NATIONAL MUSEUM
AND CENTER FOR
SERVICE

Impact report 2025/2026

A nation united through service.

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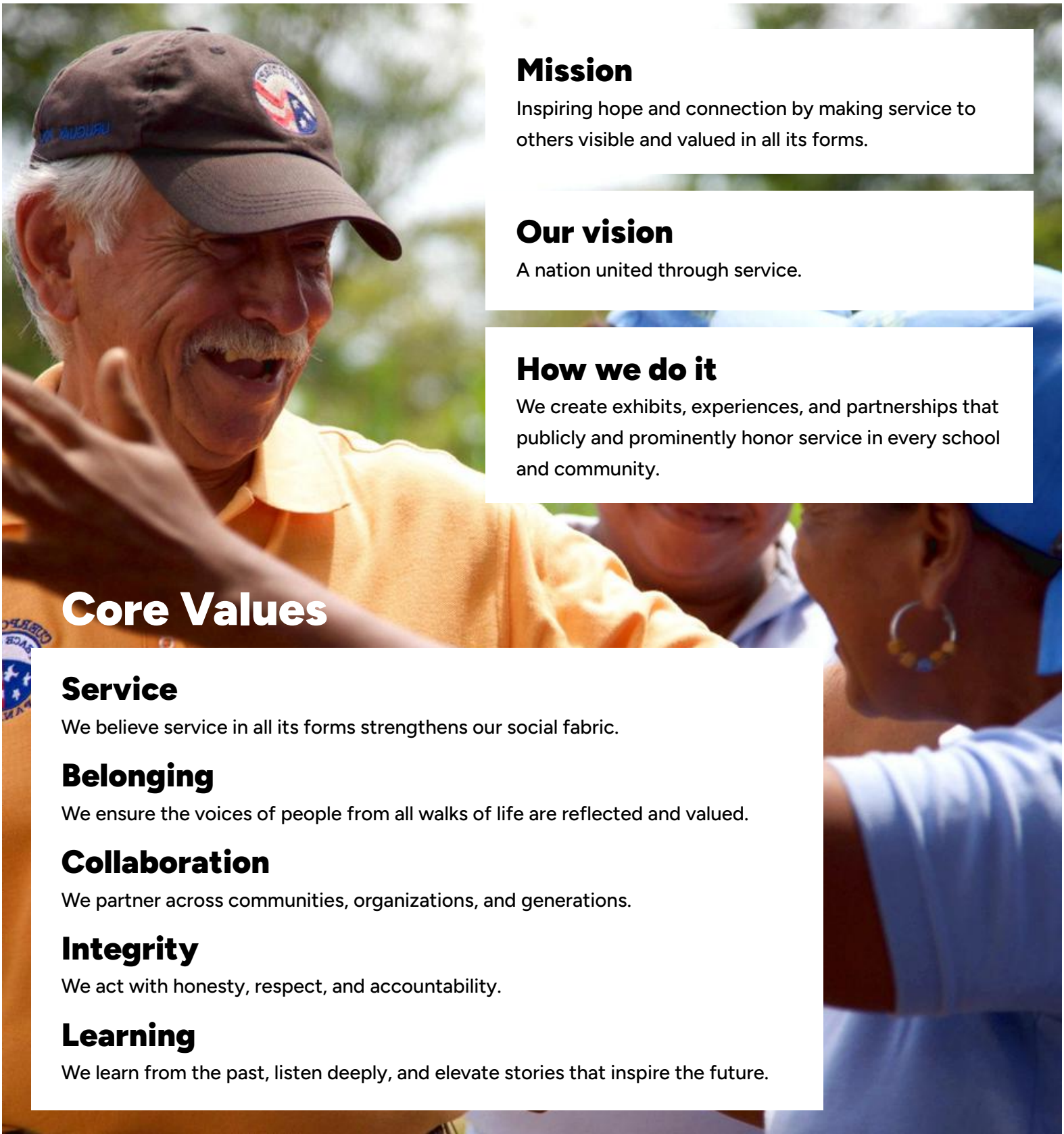
Mission, vision, and values



Mission

Inspiring hope and connection by making service to others visible and valued in all its forms.

