

YEAR IN REVIEW



A Look Back at 2025

Reflection from Kristen Bennett, CEO, Service Year Alliance

Challenges to national service are not new.

Yet, for all that transpired this year, of which there is a lot to mention, one takeaway rises to the top. In the face of significant disruption, confusion, and uncertainty, our community - including service year alums, corps members, champions, advocates and funders - responded with determination and resilience to protect, restore, and sustain service years for current and future generations of Americans.

In April, at the direction of the Department of Government Efficiency, all corps members serving through AmeriCorps NCCC were demobilized and told to return home. This action coincided with nearly 85% of AmeriCorps agency staff being put on administrative leave. Later that month, 1,031 AmeriCorps grants supporting more than 32,000 corps members were rescinded, effectively halting service programs in all 50 states.

In the span of several weeks, the present and future of national service was in jeopardy.

The reaction was swift and loud. With our partners, we mobilized service year alums and champions to contact members of Congress, write op-eds and letters to the editor, and tell their friends and family on social media what was at stake. Slowly, the tide shifted. By mid-year, court challenges reversed some of the major road blocks, including restoring nearly \$400 million in grant terminations, and pressure on Congress prevented additional cuts from going into effect.

For many corps members and service year programs, however, there was no return to normal service. National service is resilient and adaptable—just look at how the sector responded in 2020 in response to the pandemic—but does not turn on a dime. AmeriCorps remains a fraction of its operating capacity at the beginning of the year. And the federal budget remains uncertain.

A Look Back at 2025

Through it all, our resolve is as steadfast and determined as ever.

Service Year Alliance entered 2025 with a multi-part strategy to advance core programming across service year alums, bridging, climate and workforce, and state innovation efforts. It's with credit to our team and partners that we were able to achieve these outcomes while navigating the challenges we faced.

I invite you to read more about each of these initiatives in this report, including:

- Evidencing the transformational experience of service through the most comprehensive survey of service year alums to date, and elevating the voices and stories of those who served in an important moment.
- Finishing the largest-ever evaluation of corps members to determine bridging efficacy and outcomes in national service.
- Concluding our multi-year grant with Cisco to explore service years as a pathway to green sector careers.
- Launching a new partnership with philanthropic and state leaders to strengthen and expand state service corps with non-federal funds.

Service years are good for America.

They are good for Americans of all ages, backgrounds, and political affiliations. They are good for our communities and in repairing the frayed bonds that unite us. Our outlook for 2026 is shared later in this report. While much remains uncertain, we are confident that the level of coordination and partnership that propelled our efforts in 2025 will be required in the year ahead.

Thank you for answering the call in 2025.

In Service,

Kristen Bennett

CEO, Service Year Alliance

87%

Of alums say they acquired skills during their service year that helped them prepare for future employment.

Source: 2025 Service Year Alums Survey

A Growing & Mobilized Network of Alums

Service Year Alliance fostered a vibrant community of alums and lifted up the impact of the service year experience in 2025, shaping public understanding, policy decisions, and media narratives about service years.

Few opportunities transform lives, strengthen communities, and fuel civic renewal all at once in the ways we have long believed service years achieve. Yet, the field has historically lacked evidence and data to substantiate this intuition. With the [2025 State of Alums Report](#), we gathered critical data from over 2,000 alums—the most comprehensive survey of service year alums to date—on the long-term impact of service years on participants’ careers, economic mobility, and civic engagement.

Alongside the data, we showcased how 11 [Service Year Alums Awardees](#) continue to serve throughout their careers, and highlighted [impact stories](#) from hundreds of alums in the wake of devastating cuts to AmeriCorps. The launch of [Alums Amplified](#), a national speakers’ bureau of alums who are passionate about sharing their service stories, added more voices advocating for the future of national service.

Throughout the year, we continued to expand our network of service year alums. Through [The Alums Corner: The Scoop After Service](#), we delivered timely updates and actionable information, encouraged alums to connect through the [AmeriCorps Alums LinkedIn](#) group, and conducted outreach to bring more alums into the fold and renew their ties to the service year movement in 2026 and beyond.



