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SERVICE YEAR OPPORTUNITIES IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

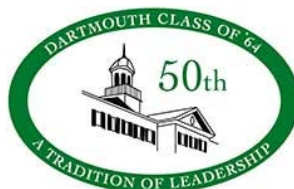
Presented to the New Hampshire Service Year Workforce
Commission

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report compiles information relevant to the work of the New Hampshire Service Year Workforce Commission. By surveying New Hampshire's workforce, service year programs available to young people in the state, and employment and education opportunities offered to service year alumni, the report intends to establish an overview of background information relevant to the goals of the Commission. As New Hampshire communities age faster than other communities across the nation, we identify service year programs as high potential opportunities to attract young people to New Hampshire who tend to be interested in contributing to their communities and engaging as productive members of civil society.

With regard to employment, the report uses the Employers of National Service program to measure dedication to attracting service alumni applicants, concluding that New Hampshire lags behind some of its neighbors and could benefit from greater commitment to the program by local and state government institutions. The report also assesses the use of Segal Education Award funding in New Hampshire and identifies institutions participating in award matching to encourage service alumni applicants. The Dartmouth Admissions Office is used as a local example of higher education attitudes towards service programs and service alumni. Finally, the report identifies various opportunities to promote service year program participation and encourage alumni to stay and contribute to the state through the development of environmental recreation, support for the New Hampshire chapter of AmeriCorps Alumni, and adoption of new education and employment incentives for service year alumni.

1. INTRODUCTION

Full-time service year programs have increasingly become a way for young adults to engage with communities, schools, nonprofits, and other civic institutions for a year of full-time or part-time service. Upon completion, these service organizations can also act as pathways to meaningful education and employment opportunities inside and outside of community service. Every year, tens of thousands of Americans graduate from these programs with practical life skills, leadership experience, and a devotion to giving back to their communities.¹ New Hampshire faces a dearth of young adults in the state workforce, but much can be done to reverse this trend, including through service year programs. Across the nation, education and employment programs already exist to offer attractive benefits to service year alumni looking to continue their education or find a steady job. This report will provide an overview of service year programs and linkages to education and employment opportunities in New Hampshire, focused on actionable ways the Service



Year Workforce Commission may facilitate participation in existing programs and propose novel ideas.

This commission is tasked with supporting the interests of the New Hampshire workforce through service year opportunities. Those who have served in programs funded by AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, City Year, and other service organizations are a dynamic group of individuals who have demonstrated a willingness to serve and contribute to their communities. Specifically, many participants in the AmeriCorps environmental stewardship program, which preserves and tends to public land, may find a connection to the state of New Hampshire through their love of the outdoors. Advertising education and employment opportunities to these young adults can play a significant role in revitalizing the aging New Hampshire workforce. The ongoing dialogue between the commission members and representatives of universities, charities, service organizations, and private stakeholders is an important step toward offering incentives that will attract service year alumni to New Hampshire. The most positive outcomes will result from the coordinated efforts of all stakeholders to compound the effect of each incentive and make New Hampshire the most appealing landing spot for service year alumni.

The following sections will outline various steps that in-state employers, universities, and local governments may take to advance New Hampshire toward this vision by both building on nation-wide programs that already exist as well as created new service opportunities. It is important to note that fully accommodating the needs of service year alumni will require more unconventional offerings, so novel suggestions are also presented. To begin, Renee Perrault of Catholic Charities notes, “The biggest obstacle is housing and the cost of housing for young folks...Especially if they’re serving in national service, they’re receiving a small stipend.”² Many service year alumni may find welcoming homes in the tight-knit, outdoors-minded communities of New Hampshire, but these young Americans can only leave home and join the New Hampshire workforce if it is feasible, given the financial demands of living in the state.

2. THE NEW HAMPSHIRE WORKFORCE

Before scrutinizing employment and education opportunities for service year alumni, it is necessary to consider the economic context in which any new programming is to be implemented. This context highlights the necessity of programs to promote youth engagement in the New Hampshire workforce. First, New Hampshire ranks highest in the share of high school graduates seeking an out-of-state college education at almost 35 percent.³ As a result, New Hampshire is one of the country’s most rapidly aging states and held the nation’s second oldest median age as of 2018.⁴



New Hampshire currently has one of the nation’s lowest unemployment rates at 2.6 percent, but experiences little growth in its 18 to 64 year-old workforce.⁵ Economic productivity stagnates in labor-intensive industries when the size of the workforce declines, so the persistence of this issue could lead to employers leaving New Hampshire or opening offices outside of the state to survive. While New Hampshire has not yet introduced significant policy reform to address this issue, programs in Vermont and Maine have demonstrated limited examples of what may be implemented. Maine has made it possible for recent college graduates to subtract student loan payments from their annual state income taxes, and Vermont has passed a bill offering to reimburse remote workers up to \$10,000 over two years for moving to Vermont (despite the fact that only \$125,000 in funds were available for this program in 2019).⁶