Our vision

A nation united through service.

How we do it

We create exhibits, experiences, and partnerships that publicly and prominently honor service in every school and community.

Core Values

Service

We believe service in all its forms strengthens our social fabric.

Belonging

We ensure the voices of people from all walks of life are reflected and valued.

Collaboration

We partner across communities, organizations, and generations.

Integrity

We act with honesty, respect, and accountability.

Learning

We learn from the past, listen deeply, and elevate stories that inspire the future.

Letter from our leadership

Dear friends,

Even in the most difficult times, good people find the courage to step forward in ways large and small to help one another and make a positive difference in their communities and the world. Those stories need to be told, and the National Museum and Center for Service is the only organization dedicated to publicly honoring all the ways people give of themselves through their work, as volunteers, or by charitable and philanthropic contributions.

During this 250th anniversary year of our nation's founding, we are convinced that the key to unifying the nation and strengthening our democratic republic can be found in reawakening our shared commitment to service - a commitment powerfully spelled out in the closing lines of the Declaration of Independence: "we mutually pledge to each other, our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor".

Brian Baird, Founder

In this brief report, we want to share with you the remarkable growth, achievements, and impact of the NMCFS during this past year. We also want to preview the exciting new initiatives and partnerships we are launching to reach exponentially more people, organizations and communities. Our goal remains to establish enduring and inspiring calls to service in nearly every school and community in the nation.

To all those who share our vision of a nation united by service, we want to thank you and invite you to be part of this mission as we enter our most exciting and ambitious year to date and as we celebrate what our nation is and can be when we are truly at our best.

Marc Miller, Board President

Brian & Marc

"Shared service reminds us that "We're all in this together", and when people see others who serve being recognized, they're more likely to get involved themselves." — Brian Baird

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Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Attorney and Former Lieutenant Governor of Maryland

Staff

Julie Budkowski, Managing Director

Harry Guerrero, Administrative Coordinator

Joel Meyers, Communications Specialist

LeAnn Naillon, Program Specialist

Key accomplishments: 250 & Beyond

250 & Beyond was launched to provide a nonpartisan, independent pathway for communities nationwide to commemorate the United States' semiquincentennial by uplifting the foundational value of service to others. With the vital goal to bridge our divides by exploring the historical and contemporary role of the ethos of service in shaping American democracy from 1776 to the present day, this movement shifts narrative power directly to the grassroots level.

By equipping local leaders with free, open-source toolkits and customizable plug-and-play templates, 250 & Beyond empowers schools, libraries, and civic organizations to establish localized "museums of service" that publicly celebrate everyday, quiet heroes. Ultimately, this interactive, hyper-local storytelling serves as a powerful mechanism to rebuild institutional trust, inspire civic intent, and anchor a sustained, multi-generational culture of civic commitment that strengthens the social fabric of our democratic republic for the next 250 years and beyond. Through this initiative, we have strategically partnered with key national organizations to provide the tools, resources, and stories necessary to help educators and local leaders deeply explore the role of service in our nation's founding and its essential, ongoing contribution to our democracy.

Special thank you to the State 250 Commissions for sharing the resources and movement across America, including: Texas, Washington State, Idaho, Rhode Island and Minnesota.

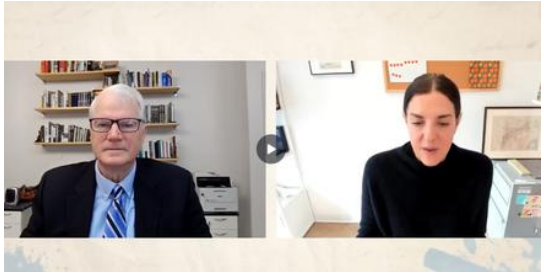
The Spirit of Service & The American Revolution Toolkit

Created in collaboration with WETA for the educational resource center accompanying PBS's The American Revolution documentary series, this specialized toolkit explores the foundational role of service in our nation's founding. The toolkit contains worksheets, family activity ideas, coloring pages and tailored guides designed specifically for History and Civics educators to dive into our founding documents.

