



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

To: Members, Assembly Committee on Environment and Forestry
From: Representative Cory Mason and Senator Mark Miller
Date: January 20, 2016
Re: Assembly Bill 548, establishing a Wisconsin Conservation Corps Program

Chairman Mursau and Members of the Committee, thank you for holding this public hearing today on Assembly Bill 548, which will reestablish the Wisconsin Conservation Corps (WCC). We are pleased to co-author legislation that will conserve Wisconsin's precious natural resources and create jobs. We are proud to have co-sponsored this legislation in prior legislative sessions with former Representative Fred Clark. In 2010, recreation of the Wisconsin Conservation Corps that existed from 1983-2003 passed the Assembly with broad, bipartisan support on a 78-19 vote. This legislation is critically important to Wisconsin as we look for new way to create jobs and protect the environment.

This proposal builds on Wisconsin's proud stewardship of our natural resources while providing Wisconsin's young people with valuable employment training and educational opportunities. For twenty years, the WCC offered the opportunity for our youth to participate in conservation and natural heritage projects throughout the state, gaining work skills, educational opportunities, and developing practical career skills through meaningful work experiences.

As millennials struggle to find meaningful, family-sustaining employment, and as Wisconsin's precious natural resources are increasingly under threat, reestablishing the Wisconsin Conservation Corps is more important than ever. AB 548 creates a WCC committed to serving 18-25 year olds who have no postsecondary education, and who have a family income of less than 200 percent of the federal poverty line, thereby ensuring that our state's most vulnerable youth have the opportunity to not only protect our state's rich environment, but obtain the training and education they need to succeed. The bill directs the Department of Administration to secure grant funding through AmeriCorps and other youth job corps related program funding, develop a WCC program "brand", and contract with one or more NGO with experience in youth corps programs to operate a Wisconsin Conservation Corps. The program will be funded by leveraging federal AmeriCorps (National and Community Service Board) grants and existing state resources.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill 548. It is our hope that this legislation is adopted soon.

Good Morning Chairman Mursau, Vice Chair Krug, and members of the Committee. My name is Don Hammes and I am here today as a former employee of the Wisconsin Conservation Corps and as a member of the Executive Committee for the Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter.

Founded in 1892 by John Muir, the Sierra Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. The Sierra Club's mission is to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth. The Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter is made up of 15,000 members and supporters located throughout Wisconsin who work to promote clean energy and protect natural resources in Wisconsin.

I worked for WCC as their Communications Coordinator and Publications Editor for several years in the early 2000's. In this position I had the opportunity to travel all across Wisconsin visiting various WCC crews to write stories for our publications and to prepare news releases regarding the projects. This gave me an opportunity to talk with crew members and crew leaders as well as project sponsors. It was not long before I became convinced that this program was a perfect example of that often used expression....a win, win, win for Wisconsin.

It was a win first of all because the program successfully trained young adults and helped them gain self-confidence and direction. Many Corps volunteers came from difficult, unstable family situations and had not finished high school. Others were high school graduates who needed help setting their sights on attending a technical college or university. WCC worked to help them all.

It was a win secondly because the training and on the job experience these young people gained while working for WCC was just they needed to find a job once they left the Corps, or if they decided to pursue additional education, the direction they wanted to take in developing a vocation.

It was a win thirdly, because hundreds of conservation projects were completed all across Wisconsin in city parks, county parks, in state parks and on state owned lands managed by DNR. In many cases these were important projects that had been put off for years due to a lack of funding or manpower to get them completed. They worked on timber stand improvement, planted trees, created firebreaks, and collected seeds for nursery tree production or prairie restoration. They worked with field researchers from DNR, from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service to band osprey, geese and ducks or conduct population surveys of everything from deer to sturgeon and trout.

Crews also worked with communities to complete parks projects including park shelters, concession stands, skiing and hiking trails and shelters, boardwalks, bridges, ballparks, dugouts and bleachers. They also fenced streambanks, built retaining walls, grass waterways and water diversions, build and install sediment barriers and riprap banks to stem erosion.

I begin can't tell you how many times I witnessed these young men and women turn their lives around as they helped each other, as they helped communities and as they helped state, county and city conservation departments all across Wisconsin.

This program for many years enjoyed bipartisan support from the state legislature because it was a win-win-win program. I believe funding was just over \$1,000,000 a year, but economic payback was many millions. I urge you to vote in support of AB548.

