, MN 55108-1011
612-624-3018

The Congressional Award
6520 Georgetown Pike
McLean, VA 22101
703-761-6150
703-761-6154 (fax)

Council of Chief State School Officers
400 North Capitol NW, Suite 379
Washington, DC 20001
202-393-8159

Federal Student Aid Program
P.O. Box 84
Washington, DC 20044
1-800-333-4630

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE)
7th and D Street SW, Room 3100
Washington, DC 20202-5175
202-732-5750

The Independent Sector
1828 L St. NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-223-8100

The Johnson Foundation Inc.
Racine, WI 53401-0547
414-681-3344
414-681-3325 (fax)

National Association of service and Conservation Corps
1001 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 827
Washington, DC 20036
202-331-9647

National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K St. NW, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20006
202-466-6272

National Governors Association
444 North Capitol St., Suite 250
Washington, DC 20001-1572
202-624-5300

National Youth Leadership Council
386 McNeal Hall
1985 Buford Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55108
612-631-3672

Office of National Service
White House
Old Executive Office Building, Room 100
Washington, DC 20500
202-456-6266

One to One Project
2550 M Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 200337
202-862-0121
202-728-0935 (fax)

People for the American Way
2000 M St., NW #400
Washington, DC 20006
202-467-4999

Points of Light Foundation
736 Jackson Place NW
Washington, DC 20006
202-408-5162

The President's Volunteer Action Awards
P.O. Box 37488
Washington, DC 20013

Public/Private Ventures
399 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106-2178
215-592-9099

Seabreeze Awards
National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare
Organization
1319 F Street NW, Suite 601
Washington, DC 20004
202-347-2080

StarServe
701 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 220
Santa Monica, CA 90401
213-452-1414

United Way of America
701 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-836-7100

Yoshiyama Award
Hitachi Foundation
1509 22nd St. NW
Washington, DC 20037
202-457-0588

Youth Service America
1319 F Street NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20004
202-783-8855
202-347-2603 (fax)

Youth Service America
Youth Volunteer Corps of America
1080 Washington
Kansas City, MO 64105-2216
816-474-5761
816-472-4207 (fax)
VOLUNTEER - The National Center
1111 North 19th St., Suite 500
Arlington, VA 22209
703-276-0542

COMMISSION OF NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE. P.L. 101-610 would establish a Commission to administer certain programs authorized by the bill. The bill would also establish a Board of Directors. The President would appoint, with Senate Confirmation, 21 individuals to the Board. The Board would have to include seven individuals nominated by the Speaker of the House and seven individuals nominated by the Majority Leader of the Senate. Membership on the Board would have to be balanced according to race, ethnicity, age and gender. Not more than eleven members could belong to the same political party.

P.L. 102-10 changes that part of P.L. 101-610 which purported to limit the President's authority under the appointments clause of the Constitution by mandating Congressional participation in the appointment of Commission members and prescribing the Commission's composition. As amended, the law provides that only the President may make appointments to the Commission. And while no prescription is made as to the Commission's composition, the President is encouraged to appoint members with experience in community service and who represent diversity in terms of experience, age, race, ethnicity and political affiliation.

The Commission's duties would include designing and administering the new programs under the Act, arranging for the evaluation of these programs, and advising the President and Congress about developments in community service. The Board could delegate authority to administer these programs to any agency or entity of the Federal government. As amended by P.L. 102-10, each member of the board shall serve for a term of three years, except that seven of the initial members shall serve for one year and seven shall serve for 2 years.

The President, acting through the Commission, would be authorized to make Presidential awards to: (1) individuals for outstanding community service; (2) outstanding service programs; (3) outstanding teachers in service-learning programs. In addition, the President would be required, by January 1, 1992, to submit, to specified Congressional committees, a report recommending improvement of the administration and coordination of service programs administered by ACTION, the Commission, and other Federal entities.

Sec. 437. (1) The appropriation in section 101 for administration of the national and community service commission program in the department of labor is based on the expectation that federal funding will be available to finance the program for the entire fiscal year.

(2) The appropriation in section 101 to the national community service commission grants shall be distributed after the department of labor, in conjunction with the department of natural resources, the department of education, and the department of social services, submits an application to the United States department of education for federal dollars authorized under the national and community service act of 1990. Public Law 101-610, 104 Stat. 3127. Within 30 days after submission of the application, the department of labor shall send a copy of the application to the regulatory subcommittees of the house and senate appropriations committees and the house and senate fiscal agencies.

(3) Within 7 days after the department of labor receives the decision of the United States department of education regarding the application described in subsection (1), the department shall notify the regulatory subcommittees of the house and senate appropriations committees of the decision.