

# National Service: Taking Action to Combat the Opioid Crisis



*“Together, we will face this challenge as a national family with conviction, with unity, and with a commitment to love and support our neighbors in times of dire need.” - President Donald J. Trump*

Our nation is in the midst of an unprecedented opioid epidemic. More than 2.4 million Americans currently struggle with opioid addiction. Since 1999, the rate of overdose deaths involving opioids—including prescription pain relievers and heroin—has nearly quadrupled. This growing crisis is causing devastating effects, placing burdens on workplaces, the health care system, families, states, and communities. Recognizing the severity of the opioid epidemic and the important role national service can play in addressing this challenge, the **Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)** has significantly increased its support of opioid abuse prevention, education, reduction, and recovery programming as part of the Trump Administration’s efforts to combat the substance abuse and opioid crisis.

## **CNCS: Taking Action to Prevent and Reduce Opioid Abuse**

CNCS, the federal agency for service and volunteering, engages 325,000 Senior Corps and AmeriCorps members in results-driven service annually at 50,000 locations across the country, including nonprofits, schools, faith-based groups, and local agencies. For decades, CNCS has supported positive youth development through mentoring, tutoring, after-school, and summer programs that help youth stay in school, graduate ready for college or career, and refrain from risky behaviors including substance abuse.

Building on this track record of improving the lives of at-risk youth and other vulnerable populations, CNCS prioritized opioids and substance abuse programming in its FY 2017 AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps VISTA, and Senior Corps RSVP competitions and program guidance. Working with Governor-appointed State Service Commissions and national and local organizations, CNCS substantially increased its investments in opioids and substance abuse programs. New or expanded FY 2017 investments support:

- **96 projects** serving **more than 150 communities** in **45 states**.
- **1,200 Senior Corps and AmeriCorps members** focused on opioid prevention, reduction, and recovery.
- **More than \$10.5 million** in opioids-related AmeriCorps and Senior Corps grants and project funding.
- **\$4.2 million** in education awards for AmeriCorps members serving in these programs to help pay for college or pay back student loans after completing their service.

Nonprofit groups, faith-based and community organizations, and state and local agencies across the country are using AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members to provide drug abuse education, serve as recovery coaches, build capacity for anti-drug organizations, provide screening and assessments, establish state and local prevent relapse and recidivism, and more.

## Using National Service to Prevent and Reduce Substance Abuse

National service is a flexible, cost-effective strategy to address community needs, and organizations working to combat the opioid crisis are using AmeriCorps and Senior Corps resources through a variety of program models to expand the reach and impact of substance education, prevention, and recovery efforts.

### Serving with Police Departments to Expand Access to Treatment

- In Massachusetts, 25 AmeriCorps members will serve as Recovery Coaches in police departments across the state through the Police Assisted Addiction & Recovery Initiative. Members will help opioid users access treatment and recovery services, prevent opioid overdose deaths, and recruit volunteers to serve as "angels" and peer recovery coaches.

### Serving as Recovery Coaches to Prevent Relapse

- In Wisconsin, the Marshfield Clinic Health System will engage 20 AmeriCorps members to serve as trained Recovery Coaches to provide services and support individuals overcoming addiction to remain drug-free. The Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital in New Hampshire will engage 16 AmeriCorps members to help individuals in recovery resolve non-clinical barriers to care such as housing, literacy, and transportation.

### Providing Drug Abuse Prevention and Education

- In Kentucky, Operation UNITE engages 54 AmeriCorps members to provide drug abuse education and math tutoring to more than 3,300 students, recruit 8,240 adult volunteers for school activities, and sponsor anti-drug clubs involving 4,353 students. In Tennessee, the Roane County Anti-Drug Coalition will engage 100 Senior Corps RSVP volunteers to deliver drug education to military veterans, encourage responsible storage and disposal of medications; and host a training for medical professional on proper prescribing.

### Building the Capacity of Drug-Prevention Organizations

- In Indiana, AmeriCorps VISTA members will raise funds for Volunteers of America of Indiana Fresh Start Recovery Initiative to increase the availability of drug treatment for pregnant and post-partum women, women with young children.

### Supporting Safe Disposal of Prescription Drugs

- In Indiana, Senior Corps volunteers serving through RSVP of Allen County will work with a drug store chain on a program to collect unwanted medications. In Arizona, AmeriCorps members will provide education to 4,000 older, homebound or disabled seniors, on the proper use of prescription medications.

### Planning and Coordinating State and Local Initiatives to Curb Opioid Abuse

- 6 AmeriCorps VISTA members will support the statewide Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse Initiative in Arizona by building partnerships, providing training, and collecting data. In Southwest Florida, AmeriCorps VISTA members will develop a regional task force and strategic plan to address the opioid crisis in Southwest Florida.

### Providing Substance Abuse Screening and Assessments

- AmeriCorps members serving through the University of Nebraska will provide 2,500 behavioral health and substance use screening, assessment, and treatment sessions for children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families. Mercy Health in Ohio will engage AmeriCorps members in providing assistance with access to treatment, education, follow up data collection, and screenings for at least 2,400 individuals.