

# Federal Work-Study (FWS) Community Service

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## The “Best Kept Secret in Higher Education?”

### Presenter:

Bob Davidson

Senior Advisor

Learn and Serve America

Corporation for National and Community Service

[rdavidson@cns.gov](mailto:rdavidson@cns.gov)

# Issues for Discussion

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- **“Not Just Student Aid” – a multi-purpose program:**
  - To ensure part-time employment opportunities for needy students
  - To provide community service opportunities
  - To develop students’ sense of social and civic responsibility
  - To support of students’ educational programs/ vocational goals
  - To provide subsidized labor for colleges (?)
- **Benefits of FWS community service?**
- **Why has the FWS community service rate stalled at less than 16%?**
- **What are the challenges to further growth?**
- **What steps can be taken to address the challenges?**

# FWS Community Service Purposes

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**“... to encourage students receiving Federal student financial assistance to participate in community service activities that will benefit the Nation and engender in the students a sense of social responsibility and commitment to the community..”**

**...“community services” which are:**

- identified...in consultation with local nonprofit, governmental, and community-based organizations,
- designed to improve the quality of life for residents, particularly low-income individuals, or to solve particular problems related to their needs, including... in such fields as health care, child care, literacy training, education, welfare, social services, transportation, housing...

(Title IV, Section 441 of the Higher Education Act)

# Requirement that FWS Jobs Support Students' Academic/ Career Goals

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- Participating colleges must assure that FWS students are placed in jobs that

“...to the maximum extent practicable, complement and reinforce the educational program or vocational goals of each student...”

(Section 443(b)(7) of the Higher Education Act)

- This requirement applies to all FWS jobs--including FWS Community Service

# FWS Community Service Requirements and Incentives

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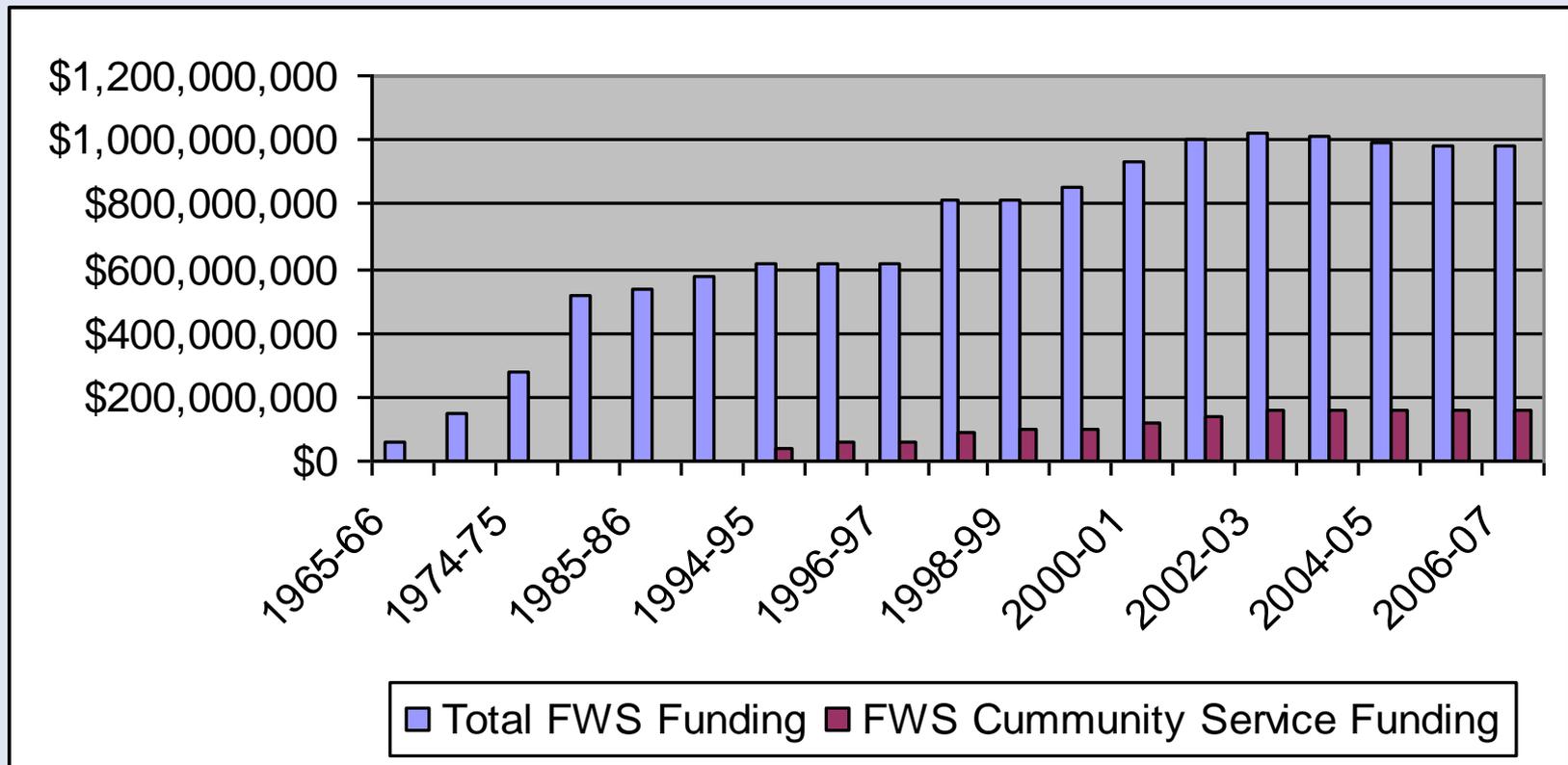
- At least 7% of annual allocations must be spent on community service
- 100% Federal funding (25% employer matching waived) for reading and math tutors; At least one family or childhood reading tutor program required
- Community Service travel and training hours covered by FWS salaries
- Colleges required to notify students of community service jobs
- Community Service priority in annual reallocations
- Job Location and Development Program (up to 10% of institutional allocation)