Toolkit engagements 6200+

Video special — 250 & Beyond: Our American Story

A broadcast conversation about community, service, and democracy. Acclaimed documentary filmmaker Sarah Botstein and former U.S. Representatives Bob Inglis, Donna F. Edwards, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen join host Brian Baird in an uplifting, inspiring dialogue exploring how this shared civic duty has shaped our nation's history—and how it continues to light the way forward into the next 250 years.



Click the image to view promo video (0:49)

19,000+ views

Accompanying resources were designed to help communities host a similar bi-partisan conversation, including how to request participation from a former member of Congress.

The American Tradition of Service: ready-to-print exhibit

A free, high-resolution downloadable resource, this ready-to-print exhibition allows schools, libraries, and museums to explore the critical role of service in our nation's founding, highlighting how a shared commitment to the greater good has profoundly shaped American history and identity. To ensure maximum community accessibility, the exhibit is engineered across multiple formats designed for four different budget levels—ranging from high-end professional panel installations and hanging graphics to simple easel displays and digital projections.

Click image to access free downloadable kit.

The 2026 National Service Symposium

Survey feedback
Net promoter score of the symposium was **90**, and quality of speakers was rated **4.7/5**.

Attendance
Over **150** in-person attendees and **500** virtual viewers watching live online.

Hosted on April 24, 2026, at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., in partnership with Independent Sector, this high-profile event served as a nationwide celebration of service.

Event Highlights: Feature sessions included a fireside chat with Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, the formal release of the updated Value of Volunteer Time, a closing keynote address from Rotary International's General Secretary and CEO John Hewko, and an inspiring presentation of the John R. Lewis Campus Museum of Service delivered by the very students who built it.

Our American Story of Service campaign

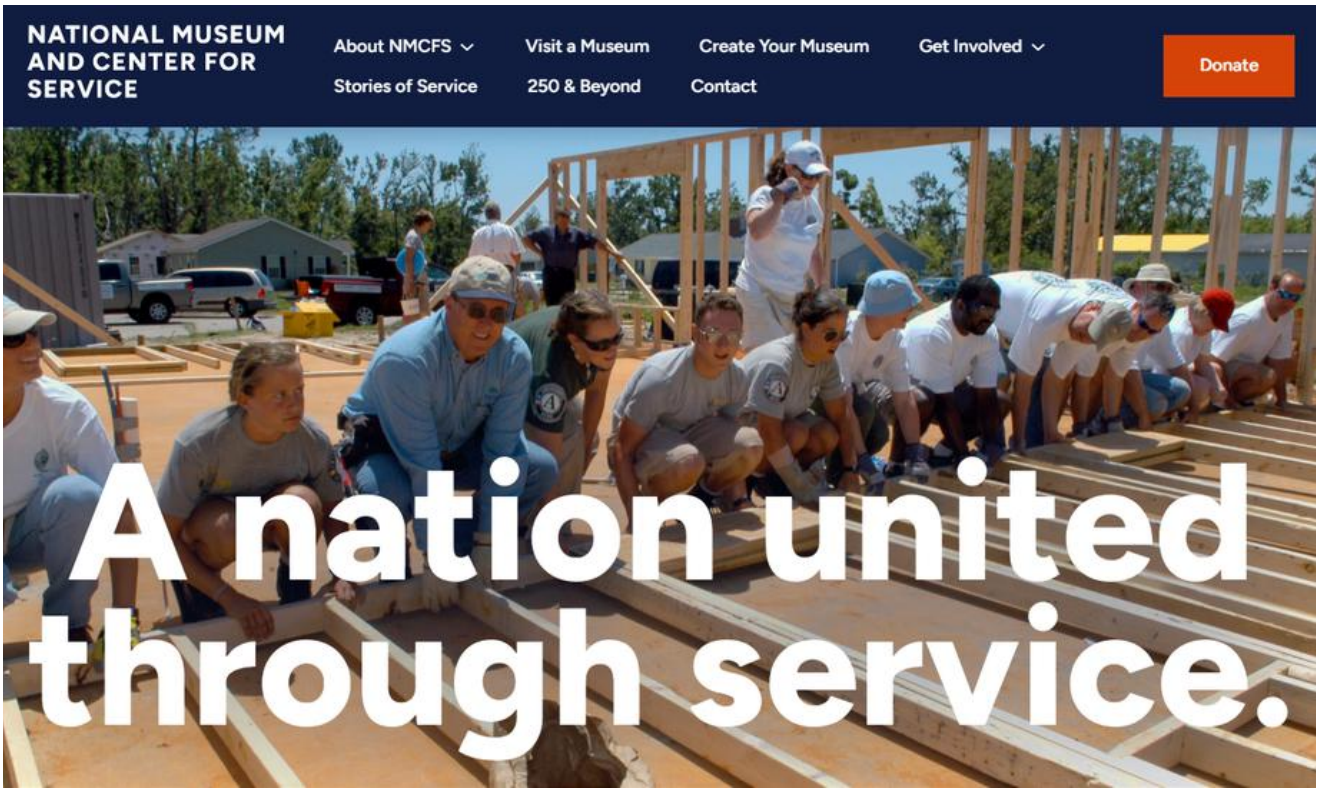
A collaborative storytelling campaign designed to build a living, crowdsourced digital archive of American service. By highlighting regional stories of neighbors coming together to support the greater good, the ongoing campaign paints a vivid, unified picture of what civic dedication looks like in communities across the country for the semiquincentennial celebration.

