

# **Preservation Alliance of West Virginia Retrospective Outcome Evaluation**

**FINAL REPORT**

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The Preservation Alliance of West Virginia (PAWV) was founded in 1982 through the efforts of six volunteers who were passionate about supporting historic preservation in West Virginia (PAWV, 2017a). The intent of the organization was to garner interest in, develop knowledge about, and gain legislative support for historic and cultural resources through outreach, education, advocacy, heritage preservation assistance, and heritage tourism.

The Preserve WV AmeriCorps program places volunteers at cultural or historic tourist sites such as museums, archives, historic landmarks, or main street organizations for a year-long volunteer commitment. The PAWV Preserve WV AmeriCorps program was evaluated in 2018 to assess whether program activities were meeting outcomes, specifically (1) increasing visitation, (2) improving the local economy, and (3) increasing people's connection to communities (Kelley & McMahon, 2018). To continually improve the program and meet the requirements of the funder, the PAWV sought to complete a retrospective outcome evaluation of the Preserve WV AmeriCorps program from 2015 to 2019. Essentially a post-program examination of the impacts to determine whether the program outcomes were met, retrospective outcome evaluations allow for reflection on the experience and the outcomes of the program. The PAWV partnered with the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands at Indiana University to complete the study.

## Study Purpose

The purpose of the 2015–2019 retrospective outcome evaluation study is to examine the impact that Preserve WV AmeriCorps program members have on sponsoring sites.

## Summary of Findings

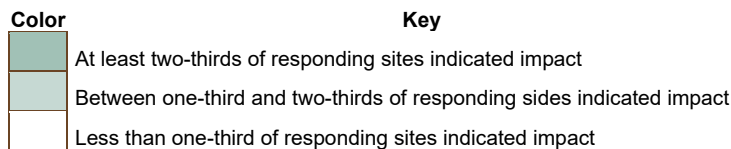
Analysis evaluating the impact of AmeriCorps member(s) on sponsoring sites' capacity, tourism, and organizational sustainability indicate substantial effects. Of 27 measures included in this evaluation, 67% denote that at least half of site supervisors reported AmeriCorps member(s) impact in that area. Quantifiable examples of these improvements include:

- \$1,100 median increase in fundraising (\$825 before/\$2,500 during)
- 31% increase in average number of volunteers (47 before/61 during)
- 72% increase in the average number of events (6 before/10 during)
- 61% increase in the average number of visitors (2,114 before/3,409 during)

Each responding site supervisor was asked whether the AmeriCorps member(s) made an impact across 24 measures. Notably, five of the measures (21%) had at least two-thirds of sites indicate that the AmeriCorps(s) member made a positive impact (Table 1). Only six (25%) of the measures had fewer than 33% of sites indicate that their AmeriCorps member(s) made an impact. These values are particularly noteworthy given the incredible diversity of sites that host Preserve WV AmeriCorps members, as some measures were more relevant to some sites than others.

**TABLE 1: Overview of AmeriCorps Members Impact on Preserve WV Sites**

Measures	Yes (%)
Data Organization Efficiency	71%
Effectiveness of Organizational Processes	74%
Amount of Money/In-kind Contributions	29%
Data Collection to Support Grant Applications	45%
Grant Funding	68%
Number of Volunteers	61%
Number of Events	58%
Types of Events	45%
Percent New Events	61%
Number of Events Off-Site	32%
Number of Tours	42%
Type of Tours	39%
Number of Patron Requests	22%
Number of New Resources	61%
Number of Improved Resources	74%
Type of Marketing Initiatives	58%
Number of Phone or Digital Service/Program Inquiries	29%
Number of On-Site Service/Program Inquiries	19%
Number of Visitors	32%
Number of Program Participants	61%
Quality of Events and Programs	61%
Care of Site Resources	77%
Programming Sustainability	61%
Resource Sustainability	61%



## Conclusion

The results of this program evaluation indicate generally positive results across the three areas of site capacity, site tourism, and site service organization sustainability. These results also align and support PAWV’s long-term, desired outcomes in areas related to historic resources improvement, growth in cultural heritage tourism opportunities, visitor engagement, and sustainable development.

Finally, these Phase 1 results provide a framework for ongoing evaluations, including Phase 2 data collection. Through these continued efforts, Preserve WV can further assess the program’s short-, medium-, and long-term benefits in its work to preserve historic and cultural resources throughout West Virginia.