Organizations and policymakers in New Hampshire are also pursuing a range of ways to incentivize young people to remain in New Hampshire or migrate into the state. One non-profit, Stay Work Play, studies the factors driving youth migration trends in and out of New Hampshire. The most significant causes of out-migration, according to the organization, are housing costs, a lack of career opportunities, limited nightlife, and a lack of diversity.⁷ Furthermore, the problem has the potential to worsen over time as young people leaving the state begets more young people leaving the state. The executive director of Stay Work Play identifies this as the “loneliness factor” spurned by young people not living around other young people. One in five New Hampshire residents between the ages of 20 and 40 say they do not have a friend “nearby.”⁸

While the aging of New Hampshire’s workforce is an undoubtedly dire issue, the popularity of service year organizations in the state creates distinct potential. A figurative “stream” of Americans in their 20s flow in and out of New Hampshire every year to volunteer for AmeriCorps and other service organizations, so policies that encourage them to remain in the state after completing their term of service to pursue educational and employment opportunities could help generate a necessary rejuvenation of the New Hampshire population.

Stay Work Play does not engage directly with service organization alumni but advertises a number of programs and resources on its platform to help with job searches, internship searches, purchasing or renting housing, and finding education and training programs in the state. The organization also lobbies for legislation to attract young workers that include bills to aid those with student debt, expand affordable housing, and promote New Hampshire’s outdoor recreation industry. Outdoor recreation opportunities are identified by Stay Work Play surveys as a primary reason young people stay in New Hampshire.⁹ Since many New Hampshire AmeriCorps volunteers are devoted to environmental



conservation activities on public land, promoting outdoor recreation in New Hampshire is also likely an effective way to advertise living in New Hampshire to service year alumni.

Lastly, it is worthwhile to note that several large New Hampshire employers host outreach programs for public school-age New Hampshire children aimed at bolstering the New Hampshire workforce and exposing New Hampshire children to a variety of career opportunities and fields. One example is Hypertherm, an industrial metal cutting technology company based in Hanover, NH. Hypertherm offers job shadow programs, school tours, teacher workshops, and a week-long camp for young New Hampshire students, all designed to expose the students to STEM careers and ways to pursue STEM in New Hampshire.¹⁰ Matthew McKenney, the Workforce Development Leader at Hypertherm, estimates that these programs have reached at least 1,000 middle school and high school students.¹¹ Other companies that host similar programs engaging with local students and local communities include Revision Energy, Eversource, and GW Plastics.

3. VOLUNTEERISM IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

According to data collected by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), New Hampshire has a strong culture of volunteerism. As of 2015, 28.6 percent of New Hampshire residents engaged in volunteer work, above the national average of 24.9 percent. These roughly 329,600 volunteers gave 37.33 million hours of their time, an impressive rate of 37.5 volunteer hours per capita in 2015.¹² Figure 1 below displays the categorical distribution of these volunteer hours as of 2015 collected by CNCS from programs under their purview, including, but not limited to, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps.

Notably, this shows that a significant number of New Hampshire residents volunteered in activities related to the economic welfare of their communities in 2015. Roughly 22 percent of residents collected, prepared, distributed, or served food in some capacity, and 13 percent collected, made, or distributed clothing to those in need. A significant share of volunteers also worked with children directly: 15 percent mentored youth, 13 percent worked as a tutor or teacher, and 10 percent volunteered with a sports team. However, there is likely significant crossover between these categories, as many volunteers who give time to youth in the context of education likely identified themselves as mentors and tutors on this survey. Volunteer activities related to economic welfare and youth education are strongly connected to the future of New Hampshire's workforce, making New Hampshire communities more desirable places to raise families and preparing young people for skilled employment.

