

### **What is National Service?**

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) provides opportunities for service through AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve, National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), and Senior Corps. Volunteers work with schools, churches, hospitals, and local nonprofits to meet the needs of the community. Volunteers act as teachers, mentors, and offer other professional services.

### **Why is it important to engage people with disabilities in National Service?**

All volunteers can learn transferable skills related to problem solving, management, and inter-personal communications during their service. This is particularly important for people with disabilities who can use the volunteer experience as a gateway to employment. Additionally, the community benefits from creating and promoting an inclusive environment.

Since 2001, CNCS has partnered with the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston and the Association for University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) to assist national service programs to increase the participation of members and volunteers with disabilities in national service.

The National Service Inclusion Project (NSIP) has awarded mini-grants to 32 University Centers on Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) and one Leadership Education in Neurodevelopment and Related Disabilities (LEND) program, all of whom are part of the AUCD network. These university centers:

- Cultivate working relationships among the State Commission Office, CNCS State Office, and CNCS grantees.
- Serve as gateways to disability organizations, consumer advocacy groups, service providers and public agencies on the state and local level.
- Provide national service program sites with information on how to better involve persons with disabilities.
- Provide valuable technical assistance on how to accommodate the needs of persons with a wide range of physical and cognitive disabilities so that they can fully participate in service opportunities

All of the university-based Centers supported by this project partnered with their State Commissions to increase the participation of members and volunteers with disabilities in national service.

### **Highlights To Date:**

- A sharp increase in the number of individuals with disabilities who obtained National Service placements as a result of this project.
- Over 100 trainings conducted for professionals to assist people with disabilities to get involved in national service.
- Over 93 products developed that have been disseminated locally and nationally, covering a variety of topics related to national service and the inclusion of people with disabilities.
- Over 3,700 individuals impacted through trainings and events.
- 4 of the university-based Centers supported by this project went on to successfully compete to become full-fledged AmeriCorps Service Sites.
- Tarjan Center (UCEDD) at the University of California at Los Angeles was awarded a \$1.4 million grant from the CNCS. The Tarjan Center manages a collaborative program with the Mailman Center (FL UCEDD) and the Center on Disability Studies (HI UCEDD) that focuses on increasing the number of youth and adults with disabilities, including veterans, in national and community service.
- In 2007, two innovative Fellowships were awarded that enabled individuals with disabilities, paired with an individual without a disability, to fully participate in service and volunteerism.

## Selected Highlights:

**California:** The Tarjan Center for Developmental Disabilities at the University of California-Los Angeles

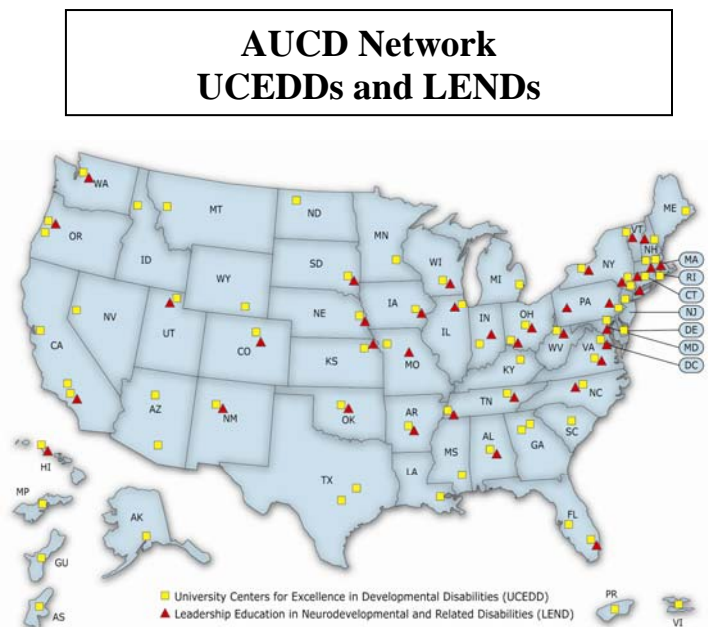
- Developed two regional Service Inclusion Networks, one in Los Angeles and one in San Diego, which bring local service programs together with local disability related organizations to assist in the program to include people with disabilities in national service.
- Subsequent funding from CNCS was obtained to continue its projects to include people with disabilities in national service through strengthening partnerships with local disability service providers.
- Provides technical assistance on how to include people with disabilities to interested organizations.

**Florida:** The Mailman Center for Child Development at the University of Miami

- Focused on working with AmeriCorps and SeniorCorps.
- 81 AmeriCorps managers and members have been trained in awareness of disability inclusion and ways of modifying the service setting and program position descriptions to accommodate members with disabilities.
- Subsequent funding was secured to continue its projects to include people with disabilities in national service.

**Ohio:** The Nisonger Center

- Since 2007 has hosted an AmeriCorps placement.
- Provided full analysis of member position descriptions, review of current recruitment practices, facilitation of partnerships with local disability organizations, assistance in reasonable accommodation issues, disability education and awareness training, periodic educational pieces, technical assistance for AmeriCorps programs across Ohio.
- Informed its partners and local organizations of the opportunities available for people with disabilities through AmeriCorps.



## For more information:

NSIP: [www.serviceandinclusion.org](http://www.serviceandinclusion.org)

The Corporation for National and Community Service: [www.cns.gov](http://www.cns.gov)

Association of University Centers on Disabilities: [www.aucd.org](http://www.aucd.org)

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