Five Alums Amplified members joined our team for the National Service Summit in Washington, DC, in September, sharing their experiences in a panel discussion and in meetings with members of Congress.

With support from our funders, including Einhorn Collaborative and the Sagawa Baer Charitable Fund, we are building the momentum needed to strengthen national service for the next generation.

223

Corps members received dedicated green sector career exposure, training, and supporting resources through Service Year Alliance.

Strengthening Service to Career Pathways

Service years are a vital, but under-leveraged, pathway to clean energy and climate-focused careers. The skills, experiences, and training many corps members receive during their service years align with the needs of employers in this growing sector of the economy. Yet, for many alums, these career opportunities remain out of reach.

With support from Cisco, we explored solutions to bring service year programs, alums, and employers together in 2025 to strengthen this service-to-career pipeline.

“ I wanted to shift my career path to focus on responding to the climate crisis, but with only passion and no tangible experience, after dozens of job applications and interviews, I couldn't get a job.

“AmeriCorps gave me the experience I needed to learn more about the sustainability space and prepare me for a full time role in this space. After AmeriCorps, I landed a Zero Waste Program Manager role at a Fortune 5 company. It changed the trajectory of my career path.”

*Abbie S.
AmeriCorps Alum*

From September 2024 to May 2025, we facilitated a Green Employer Learning Cohort, bringing eight service year programs and commissions alongside nine industry partners.

In addition to key insights on ways to strengthen career pathways, 97 service year alums who participated in cohort programs secured jobs in the green sector, with 18 of those roles being directly aligned with cohort target careers.

Strengthening Service to Career Pathways



Our team also partnered with public and private sector institutions to advance four workforce development initiatives focused on advanced energy and weatherization.

- In partnership with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Service Year Alliance [released a toolkit](#) to help weatherization employers form talent development and capacity-building relationships with service year programs.
- Through the [Apprenticeships in Clean Energy Network](#), Service Year Alliance helped grow the number of apprenticeships in the advanced energy sector from just 15 in 2023 to more than 1,000 by the end of this year.
- We launched the [Service Year Talent Pipeline](#) on Green Workforce Connect, highlighting why service year alums are a strong source of advanced energy and weatherization talent and providing tools for employers to connect with relevant programs in their area.
- And with support from the [Clean Energy Community Fund](#), Service Year Alliance supported service year alumni participation in two career fairs and hosted three Advanced Energy Career Pathway webinars to strengthen connections between service year alums and employers.

These efforts build towards our goal of making service years a more effective pathway into careers in advanced energy, climate resilience, and other green sector industries.

1,100

The number of corps members engaged through our Bridging Divides + National Service initiative.

It's the largest evaluation of bridging efficacy outcomes in service years.

Bridging Across Lines of Difference

This year, Service Year Alliance advanced our Bridging Divides + National Service initiative, deepening our understanding of how service years can equip young people with the skills, mindsets, and behaviors needed to bridge divides in their communities and across the country.

Over the last two years, with support from Einhorn Collaborative, we have worked with 40+ service year programs in over 20 states; and this year we engaged more than 1,100 corps members, conducting [the largest-ever evaluation](#) of bridging efficacy and outcomes in service years.

Our data collection included pre and post-service measures of six bridging outcomes. These include intellectual humility, belonging, collaboration norms, individual bridging self-efficacy, community-oriented bridging self-efficacy, and affective polarization, as well as one behavioral measure, marking an unprecedented effort to understand how service influences how people connect across lines of difference.

Despite significant field-wide disruption and uncertainty facing many service year programs, our partners remained deeply committed to this work. Programs continued to invest time, creativity, and care into supporting corps members' bridging growth.