View Our American Story of Service on Substack

250 & Beyond collaborating partners

- American Association for State and Local History
- America's Service Commissions
- AmeriCorps Connections
- assemble
- Association of Former Members of Congress
- Campus Compact
- Idealist
- Independent Sector
- Listen First Project
- Made By Us
- Modern Species
- National Council for the Social Studies
- National Endowment for Humanities
- National Peace Corps Association
- National Youth Leadership Council
- Nest4Us
- New Politics Academy
- Service Year Alliance
- The American Revolution
- Volunteer Alexandria
- WETA
- Youth Service America

Key accomplishments: Our new digital look



As our organization continues to mature, we have unveiled a refreshed look and feel with the launch of a brand-new website specifically designed to showcase the truly national scope of our programs.

This digital home will soon expand to feature an interactive map and a centralized resource portal. We are deeply honored to have received a grant from the Gadfly Project to develop this custom application, which will provide invaluable support and tracking insights for our rapidly growing network of grassroots community curators. Stay tuned for the upcoming launch of this powerful new tool!

"There are many different ways student voices can matter. I am learning how to use mine to make an impact on something I care about and to help the people around me." — Michelle, 12th grade student

Exhibitions & community impact

61 local leaders registered to create their own local museums of service

6300+ toolkit downloads

15 School, Community and Campus Museums of Service launched

This year, we were able to publish 3 case studies following the unique journeys of 3 school and community museums of service. No one journey is the same, and every exhibit and experience is unique to the community that created it, truly reflecting the fabric of our nation.

Case study: John Lewis Leadership Museum of Service

Developed by Lewis Leadership Program students at John R. Lewis High School in Springfield, Virginia, this campus exhibit is unique because it is both physical and virtual, operating as a traveling 'Museum of Service' to tour schools, businesses, and community organizations. It has garnered national acclaim, being featured in the School Library Journal and the School Librarian Learning Network podcast. In February 2026, the traveling exhibit was visited by legendary labor leader and civil rights activist Dolores Huerta. Students also connected their local work with an international art initiative, The Mossy Carpet, to celebrate small community actions.