# Other Key FWS Statutory Provisions

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- Financial matching (in general): 75% Federal Government/ 25% college—or other nonprofit employer
- Colleges must assure “non-displacement” of regular institutional employees
- Students must have financial need
- Colleges have significant discretion (award amount, wage rates, selection of off-campus non-profit employers)
- Federal minimum wage applies
- Funds allocated by statutory formula: aggregate student need and school’s historic funding level
- Administrative allowance (can cover community service admin. costs): generally 5% of Federal allocation

# Federal Work-Study & Community Service Funding



# FWS Program History and Trends

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- Created in Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (President Johnson's "War on Poverty"); \$57 million appropriation
- 1992: Community Service purpose specified in law; 5% community service requirement
- 1995 Heritage Foundation recommends zero funding
- FY 1997: \$200 million increase spurred by 1996 "America Reads" provisions; support from Clinton, Gingrich, Goodling
- 1998: 7% community service requirement
- From dishwashing to physics research
- From directed placement to job choice and student interest matching

# FWS: the largest national college student service program?

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- 3,327 higher education institutions have FWS community service programs; all sectors
- 129,000 students participate in FWS Community Service annually – of 819,000 total FWS students
- Compares to: some 15,000 AmeriCorps and 90,000 Learn and Serve America college student participants-- on 200 campuses

# Benefits to Students

## *of Work-Study Community Service*

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- Apply academic learning to real world problems
- Develop citizenship skills and habits
- Develop interpersonal and leadership skills
- Career-related skills and “internship” experience
- Build a contacts network
- Career exploration; strengthen resume
- Maximize use of time: combine need to earn tuition with opportunities for community service—and academic/ career-building experience

# Benefits to Community Organizations

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## *of Community Service Work-Study*

- Affordable employees for longer period of time than traditional volunteers or service-learning students
- FWS students can play both coordination (of other students/volunteers) and direct service roles
- Access to students and faculty with needed knowledge and skills
- Stronger relationship with the college/ university can extend to other areas and resources (e.g., research, facilities, technology)

# Benefits to Colleges/ Universities

## *of Work-Study Community Service*

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- Adds “real world” focus to academic and student affairs programs
- Strengthen service-learning programs
- Strengthen campus-community relationships and partnerships
- Good public relations/ opportunities for media exposure and national honors
- Help in recruiting and retaining needy students, especially those attracted to service – likely to graduate and be strong alums

