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AMERICORPS  
WASHINGTON

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# The Effects of AmeriCorps on Participant Readiness for Education and Employment Success

*prepared by*



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A study conducted by VeraWorks, Inc., suggests that Washington AmeriCorps increases participant readiness for educational and employment success. As compared to a national group of non-participants, the surveyed Washington AmeriCorps participants experienced significantly higher increases in three of the four areas examined: confidence in their ability to obtain an education, responsibility for educational success and basic workplace skills. The final area, responsibility for employment success, did not increase across the full group of respondents. It did increase, however, among respondents without a four-year college degree, who made up roughly half of all respondents.

The study was based on a pre- and post-survey on educational and employment preparedness completed by 399 AmeriCorps participants between 2005 and 2006, corresponding to a 67 percent response rate. The pre- and post-survey collected information on four metrics on readiness for educational and employment success that were developed by the Corporation for National and Community Service through a contract with Abt Associates.





Although there are some variations with respect to other studies, the above overall findings are largely consistent with research conducted nationally, as well as in other states and regions. They are also consistent with Washington participant expectations of their AmeriCorps service. Sixty-four percent of survey respondents selected “explore future jobs/education interests” as one of their top two reasons for joining AmeriCorps.

Gender, ethnicity, state of residence prior to AmeriCorps, type of AmeriCorps program (AmeriCorps\*VISTA or AmeriCorps\*State), and previous community service do not appear to affect the degree to which readiness for educational and employment success increased. There are, however, some differences in findings by age, education level, income level and motivation behind joining AmeriCorps. The profile of the Washington AmeriCorps participant most likely to experience a boost in readiness for education and employment success appears to be a young individual who has not completed college, has a household income greater than \$20,000, and entered AmeriCorps with the expectation that it was an investment in the future, rather than primarily a job for the present.

In summary, it appears that Washington AmeriCorps participants experience a meaningful boost in their educational and employment skills, confidence and prospects. As one survey respondent suggested, the Washington AmeriCorps experience appears to give participants “more opportunities to go places.”

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