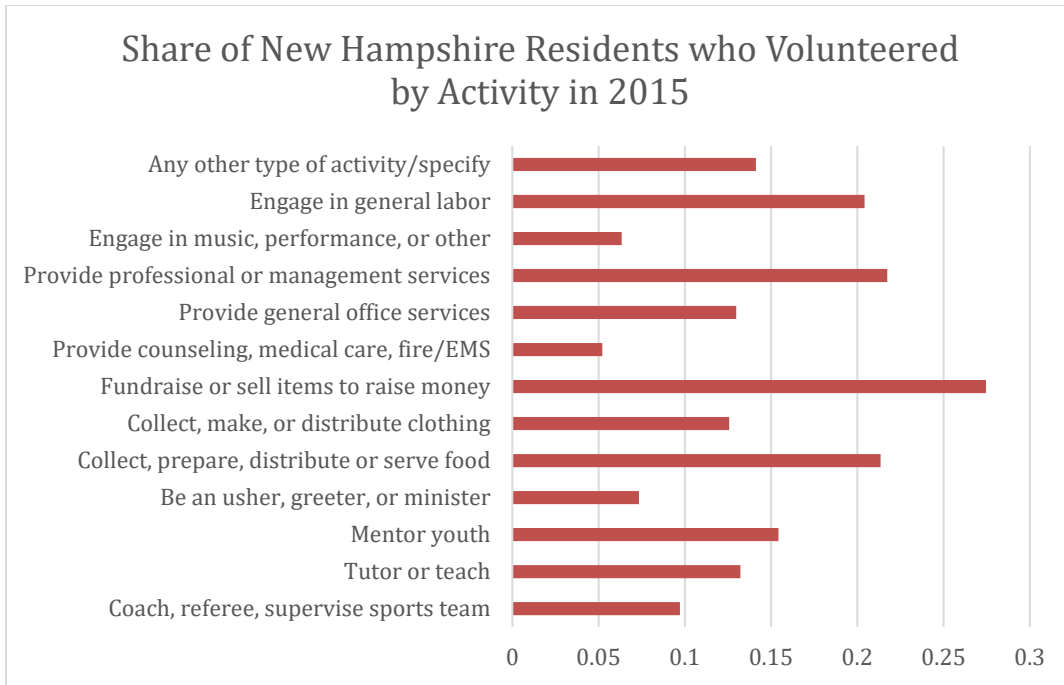


Figure 1: Categorical Distribution of Volunteer Activities in New Hampshire, 2015
 Source: CNCS

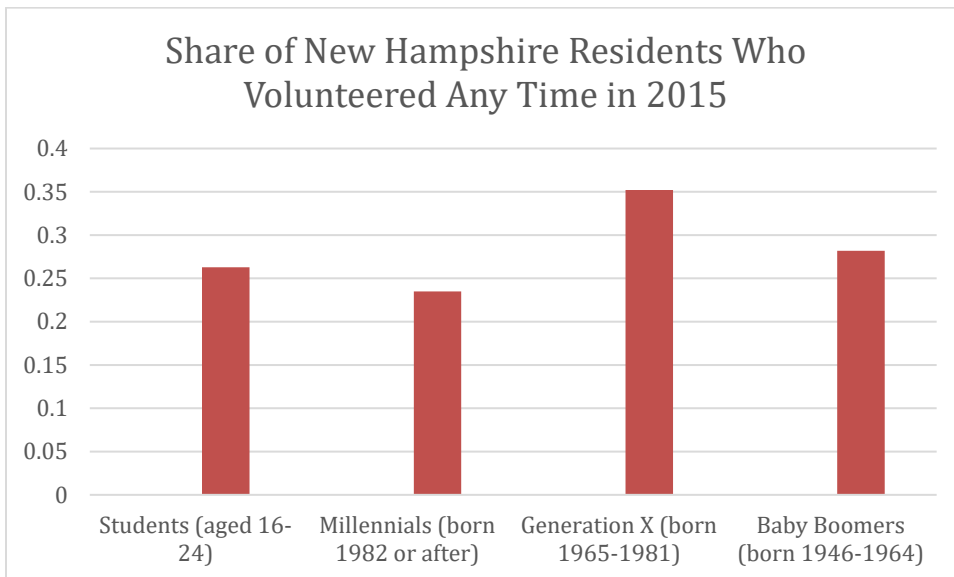


Figure 2: Volunteerism in New Hampshire by Age
 Source: CNCS



Figure 2 reflects the share of New Hampshire residents who volunteered in 2015 by age group. This is the most detailed information on volunteerism by age collected by CNCS. Students and young people are revealed to make up a significant, but not dominant, share of volunteer activity in New Hampshire (CNCS). Unfortunately, however, tabulating these results reveals an error in the collection or enumeration of this data by CNCS. The sum of all four columns exceeds 100 percent, presumably because some respondents were counted in both the “Students” and “Millennials” category. The decision to include this data in this report is based on the value it holds in spite of its errors.

Before relating this discussion to New Hampshire AmeriCorps programs specifically, one organization to recognize is Lead for America, a unique form of service organization that is new to New Hampshire. Lead for America places young people in public service positions hosted by local governments around the country to serve communities, bolster public institutions, and encourage young people to embrace public service and develop leadership skills. In Lead for America’s 2020 cohort, they will be placing one fellow in Lebanon, New Hampshire—one of their 54 fellows across 21 states.¹³ Reed Shafer-Ray, COO of Lead for America, also expresses interest in expanding the LFA organizational footprint in New Hampshire.¹⁴ As a way to bolster public service and help revitalize New Hampshire communities, encouraging public/governmental institutions throughout New Hampshire to participate in this program is an excellent opportunity.