# A History of Valuing Higher Education Community Engagement

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- **Institutional missions**

- Public service/ religious missions of early colleges;
- Morrill Act: land grant colleges—public service and applied research
- Growth of community colleges
- Recent emergence of service-learning
- Campus Compact's recent growth (from 512 colleges in 1996 to 1,036 in 2006)

- **National recognition** for commitment to service:

- Princeton Review's listing of "Colleges with a Conscience"
- U.S. News & World Report's ranking of Service-Learning colleges
- Washington Monthly's annual ranking of colleges on service to the nation (using FWS Community Service percentages)
- President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll

# Recent Trends in Student Attitudes and Service

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- **State/ local policies:** 37 States have policies encouraging K-12 student community service or service-learning
- **Freshmen attitudes:** UCLA's 2005 survey of college freshmen: 66.3 percent say it's essential or very important to help others who are in difficulty-- highest level in 25 years.
- **New CNCS study of college student volunteering:**
  - Some 3.3 million college students volunteered in 2005, a 20 percent increase since 2002. More than double the 9 percent volunteering growth rate among all adults.
  - College students are twice as likely to volunteer as individuals the same age not enrolled in college.
  - Most popular service areas: tutoring and mentoring younger students.

Note: see "College Students Helping America" at [www.nationalservice.gov/about/role\\_impact/performance\\_research.asp#COLLEGE](http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/role_impact/performance_research.asp#COLLEGE)

# What's Wrong with This Picture?

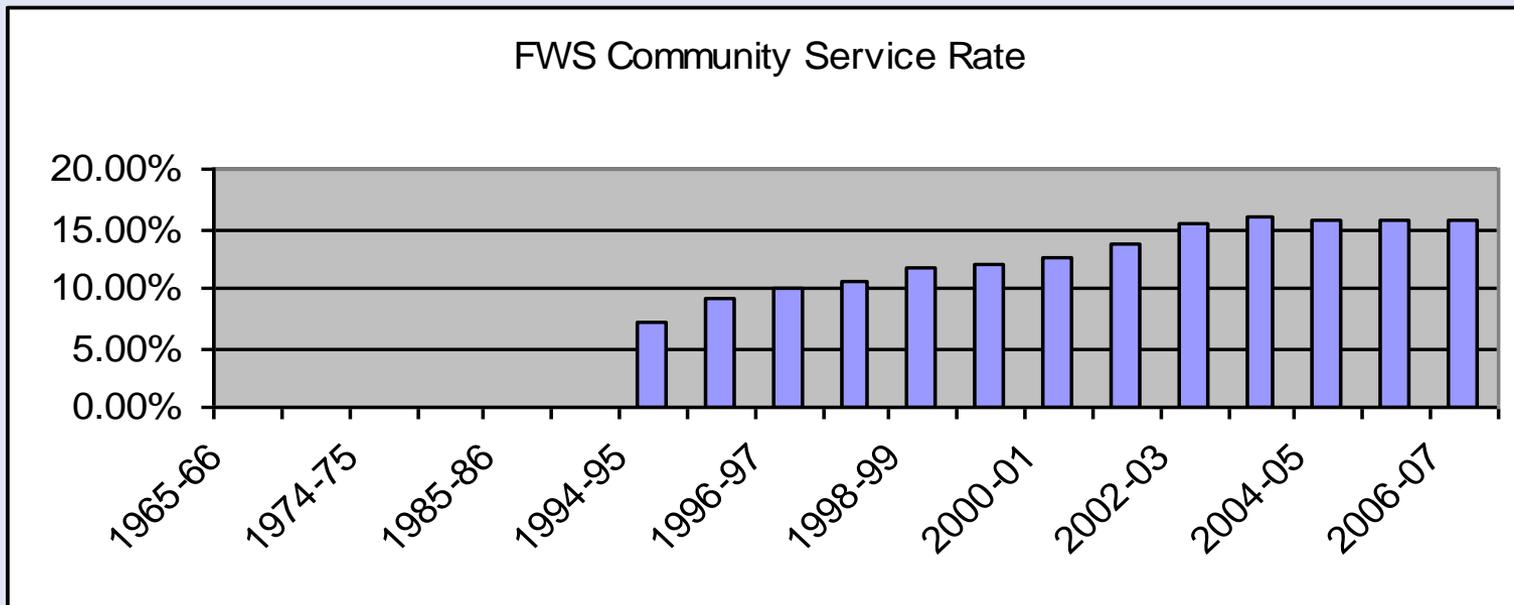
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- Given the benefits of FWS community service—to students, communities, and schools,
  - recent growth in institutional commitments to service,
  - and in student volunteering overall---

