

**Draft Conceptual Framework – National Service engagement of Human
Capital and Social Capital: A Case Study of Jumpstart**

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Abstract

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) administers the AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs, which support National Service programs such as Jumpstart, a national organization that engages college students (called “college corps”) and older adults (“community corps”) to serve preschool children in low-income neighborhoods. This draft paper presents a conceptual framework using these two corps as an example of how National Service can tap different sources of human capital and social capital. College corps members, who are often funded through AmeriCorps, primarily represent “bridging social capital” that can cut across communities or a social divide. “Community corps” members represent “bonding social capital,” with funding through programs like the Foster Grandparent Program that taps “bonding social capital,” which empowers community members to help children be better prepared for school. The example of the Jumpstart community corps describes how with sufficient investments in recruitment and training, older adults can be mobilized in a program originally designed to engage college students.

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Introduction

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is the lead federal agency supporting domestic civilian National Service. CNCS mobilizes human capital and social capital, in the form of AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers, who serve to address unmet community needs that include school readiness, academic outcomes, and engagement in school of children and youth. (See table 1 for volunteer requirements and benefits of AmeriCorps and Senior Corps.) Since 2013, Senior Corps and AmeriCorps grantees have been required to report the same education and school readiness performance measures. AmeriCorps State and National, the largest and best known National Service program, engages Americans age 18 and older through national grantees along with state-based programs through state AmeriCorps service commissions. Two Senior Corps programs, the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) and RSVP engage Boomers and older adults aged 55 and older and also serve children. Volunteering is also postulated to benefit volunteers, as well as the community being served. One prior study suggests that unemployed individuals who volunteer are more likely to find work than those who do not volunteer. (Spera, Ghertner, Nerino, & DiTommaso, 2013). Volunteering has also been associated with better health outcomes in older adults, including better self-reported health, lower disability and mortality (Kim & Kawachi, 2006; Lee, Steinman, & Tan, 2011; Lindstrom, Hanson, & Ostergren, 2001; Lochner, Kawachi, Brennan, & Buka, 2003; Musick, Herzog, & House, 1999; Seeman, 1996).

Table 1: AmeriCorps and Senior Corps Programs

	AmeriCorps		Senior Corps	
	AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC)	AmeriCorps VISTA and AmeriCorps State and National	Fostergrand Parent Program and Senior Companion Program	RSVP
Age Requirements	18 to 24	18 and over	55 and older	55 and older
Service Commitment	10-month full time campus based program	One-year full time commitment for VISTA members One-year full-time and part-time options for AmeriCorps State and National members	Minimum 15-hours a week	Flexible from a couple hours a month to 40-hours a week
Volunteer Support	Campus Based program that provides housing, uniforms and food allowance	Full-time members receive living allowance which may be provided for part-time members	Hourly stipend and reimbursement for some volunteer expenses	Reimbursement for some volunteer expenses
Segal AmeriCorps Education Award	Yes	Yes	No	No

Different National Service models can mobilize human capital through different forms of social capital. Putnam defined social capital as "the nature and extent of networks and associated norms of reciprocity" (Putnam, 2000). Coleman has

also proposed that volunteering can generate social capital, either intentionally, by generating community action around a specific purpose, or unintentionally, by creating new social ties that can be conduits of future transfers of social capital (Coleman, 1988). Glass and Fried have further proposed that the deployment of a critical mass of National Service in a school has the capacity to activate, mobilize, and change norms (Glass et al., 2004). Many AmeriCorps programs have national recruitment strategies that attract current or recent college graduates, with some programs having multiple applicants for each National Service opportunity (Winerip, 2010). The mobilization of National Service participants from across the country to serve in a community can be seen as bridging social capital that cuts across communities or bridges a social divide such as race, class or religion (Narayan, 1999). Other AmeriCorps models and most Senior Corps programs utilize bridging social capital in models where service is a product of the social cohesion within the community.(Narayan, 1999). Examples of National Service models that leverage bonding social capital may include AmeriCorps funded “Veterans Corps” which recruit veterans or veteran family members to serve other veterans. Senior Corps volunteers engaged in the FGP must be within 200 percent of the federal poverty level and often serve in their own communities. FGP projects must also be directly administered by the grant sponsors which tend to be local organizations that are not part of national networks, but instead rely on bonding social capital for fundraising and in-kind support. Experience Corps, which is an AmeriCorps grantee and is affiliated with the AARP foundation, is an exception in that it is also the RSVP grantee in the