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Serve Wisconsin 2016-2018 State Service Plan

SERVE WISCONSIN is a 21-member citizen body appointed by the Governor to support community service and volunteerism. Federal AmeriCorps resources from the Corporation for National and Community Service are awarded to organizations seeking to deliver services using an evidence-based approach to solve identified community needs. Serve Wisconsin will support organizations using delivery system models that address one or more of the six national focus areas:

- Disaster Services
- Economic Opportunities
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Futures
- Veterans and Military Families

State Service Plan Performance Targets	
OBJECTIVE 1: Serve Wisconsin will invest in sustainable service solutions that are supported by evidence-based community need. The service delivery system shall incorporate effective capacity building activities and strategies for recruiting, retaining, managing, and recognizing volunteers and AmeriCorps members. Serve Wisconsin shall allocate 100% of the available resources in support of the six national focus areas and capacity building activities to enhance program sustainability.	
ACTION 1:	Establish annual aggregate volunteer engagement targets and report the number of episodic and ongoing volunteers engaged.
ACTION 2:	Establish an annual aggregate volunteer hour target and report the number of volunteer hours completed by episodic and ongoing volunteers.
ACTION 3:	Annually establish the number of organizations to receive capacity building services that report the implementing three or more effective volunteer management practices.
ACTION 4:	Annually establish the number of organizations that will report that capacity building activities supported by national service funding have helped to make the organization more efficient and/or effective.
State Service Plan Support Activities	
OBJECTIVE 2: Serve Wisconsin will support the promotion of National Service and Volunteer Wisconsin to enhance recognition and awareness of service and volunteer opportunities in Wisconsin.	
ACTION 1:	Coordinate and sponsor the Governor's Service Awards.
ACTION 2:	Publish and distribute Serve Wisconsin Annual Report.
ACTION 3:	Publish and distribute AmeriCorps Member Reflections.
ACTION 4:	Record and report on the AmeriCorps member experience through the annual member survey.
ACTION 5:	Promote the Volunteer in America Report statewide.
ACTION 6:	Collect information from all AmeriCorps State and National grant applicants on how the proposed AmeriCorps service activities align with the State Service Plan.
ACTION 7:	Support Volunteer Connection as the electronic internet connector of volunteer opportunities in Wisconsin.
ACTION 8:	Collaborate with CNCS's Wisconsin State Office to promote national service and volunteerism.
Serve Wisconsin Promotional and Professional Learning	
OBJECTIVE 3: Serve Wisconsin board members and staff will engage in professional learning to promote best practices that strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of National Service.	
ACTION 1:	Support activities that expand the scale, reach, efficiency, and/or effectiveness of AmeriCorps programs.
ACTION 2:	Support efforts to balance the rural and urban AmeriCorps delivery systems.
ACTION 3:	Continue to diversify the AmeriCorps program portfolio while reaching more underserved populations.
ACTION 4:	Promote best practices and core delivery system methods to improve performance.
ACTION 5:	Expand outreach to seniors to improve collaboration and senior engagement.

Serve Wisconsin 2016-2018 State Service Plan

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

AMERICORPS: A Federally-funded program that engages over 80,000 Americans each year to serve their community through community-based programs.

CAPACITY BUILDING: A set of activities that expand the scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of programs and organizations. Activities may also leverage resources for programs and/or organizations. For example, capacity building activities may expand services, enhance delivery of services, or generate additional resources. These activities achieve lasting positive outcomes for the beneficiary populations served by CNCS-supported organizations.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS): The Federal agency that engages more than 5 million Americans in service through its core programs: AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and Volunteer Generation Fund. CNCS plays a critical role in strengthening America's nonprofit sector and addressing our nation's challenges through service.

CNCS'S SIX FOCUS AREAS: The 2009 Serve America Act directs CNCS to focus national service on a core set of six priority issue areas, as follows: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, and Veterans and Military Families.

CNCS-SUPPORTED ORGANIZATION: Comprises a) organizations that have national service participants (AmeriCorps, VISTA and NCCC members, Senior Corps volunteers) and, b) organizations that receive CNCS funding.

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER: Citizens or residents in the community who are recruited and/or managed by the CNCS-supported organization or assigned national service participant(s) to offer time, knowledge, skills, and expertise for free to support the CNCS-supported program or organization.

EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: CNCS has identified a series of practices that collectively maximize the capacity of volunteers to have an impact on behalf of the organization or community.

EFFECTIVENESS: Improved ability of the organization to achieve outcomes resulting in better success rates or better quality of outcomes achieved.