## **Why has the FWS community service participation rate stalled?**

- FWS Community Service rate rose from 7.2% in 1994-95 to 15.91% in 2003-04; but has declined to 15.75% in 2004-05 (latest year of data)
- The rate for Campus Compact members is only 16.06%
- **What are the challenges to further expansion of FWS Community Service?**
- **Are there potential solutions?**

# FWS Community Service Rate



# Institutional Data on FWS community service

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## *2004-05 Reports*

- Dramatic variation in institutional performance, but little variance across sectors.
- Poor-performing schools: 318 schools (9.5% of participating schools) failed to either meet the 7% statutory requirement or obtain a Secretarial waiver
- High-performing schools: 846 schools (22% of total participating schools) spent 20% or more on service
- Top-performing schools: 163 schools (5% of total participating schools) had community service rates of 40% or higher, including 5 with 100% rates
- A complete listing of institutions and participation rates is found at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/volunteering/federal.asp>

# National FWS Study Findings

## *2000 Education Department Study*

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- Among ALL Federal Work-Study jobs:
  - 43 % were identified as clerical
  - 10 % as library support
  - 5 % as computer support
  - 19 % were identified as “other” – including facilities maintenance and food service

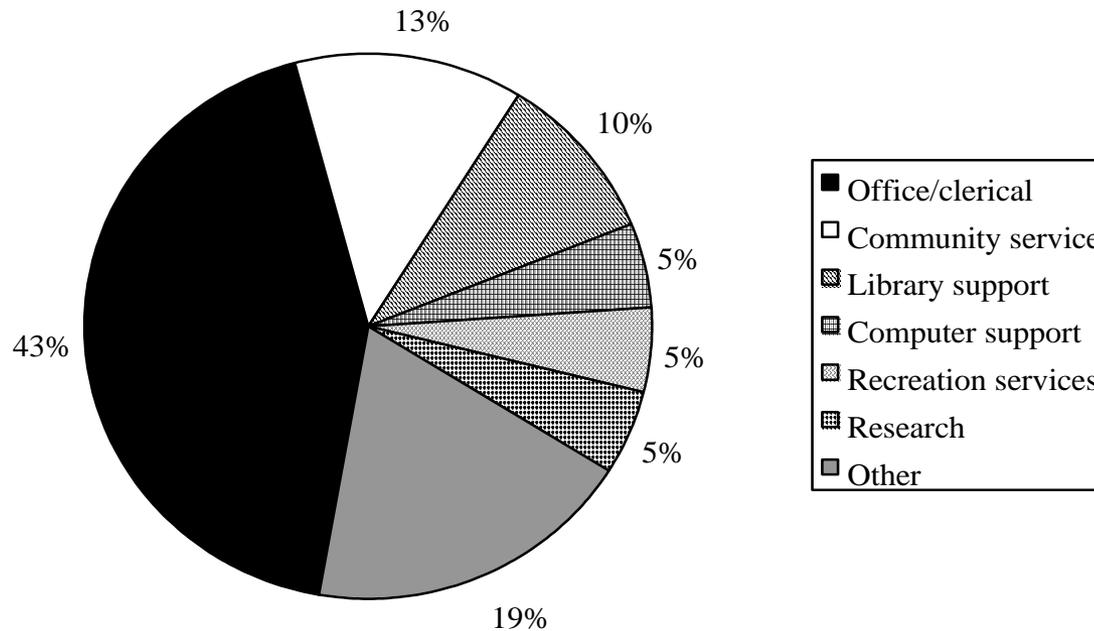
**(Unlikely that very many of the above jobs, 87% of total FWS jobs, were academic or career-related as intended in law)**