City of Chicago. Experience Corps is a well-studied National Service program that has model designed to provide health benefits to the older adult participants (who must be 50 and older in their AmeriCorps program) and academic benefits to the children served. (Carlson et al., 2009; Carlson et al., 2008 ; Fried et al., 2004; Hong & Morrow-Howell, 2010; Rebok et al., 2004; Tan et al., 2010; Tan, Xue, Li, Carlson, & Fried, 2006). Experience Corps AmeriCorps members and RSVP volunteers are not required to have incomes within 200 percent of the poverty level and may represent a mix of bonding and social capital, having been recruited with more varied backgrounds, income levels and education histories than Foster Grandparents (Hong & Morrow-Howell, 2010; Martinez et al., 2006; Tan, et al., 2010). In reality, most service programs likely leverage both bridging and bonding social capital as they engage both volunteers and funders.

This draft paper present a conceptual framework of how distinct sources of human capital can be engaged through bridging and bonding social capital using the Jumpstart community corps model as a case study. Jumpstart provides a convenient conceptual example because the program engages college students as AmeriCorps members through its “college corps” and separately engages Fostergrand Parents through is “community corps.” Jumpstart describes itself as “a national early education organization that recruits and trains college students and community corps members to serve preschool children in low-income neighborhoods“ (Jumpstart Website). Jumpstart’s experience with engaging Foster Grandparents in their community corps illustrates how programs that

currently engage young Americans primarily through bridging social capital could expand their model to empower Boomers and older adults to serve in their own communities.

Corporation for National and Community Service:

AmeriCorps consists of three main programs: AmeriCorps State and National, whose members provide primarily direct service through national and local nonprofit and community groups; AmeriCorps VISTA, whose members serve full-time in primarily capacity building rolls in the fight against poverty; and AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps), a team-based residential service program for young adults 18-24. AmeriCorps engages more than 75,000 men and women in intensive service each year at more than 15,000 locations including nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups across the country. AmeriCorps members help communities tackle pressing problems while mobilizing millions of volunteers for the organizations they serve. Members gain valuable professional, educational, and life benefits, and the experience has a lasting impact on the members and the communities they serve. (See table 1.)

The Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), Senior Companion Program (SCP), and RSVP, the three main programs of Senior Corps, are among the nation's largest volunteer programs for volunteers age 55 and over serving 550 communities across the US. Both Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions

serve from 15 to 40 hours a week, for which they receive a small stipend of \$2.65 per hour of service. Previous research shows that few retirees are willing to serve more than 10 hours per week without similar support (Fried, et al., 2004; Morrow-Howell, Hinterlong, Rozario, & Tang, 2003). While Senior Corps grantees tend to be smaller local grantees, Jumpstart and Experience Corps are examples of three national programs that engage both AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers. (See table 1.)

Much of the prior research on intergenerational National Service models has been done with AmeriCorps members in Experience Corps. Experience Corps volunteers in AmeriCorps reported primarily generative motives as their reason for participating, such as “giving back to the community” or “helping others is important”(Tan, et al., 2010). Prior published data on a national cohort of Experience Corps volunteers show 86 percent of the volunteers were women and 38 percent were white with 26 percent reporting a high school education or less. (Hong & Morrow-Howell, 2010). In comparison, 90 percent of Foster Grandparents report they are women and 45 percent reporting they are white, and 57 percent report having a high school education or less in a recent census of the program (unpublished data). This suggests that this AmeriCorps program and the larger Foster Grandparent Program are able to engage older adults with a wide range of educational backgrounds. This is an important consideration as older African Americans who may have experienced limited access to higher

education should not be limited in their ability to contribute due to our nation's history of racial segregation.