3.1 New Hampshire AmeriCorps Programs

Volunteer NH, New Hampshire’s State Service Commission, administers service programs in New Hampshire and monitors over \$2.2 million in federal funding for AmeriCorps programs. In addition to AmeriCorps VISTA employees, the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), and Senior Corps, Volunteer NH administers grant funding to New Hampshire’s seven AmeriCorps State programs. These programs are awarded funding for 176 full-time members and a smaller but significant number of half-time members across the seven organizations.¹⁵ City Year and the Student Conservation Association are the largest state programs, awarding 70 full-time members and 30 full-time members, respectively.

This data is relevant for demonstrating the scope of AmeriCorps activity in New Hampshire. Information about the age of typical AmeriCorps volunteers will also be relevant to later discussions of employment and education opportunities. While Volunteer NH does not have precise information about the ages of volunteers within each program, which varies every program cycle, Program Officer Emily Planchet estimates that most members of these programs are between 18 and their mid-20s. She estimates that most



program participants have at least some college education, and programs prefer to accept volunteers with the maturity associated with this level of academic achievement, so full-time AmeriCorps volunteers doing gap years after high school and before college are in the minority.¹⁶ Nonetheless, Ms. Planchet believes that most alumni spend their Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, which will be discussed in greater detail in this report, paying off student loans taken out at the undergraduate level.

Lastly, because a central goal of this Commission is to promote the health of the New Hampshire workforce through service programs, it is relevant to analyze the regions of origin and patterns of later movement of AmeriCorps alumni. Ms. Planchet notes that all programs are encouraged to recruit volunteers from both within the communities they serve and outside of them. City Year, the Student Conservation Association (SCA), and Lakes Region Conservation Corps (LRCC) tend to attract the most out-of-state participants, while the other state programs have less national reputation and tend to rely more on local residents familiar with the organizations and their work. Ms. Planchet also believes that housing is a key recruitment barrier for out-of-state applicants, as many want to join AmeriCorps state programs in New Hampshire but cannot find affordable housing, and only SCA and LRCC provide housing for members.¹⁷ Furthermore, little information exists on where New Hampshire AmeriCorps alumni go after completing these programs, including whether or not they remain in the state. This is the most notable informational gap relevant to the work of the Service Year Workforce Commission, so it is important to develop a means of collecting this information, such as a survey sent out to past participants, to serve the interests of the Commission.

4. EMPLOYERS OF NATIONAL SERVICE

Many state and local governments, non-profit organizations, and corporations seek to attract service organization alumni by becoming an “Employer of National Service.” Current Employers of National Service include federal government agencies like the US Department of Energy and the US Department of State, non-profits including the American Red Cross, and well-known corporations such as Delta Airlines, Disney, and Mastercard, totaling over 600 participating organizations. Fifty-two state and local governments are Employers of National Service, none of which are in New Hampshire. To become one, the employer must adopt hiring policies for all open positions that attract individuals who have completed a service year or national service program. Participating employers advertise themselves as Employers of National Service on their website, in job applications, or in another approved way that “demonstrates to [service organization] alumni that [the] organization understands and actively recruits those who have completed a national service program.”¹⁸



Encouraging New Hampshire local governments, non-profits, and private companies to become Employers of National Service will help attract qualified job applicants to government roles. It will have the dual effect of encouraging participation in New Hampshire service year programs and increasing applications to public sector jobs because it will help provide a more solidified pathway from national service in New Hampshire to future employment in the state. Public and private institutions in New Hampshire participate in the Employers of National Service program at relatively low levels. The following table tallies the number of Employers of National Service in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine.

Table 1. Total Employers of National Service in New Hampshire and Neighboring States

State	State/Local Government Institutions	Non-Profit Institutions	Private Companies	Other
New Hampshire	0	5	1	1
Vermont	4	8	0	0
Massachusetts	2	18	4	0

Source: CNCS

Seven non-profits and private companies (including one work placement platform classified as “other”) based in New Hampshire are a part of the Employer of National Service program. This is comparable to Vermont, a state of half the population of New Hampshire, with eight, and less than Massachusetts, with 22. Where New Hampshire lags behind its neighbors is in the state and local government category. Two public entities in Massachusetts hire as Employers of National Service, the cities of Boston and Newton, and four in Vermont do the same: The City of Burlington, the Vermont Park Service, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, and its public State Service Commission, SerVermont. In New Hampshire, no local government or part of the state government hires as an Employer of National Service. The five non-profit Employers of National Service in New Hampshire are Volunteer NH, The Student Conservation Association, FIRST, Indian Stream Health Center, and Families in Transition. New Hampshire’s one private Employer of National Service is the Timberland footwear company based in Stratham, New Hampshire. This message, displayed prominently on the Timberland website, demonstrates what this program looks like to users.