Full case study

"My project is about supporting and empathizing with immigrants' experiences when coming to the U.S. This story matters to me because my parents are immigrants. I have family members, people who I care about going through this experience as we speak."
— Matthew, 10th grade

Case study: Service is Everywhere in DC

Service is Everywhere in DC (Lamond-Riggs/MLK Jr. libraries): This pilot community exhibit serves as a premier model of cross-sector collaboration. Co-created by the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington, the Rotary Club of Washington, DC, and the DC Public Library, the residency first launched at the Lamond-Riggs Neighborhood Library—featuring dedicated volunteer docents and a special screening of *A True American Hero: Reflections on the Life of Anthony Bowen*. It then transitioned to the main floor of the central Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library in downtown Washington, D.C. The project proved the powerful, trust-building effect of making service visible.

Survey data revealed that **93%** of visitors agreed that service can bring people together and strengthen our country, and **90%** stated they learned something new about the organizations featured.

Full case study

Case study: Sumter County Museum of Service

Sumter County Museum of Service: Created by Furlow Charter School in Americus, Georgia, this Campus Museum of Service stands out for its dynamic design, refreshing and expanding each year to add new local honorees (such as Elena Carné Lorenz and Valerie Duff) to celebrate community history.

Natalya Larkin with Sheriff Eric Bryant at Sumter County Museum of Service

The museum now tours the county and achieved an exceptional milestone of national recognition when the National Park Service officially requested the student-led exhibit to be placed on display.

Full case study

"This is what project-based learning is supposed to be. Not just knowledge retention, but transformational growth — learning what it means to serve, to lead, and to connect across differences." — JoAnna Arnold, Literacy Specialist, Chattahoochee-Flint RESA, Georgia

Spotlight: Edmonds Serves

Brian Baird, NMCFS Founder and Executive Director (right), presents Edmonds Mayor Mike Rosen a plaque recognizing Edmonds as the first U.S. city to be designated a “Community of Service”. Photo: Benjamin Finley Photography

Edmonds Serves—the nation’s first Community of Service—now serves as a scalable prototype for national deployment.

On June 6, 2026, Edmonds, Washington made history as the nation’s inaugural "Community of Service," launching Edmonds Serves as the flagship prototype for the National Museum and Center for Service (NMCFS). Designed to turn the city into a "living museum of service," the initiative shifts focus from formal annual awards to celebrating everyday neighbors who quietly strengthen their community.

“At a time when so much seems to divide us, Edmonds Serves is a reminder of what still brings us together, the shared values of compassion, service, and a deep sense of community.”
— Mayor Rosen, Edmonds, Washington

Spotlight: Edmonds Serves

Model in action

44 citywide exhibits: Storefront windows, libraries, schools, and community centers host locally crafted displays and video profiles highlighting dedicated volunteers.
Direct call to action: Every exhibit features a QR code connecting residents and visitors instantly to active, neighborhood-specific volunteer opportunities.

Cross-sector coalition

Broad mobilization: Over 200 business and nonprofit leaders gathered during the spring kickoff to commit to a shared civic vision.
Official civic recognition: Mayor Mike Rosen issued a mayoral proclamation honoring the city's network of nearly 500 active serving nonprofits.

A replicable and scalable model

Edmonds Serves is a tested proof of concept. The NMCFS team is analyzing real-world outcomes from Edmonds as a prototype and collaborating with local and national partners to build a playbook, shared resources, and designation criteria.

This framework will empower cities and towns across the United States to embed sustained civic participation directly into their local culture and infrastructure, in partnership with local businesses, schools and nonprofits.

"Service is not an activity. It's a way of life and it's a vocation thankfully that everyone has the opportunity to be a part of no matter what our lot in life is."
— Tay Moore, Aspen Institute

In the community

As momentum builds nationwide, we are thrilled to expand our reach through invitations to feature on podcasts, deliver keynote addresses, and lead dynamic workshops across the country.

Managing Director Julie Budkowski was invited to serve as a keynote panelist at Peace Corps Connect alongside Scott Beale, Shirley Sagawa and Alan Khazei.