Jumpstart:

Jumpstart engages college students and older adults in the same four-hours-a-week, 20-week intervention through two separate models: a "College Corps" model started in 1996 and supported by AmeriCorps since that year and a "Community Corps" model started in 2004 and supported by FGP since 2012. Jumpstart "helps children develop the language and literacy skills they need to be ready for kindergarten, setting them on a path to close the achievement gap before it is too late" (Jumpstart Website). Children served by the Jumpstart college corps have showed greater fall-to-spring gains on all measures than children in the same classrooms yet not in the program—measures of early literacy, school readiness, and socio-emotional skills.(Jumpstart, 2011) In 2013-14, Jumpstart had programs in 15 states, from Massachusetts in the east to Washington in the west. The programs served young children in 630 classrooms, in 350 early learning centers, and in 200 communities. The organization trained – 4,170 college students and 230 older Americans that year to serve in early education classrooms. To support its programs and its growth, in fiscal year 2013 Jumpstart received \$17 million—\$7 million in government funding and \$10 million private funding, from foundations, corporations, and individuals.(2013). Jumpstart's success in raising funds (financial capital) from both local and

national donors may in part reflect social capital networks that they can tap into as a national organization.

Initially founded by four Yale undergraduates, Jumpstart college corps is an example of “bridging social capital,” in which the human capital of college students is activated through AmeriCorps. While some college corps members may be from the same community they serve in, the majority reflect the diverse geographic backgrounds reflected in the student bodies of national and regional colleges. Since 2004, Jumpstart has also engaged with community corps members who “often join Jumpstart directly in the communities where they live, fostering even deeper connections with the children and families they serve.”(Jumpstart) In 2012, Jumpstart became a FGP grantee in Los Angeles, California, after a previous grantee there relinquished the grant. This successful introduction to the Senior Corps grantee community leveraged the resources of a pre-existing Jumpstart college corps program in Los Angeles. Jumpstart has also developed partnerships with Foster Grandparent Grantees in Atlanta, Georgia, and Washington, DC. --In Atlanta, Jumpstart placed Jumpstart community corps Foster Grandparents at a pre-school attached to a homeless shelter. The life experiences of the Foster Grandparents, who were from the Atlanta community and who often have personal experiences as parents and grandparents, were seen as an important resource for Jumpstart, as it sought to help children exposed to homelessness be ready to start school. In Washington DC, Jumpstart has partnered with the local Foster Grandparent Program to place

Jumpstart community corps volunteers in areas of the city that are less accessible for college students.

Jumpstart has worked hard to ensure that the college and community corps provide equally strong support for children involved in the program. Programs in different cities served by participants of different ages are remarkably similar. During its first year, the Jumpstart Foster Grandparent Program in Los Angeles, California utilizes Foster Grandparents to implement the same curriculum as the national college corps. Between September, 2012 and September 2013, 80 Foster Grandparents mentored 182 preschool children. Of the 165 children who fully participated in the program (at least 120 days), 96 percent demonstrated gains in language and literacy skills and 58 percent demonstrated gains of one developmental level or more. Additionally, 91 percent of Foster Grandparents indicated that their service experience has enabled them to build leadership skills and 100 percent reported feeling proud of their service. Despite this being Jumpstart's first year as an FGP grantee feedback from volunteers, teachers, and child results all pointed towards high satisfaction and a positive impact on the community.

The qualitative differences between the Jumpstart models may provide insights to the differences between bridging and bonding social capital. College corps members are young adults who tend to bring additional energy to a class and provide important role models for children. They often sit on the floor with

children as they read a book, as they take part in “circle time,” and as they lead other activities that support children in the development language and literacy skills. Community corps members, on the other hand, tend to bring calm rather than energy to a class and often sit in chairs while engaging with children rather than sitting on the floor. Community corps members often rely on children to help them accomplish simple tasks. The fact that children respond easily to requests and guidance from the community corps members may reflect the social cohesion that bonding social capital leverages (Narayan, 1999) and represents an added benefit of this model: community expectations of respect toward community elders.

While the service of the Jumpstart college corps and community corps is nearly identical, there are important differences in training participants serving in the two models. College corps members tend to excel at absorbing large amounts of information quickly and are generally able to prepare for each upcoming session after completing the prior two-hour session. Community corps volunteers tend to need more time to prepare for class and learn more effectively if their training sessions are shorter. Jumpstart also found that it was important to break up the training sessions for the community corps volunteers into smaller sections. This was made easier by the more flexible schedules of some of the community corps volunteers who were not juggling classes, as well as the 15-hour a week minimum service requirement of the Foster Grandparent Program.