  - 13% were Community Service jobs

# National FWS Study Findings

*2000 Education Department Study*

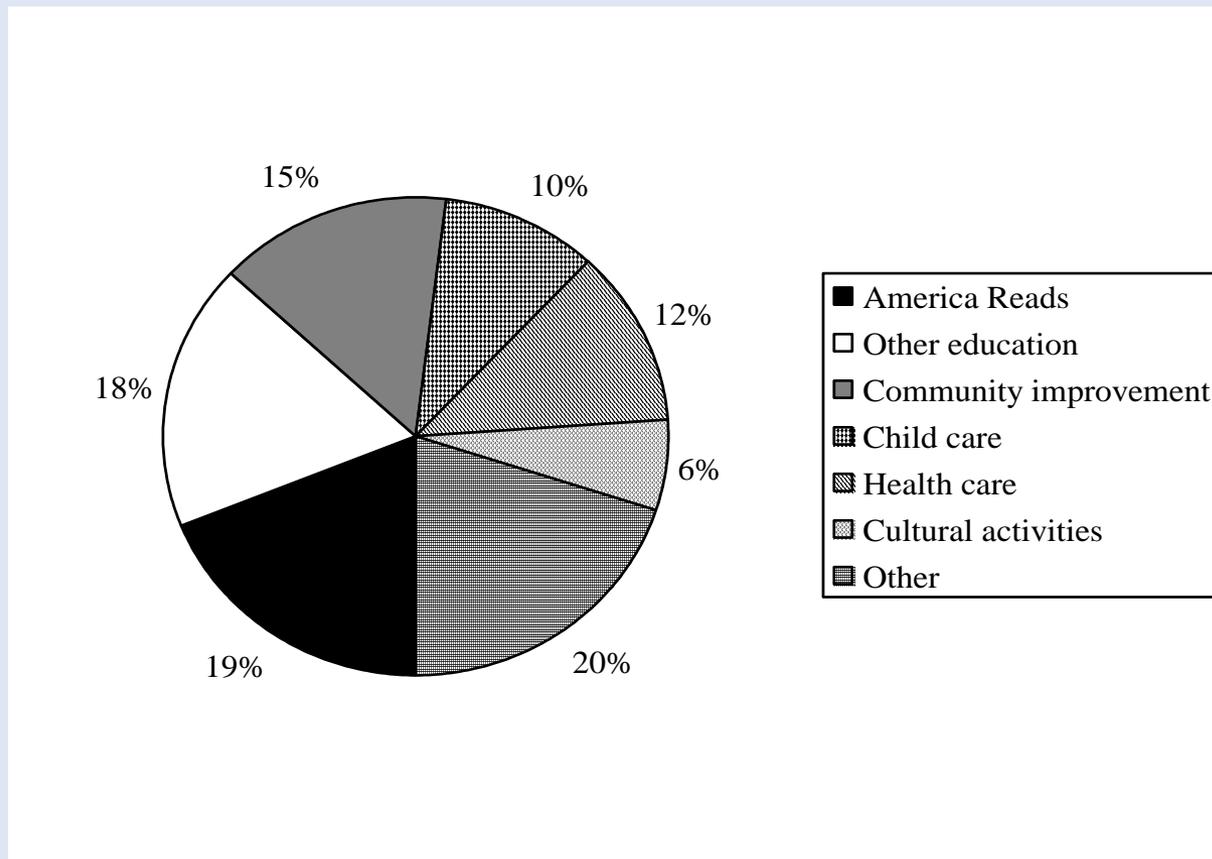
**Mean Percentage of FWS Students by Primary Job Activity**



# National FWS Study Findings

## 2000 Education Department Study

### Mean Percentage of FWS Students in Community Service by Community Service Area\*



\* On average, 16 percent of FWS students were involved in community service activities in 1997-98 according to administrators.

