



The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act (H.R. 1388)

Background

On April 21, 2009, President Obama signed The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act (H.R. 1388, previously the Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education, or GIVE, Act) in law. The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act reauthorizes the Corporation for National and Community Service and its programs through 2014. It expands and improves service opportunities dramatically so that Americans of all ages can address the nation's most urgent challenges, from the high school dropout crisis to the lack of health care in our neediest communities.

Summary

The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act:

- ***Builds on the success of AmeriCorps to create a new, more robust service corps focused on areas of national need.*** It sets a path for 175,000 more Americans to give a year of service to solve specific challenges in the areas of education, energy conservation, health, veteran affairs, and economic opportunity for disadvantaged individuals. It expands the number of national service participants to 250,000 by 2017.
- ***Mobilizes community members to work together to close the educational achievement gap.*** It establishes an "Education Corps" to improve student achievement. Education corps members could serve as mentors or tutors in expanded learning time initiatives or high-quality afterschool programs to increase student engagement, academic success, and college readiness. They could also help students and families navigate the college admissions process.
- ***Scales what works.*** It creates a Social Innovation Fund pilot program, providing \$1 to 10 million grants of seed money to scale up innovative and evidence-based programs that leverage private and foundation capital to meet major social challenges.
- ***Builds capacity in the nonprofit sector.*** It authorizes a Nonprofit Capacity Building Program to make grants of at least \$200,000 to intermediary organizations to support the provision of organizational development assistance - including training on best practices, financial planning, grant-writing, and compliance with applicable tax laws - to small and mid-size nonprofit organizations, particularly those facing resource hardship challenges.
- ***Increases levels of volunteerism.*** It authorizes a Volunteer Generation Fund to award grants to states and nonprofits to recruit, manage, and support volunteers and strengthen the nation's volunteer infrastructure. This fund will increase the number of volunteers who are able to work with community and faith-based organizations to meet growing needs.
- ***Authorizes new AmeriCorps VISTA grant programs of national significance*** that provide poor and rural communities with before-school and after-school services; financial literacy and planning; community economic development initiatives; services reintegrating formerly incarcerated individuals into society; assistance to veterans and their families; and health and wellness services.

- ***Raises the value of the current education award and creates more opportunities to earn education awards.*** It raises the amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award by tying its value to the maximum Pell Grant available to students under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (currently \$5350, but set to increase over time). It also authorizes \$500 summer of service education awards for rising 6-12th graders based on 100 hours of service (\$750 for economically disadvantaged students); and \$1,000 Silver Scholar education awards, based on 350 hours of service, for individuals age 55 and older.
- ***Encourages people of all ages to serve.***
 - With the Campuses of Service program, it provides funds to up to 25 institutions of higher education to develop or disseminate exemplary service-learning programs that assist their students' pursuit of public service careers.
 - It funds community service-learning opportunities for elementary and secondary, college, and graduate students as well as research into service-learning.
 - It requires states to develop comprehensive plans for volunteer and paid service by Baby Boomers and older adults.
 - It includes three Senior Corps programs that empower people 55 years and older to contribute to their communities through service.
- ***Strengthens accountability measures for national service programs.*** It focuses national evaluation activities on performance measures, with a greater focus on cost-effectiveness and the effective use of participants' time. It also directs the Corporation to establish, in consultation with grantees, performance measures for each program, require corrective plans for those not meeting goals, and reduce or terminate assistance if the correction is not made. Annual reports are required, beginning two years after the bill's enactment.
- ***Authorizes the Corporation to treat September 11th annually as a National Day of Service and Remembrance.***

For a more detailed summary of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, visit http://voicesforservice.org/legis_update.htm.

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Citizen Schools is a leading national education initiative that mobilizes thousands of adult volunteers to help improve student achievement by teaching skills-building apprenticeships after school. These programs blend real-world learning projects with rigorous academic and leadership development activities, preparing students in the middle grades for success in high school, college, the workforce, and civic life.

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*Citizen Schools is a member of **Voices for National Service**, a coalition of national service programs and state commissions committed to expanding opportunities for Americans to serve. For more information, visit www.voicesforservice.org. We appreciate their assistance in creating this document.*