EFFICIENCY: Improved outcomes with the same level of resources; improved or consistent quality of services with fewer resources.

EPISODIC VOLUNTEER: A volunteer who participates in one-time service projects.

NATIONAL SERVICE PARTICIPANT: Refers to the individuals supported by CNCS who carry out service activities. CNCS' various programs refer to people who participate in national service in different ways, e.g. AmeriCorps members, Learn and Serve America participants and Senior Corps volunteers. The broad term "national service participant" encompasses individuals in all CNCS programs, excluding CNCS staff members.

ONGOING VOLUNTEER: A volunteer with an ongoing volunteer commitment to an organization or program.

SCALE/REACH: The scope of a program's services. Increased scale/reach can be measured by the number of new people served, new populations served, and/or new or expanded services.

SUPPORTING/ENHANCING THE PROGRAM DELIVERY MODEL: Specifies that the services provided by the CNCS-supported organization or the national service participant engaged in the capacity building activity must be for the intended purpose of supporting or enhancing the CNCS-supported program delivery model. These capacity building activities cannot be solely intended to support the administration or operations of the organization.

SUSTAINABILITY: A lasting outcome of the capacity building activity or intervention. This may include maintaining service after the CNCS resource is gone, maintaining enhanced or increased services after the CNCS resource is gone, or both. Sustainable projects and programs have institutional procedures, resources and processes that assure the continuation of expanded or enhanced beneficiary services.

UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS: Populations or groups that are specifically identified by the program as in need of program services or that currently receive inadequate service.

VOLUNTEER WISCONSIN: A collaborative initiative to connect volunteers with opportunities with the Volunteer Connection website (www.volunteerwisconsin.org), promote volunteerism, and support the capacity of nonprofit organization through service.

2015-2016 AmeriCorps State Program Summary - Serve Wisconsin

1	Organization	CNCS	Match	Total	Slots					MSY	2015 - 2016 Cost Per MSY	2014 - 2013 Cost Per MSY	Program Operating Locations
					FT	HT	RHT	QT	MT				
2	B&G Clubs Milwaukee - Kinder Academy	\$82,753	\$35,527	\$118,280	0	0	8	0	16	6.43	\$12,869.83	\$13,306.90	Milwaukee
3	B&G Clubs Milwaukee - SPARK	\$245,323	\$258,755	\$504,078	2	3	0	63	5	21.22	\$11,560.93	\$13,151.84	Milwaukee
4	Dane County Human Services	\$344,451	\$390,490	\$734,941	35	0	0	0	0	35.00	\$9,841.46	\$10,389.91	Dane County - Multi-Site
5	Indianhead Community Action Agency	\$113,292	\$70,168	\$183,460	0	20	0	0	0	10.00	\$11,329.20	\$11,329.20	Sawyer & Rusk Counties
6	Marshfield Clinic - Afterschool	\$378,300	\$196,467	\$574,767	30	0	0	0	0	30.00	\$12,610.00	N/A	Statewide
7	Milwaukee Christian Center	\$167,083	\$386,374	\$553,457	3	20	0	0	0	13.00	\$12,852.54	\$13,295.00	Milwaukee
8	Renewal Unlimited	\$185,549	\$257,915	\$443,464	0	15	9	10	2	14.00	\$13,253.50	\$13,253.50	Columbia County
9	United Way Dane Co-Achievement Connections	\$257,188	\$460,608	\$717,796	20	0	0	0	0	20.00	\$12,859.40	\$12,859.40	Dane County
10	UW - Eau Claire ECLIPSE	\$86,717	\$48,178	\$134,895	0	0	0	0	45	9.52	\$9,108.93	\$9,390.65	Eau Claire
11	UW - Oshkosh Vet Corps	\$72,939	\$48,858	\$121,797	0	0	0	22	0	5.82	\$12,532.47	\$12,532.47	4 Counties - Multi-Site
12	WI Association for Runaway Services	\$375,941	\$438,881	\$814,822	30	5	0	0	0	32.50	\$11,567.42	\$11,567.42	Statewide Reach
13	WI Emergency Management	\$130,503	\$47,444	\$177,947	0	20	0	0	0	10.00	\$13,050.30	\$13,050.30	5 Counties + City of Milwaukee
14	College Possible	\$296,400	N/A	\$296,400	30	0	0	0	0	30.00	\$9,880.00	\$12,350.00	Milwaukee
15	Public Allies	\$555,750	N/A	\$555,750	45	0	0	0	0	45.00	\$12,350.00	\$12,350.00	Multi-Site Milwaukee
16	Teach For America - Milwaukee	\$96,000	N/A	\$96,000	120	0	0	0	0	120.00	\$800.00	\$800.00	Milwaukee
	WI Primary Healthcare Association	\$247,000	N/A	\$247,000	20	0	0	0	0	20.00	\$12,350.00	\$12,350.00	Multi-Site - 9 Counties
	TOTALS	\$3,635,189	\$2,639,665	\$6,274,854	335	83	17	95	68	422.49	\$8,604.20		