EMPLOYER OF NATIONAL SERVICE

We know our employees grow as individuals and leaders when they volunteer in the community. The same holds true for alumni/alumnae of National Service. That's why we're committed to being an Employer of National Service and to provide special consideration for alumni/alumnae of AmeriCorps and/or the Peace Corps who apply for corporate positions. As an alumnus/alumna, in addition to submitting your on-line job application, please send your materials to the mail address noted on the application to ensure your materials are further considered and that you receive an individual response.



Figure 3. Employer of National Service Website Message

Source: Timberland LLC.¹⁹

Encouraging greater government, non-profit and private company participation in this program will strengthen the connection between national service and work in New Hampshire. New Hampshire-based national service programs will have greater success recruiting young volunteers and New Hampshire employers will subsequently see an increase in qualified applicants. Finally, the program requires relatively little formal commitment on the behalf of the employer, which may moderate its effectiveness but makes it easier to spread and promote.



5. SERVICE YEAR EDUCATION FUNDING

The leading AmeriCorps program connecting its alumni to education opportunities is the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award. AmeriCorps also negotiates partnerships with institutions that match or partially match the value of the education award. The Segal award is adjusted every year to match the maximum value Pell Grant that can be granted that year, so the 2020 award for full-time AmeriCorps service for one year is \$6,195.²⁰

One way to encourage greater enrollment of AmeriCorps alumni in New Hampshire universities would be to encourage greater participation in their award-matching program. AmeriCorps has 250 university partners that offer either scholarships, full education award matching, or partial award matching. Partners offer these benefits at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Currently, the only partners in New Hampshire are Antioch College in Keene, NH, and the University of New Hampshire's Carsey School of Public Policy in Durham, NH. Antioch College offers 25 percent tuition scholarship awards and the Carsey School at UNH offers up to \$7,000 in total scholarship awards for specific graduate school programs.²¹

City Year, an AmeriCorps program that pairs participants with students in public schools, also has partnerships with 115 universities. These universities offer application fee waivers and extend deferrals for those who want to serve additional time with City Year, and some partners offer exclusive scholarships and grants for City Year alumni. Similar to AmeriCorps' Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, the only New Hampshire partners are Antioch College and the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire. City Year partners in other states include Duke University, Boston College, Brandeis University, Brown University, Georgetown University, the University of Pennsylvania, and many others. While many of these partnerships are for selective graduate degree programs, it is also not atypical for City Year partners to offer scholarships and grants to alumni seeking undergraduate education.²²

The data in Table 2 below, collected by CNCS, reflects the total Segal Education Award Funding paid to all New Hampshire institutions between its inaugural year, 1995, and 2016.



Table 2. Segal Education Award Payments to NH Institutions 1995-2016

INSTITUTION	TOTAL PAYMENTS
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE	1,416,474.87
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE	967,836.62
ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY (New England)	928,048.24
SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE UNIVERSITY	734,835.63
PLYMOUTH STATE UNIVERSITY	432,757.93
KEENE STATE COLLEGE	396,717.21
WINDHAM PROFESSIONALS	230,955.47
COLLEGE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING	196,175.26
NHTI, CONCORD'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE	182,147.62
HESSER COLLEGE	174,228.84
NEW ENGLAND COLLEGE	156,465.25
GRANITE STATE COLLEGE	139,248.04
FRANKLIN PIERCE UNIVERSITY	119,317.46
MANCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE	116,406.54
SAINT ANSELM COLLEGE	100,347.87
WHITE MOUNTAINS COMMUNITY COLLEGE	95,631.73
NASHUA COMMUNITY COLLEGE	93,852.80
GREAT BAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE	88,904.38
RIVIER UNIVERSITY	87,090.75
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE (Manchester)	55,637.05
LAKES REGION COMMUNITY COLLEGE	47,880.68
COLBY-SAWYER COLLEGE	38,186.43
NEW HAMPSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION	36,997.15
UPPER VALLEY EDUCATORS INSTITUTE	36,200.00
MCINTOSH COLLEGE	34,051.31
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE (Concord)	25,276.10
NOTRE DAME COLLEGE	22,505.00
NEW HAMPSHIRE INSTITUTE OF ART	19,361.00
RIVER VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE	19,345.90
CHESTER COLLEGE OF NEW ENGLAND	18,218.13
DANIEL WEBSTER COLLEGE	16,997.99