# INTRODUCTION

The Preservation Alliance of West Virginia (PAWV) was founded in 1982 through the efforts of six volunteers who were passionate about supporting historic preservation in West Virginia (PAWV, 2017a). The intent of the organization was to garner interest in, develop knowledge about, and gain legislative support for historic and cultural resources through outreach, education, advocacy, heritage preservation assistance, and heritage tourism. The organization provides a variety of programs and services, including the provision of funding and contracting resources for cultural and historic organizations and sites; preservation training opportunities including conferences, workshops, and webinars; advocacy for historic preservation at the state level; and co-management of the West Virginia Historic Theatre Trail and the West Virginia Historic New Deal Trail. One of the key programs PAWV operates is the Preserve West Virginia (WV) AmeriCorps statewide service program (PAWV, 2017a).

Nationally, the AmeriCorps program is a United States (U.S.) federal agency that seeks to address the nation's most pressing challenges through service and volunteering. AmeriCorps volunteers serve at organizations that committed to the improvement of communities across the U.S. in the areas related to economic opportunity, education, environment, disaster response, health, and veterans and military families (AmeriCorps, 2021).

The Preserve WV AmeriCorps program places volunteers at cultural or historic tourist sites such as museums, archives, historic landmarks, or main street organizations for a year-long volunteer commitment. The AmeriCorps volunteers work to support the following program goals:

1. bring local history to life and enhance cultural heritage tourism opportunities;
2. increase visitation at cultural heritage sites;

3. preserve historical resources helping transform blighted and underused places into community resources; and
4. build sites' capacity to increase their efficiency, effectiveness, and/or program reach (PAWV, 2017b).

The first Preserve WV AmeriCorps program had 11 volunteers serving at five sites (PAWV, 2017a). The program now supports up to 30 volunteers a year across 28 sites.

The Preserve WV AmeriCorps program operates through a Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) funded AmeriCorps State Formula grant, managed by Volunteer West Virginia, the state's Commission for National and Community Service (Volunteer West Virginia, 2020). The funding structure mandates certain requirements; specifically, the development of a theory of change (also known as a theory of action) (Peyton & Scicchitano, 2017), a logic model, and an evaluation of the program. The intent of the theory of change is to identify a problem to be solved through an intervention (i.e., the work of AmeriCorps program participants) and the specific outcomes that can be expected from the intervention and will address the problem (Cooksey, Gill, & Kelly, 2001; Volunteer WV, 2020). The logic model is intended to be the visual component depicting the theory of change (Peyton & Scicchitano, 2017). The logic model traditionally identifies the necessary resources to implement an intervention, the actions to be taken, the expected outputs or results from the actions, and finally the short-, medium-, and long-range outcomes to occur based on the outputs (Cooksey, Gill, & Kelly, 2001). The final funding requirement, a program evaluation, demonstrates the program is meeting the outcomes outlined in the logic model and theory of change (Volunteer WV, 2020). The PAWV Preserve WV AmeriCorps program was evaluated in 2018 to assess whether program activities were meeting outcomes, specifically (1) increasing visitation, (2) improving the local economy, and (3) increasing people's

connection to communities (Kelley & McMahon, 2018). To continually improve the program and meet the requirements of the funder, PAWV sought to complete a retrospective outcome evaluation of the Preserve WV AmeriCorps program from 2015 to 2019. Essentially a post-program examination of the impacts to determine whether the program outcomes were met, retrospective outcome evaluations allow for reflection on the experience and the outcomes of the program. PAWV partnered with the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands (Eppley Institute) at Indiana University (IU) to complete the study.

## Study Purpose

The purpose of the 2015–2019 retrospective outcome evaluation study was to examine the impact that Preserve WV AmeriCorps program members have on sponsoring sites. The following overarching question and sub-questions guided this research. Figure 1 below provides an overview of the study purpose.

FIGURE 1: Study Purpose Overview

What impact do Preserve WV AmeriCorps members have on site sponsor organizations?

Have Preserve WV AmeriCorps members increased the following:

- (1) the capacity of sites?
- (2) site tourism?
- (3) the sustainability of service organizations?