NMCFS hosted a storyboarding workshop alongside our friends from assemble at the Points of Light conference as well as serving on the conference's Host Planning Committee.

United Philanthropy Forum hosted the American Tradition of Service exhibit and invited NMCFS to participate in their annual convening.

Julie Budkowski, Managing Director, and Brian Baird, Founder and Executive Director of NMCFS, joined The Bliss Business Podcast.

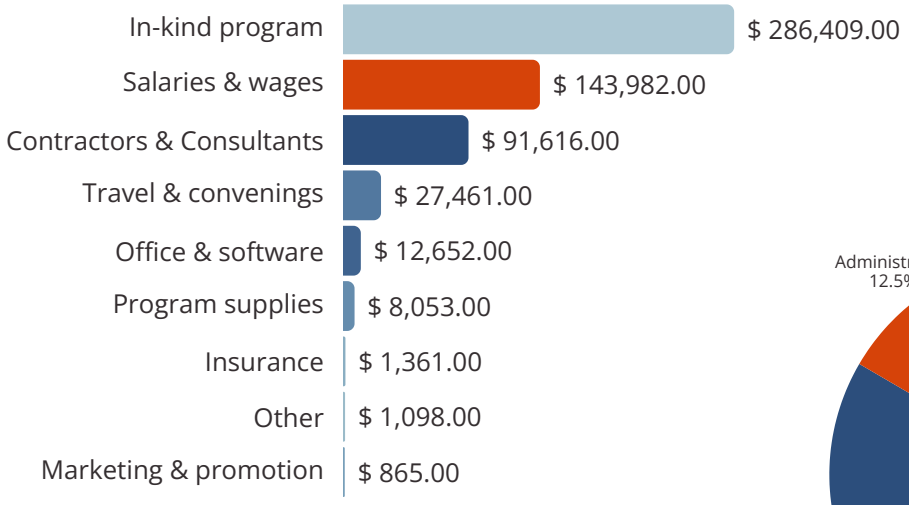
Thank you to everyone for sharing the importance of making service visible and valued throughout your community:

- Next Generation Service Corps
- Bridge Alliance
- Civic Learning Week Webinar
- Girl Scouts Unite
- HistPhil
- Independent Sector National Summit
- Living with Purpose Podcast
- National Council for the Social Studies
- New Mexico After School Networks
- Peace Corps Connect
- RW Institute
- School Librarian Learning Network
- Washington State 250
- WTTW Spirit of Service

