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Public – Private Partnership Launches New AmeriCorps Program to Help Communities Build Resilience

Federal agencies, The Rockefeller Foundation, and Cities of Service announce Resilience AmeriCorps initiative as part of Administration's effort to build climate resilience nationwide

WASHINGTON – Building on the President's Climate Action Plan, today the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the Department of Energy (DOE), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), The Rockefeller Foundation, and Cities of Service, announced a new commitment to launch a Resilience AmeriCorps pilot program.

Resilience AmeriCorps will help communities plan and implement efforts necessary to become more resilient to shocks and stresses, including extreme weather and other impacts of climate change. Through the pilot program, AmeriCorps VISTA members will serve in up to 12 communities in 2015-2016 to support the development of resilience strategies that will both help communities better manage the unavoidable and avoid the unmanageable. AmeriCorps VISTA members will build volunteer networks to carry out program initiatives, and create education and outreach materials to strengthen awareness and citizen engagement in low-income communities.

"EPA understands that environmentally overburdened communities are often those most in need of resources to help prepare for and respond to climate change," said EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. "We are excited to support the new Resilience AmeriCorps pilot program and look forward to its potential for encouraging service opportunities that will meet local needs."

"National service is a powerful and proven solution to local issues communities face today, including making communities more resilient, especially those most vulnerable in the face of disasters," said Corporation for National and Community Service CEO Wendy Spencer. "This partnership will expand the role of our AmeriCorps VISTA members in strengthening communities and will build on AmeriCorps VISTA's long history of partnering with federal agencies, philanthropy, and city leadership. I am confident that the work of our AmeriCorps members will have a significant impact on these communities and its residents."

"At the Department of Energy, we are strong advocates for public-private partnerships to enhance the resilience of our Nation," said Deputy Energy Secretary Liz Sherwood-Randall. "Through this initiative, we will help some of our most vulnerable communities become more resilient and get better prepared to meet the challenges of climate change and extreme weather."

"Crisis is increasingly part of the 21st century, which is why it is imperative that communities – large and small – place a premium on building resilience. With collaborative efforts across all sectors we can ensure our country is prepared for the inevitable shocks and gnawing stresses so that disruptions no longer become disasters," said Dr. Judith Rodin, President of The Rockefeller Foundation. "The new Resilience AmeriCorps program will create a new generation of talented individuals who are committed to building resilience, and who can support cities today while deepening the bench for

innovative leadership in years to come. Resilience is a journey, not a destination, and the time to embark on it is now.”

"As communities around the nation become more vulnerable to severe extreme weather and climate related events, NOAA and its partners are working to build resilient communities and economies," said Holly Bamford, Ph.D., assistant NOAA administrator for NOAA's National Ocean Service performing duties of the assistant secretary of commerce for conservation and management. "These pilot projects are an exciting step in providing communities with the tools, information, and services they need to become more resilient."

"We are excited to help lead the country's first Resilience AmeriCorps with our federal partners and the Rockefeller Foundation," said Cities of Service Executive Director Myung J. Lee. "Cities of Service works with our mayors to help engage their citizens, improve their communities with impact volunteering, and achieve results. We are glad to be a part of this program that will strengthen cities structurally as well as socially, toward greater national resilience."

The pilot program is one of a series of actions the White House announced in support of the Administration's commitment to building resilience in vulnerable communities. Resilience AmeriCorps was developed in response to a recommendation made by the President's State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience.

On Wednesday, July 15 at 2 p.m. EDT the White House will host a Google+ Hangout to discuss the important role of community service in helping vulnerable communities become more resilient. The event will feature speakers from the Administration, The Rockefeller Foundation, Cities of Service, and local communities engaged in building community resilience. Members of the public are encouraged to ask the participants questions during the livestreamed conversation using the Twitter handle #ActOnClimate.

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The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. Since 1994, more than 900,000 Americans have provided more than 1 billion hours of service to their communities and country through AmeriCorps. For more information, visit NationalService.gov.

Cities of Service is a national nonprofit that supports a nonpartisan coalition of mayors and city executives to design and implement high-impact volunteering initiatives addressing multiple issues from supporting youth and education, to disaster preparedness and neighborhood revitalization. It provides technical assistance, programmatic support, planning resources, and funding opportunities. Founded by Michael R. Bloomberg in 2009, Cities of Service is comprised of more than 200 cities in the U.S. and UK whose mayors are committed to engaging citizen volunteers to solve local pressing challenges. Cities of Service helps coalition cities share solutions, best practices, and lessons learned, as well as spreads awareness about meaningful work happening in cities. Visit citiesofservice.org to get involved, and follow @citiesofservice on Twitter.

For more than 100 years, The Rockefeller Foundation's mission has been to promote the well-being of humanity throughout the world. Today, The Rockefeller Foundation pursues this mission through dual goals: advancing inclusive economies that expand opportunities for more broadly shared prosperity, and building resilience by helping people, communities and institutions prepare for, withstand, and emerge stronger from acute shocks and chronic stresses. To achieve these goals, The Rockefeller Foundation works at the intersection of four focus areas – advance health, revalue ecosystems, secure livelihoods, and transform cities – to address the root causes of emerging challenges and create systemic change. Together with partners and grantees, The Rockefeller Foundation strives to catalyze and scale transformative innovations, create unlikely partnerships that span sectors, and take risks others cannot – or will not. To learn more, please visit www.rockefellerfoundation.org.