# METHODS

## Approach

System theory is the idea that the relationships and interactions between program elements influence the overall program and often informs logic modeling (Frye & Hemmer, 2012). Planning for this study was guided by a system theory influenced theory of change. The program’s theory of change demonstrated in the logic model in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Preserve WV AmeriCorps Program Logic Model

Problem	Process			Outcomes		
	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short	Medium	Long
Why Are We Doing It	What We Invest	What We Do	Direct Products from Activities	Changes in Site Operations	Changes in Site Characteristics	Changes in Social, Economic, Environmental Conditions
Develop Site Capacity	AmeriCorps Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→Fundraising</li> <li>→Organize Data, Collections, and Information</li> <li>→Improve Existing Resources</li> <li>→Acquire New Resources</li> <li>→Plan and Implement Events and Programs</li> <li>→Outreach</li> <li>→Engage, Manage, and Train Volunteers</li> </ul>	Increase capacity at 30 sites	10 organizations will increase efficiency, effectiveness, and/or program reach	10 organizations will report increased volunteer participation	More historic resources will be improved. Sites will offer more cultural heritage tourism opportunities. Sites will engage more visitors.
Improve Site Tourism	AmeriCorps Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→Improve Existing Resources</li> <li>→Acquire New Resources</li> <li>→Plan and Implement Events and Programs</li> <li>→Develop Educational Materials</li> <li>→Provision of Information and Education to Site Visitors</li> <li>→Publicize and Promote Site Activities and Services</li> </ul>	<p>Preserve and improve 30 historic resources</p> <p>Marketing materials and campaigns implemented or continued at 30 sites</p>	15 host sites will report increased cultural heritage tourism offerings for visitors and tourists	5 host sites will report increased visitation at their site	Sustainable economic, social, and cultural development combined with active enhancement of historic resources.

## Study Design

The study occurred in two phases. The first phase addressed the retrospective outcome evaluation, while the second phase collected data for future evaluations. While this report includes the analysis of Phase 1 data, the data collected for Phase 2 can be used in future evaluations, particularly in order to facilitate a potential pre-post study design. Similarly, while the logic model outlined in Table 2 guided both phases of the study, the results of this report focus on the results of Phase 1.

An adapted retrospective pre-post design was used for the first phase of the research. Retrospective pre-post designs are useful to avoid response-shift bias, which can occur when a participant interprets the post-test differently than the originally applied pre-test (Geldhof et al., 2018). A traditional retrospective pre-post design calls for a pre-test prior to the intervention, a retrospective pre-test, and a post-test after the intervention (Geldhof et al., 2018). Since a pre-test prior to 2015 was not collected, this study used an adapted version of this design, which focused on a retrospective pre- and post-test. The retrospective pre-post test allows for an understanding of changes at sites over time and addresses the concern for a response-shift bias.

A quasi-experimental pre-post study design was used for the second phase of the research. This design required a pre-test at the onset of the program and a post-test at the end of the program, which allows for an understanding of change over time. In addition, a quasi-experimental study design includes comparison sites. In this study, four sites from other similar organizations without AmeriCorps members were used to examine findings between the Preserve WV AmeriCorps sponsoring sites and the comparison organization sites. The comparison sites help to determine if the incorporation of AmeriCorps members at site sponsoring organizations impact site capacity,

tourism, and sustainability outcomes. While a summary evaluation of this comparison site data is included in order to provide context to the retrospective pre-post data, future analysis should explore and utilize these findings in greater depth.

Data was collected and analyzed for the retrospective outcome evaluation and collected for the pre-test for the program evaluation. Due to the study timing, data for the post-test were not collected, however the data collection tools have been made available for future use.

The measures used, study phase in which the measures occurred, sources for data, and timing for data collection for each research question are outlined in Table 3.

As Phase 1 was limited to (a) the availability of data and (b) response rate of Phase 1 participants, in some cases the information obtained during data collection did not always directly align within the framework outlined in the logic model. Therefore, any perceived discrepancies in the reported results compared to the logic model (Table 2) or the evaluation data collection strategy (Table 3) are a reflection of the data available for the scope encompassed under Phase 1.