Bridging in Action



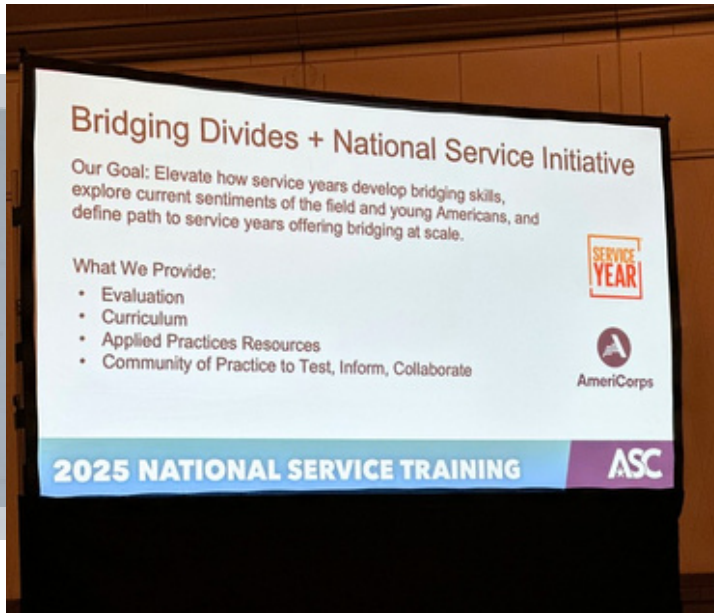
As an AmeriCorps member in northwest Indiana, Jada helped enhance mental health awareness and suicide prevention through a unique focus on educating community members and law enforcement officers.

“Even if only one person was helped, that is one more person now equipped to help someone else.”

Jada Edwards

Bridging Across Lines of Difference

We strengthened learning and collaboration and brought practitioners together to explore shared challenges and promising practices with our Community of Practice and through facilitating two sessions at the 2025 National Service Training.



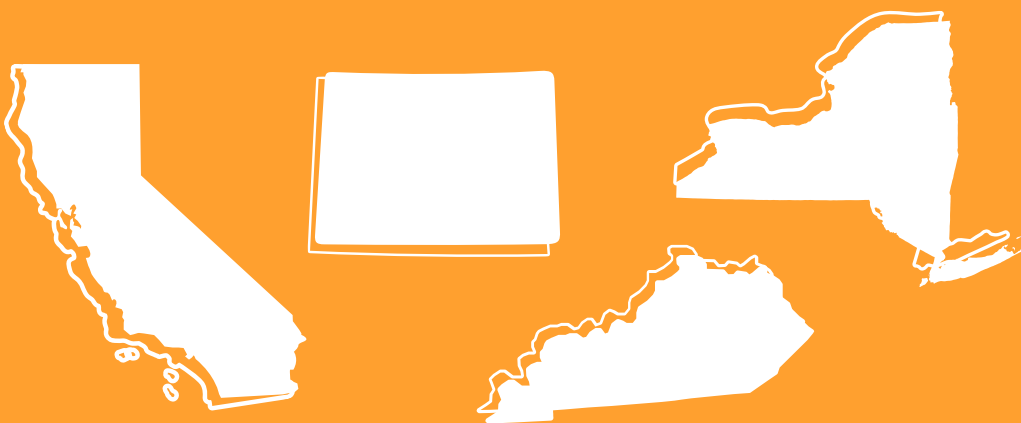
Our team was grateful to present alongside partners Becca Kearl of Living Room Conversations and David Eisner, former CEO of AmeriCorps who co-authored, “No Greater Mission. No Greater Means. How National Service Can Advance Bridgebuilding.”

We also elevated service years within the broader bridging ecosystem. As members of the Listen First Project Coalition, we presented twice to coalition partners, building understanding and momentum around the role of service years in strengthening social cohesion.

Together with programs, partners, and corps members across the country, we made significant progress this year and are positioned to enter 2026 with stronger evidence of the ways that service years can help our country come together across divides to listen, understand, and make collaboration the norm.

4

States—California, Colorado, Kentucky, and New York—selected to participate in our inaugural cohort.