1	FORMULA	Boys & Girls Clubs Barron County	Easter Seals Wisconsin	Marshfield Clinic - Volunteer WI	North Central CAP	United Way Dane Co - Schools of Hope	Western Dairyland EOC	WI Dept. of Agriculture (DATCP)	WI Dept. of Public Instruction	Mount Mary University	Second Harvest Food Bank (Planning Grant)	TOTALS	2015 - 2016 Cost Per MSY	2014 - 2013 Cost Per MSY	Program Operating Locations	
																FT
2		\$205,950	\$75,986	\$281,936	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	15.00	\$13,730.00	\$13,247.04	Barron County
3		\$265,639	\$301,209	\$566,848	1	29	0	1	22	20.42	\$13,008.77	\$10,784.08	20.42	\$13,008.77	\$10,784.08	Statewide Reach
4		\$617,850	\$199,196	\$817,046	45	0	0	0	0	45.00	\$13,730.00	\$13,300.00	45.00	\$13,730.00	\$13,300.00	Statewide
5		\$308,376	\$308,920	\$617,296	14	11	0	0	14	22.46	\$13,730.01	\$12,815.44	22.46	\$13,730.01	\$12,815.44	Marathon, Portage & Langlade Co
6		\$356,980	\$336,285	\$693,265	26	0	0	0	0	26.00	\$13,730.00	\$12,146.54	26.00	\$13,730.00	\$12,146.54	Madison, Middleton, Sun Prairie
7		\$137,300	\$137,300	\$274,600	0	20	0	0	0	10.00	\$13,730.00	\$12,255.00	10.00	\$13,730.00	\$12,255.00	Eau Claire & Jackson Counties
8		\$212,553	\$223,762	\$436,315	1	29	0	0	0	15.50	\$13,713.10	\$12,180.87	15.50	\$13,713.10	\$12,180.87	Statewide Reach
9		\$274,179	\$140,214	\$414,393	16	8	0	0	0	20.00	\$13,708.95	N/A	20.00	\$13,708.95	N/A	Southern Wisconsin
10		\$24,000	N/A	\$24,000	30	0	0	0	0	30.00	\$800.00	\$800.00	30.00	\$800.00	\$800.00	Milwaukee
	TOTALS	\$2,451,942	\$1,739,870	\$4,191,812	143	107	0	1	36	204.38	\$11,996.98		204.38	\$11,996.98		Statewide

