

Proven Practices



A Spotlight on National Service and Career Development

In 2022, Ampact partnered with the National Science and Service Collaborative to design the Career Development Survey (CDS) as a tool to better understand how AmeriCorps service shapes members' skills, perceptions, and career pathways. This effort reflects a broader career development mission: to align programs with critical workforce needs while ensuring that AmeriCorps service translates into career pathway opportunities for members. The CDS supports this mission by generating evidence on the impact of national service on the career development of members.

What is the Career Development Survey?

AmeriCorps members at Ampact complete the CDS at the beginning and end of their service year. They then complete an alumni version of the CDS a year later. The survey captures demographic information about members, perceptions of their sector-related skills, perceptions of their career development skills—referred to as Career Capital in the CDS—and information on their post-service plans.

This report outlines results from the 2024-25 Baseline CDS (N = 3,012), Exit CDS (N = 2,393), and Alumni CDS (N = 288). Seven programs are represented, split largely by Education (e.g., Reading Corps), Healthy Futures (e.g., Recovery Corps), and the Environment. Below is a snapshot of the results.

CDS Top-Level Insights

48% of members enter service with a bachelor's degree

Service has a meaningful impact on members who are unsure or not interested in pursuing a career in the field aligned to their service.

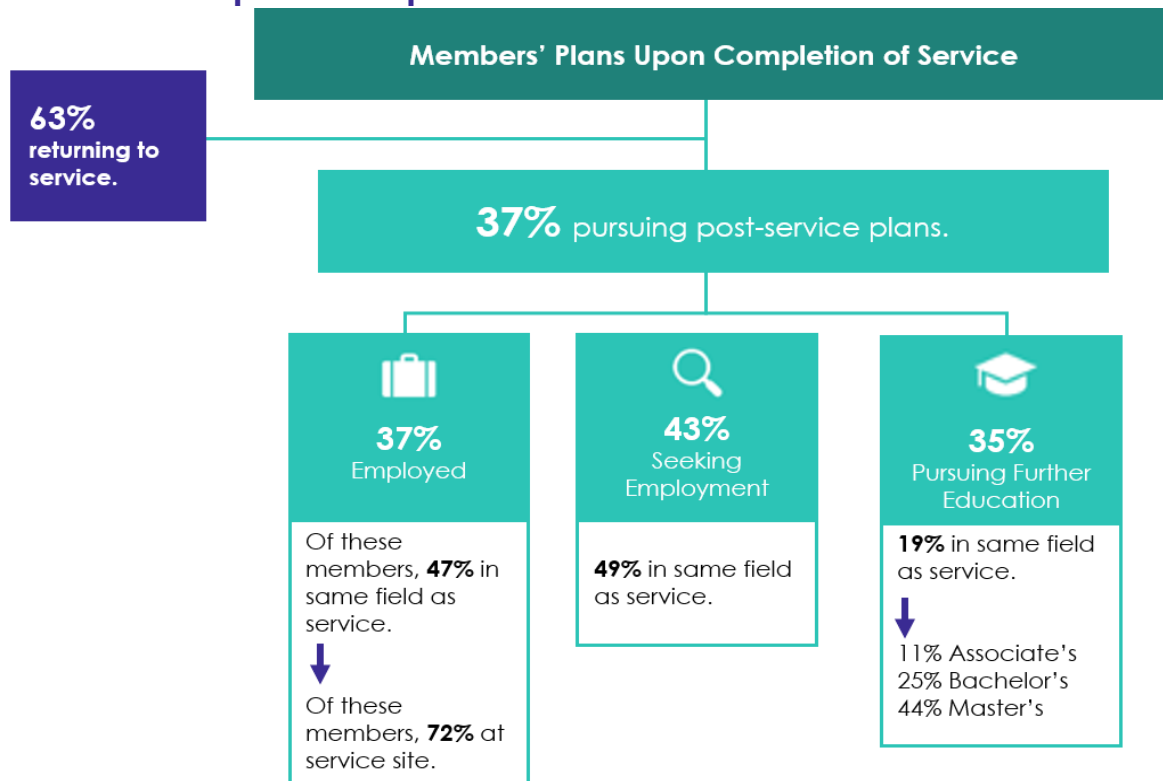
40% of members who were "not interested" and 42% of members who were "unsure" if they were interested at baseline indicated interest in that career field upon exit.

Members made statistically significant and positive gains in their Career Capital and Sector Skills over the course of their service year.

The average change in Career Capital across all programs was equal to 0.33 standard deviations, with the largest changes observed in the professional network of members. Large changes were also observed for sector skills, with the average change in skill from baseline to exit equal to 0.69 standard deviations.



Members' Plans Upon Completion of Service Term



Patterns in Career Development

- **Members with more (i.e., prior) service experience started the year with progressively higher career and skill ratings, but increased their skills regardless of where they started.** *The biggest gains were observed for members in their first year; however, even members in their fourth year of service made significant gains in their sector skills.*
- **The largest rates of intent to pursue a career in their service field were observed among members in Heading Home Corps (81%) and Recovery Corps (86%).** *Intent to pursue a career in their field of service increased among all members, but service experiences with more accessible careers immediately following service tended to experience the highest rates of career interest. For example, 41% of Recovery Corps members became certified as peer-recovery specialists during their service year and 61% were employed at the end of their service year.*

Member Perceptions of Service and Career Development

Overall, a majority of members felt supported in their career development by both their AmeriCorps program and their host sites, with 72% of members feeling supported by their program and 71% by their host sites.

"My site supervisor was extremely supportive and encouraging, I learned many skills and gained a ton of experiences that I feel will benefit me. I made a ton of community connections and was given many training opportunities to build my skills."

- Heading Home Corps Member

"I recommend this program to others because I didn't expect to fall in love with teaching and fall in love with the students... It's very rewarding to know you are making a difference in a little person's life."

- Reading Corps Member

"The training on resume building was extremely helpful for me because of the way resumes are constructed, worded, and used today is very different from the last time I had to write a resume."

- Recovery Corps Member