TABLE 3: Evaluation Data Collection Strategy by Research Question

Have Preserve WV AmeriCorps members increased the capacity of sites?			
Measure	Phase	Data Source	Timing
Instances of Information Organization	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
Improved Processes	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
Amount of Money/ In-kind Contributions	Both	PAWW Data	2015-2019
	Phase 1	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
Data Collection for Grant Applications Instances	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
Grants Obtained	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	GPR Data	2015-2019
Number of Volunteers	Phase 1	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
Number of Volunteers Trained	Both	GPR Data	2015-2019
	Phase 1	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
Number of Events	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	PAWW Data	2015-2019
Types of Events	Phase 1	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
Percent New Events	Both	PAWW Data	2015-2019
	Phase 1	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
Number of Events Off-Site	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	PAWW Data	2015-2019
	Phase 1	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021



Number of Tours	Both	PAWV Data	2015-2019 Jan. 2021
	Phase 1	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
Type of Tours	Both	PAWV Data	2015-2019 Jan. 2021
	Phase 1	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
Number of Patron Requests	Both	PAWV Data	2015-2019 Jan. 2021
	Phase 1	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
Number of New Resources	Both	GPR Data	2015-2019 Jan. 2021
	Phase 1	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
Number of Improved Resources	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
Number of Marketing Initiatives	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
Type of Marketing Initiatives	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
<b>Have Preserve WV AmeriCorps members increased site tourism?</b>			
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Number of Service/Program Inquiries Pre-Visit	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
Number of Service/Program Inquiries During Visit	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	PAWV Data	2015-2019 Jan. 2021
	Phase 1	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
Number of Visitors	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	PAWV Data	2015-2019 Jan. 2021
	Phase 1	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
Number of People on Tours	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	PAWV Data	2015-2019 Jan. 2021
	Phase 1	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
Number of Program Participants	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	PAWV Data	2015-2019 Jan. 2021
	Phase 1	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021

	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
<b>Have Preserve WV AmeriCorps members increased the sustainability of site service organizations?</b>			
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Quality of Programs and Events	Phase 1	Site Program Evaluation Data	2015-2019
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
Quality of Site Resources	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
Marketing Effectiveness	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
Information Provision Usefulness	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
Programming Sustainability Ability	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
Resource Sustainability Ability	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
Site Resource Satisfaction	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
Site Program/Event Satisfaction	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
Site Tour Satisfaction	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Both	Site Supervisor Interviews	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Comparison Sites	Jan. 2021
	Phase 2	Visitor Surveys	Jan. 2021
<b>What impacts does the Preserve WV AmeriCorps program have on participants?</b>			
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Career Development	Phase 1	AmeriCorps Member Interviews	Jan. 2021

## Study Participants

The participants in the Preserve WV AmeriCorps program retrospective outcome evaluation study were the site supervisors and the program participants. In ten cases, an AmeriCorps volunteer did not complete the program. Since program impacts would be different for sites where the AmeriCorps volunteer left early, these individuals were excluded from analysis. From 2015-16 to 2019-20, AmeriCorps member(s) served at sponsoring organizations located across the state of West Virginia (Figure 2).

The number of sites hosting AmeriCorps member(s) during this time can be found in Table 4. A full list of the sites recruited by year can be found in Appendix A.