# National FWS Study Findings

*2000 Education Department study*

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- **Of FWS Community Service students:**
  - 88% would take such jobs in future
  - 85% felt jobs provided interesting assignments
  - 81% felt the community service job would stimulate future service
  - 62% felt community service jobs supported academic goals
  - 68% felt community service jobs had a positive effect on academic performance

**(In other words, at least for students with community service jobs, the educational purpose of the program was honored)**

# National FWS Study Findings

*2000 Education Department study*

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- **Reasons FWS students did not take community service jobs:**
  - 42 percent said their course schedule did not allow a service job
  - 17 percent said service jobs were not conveniently located
  - 11 percent wanted community service jobs but found all community service jobs already taken
  - 14 percent said they were not made aware of community service job options
  - Of those, more than 80 percent said they would be interested in community service jobs in future

# Challenges

## *re: expansion of Work-Study Community Service*

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- **Challenge: Increased workload on student aid staff**
  - Potential Solution: Use JLD funds and FWS students. Help from campus or of-campus partners.
- **Challenge: Meeting 25% employer matching requirement**
  - Potential Solution: Statutory “needy nonprofit” option – 10% matching. College as employer.
- **Challenge: Rural location, no nearby urban problems**
  - Potential Solutions: Partner with local schools and government agencies. Some community needs (e.g., education, health care, environment) are not just urban. Use of summer and spring break service trips.
- **Challenge: Inadequate transportation to service sites**
  - Potential Solutions: College-owned vehicles. Support from local transit agencies. Use of Title III funds. Use of FWS students as drivers; FWS salaries to cover time in travel.

# Challenges

## *re: expansion of Work-Study Community Service, cont.*

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- **Challenge:** Some students prefer on-campus FWS jobs close to classes and dorms and easier to fit into class schedules.
  - **Potential Solution:** Ensure students and campus offices understand the benefits of FWS community service and the need for FWS jobs to materially support education/ career goals. Publish on-campus FWS position descriptions demonstrating academic/ vocational support.
  
- **Challenge:** Competition with campus departments' desire for low-cost (Federally subsidized) FWS student labor
  - **Potential Solution:** High-level budget/ academic decision to use local, non-student labor for low-skill campus jobs, allowing more FWS funds to support community service jobs for students
  
- **Challenge:** Numerous FWS Community Service policy myths and misunderstandings
  - **Potential Solution:** Education Department to publish clearer policy guidance

# Challenge: FWS Policy Myths and Misunderstandings

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- **Myth: FWS community service jobs are limited to 7% of the institution's annual allocation**
  - Fact: 7% is the statutory minimum; there's no Federal maximum. Some schools set limits.
- **Myth: FWS students can't earn more than the Federal minimum wage**
  - Fact: They can; limits may be set by the college
- **Myth: Transportation and training costs can't be met with FWS funds**
  - Fact: Time spent in training or travel may be paid for via FWS salaries
- **Myth: FWS students must provide direct services**
  - Fact: They can coordinate services/ provide indirect support

# Challenge: FWS Policy Myths and Misunderstandings, cont.

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- **Myth: For community service jobs, institution may not be employer**
  - Fact: False. Depends on community service purpose and effects
- **Myth: FWS students must work during academic terms**
  - Fact: summer and between-term community service work is allowed, even promoted by some colleges
- **Myth: FWS community service students can't work for government agencies**
  - Fact: They can; govt. agencies are specifically cited in the law
- **Myth: FWS students can't earn course credit for same time they earn FWS salaries**
  - Fact: Depends on school policy (No Federal rule)
- **Myth: FWS students can't earn AmeriCorps education awards for the same FWS service hours**
  - Fact: They can, and hundreds do— via Campus Compact, JumpStart, and other AmeriCorps higher ed programs

# Steps to increase FWS community service

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- **Identify and develop relationships with key agency/  
college contact person(s)**
- **Create clear community service Position  
Descriptions**
  - emphasize needed skills and knowledge
  - identify skills, knowledge, experience that will be gained
  - and potential relationship with academic programs/ career goals
- **Emphasize positive program qualities:**
  - Quality of supervision/ relationships with community leaders
  - Meaningful work addressing significant community needs
  - Student learning and career exploration opportunities
  - Opportunities for student input/ leadership/ reflection/ celebration/  
honors