A New Center for State Innovation

Each year, the demand for service years among young people routinely exceeds the number of opportunities available, and significant gaps persist to meet critical needs in communities. The disruption to federal funding for service years in 2025 further galvanized the need for new pathways to create and sustain service opportunities nationwide. The **Center for State Service Innovation** was created to meet this need, and builds on recent success to create and expand state-based service years.

Service Year Alliance launched the [Center for State Service Innovation](#) in 2025 to help state leaders unlock non-federal resources to further strengthen and expand state-based service year programs.

With support from Einhorn Collaborative and Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Center engages state-level stakeholders, including state service commissions, lawmakers, and civic leaders, with the tools they need to create new funding for service years within their states.

“With Serve Colorado and support from the Center for State Service Innovation, we are expanding opportunities for Coloradans to serve locally, strengthen communities, and create lasting positive impact across our state.”

Colorado Lt. Gov. Dianne Primavera

Four states—California, Colorado, Kentucky, and New York—[were selected](#) to participate in our inaugural cohort through the Center. Leveraging our network of partners at the local and national level, our team works hand-in-hand with leaders in cohort states, providing technical assistance, public policy support, and cross-state collaboration to help them achieve their service year goals.

Our work in 2025 to establish the Center for State Service Innovation sets the stage for ongoing collaboration and learning across our network in 2026, and will look to leverage new partners to expand this work.

Media & Event Highlights

The Chronicle of Philanthropy

States and Foundations Unite to Bolster National Service Programs

"That fragility has spurred a rethink of how national service is financed. This fall, Service Year Alliance launched the Center for State Service Innovation..."

[Read More](#)

WABE

They Were Sent to Georgia after Hurricane Helene. Then, federal cuts sent them home.

"With every service year, there's the opportunity to transform the life of the person who's serving, to strengthen the community..."

[Read More](#)

Vox

What if college isn't for all?

"What does it mean to have a "good life" in this context? And what does a path that doesn't include college look like? That's what we tackle on this episode of Explain It to Me..."

[Take A Listen](#)





Where We're Going in 2026

As we turn the corner to 2026, our direction is clear: We need to expand the number of service years and create the conditions for service to exist at scale, so that the next generations of young Americans can gain experience, contribute to their communities, and find their purpose.

At the heart of this strategy is a vision of a future where state service corps thrive alongside a robust and fully funded national service sector at the federal level.

The Center for State Service Innovation will expand our reach as we help leaders access non-federal funding to strengthen and expand service years in their state. Our work in California, Colorado, Kentucky, and New York will continue in earnest, and we will look to welcome new state leaders to our cohort.

Alongside our partners, we will continue to advocate for service years because they represent America at our best.

Our focus will be on creating more opportunities to uplift and celebrate alums, including through our Alums Amplified Speakers Bureau, Service Year Alums Awards, and infusing new data and stories into the conversation on the future of national service.

Where We're Going in 2026

As we saw in 2025, intentions for the year ahead are always subject to the reality of the world in which we live and serve. We expect 2026 will echo some of the challenges we, as a national service community, experienced in 2025. The federal landscape remains volatile and the budget outlook for AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, and other federally funded programs are unclear.

Amid this uncertainty, our nation will celebrate 250 years of independence and conduct mid-term elections. Much will be said, pledged, and created in response to our semiquincentennial and the current state of our nation.

What we know—with clarity—is that service years have been consequential to the health and betterment of our communities and must continue to be for generations to come.

Thank you for your steadfast commitment to service in 2025.

We look forward to building on this momentum in 2026 as we work together to ensure service years are a more common opportunity and expectation for all young Americans.

We invite you to join us in 2026.

Partner with Us

Connect with our team to identify where we can collaborate.

[Take Action](#)

Make a Donation

Help us achieve our priorities in 2026 with a gift to Service Year Alliance.

[Take Action](#)

Join the Network

Sign up to receive our newsletter and join a growing network of service year alums.

[Take Action](#)



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