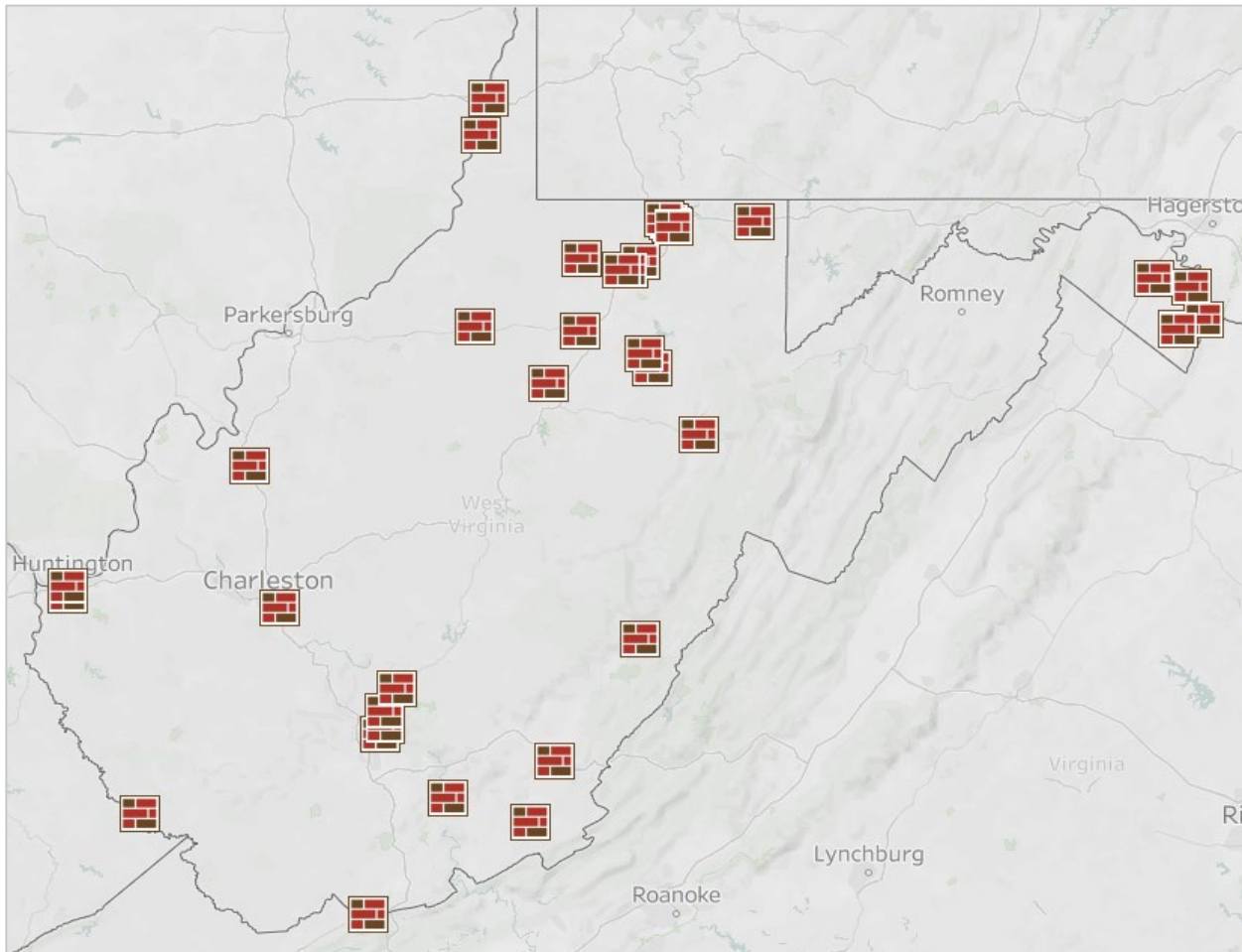
The primary study participants in the pre-post future program evaluation were the site supervisors.

In addition, it included four site supervisors for the comparison sites. The comparison sites were chosen based on their similarity to the current site sponsoring organizations and the resources they manage but did not include an AmeriCorps or similar long-term volunteer program component.

**TABLE 4: Number of Sites Recruited for Participation by Program Year**

Program Year	Number of Sites
2015 – 2016	18
2016 – 2017	23
2017 – 2018	23
2018 – 2019	23
2019 – 2020	24

**FIGURE 2: Map of AmeriCorps Member Sponsoring Sites**



## Data Collection

This study collected data from multiple sources. The following three datasets were used: PAWV data, Grantee Progress Report (GPR) data collected by AmeriCorps members, and site program evaluation data. In addition, the study included interviews with site supervisors, AmeriCorps members, and supervisors of comparison sites. Finally, the study collected data through visitor surveys for Phase 2. The following sections explain the data collection methods.

### Datasets

The PAWV data provided information on a variety of site variables, such as funding, visitor experiences, services, and visitation. The GPR data provided information on volunteer engagement and management and site resources. The data was provided through PAWV, as available, for the years 2015 to 2020.

### Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with site supervisors and comparison site supervisors. The questions were developed by the Eppley Institute research team and pilot tested for clarity, relevance, length, and question flow. Necessary adjustments were made following the pilot tests and prior to implementation.

Site supervisors were contacted via email to ask for an interview to gather retrospective pre-post data for years 2015 to 2019 and to gather pre-test data for 2020. All site supervisors with an AmeriCorps member who completed the program during years 2015 to 2019 were asked for an interview, as well as all current site supervisors. This resulted in 31 interviews, which are indicated in Appendix A. The interviews lasted approximately an hour on average and occurred throughout the month of January 2021.

Four comparison site supervisors were contacted for an interview identical to the AmeriCorps site supervisor pre-assessment interview for 2020. These interviews lasted approximately thirty minutes and took place in January 2021. To solicit participation in interviews, the Executive Director of PAWV reached out to site supervisors and comparison site supervisors. This was followed by an email invitation from the Eppley Institute. If responses were not received within one week, a follow-up email was sent by the Eppley Institute. A final email was sent by the Executive Director of PAWV if a response is still not received. After that time, it was assumed the organization would not participate in the study.