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HESSER COLLEGE (Portsmouth)	14,375.00
NORTHEAST CREDIT UNION	12,484.07
EMPIRE BEAUTY SCHOOL (Somersworth)	11,812.50
LEBANON COLLEGE	11,059.00
EMPIRE BEAUTY SCHOOL (Hookset)	9,450.00
NORTHEAST CAREER SCHOOLS	9,040.00
ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL OF NURSING	7,777.76
KEENE BEAUTY ACADEMY	6,950.00
SEACOAST CAREER SCHOOL	6,550.00
THOMAS MORE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS	5,316.43
CONTINENTAL ACADEMIE OF HAIR DESIGN	4,725.00
BERNE UNIVERSITY	4,725.00
CONCORD ACADEMY OF HAIR DESIGN	4,725.00
NAVIENT	3,577.80
LAKE SUNAPEE BANK	3,449.69
LEDYARD NATIONAL BANK	3,415.75
NEW ENGLAND SCHOOL OF HAIR DESIGN	2,362.50
NEW HAMPSHIRE INSTITUTE FOR THERAPEUTIC ARTS	2,362.50
UNITED STUDENT AID FUND	2,064.76
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY	1,325.00
STONEHEARTH OPEN LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES	900
PORTSMOUTH SAVINGS BANK	800.09
DARTMOUTH-HITCHCOCK	481

Source: CNCS

The most notable conclusion derived from this list is that the only two New Hampshire institutions that match Segal Education Awards or offer additional financial assistance, Antioch University and UNH, are highly trafficked by service year alumni. They rank first and third in the amount of Segal funding spent among all New Hampshire institutions. It is especially notable that Antioch University places third on this list because its student population totals only 731 graduate students. For comparison, Franklin Pierce University is a comparable graduate institution with over three times as many students, 2,273, but Antioch University hosts service year alumni that have used about eight times as much Segal Education Award funding as Franklin Pierce University.



5.1 Example: The Dartmouth College Admissions Office

The undergraduate admissions office at Dartmouth College provides a useful perspective on their approach to service year programs and their philosophy toward engaging with New Hampshire communities and service program alumni through the admissions process. Paul Sunde, the Director of Admissions at Dartmouth, estimates that two-to-three dozen students per year enroll at Dartmouth after having taken a gap year, and one third to one half of these students participated in some kind of service-related activity during their gap year.²³ He notes that Dartmouth strongly encourages gap years as a mechanism for personal development outside of the classroom, so almost all students who are accepted to Dartmouth and apply for a gap year receive one. Additionally, a small cohort of students apply to Dartmouth while participating in a gap year program like AmeriCorps, but no statistics are collected by the admissions office for this small group.

That said, while Mr. Sunde stressed the primacy of “raw academic components” when considering the candidacy of any applicant, he noted that participation in an AmeriCorps program, or any program that highlights a commitment to service, is carefully considered by admissions officers. In the context of the Segal Education Award, and Dartmouth’s lack of participation as a matching institution, Mr. Sunde highlighted Dartmouth’s pledge to meet 100 percent of all admitted students’ financial need. While students can always use outside scholarship awards like the Segal Award at their discretion, Mr. Sunde believes that not participating as a Segal Award matching institution does not affect any AmeriCorps alumnus’ ability to attend Dartmouth because all financial need otherwise demonstrated by the student would be met by the financial aid office.²⁴ Students can also use outside scholarships for expenses not covered by financial aid, such as textbooks and payment of loans. The Graduate program admissions process at Dartmouth is divided into admissions offices at the Geisel School of Medicine, the Thayer School of Engineering, the Tuck School of Business, and the Guarini School of Graduate and Advanced Studies. None of these offices provides matching funds for the Segal Education Award, but all offer need-based scholarships to varying degrees based on what their budgets allow.²⁵

Outside of the context of service year alumni, Mr. Sunde also expressed a sense of commitment to the local community and region. New Hampshire’s population is rapidly aging, and more New Hampshire high school students seek higher education out-of-state every year. Mr. Sunde believes that Dartmouth’s sense of belonging to New Hampshire and the New England region fuels its efforts to encourage local students to submit applications and enroll if admitted. While the admissions process is highly competitive for applicants from all regions, including locally, Mr. Sunde noted the Admissions Office’s strong interest in enrolling students from New Hampshire and its neighboring states.²⁶