# Steps to increase FWS community service

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- **Advertise FWS community service opportunities to current and prospective students**
- **Market to local community service agencies**
- **Use Job Location/ Development and FWS-supported staff to coordinate and trouble-shoot**
- **Promote academic departments' use of FWS community service vocational internships** (e.g., (e.g., education, nursing, medicine, law, engineering, social work, public administration)
- **Partner with Service-Learning courses**
- **Partner with AmeriCorps, faith-based and other campus-based service programs**

# Steps to increase FWS community service

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- **Survey all FWS students to determine whether jobs align with the program's educational and/ or community service purposes, and publicize results**
- **Encourage student affairs and academic affairs officials to become involved in institutional policies for allocating FWS jobs/ Federal subsidies**
- **Raise awareness of college/ university presidents; encourage them to take leadership** in allocating FWS jobs and linking FWS jobs to the institution's educational and civic missions and goals
- Clarify Federal FWS policies vs. institutional policies/ debunk myths

# Goals for the Future of FWS Community Service

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- President Clinton's 1996 State of the Union challenged colleges: increase FWS community service to 50% of allocations
- President G.W. Bush's 2002 State of the Union challenged colleges: increase FWS community service to 50% of allocations
- **Current CNCS Strategic Plan goals:**
  - Increase FWS community service to 20% by 2010
  - Increase college students serving from 3.3 million to 5 million by 2010

**Are these reasonable goals? What strategies should be pursued?**

# Support from Corporation for National and Community Service

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- AmeriCorps Education Awards –
  - Up to \$4,725 per year awards –as grant or as student loan repayment
- AmeriCorps \* State and National grants; members may be college students and FWS recipients—while earning Ed Awards
- AmeriCorps \* VISTA; some 300 VISTAs serve annually as college student service coordinators
- Learn and Serve America -- Higher Education grants serving some 200 colleges; some 90,000 participants
- Senior Corps/ RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteers Program); over 2,000 serve as college student volunteer coordinators
- Collaboration with Education Department in promoting FWS community service
- President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll

# Additional Resources on FWS Community Service

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- *Campus Compact: Resources for higher education institutions striving to develop or improve their programs:*
- **[www.compact.org/national/FWS](http://www.compact.org/national/FWS)**
  
- *Expanding Federal Work-Study and Community Service Opportunities*
- Provided by the U.S. Department of Education with ideas for campuses incorporating community service into Federal Work-Study programs. Please visit <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/pubs/WorkStudy/>.
  
- *Federal Student Aid Handbook (for Financial Aid Professionals)* Provided by the U.S. Department of Education
- **[www.ifap.ed.gov/IFAPWebApp/currentSFAHandbooksPag.jsp](http://www.ifap.ed.gov/IFAPWebApp/currentSFAHandbooksPag.jsp)**
  
- *Guidance on the relationship between AmeriCorps benefits and financial aid eligibility*
- **[www.americorps.org/members/resource/education/benefits.html](http://www.americorps.org/members/resource/education/benefits.html)**
  
- *National Student Employment Association*
- “The Work Book” provides detailed information on work-study regulations and programs

# Additional Resources for Literacy Programs

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- **LEARNS**
- Provides technical assistance to Corporation for National Service and Federal Work-Study projects focused on literacy and education. Call them at 1-800-930-5664 or 1-800-361-7890 or visit their website at <http://www.nwrel.org/learns>.
- ***Growing a Volunteer Tutor Program: Engaging Communities to Support Schools***
- Available from LEARNS (see above for their phone number and website).
  
- **The National Service Resource Center (NSRC)** is a clearinghouse for information on national service programs. Literacy resources may be found at: <http://www.etr.org/NSRC/amreads.html>
  
- ***On the Road to Reading: A Guide for Community Partners***
- For tutoring children pre-school through grade 3. Available for download on National Service Resource Center's website ([www.etr.org/nsrc](http://www.etr.org/nsrc)). Also see "Reading Partners" at this website.
  
- **Resources for Math and Reading Tutoring Programs**  
Updated and expanded resource list for national service and federal work-study tutoring programs. Includes free publications, videos and websites:  
[www.etr.org/NSRC/pdfs/arlist/pdf](http://www.etr.org/NSRC/pdfs/arlist/pdf)