

ENGAGING CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS IN STUDENT SUPPORT ROLES MENU OF SERVICES

The National Partnership for Student Success (NPSS) is a public-private partnership launched in July 2022 between AmeriCorps, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Johns Hopkins Everyone Graduates Center working to bring an additional 250,000 caring adults into high-impact roles as tutors, mentors, student success coaches, post-secondary transition coaches, and wraparound or integrated student support coordinators by summer 2025. Various stakeholders (including schools; districts; federal, state, and local government agencies; AmeriCorps programs; state service commissions; nonprofits; volunteer-based organizations, and others) are coming together around the common goal of getting more trained people to support students in high-impact and evidence-based roles so students can succeed and thrive.

Corporations and corporate volunteers across the country have an important role to play in supporting our P-12 students but often have had difficulty finding the “right” fit. A working group composed of NPSS Supporting Champions and READY SET coalition members worked together over several months starting in the spring of 2023 to identify medium- to high-impact volunteer opportunities to support students in P-12 schools and out-of-school time programs and make a meaningful difference in the education and support of our nation’s children.



When considering the quality of programs, utilize the NPSS Support Hub’s free [Voluntary Quality Standards tool](#), designed for use by schools, districts, state education agencies, youth-serving organizations, foundations, community groups, and others to better understand essential components of quality, set goals as part of existing or emerging continuous improvement processes, set goals when designing new programs, and consider prospective partners.

The working group identified several categories around which corporations and corporate volunteers can provide meaningful support including:

SUPPORTING DIRECT SERVICE PROVIDERS

Many corporate volunteers are unable to provide the time necessary to provide direct and high-impact supports to students in tutoring, student success coaching, and wraparound/integrated student supports. However, they are able to provide meaningful support to the organizations providing these direct services as well as those providing mentoring and post-secondary transition coaching. For example, corporate volunteers can mentor and offer career support services to tutors, student support coordinators, AmeriCorps members, and other direct service providers.

MEANINGFUL DAY OF SERVICE

Corporations and corporate volunteers naturally gravitate towards day of service opportunities where they are able to provide one day of volunteering for their entire staff to both give back and to provide an opportunity for their staff to connect to one another and the community. Focusing these days of service - whether they align with federal days of service on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day or 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance or a separate day of service- on meaningfully supporting direct service providers and their programs—including recruitment for longer term direct support opportunities—is one way to increase the impact corporations and corporate volunteers have on students.

POST-SECONDARY SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

Corporations and corporate volunteers are uniquely positioned to support students in their post-secondary attainment through sharing experiences, exposure to career opportunities, and support to and through post-secondary education as a few examples. Corporate volunteers with financial experience or appropriate training can help students with their FAFSA applications and many can help with resume writing.

DIRECT SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

Another way to support direct services is to consider opportunities that are also high-impact but require less time commitment than tutoring, student success coaching, or wraparound student support coordination, such as high quality mentoring.

BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES AROUND A SCHOOL OR NONPROFIT'S SPECIFIC NEED

Utilize the NPSS Support Hub / READY SET engagement toolkits to create a locally driven, locally supported opportunity.

SUPPORTING DIRECT SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Utilize corporate volunteers to support direct service providers with professional development, coaching, etc. Have corporate employees provide professional development or mentorship to staff, AmeriCorps members, AmeriCorps seniors volunteers, or other volunteers, taking into consideration what employees are excited to engage in or what their employee's skill set is to offer a direct service provider. This could help with staff/AmeriCorps Member hiring and retention and indirectly support students.
- Engage corporate volunteers as nonprofit ambassadors to support the organization's recruitment of high-impact tutors (and/or mentors, student success coaches, post-secondary transition coaches, wraparound/integrated student support coaches).
- Engage corporate volunteers in annual campaigns (e.g. a tutor referral campaign or fundraising campaign) to support an organization's recruitment of high-impact tutors (and/or mentors, student success coaches, post-secondary transition coaches, wraparound/integrated student support coaches) and/or support via a financial investment to help cover costs of tutor compensation.
- Utilize knowledge and expertise of Employee Resource Groups to better understand what volunteerism practices already exist within the groups and ask how they want to expand their efforts to support direct service providers in education settings.
- Provide employees with an easy-to-access way to donate financial or other resources to local, high-quality providers and/or schools.
- Consider board service as a way to support the organization and its staff.



MEANINGFUL DAY OF SERVICE

Because many high-impact programs require volunteers to work with students at a minimum of twice a week, it is often difficult for corporate volunteers to dedicate this amount of time. If this type of time commitment is not feasible, corporate volunteers can focus instead on a meaningful and high-impact day of service. This could include:

- Students learning about what career paths are possible at various companies (help recruit other companies to participate and build career day curriculum).
- Soft skills development and building a curriculum around characteristics that make people successful in the workforce.
- Focusing on recruiting and training additional volunteers for high-impact, student-support roles such as tutors, mentors, student success coaches, and post-secondary transition coaches.
- Hosting a training or conducting a FAFSA completion event to help students access federal student aid.
- Supporting students in drafting or revising college admissions essays.
- Hosting a career fair to provide middle and high school students with an opportunity to learn about various career paths that are available at local companies.

POST SECONDARY SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

- Support the professional development of students:
 - Offer professional development designed to empower students, particularly around career exploration or internship opportunities.
 - Consider mentoring students around career opportunities, job searching, career and academic major choices, etc.
 - Review the National College Attainment Network's Career Advising for College Students Brief for ideas around creating work-related opportunities.
- Corporate volunteers with financial acumen, experience with navigating college admission, or other related experience are often well positioned to help students navigate financial services such as filing a FAFSA application for financial post-secondary support.
- Think about the transition from middle school to high school or from high school to college, the workforce, national service, or training:
 - Volunteer to be on an advisory group for a school and share your knowledge and resources - these are typically managed by an individual at the school level but information is shared with stakeholders (nonprofits/chambers/etc).
 - Support students by participating in mock interviews, resume writing or reviewing, secondary school applications, essay help, etc.

