Introduction

- The *Our Common Purpose* report seeks to cultivate a cross-ideological supermajority dedicated to the reinvention of American constitutional democracy.

- To foster a culture of commitment to American constitutional democracy and to each other, the report recommends:
  - Establishing a universal expectation of a year of national service.
  - Significantly expanding funding for service programs or fellowships to provide young people with paid service opportunities.

- The Academy partnered with leading national service organizations to conduct research and employ data-driven approaches to build demand for national service.
Key Findings

- **3 in 4 respondents** say it would be good for the country if more people participated in service year programs, and they are more likely than others to recommend service (but not likely to participate).

- Across groups, **positive messages are effective** at increasing the likelihood to consider a service year and the likelihood to recommend one.
  - Some messages are more effective and some groups are more likely to consider participation.

- Belief that **service can help with one’s own goals** is closely related to considering service.
# Our Common Purpose

## Research program details

### Methodology
- **Random digit dial survey** conducted by telephone (cell and landline) and online (recruited by text message)
- Survey offered in English and Spanish
- Conducted July 27-August 9, 2023

### Sample
- 1,600 California adults, oversample of 200 Californians aged 18-24, 600 adults nationwide
- The margin of error is ±2.5% for the California sample, ±4.0% for the national sample, ±5.1% for Californians 18-24, and larger for subgroups
- (*) indicates a sample size of 100 or fewer. Numbers in charts and tables represent percentages
- Unless otherwise noted, numbers shown in this report are among California adults
- Results for White, Black, and AAPI are among non-Hispanic adults

### Four online focus groups
- Conducted May 8 and 9, 2023
- 100-minute online sessions with 5 participants in each
- Young adults who have not participated in, or committed to, paid national service
  - In college or college graduates
  - Not college graduates and not planning to be
- Parents of such young adults
  - Progressive and liberal
  - Moderate and conservative
Attitudes toward Service
Those who have an opinion of AmeriCorps are overwhelmingly positive.

Results shown among all California adults.
3 in 4 say it would be good for the country if more people participated in service year programs

*It would be good for the country if more people participated in service year programs*†

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA &lt;25</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent/No party</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†Results shown among all California adults

Progressives, liberals, moderates and Democrats are most likely to agree, but large majorities of conservatives and Republicans agree as well.
44% expect a service year would help with their own goals.

Participating in a service year could help me achieve my own goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA &lt;25</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>43</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CA aged 18 to 24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White*</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of color</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive/Liberal</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate/Conservative</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Small sample size

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Agreement that a service year could help achieve goals is closely related to considering service.

**Participating in a service year could help me achieve my own goals†**

**Likelihood to Consider**
*(after messages)*

- **Agree strongly**: 7, 53, 24, 16
- **Agree somewhat**: 17, 45, 36, 19
- **Don’t Know**: 21, 43, 35
- **Disagree somewhat**: 17, 44, 38
- **Disagree strongly**: 8, 20, 72

†Results shown among all California adults
Reasons to Participate
Young adults and their parents need to believe service is a good use of their time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Many young adults want to start their professional and adult lives as soon as they can, and service must be seen as a step toward their goals.</td>
<td>• “With that pay, a lot of people won’t be able to do that.” —Liberal Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cost of living and cost of housing are major challenges, so service must be seen as something that can help financial stability, not make things more difficult.</td>
<td>• “I got a lot of other stuff going on. If the benefits line up with what I’m trying to do it could work.” —Non-College Young Adult, Black Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Young adults want time to focus on the bigger picture but see their time as occupied by work, school, family, and other responsibilities.</td>
<td>• Conservative parents say service programs are likely to have a liberal agenda and there may not be people in the programs for their children to relate to.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Language and Concept Tests

### % saying "very good reason"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>CA &lt;25</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Probably will Consider*</th>
<th>Probably will Recommend*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving back to your community</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving back to the country</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping your community</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping communities other than your own</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money for college</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education awards</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting people different from you</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting people similar to you</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional skills</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job skills</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working hands-on to address issues on the front lines</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working behind the scenes to support programs</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>A living stipend</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A living allowance</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a personal network</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a professional network</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- More effective
- Equally effective

All asked of half the sample

* 6 to 10 on final ask

#OurCommonPurpose
Aspirational outcomes: Adults Nationwide

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Aspirational outcomes:
Californians aged 18 to 24
Messages
Young adults want a full picture of what their year doing service work would look like and what its outcome would be.

### Messaging Implications from Focus Groups

| **Participants react positively to brief descriptions of service programs, examples of daily work, and benefits from participating.** |
| **But they want a better understanding of what service would be like and what the benefits would be.** |
| **Top message language includes specifics about pay, education, and health benefits, and information about technical training and certifications.** |
| **A strong testimonial tested describes specific benefits that one individual saw.** |
| **“I'd want to know what I'd be doing and not just service work.”** —Young adult in college |
| **“It gave an example of how it would be helpful in the future and building a career, and gives an example of career specific training which was persuasive to me—to find that it was not just experience that gives you soft skills but certifications as well.”** —Young adult in college |
Opinion after Messages
Likelihood of considering a service year increases after messages

**Likelihood to Consider Service Year for Yourself**

**CALIFORNIA**

- First Ask: 21
- After Messages: 29

**CALIFORNIA < 25**

- First Ask: 5
- After Messages: 8

**NATIONAL**

- First Ask: 4
- After Messages: 6

Extremely likely (10)
Probably (6 to 10)

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#OurCommonPurpose
Among young adults, the likelihood to consider service increases most among those planning to get a degree.

Increases are also slightly higher among women and progressives/liberals.
Likelihood of recommending a service year increases after messages

Likelihood to Recommend a Service Year

**CALIFORNIA**
- First Ask: 36
- After Messages: 54 (+18)
- Extremely likely (10)
- Probably (6 to 10)

**CALIFORNIA < 25**
- First Ask: 36
- After Messages: 54 (+18)
- Extremely likely (10)
- Probably (6 to 10)

**NATIONAL**
- First Ask: 34
- After Messages: 55 (+19)
- Extremely likely (10)
- Probably (6 to 10)

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#OurCommonPurpose
After messages, more believe a service year could help achieve their goals

Participating in a service year could help me achieve my own goals

**CALIFORNIA**

First Ask | After Messages
--- | ---
Disagree | Agree
44 | 52
38 | 40

**CALIFORNIA < 25**

First Ask | After Messages
--- | ---
Disagree | Agree
47 | 55
39 | 37

**NATIONAL**

First Ask | After Messages
--- | ---
Disagree | Agree
43 | 46
39 | 40

+8
+8
+7
Recommendations
Data-driven recommendations

A. For recruiting, focus on the **community aspects of service** rather than describing it as “national service” or a national program.

B. Include **top motivations** in messaging: helping people and communities, health insurance, money for college, and technical training and job certifications.

C. Shift **key attitudes** that can increase the likelihood to serve:
   - Service can help you achieve your goals.
   - Participating can provide you with greater financial stability over the long term.

D. Use a **mix of testimonials and traditional messages** to paint a full picture of the value and benefits of service.

E. Use **effective language**:
   - “Giving back to your community” (vs. “Giving back to the country”)
   - “Helping your community” (vs. “Helping communities other than your own”)
   - “Money for college” (vs. “Education awards” or “Loan deferment”)
   - “Meeting people different from you” (vs. “Meeting people similar to you”)

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