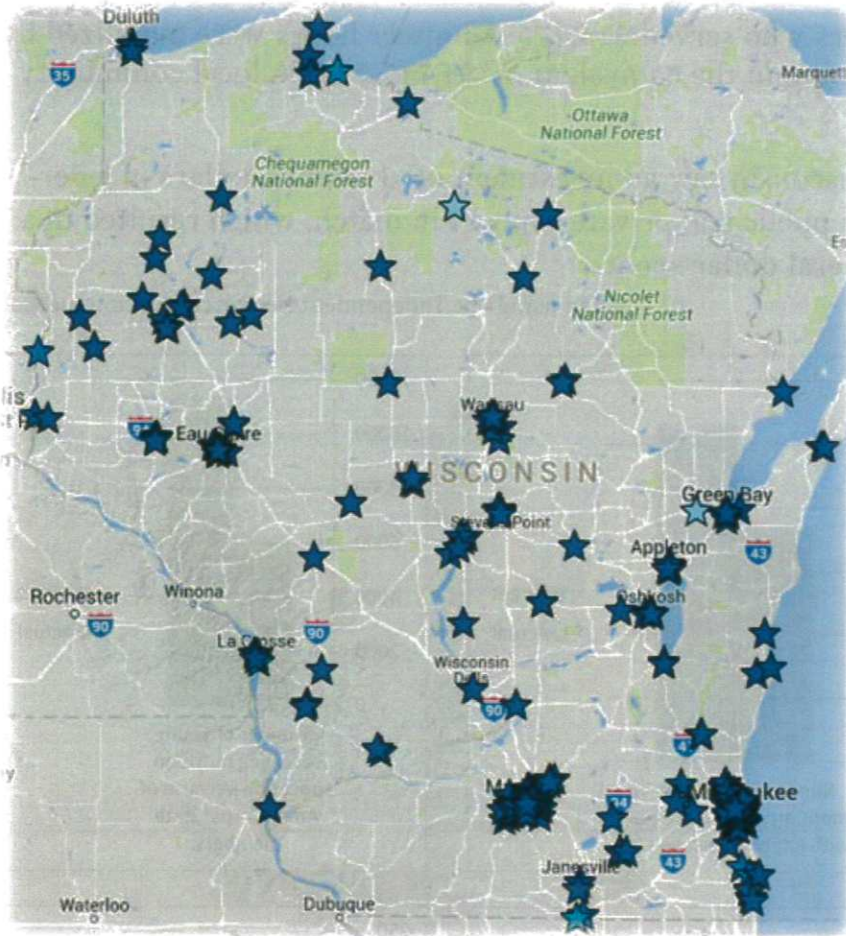
AmeriCorps*State - Serve Wisconsin												
TOTALS												
FT	Full-Time Slot (1,700 hours)	\$6,087,131	\$4,379,535	\$10,466,666	478	190	17	96	104	26	Number of Programs	
HT	Half-Time Slot (900 hours)	58.16%	41.84%	100%	54%	21%	2%	11%	12%	626.87	Total MSYs (1 MSY = 1 FTE)	
RHT	Reduced Half-Time Slot (675 hours)									885.00	Total Member Positions	
QT	Quarter-Time Slot (450 hours)											
MT	Minimum-Time Slot (300 hours)											
	TOTALS											

Overall Cost Per MSY		
598	Total Competitive Slots	
287	Total Formula Slots	
885	Total Slots	
\$9,710.36	Overall Cost Per MSY	

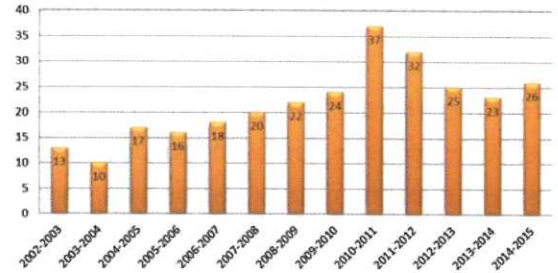
AmeriCorps in Wisconsin



Since 1994, more than **22,000 Wisconsin** residents have served more than **33 million hours** and have qualified for Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards totaling more than **\$81,140,000**.

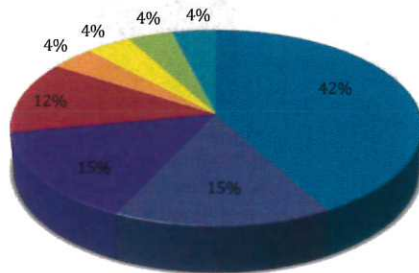


of AmeriCorps*State programs served by Serve Wisconsin 2002-2015



"I have had the most life changing experience of any experience in my life through AmeriCorps. I am incredibly more equipped to be an active and productive member of my community and in society as a whole. I have gained invaluable skills that will make me a dynamic employee when I move on from the AmeriCorps program. I highly recommend the AmeriCorps program to anyone!"
 ~ Wisconsin AmeriCorps Member '15

2014-2015 Program Focus Areas



- Education
- Economic Opportunities
- Healthy Futures
- Capacity Building
- Disaster Services
- Veterans & Military Families
- Environmental Stewardship
- At Risk Youth Outreach

"AmeriCorps has been an enriching experience in my life which makes it very satisfying. I've been challenged and tested to my limit and have seen a lot of growth in the community around me, in myself as a service member, and as a citizen."
 ~ Wisconsin AmeriCorps member '15



69% of Wisconsin's counties were served in 2014-2015 by Serve Wisconsin's AmeriCorps*State Programs.