SEE IT IN ACTION!

Play Like a Girl Field Day: Field Days are fun, interactive trips or events that feature hands-on activities and programming as well as meaningful opportunities for students to hear from and interact with role models. Field Days are either sports-focused or STEM-focused, and ultimately push Play Like a Girl's mission forward by helping middle school girls (ages 10-14) develop skills, learn about career opportunities, and get inspired and motivated by women role models.

[Career Exploration - Inside look at a career in construction](#)

DIRECT SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

- Mentoring - mentoring is a great place for corporate volunteers to focus their time. EY and MENTOR together released a report "[Mentoring: at the crossroads of education, business, and community.](#)" According to MENTOR's report, youth with mentors are more likely to be successful in school, leaders in their communities, and to enter young adulthood with opportunities for ongoing education and career choices. Examines how businesses collaborate with different sectors to connect youth to transformative mentoring relationships.
- Use corporate employees as REGULAR volunteer substitutes for tutoring programs (e.g. volunteer commits to tutoring the same day/time on a recurring basis one session per week).
- Consider participating in a pen pal mentorship opportunity. Some experts believe that forming letters by hand while learning sounds activates reading circuits in the brain that promote literacy. Writing 4-5 letters with a mentor over the year can improve reading skills and in studies, kids who practice handwriting do better at reading and spelling.¹ This also provides corporate volunteers with scheduling flexibility.
- Asynchronous opportunities - For example, participate in creating custom STEM units as a subject matter expert or align another opportunity to the corporation's specialization like financial services for financial literacy or tech for digital literacy.



BUILDING ON A SCHOOL OR NONPROFIT'S SPECIFIC NEEDS

- Team building or educational exercises - Consider developing an exercise around a school or nonprofit's specific need. For example, health care providers with relevant expertise can create an exercise around navigating challenging mental health situations or student wellness in general. A corporation can also utilize employee resource groups with expertise in their specific areas.
- Create an opportunity tied to metrics - Align corporate engagement activity with a measurable outcome and devise a template to devise a plan to get there.
 - For example, if the goal is to increase literacy by one grade level by the end of the year, work with the nonprofit to identify steps to take to get there.
- Adopt a school or grade - Support a school in specific asks based on what their particular needs are at that moment. This could vary with opportunities like providing mentoring to transition grades, supporting specific STEM initiatives, offering post-secondary supports as needed, etc.
- Companies can host cohorts of students for a visit to the office to include things like a tour and a chance to hear from employees in different functions about how they got into that role or specialty.
- Support relationships with particular identity groups, i.e. LGBTQIA+, Race-based affinity groups, neuro-diverse groups, etc. by working with a school or grade to identify specific needs for these groups. Work with the groups directly to provide the support identified.

Corporations can also support this work by funding local organizations or schools in their communities or national organizations doing this work. We encourage corporations to reach out to local organizations or schools in their communities to understand what they need to make a meaningful impact. Even small corporations can make a meaningful impact here. For example, they can provide space and catering to bring together nonprofits, schools, etc. in your community.



INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED BUT DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START?

Here are a few ideas:

- Utilize online listings like [MENTOR's mentoring_connector](#) or [VolunteerMatch.org](#), specifying you are looking for Education & Literacy volunteer opportunities in your community.
- Review supports offered by **AmeriCorps** as they help manage two federal days of service: [Martin Luther King, Jr., National Day of Service](#), and [September 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance](#).
- Search for and reach out to local nonprofits working in education or youth development as many have volunteer programs you can explore. And, if they don't offer volunteer opportunities, they're likely well-connected to other organizations in the community and can give you some helpful suggestions on which nonprofits to connect with.
- Ask for suggestions at your child's (grandchild's, friend's child's, etc.) school for nonprofits they partner with to provide additional supports to students. They should be aware of local organizations doing great work in the community because as we well know, it takes a village!



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Business case for mentoring:** Examines how businesses collaborate with different sectors to connect youth to transformative mentoring relationships.
- **Voluntary Quality Standards:** Designed for use by schools, districts, state education agencies, youth-serving organizations, foundations, community groups, and others to better understand essential components of quality, set goals as part of existing or emerging continuous improvement processes, set goals when designing new programs, and consider prospective partners.

This resource is a publication of the NPSS Support Hub at the Johns Hopkins Everyone Graduates Center and READY SET, along with a subset of READY SET coalition members and NPSS supporting champions, including the following contributors:

AARP Foundation Experience Corps Creative Artists Agency
Cricket Media iCouldBe Play Like a Girl Reading Partners
Step Up Tutoring VolunteerMatch Young Storytellers



The National Partnership for Student Success (“NPSS”) is a public-private partnership between the U. S. Department of Education, AmeriCorps, and the Johns Hopkins University Everyone Graduates Center which houses the NPSS Support Hub. The NPSS supports a nationwide three-year effort that brings together experienced organizations to recruit, screen, train, support, and engage an additional 250,000 caring adults in roles serving as tutors, mentors, student success coaches, wraparound service coordinators, and post-secondary transition coaches.

READY SET is a national tutor, mentor and service recruitment campaign created by the CAA Foundation in partnership with MENTOR, VolunteerMatch and AmeriCorps. READY SET aims to increase volunteer engagement by making it easy to support students who have suffered increased learning and relational losses contributed to by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