Table 3. Dartmouth Admissions Statistics by State and Region, 2014-2019

State	State Population in 2014 (millions)	Average Number of Applicants	Average Number of Enrolled Students	Average Enrollment Rate (%)
New England	-----	-----	-----	-----
New Hampshire	1.33	348	28	8.05
Vermont	0.63	157	14	8.92
Maine	1.33	156	12	7.69
Massachusetts	6.76	1337	103	7.70
Across the US	-----	-----	-----	-----
California	38.63	2905	137	4.72
Texas	26.98	917	44	4.80
Florida	19.86	933	48	5.14
Illinois	12.74	606	37	6.11
New York	8.52	2022	133	6.58

Source: Dartmouth College Admissions Office

While Dartmouth does not make public its number of acceptances by applicant state of residence, the admissions office does provide the number of applications it receives and students who enroll by state per year. The average of these values is tabulated above for years 2014 through 2019. First, while the number of applications received is roughly proportional to the population of the state for the four New England states above, the number of applicants is proportionately lower for the five states outside of New England that are displayed.

The only exception to this is New York, which has 6.4 times as many people as New Hampshire and comparably 5.8 times as many applicants, but this can be explained by the



geographic proximity of New York to New England. This highlights that Dartmouth receives proportionately more applications from the New England region, but not proportionately more applications from New Hampshire than neighboring states. Second, while we cannot confirm whether or not Dartmouth accepts students from New England at a higher rate than other regions of the country, this data does confirm that New England applicants enroll at Dartmouth at higher rates in every New England state displayed above than in all other states above.

6. SERVICE YEAR LEGISLATION

First, political movement at the national level could potentially make education access easier for AmeriCorps alumni. In May 2019, U.S. Senators Michael Bennet of Colorado and Johnny Isakson of Georgia reintroduced bi-partisan legislation to provide tax relief for those receiving Segal Education Awards after AmeriCorps service.²⁷ Currently the awards are taxable income, but this legislation would allow recipients to receive their award tax-free. The goal of this legislation is to incentivize greater participation in AmeriCorps' programs, which provide great value to the United States, and remove what the bill's proponents call a "tax on service."²⁸ New Hampshire Senator Jeanne Shaheen is also one of the bill's ten co-sponsors.

At the state level, two bills introduced by members of the New Hampshire House of Representatives, HB 1498 and HB 1499, seek to improve education and employment opportunities for service organization alumni. HB 1498 would enhance access to employment opportunities in New Hampshire's state executive branch agencies. The bill specifies that current members and alumni of AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps and "other civilian national service organizations" shall be granted an interview with any executive branch agency so long as the applicant meets all other "minimum qualifications specified by the agency."²⁹

HB 1499 is targeted at education opportunities for service alumni. It delineates two measures of reform for all New Hampshire public institutions that are a part of the University System of New Hampshire or the Community College System of New Hampshire. The proposed bill requires, first, that there shall be no application fee for a current member or alumnus of a "national civilian service organization," and second, that all admitted students shall be notified of service year programs available to them permitted to defer admission for one year if they have been admitted to a service year program.³⁰ While it has been noted that various local and state government entities are participating Employers of National Service, and many public universities are matching institutions for the Segal Education Award, no U.S. state government has implemented such policies statewide.



7. NEW HAMPSHIRE AMERICORPS ALUMS

Other valuable programs for connecting national service alumni to employment and education opportunities are hosted by a non-profit called AmeriCorps Alums. The organization is divided into several local chapters, including a New Hampshire chapter of AmeriCorps Alums, which offer benefits to alumni such as virtual career fairs. The New Hampshire chapter, however, does not currently operate as a strong resource for New Hampshire alumni of AmeriCorps programs. Emily Zeien, a former AmeriCorps VISTA member and former volunteer at NH AmeriCorps Alums, describes the chapter as currently “dormant.”³¹ While in the past it has operated as an informal way for AmeriCorps members to build a network and community based on shared interests, according to Ms. Zeien, the chapter has never provided formal education and employment resources the way AmeriCorps programs often do for current members.

Strengthening the network of New Hampshire’s AmeriCorps Alums chapter, however, could significantly incentivize AmeriCorps volunteers in New Hampshire to stay in the state by helping alumni feel like they have a network of people to aid them in their professional and personal pursuits if they stay in New Hampshire. Ms. Zeien suggests that the Service Year Workforce Commission can help NH AmeriCorps Alums rebuild and maintain relevance if it can find a way to support the organization through state infrastructure devoted to administering AmeriCorps programs, such as tasking a staff member or office with the role of supporting or helping to run the New Hampshire AmeriCorps Alums chapter.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEERISM IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

As noted, access to activities outdoors are a primary reason young people are drawn to New Hampshire. Young adults from around the country come to New Hampshire every year to take on conservation-service roles within AmeriCorps and other service organizations, activities that strengthen their ties to the state as well as make the state a more desirable place to live for everyone else. The primary AmeriCorps conservation-service program, administered through Volunteer NH, is the Student Conservation Association (SCA). SCA’s New Hampshire Corps group brings several dozen young Americans to New Hampshire for 10-month rotations. In the colder months, they engage with public school students to teach environmental education, and in the warmer months, they directly complete conservation projects such as building and maintaining trails and tending to New Hampshire’s public lands.