AmeriCorps in Wisconsin

Program Year 2014-2015



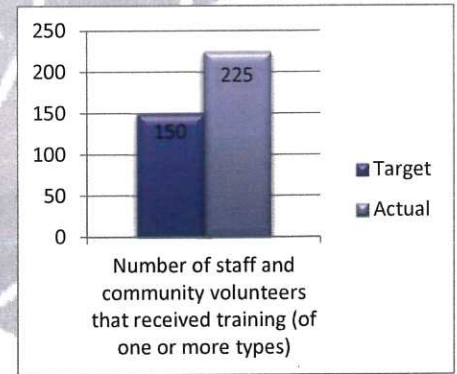
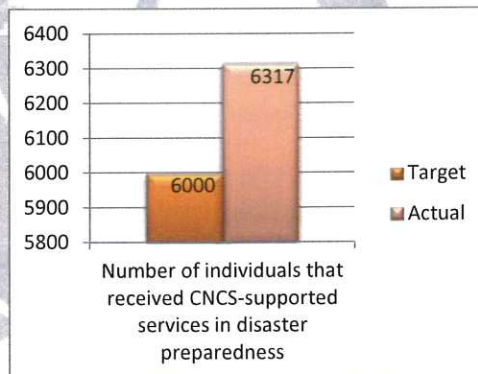
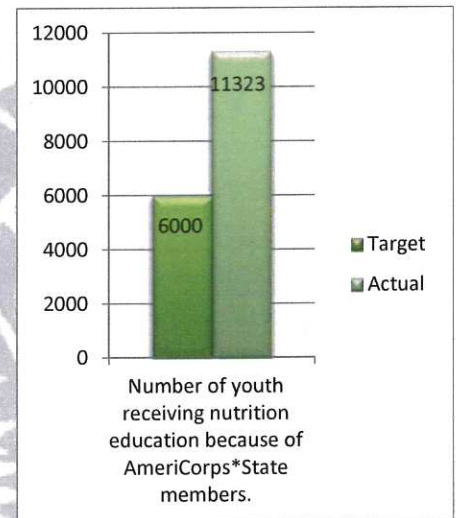
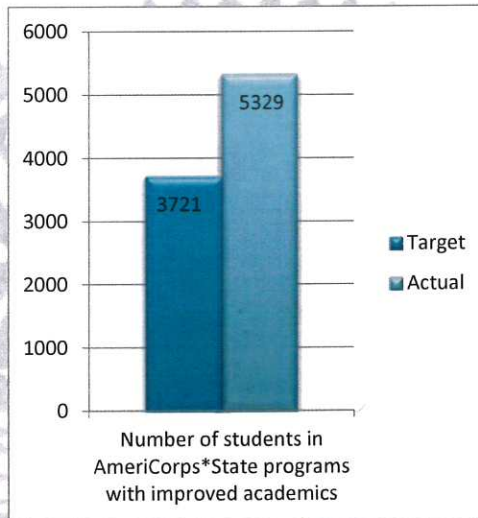
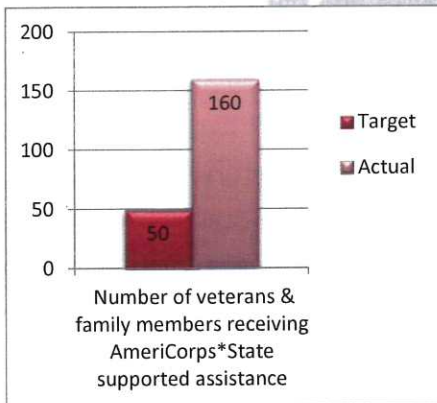
During the 2014-2015 program year, through **26 AmeriCorps*State programs** that operated across Wisconsin, **1,003 AmeriCorps members** served **1,152,600 hours**. These AmeriCorps service hours generated a **local community value of \$26,590,482***.

Furthermore, **17,009 additional volunteers** who served **205,775 volunteer hours** were mobilized by these **AmeriCorps*State programs**, resulting in the equivalent of **\$4,747,229*** in local community value.

During the 2014-2015 program year, Wisconsin saw an investment of **6 million dollars in federal AmeriCorps funds**, **4 million dollars in public and private support in match**, which resulted in a **\$5.82 return on investment** for every federal dollar spent.

*when using the Independent Sector calculation method.

AmeriCorps*State Impact Snapshot Wisconsin 2014-2015



Corporation for
NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE



"Before I joined AmeriCorps I didn't think my life would ever get better. I got into drugs and crime. I was homeless, and had little interaction with my family. Thanks to AmeriCorps, I have the opportunity to become a successful, educated, and self-sufficient member of this community. This program offers opportunities to young people that feel that they have run out of resources or have nowhere to turn. I am not another statistic, I am going to be successful."

~ Wisconsin AmeriCorps Member '15

EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

AmeriCorps members have earned more than **\$2.7 billion** in Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards since 1994, helping hundreds of thousands of alums pay for college.

\$2.7 Billion
Amount earned in education awards by AmeriCorps members since 1994.