In Washington, DC and Los Angeles, the Foster Grandparents engaged in Jumpstart do not use a “team leader”: they felt that would unnecessarily elevate one volunteer’s contributions above those of others. This may reflect that bonding social capital is based on social cohesion. (Narayan, 1999) The model has also required flexibility on the part of the Office of Senior Corps, which allows the time spent in training by Foster Grandparents in the Jumpstart model to be considered as service time. The amount of this time is far greater than the four hours a month that most Foster Grandparents receive during monthly in-service trainings, but is critical to the Jumpstart program. In Washington, DC, Jumpstart has partnered with the local FGP to place Jumpstart community corps volunteers in areas of the city that are not easily accessible to college students, which speaks to how the two models can access complementary sources of human capital.

Discussion

The Jumpstart experience with the college corps and community corps models provides a conceptual demonstration of how National Service models can tap into both bonding and bridging social capital to engage the full range of human capital available to address critical community needs such as school readiness. The value of engaging young adults through National Service is well accepted; Jumpstart community corps confirms that, with sufficient investments in model development, recruitment, and training, older adults can also be mobilized in a model originally designed to engage college students. The use of Jumpstart

Foster Grandparents in service areas where transportation would be difficult for Jumpstart college corps members reflects how National Service programs can more effectively serve a community by drawing from different pools of human capital. The use of Jumpstart Foster Grandparents in a volunteer station where homeless children are served also demonstrates the value of investing in the bonding social capital of community members who may not have been to college but still have a lot to contribute in a structured intervention that leverages the value of a caring older adult from the community.

Further work is required to reimagine National Service programs that have traditionally engaged young Americans, in order to expand their engagement to include boomers and older adults. Just as Jumpstart modified the training program for their existing college corps members to create a model well-matched for Foster Grandparents in the community corps volunteers, other programs will need to adjust training for programs and the programs themselves to account for the learning styles and the working capabilities of older adults.

Programs will also have to identify the core aspects of their models that need to be retained, while remaining flexible about other aspects to accommodate any physical limitations that older volunteers may have (for example, by providing chairs for them to sit on instead of expecting them to engage with children on the floor) or to take advantage of the impact of older adults, who may have a calming effect rather than an activating energy in a classroom. Finally, these expanded

models will have to be evaluated, on their effectiveness in terms of community impact.

This conceptual framework has several limitations. In the Jumpstart example, we propose that the college corps members represent bridging social capital and the community corps members represent bonding social capital, but the reality is that the Jumpstart members and volunteers, and the students they serve possess many different identities that can be either bonding or bridging characteristics. For example, while the Jumpstart college corps members are drawn from student bodies of colleges that recruit nationally, some local college students may have grown up in the communities that they serve while other college students may share demographic characteristics (such as race, ethnicity or country of origin) that are similar to the students they serve. While the Foster Grandparents are all local and low-income, they may not share the same demographic characteristics as the students they serve. Finally, any intergenerational National Service model (whether college students, Boomers or older adults serving children) represents bridging social capital in that it crosses generational divides.

The development of the Jumpstart community corps program demonstrates how low-income older adults who may have had limited educational opportunities due to historical racism can provide valuable bonding social capital to children in their own neighborhoods. Future efforts to reimagine National Service models to

engage both bridging and bonding social capital should also consider the value of integrated models that draw on both national and local recruitment of human capital in an integrated model. While the Jumpstart college and community corps serve in parallel, future models could engage AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers in integrated and complementary roles. For example, VISTA members recruited from across the US could provide capacity-building service, while local Senior Corps volunteers provide direct services. Of note, Jumpstart was a VISTA project sponsor from 2001 to 2012, during which VISTA members supported the capacity of the organization to expand programming across the United States. Future VISTA sponsors could design service assignments in which the organizational capacity generated by VISTA members supported the direct service of Senior Corps volunteers from the local community. Alternatively, an AmeriCorps NCCC “spike” could provide surge capacity while serving alongside local RSVP volunteers in response to a disaster. While different National Service programs often work together in communities across the United States, the intentional creation of joint service operations using the various AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs could engage the full range of human capital and social capital to address unmet community needs throughout our country.

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