According to Bob Coates, the founder and former director of the SCA, linkages between this program and employment and education opportunities in New Hampshire have long been an informal characteristic of the program.³² Many SCA graduates stay in New Hampshire because they build connections within (and are later hired by) public and non-profit organizations they engaged with while SCA volunteers. According to Mr. Coates, during his 20 years leading the SCA, the most common in-state employment path for program graduates was the New Hampshire Park Service.

While informal connections do exist between outdoors service programs like the SCA and employment opportunities in New Hampshire, Mr. Coates believes more could be done to strengthen these connections. One idea Mr. Coates has considered is a formal mentorship program for SCA volunteers, pairing them based on their interests with employees of environmentally connected public and private organizations in New Hampshire, like the New Hampshire Park Service, who are interested in hiring SCA graduates. Opportunities for greater connectivity could be explored between many service year organizations and employers through a formal mentorship program. Regardless, any formal process by which volunteers at SCA and other organizations can request employment and education resources will be a valuable improvement on the informality of the current system.³³

9. THE SERVICE YEAR WORKFORCE COMMISSION WEBSITE

Beyond this report, our team at the Rockefeller Center is also developing an interactive website, which will be launched by the New Hampshire Service Year Workforce Commission to effectively market service year pathways. We will then present the launched website to the Commission on May 19, 2020 at the final event of the statewide Commission Tour. The website will serve as a resource to high school students, high school guidance counselors, parents of students, college students, current service members, and service program alumni alike. The primary goal is to provide streamlined access to the opportunities available to these individuals — whether service-related or for their transition to school or the workforce.

The content of the website will include: (1) service opportunities, (2) educational opportunities for service year members and alumni, (3) professional opportunities for service year members and alumni, and (4) information about current and former service year members in order to connect with each other through a secured account section of the website. We aim to offer access to an abundance of resources refined by 'who you are' and 'what you're looking for.' In addition, the website will include a portal for current and former service year members to log-in to interact with one another, build networks, and access various professional and educational opportunities. It will act as a forum for engagement between current and past service year members.



This website aims to complement the resources available via Volunteer NH, a public-private partnership and the current home to a variety of volunteer opportunities in New Hampshire. In addition to streamlining access to opportunities available, the website will also focus on offering extensive resources on long-term options and the positive benefits available to service year members and alumni. The website will be easily navigable as well as inspiring for individuals from all backgrounds to want to get involved in service programs. Our goal is to create a medium where service (and follow-on – i.e., educational and professional) opportunities are aggregated, easily accessible, and taken advantage of far more frequently. Our long-term goal is to assist the Commission in making a substantive impact on the future service landscape of New Hampshire.

10. CONCLUSION

While formalized programs like Employers of National Service and the Segal Education Award have existed since the infancy of AmeriCorps, it is clear that alumni of service year organizations predominantly access opportunities for professional and academic advancement in informal ways. This can be done through connections made between service program participants and people well-connected to New Hampshire's non-profit sector, advice from mentors or other service program alumni, or simply seeking out opportunities outside of formal AmeriCorps infrastructure. AmeriCorps touts a host of programs for alumni such as Virtual Career Fairs, its various chapters of the AmeriCorps Alums organization, and of course connections to Segal Award matching institutions and participating Employers of National Service, but much can be done within New Hampshire to strengthen these programs and reinforce weak spots.

To summarize from this report, policy options include: 1) strengthening the New Hampshire AmeriCorps Alums chapter using existing state-level infrastructure; 2) encouraging more institutions to participate as Employers of National Service, especially when hiring for public positions at the state and local government levels; 3) encouraging greater Segal Education Award matching and scholarship offerings by all New Hampshire universities and community colleges; and 4) establishing a formal mentorship program that could pair service program participants with professionals in their field of interest. Pursuing these objectives could help bolster service programs and the New Hampshire economy for years to come by attracting socially engaged young individuals to fill holes left by years of out-migration and a contracting workforce. That said, wholeheartedly pursuing the goals of the Commission will require greater evaluation of why young people have trouble financially sustaining life in New Hampshire, an analysis that involves considering lack of affordable housing and stagnant wages.



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³² Bob Coates is currently the Assistant Director for Co-Curricular Programs at the Rockefeller Center at Dartmouth College. Mr. Coates was personally interviewed for this report.

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