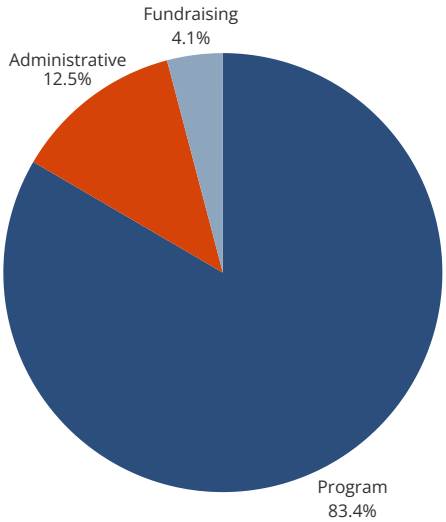
Financial overview - FY 2025/26

Total expenditure

$ 573,497.00

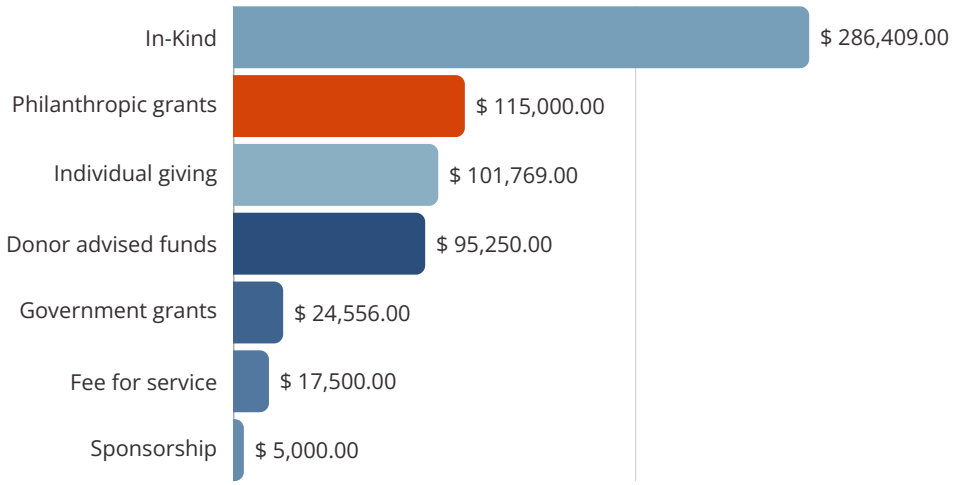


Expenditure by class



Total revenue

$645,484



Friends & partners

We are grateful to the partners, foundations, and individuals who sustain NMCFS. Their support makes the exhibits, experiences, and partnerships that publicly and prominently honor service in every school and community in America possible.

Institutional and philanthropic foundations

The Annie E. Casey Foundation
Bainum Family Foundation
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
Hazel Miller Foundation
Humanities DC
National Endowment for the Humanities
Peg & Rick Young Foundation
The Park Foundation

Special exhibition and national program partners

America's Service Commissions
AmeriCorps Connections
assemble
Campus Compact
DC Public Library
Former Members of Congress
Giving Tuesday
Idealist
Independent Sector
Listen First Project
Made By Us
National Council for the Social Studies
National Peace Corps Association
National Youth Leadership Council
Nest4Us
New Politics Academy
Rotary Club of Washington DC
Service Year Alliance
The American Revolution
Volunteer Alexandria
WETA
YMCA of Metropolitan Washington DC

National Service Symposium sponsors

EWING MARION KAUFFMAN FOUNDATION

Bainum Family Foundation

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

Interested in partnering with NMCFS? Email partnership@nmcfs.org

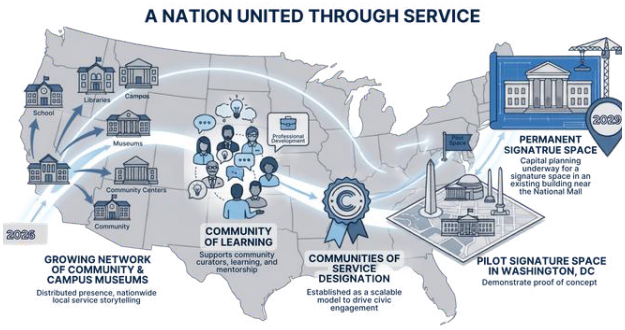
Looking ahead:
The road to 2027

2027 Service Symposium

We are already planning our next Service Symposium for April 2027.

Communities of Service

We're building out a framework for nationwide engagement in collaboration with leading service organizations across the country.



Strategic Plan

Check out our 2026-2029 strategic plan.

Community Expansion

Goal: To enable 250 Community & Campus Museums of service by December 2027, supporting a network of Community Curators through resources, workshops, and technical assistance. With exciting partnerships developing with leading service organizations across the country, we can't wait to see the impact ahead.

Looking ahead:
How to support NMCFS

Your generous gift inspires hope and connection by making service to others visible in all its forms. Donations like yours help create free resources, provide technical assistance to community curators, and share stories of service nationwide.
Donate

Volunteering is a core part of who we are. NMCFS was started by and is primarily led by volunteers. Our needs are changing as we grow, but we are always looking for people who are passionate about recognizing service.
Volunteer

Contact us today to explore the variety of partnerships we can engage in.
Partner

Bring museums of service to your community! Every community has people and organizations who serve, and every community has the power to create an exhibit that celebrates service.
Create

Want to get involved with NMCFS? Email www.nmcfs.org/get-involved

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"We mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor."
— The Declaration of Independence