Notes were taken in all interviews, and they were recorded upon consent of the participant to increase the reliability of the research.

### Visitor Surveys

Visitor surveys were developed by the Eppley Institute research team to address the quality of events, programs, and resources at sites, the effectiveness of marketing and information distribution, and satisfaction with events and programs, tours, and site resources. The survey instrument was pilot tested to ensure clarity, relevance, question flow, and length.

The surveys were provided to site supervisors to be printed and made available to site visitors. Data collection using the visitor surveys began in January 2021 and continued for the duration of the AmeriCorps 2020 program.

## Data Analysis

The following explains the data analysis methods based on the data collection methods.

### Datasets

Where data availability permitted, the collected data was averaged across years 2015-2019 by site and/or overall.

### Interviews

All interview notes were reviewed by Eppley Institute staff. The interview recordings were also consulted. The Eppley Institute entered data by question into Microsoft Excel for analysis. All data was coded, categorized, and analyzed to identify trends within and across the participant groups. Coding was data driven, meaning that the codes were not predetermined and arose from the interview responses.

### Visitor Surveys

As outlined in the Research Plan, the Eppley Institute did not analyze the visitor surveys but recommends entering the data into Microsoft Excel to allow for ease of analysis.

## Data Reporting

The results that follow correspond with the measures outlined in Table 3 and are grouped by the three research questions. Where appropriate, measure names were adjusted to align with the terms used during interviews with site supervisors. Depending on the type of data presented (i.e., quantitative and/or qualitative), results were presented in some combination of (a) paragraph text, (b) pie chart, (c) bar chart, (d) data table, and (e) exemplative quotes.

# Results

The results of this retrospective outcome evaluation study are outlined in alignment with the three research questions, which sought to determine whether Preserve WV AmeriCorps members have increased (1) the capacity of sites, (2) site tourism, and (3) the sustainability of site service organizations.

## Site Capacity

AmeriCorps members' impact on the capacity of sites was measured via the following 18 measures during Phase 1:

- Data Organization Efficiency
- Effectiveness of Organizational Processes
- Amount of Money/In-kind Contributions
- Data Collection to Support Grant Applications
- Grant Funding
- Number of Volunteers
- Number of Volunteers Trained
- Number of Events
- Types of Events
- Percent New Events
- Number of Events Off-Site
- Number of Tours
- Type of Tours
- Number of Patron Requests
- Number of New Resources
- Number of Improved Resources
- Number of Marketing Initiatives
- Type of Marketing Initiatives

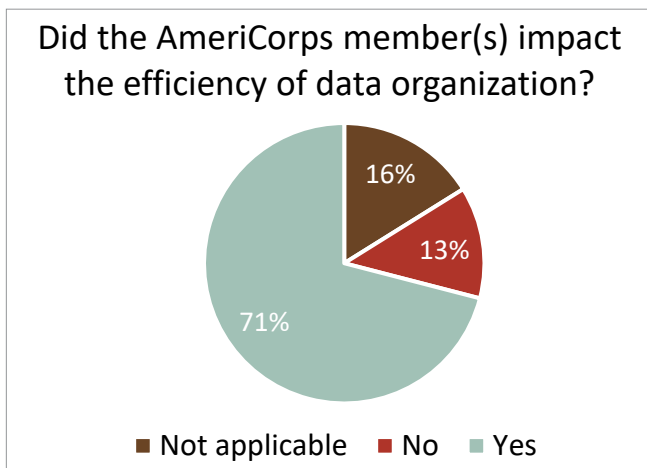
## Data Organization Efficiency

Most (71%) of the 31 site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the organization’s data efficiency (Figure 3). Whereas approximately one-third (36%) of site supervisors characterized their data organization as “efficient” before hosting an AmeriCorps member(s), most (82%) indicated “efficient” data organization in the year after (Figure 4).

Here are statements from site supervisors during the interviews in response to the question pertaining to data organization efficiency.

*“[The AmeriCorps member] set up the whole system for tracking our volunteer data, which we really didn’t have [before]. She helped us [make] it more uniform, which made it possible to aggregate it to understand the level of involvement from communities.”*

FIGURE 3: Impact on Data Organization Efficiency



*“One of [the volunteers] came up with new approaches to organizing material about the history of the building. She also organized the inventory of the museum and carried it out.”*

Figure 4 depicts changes in data organization efficiency ratings both before and after AmeriCorps member(s) service. The change in this measure illustrates a positive increase in the number of sites with “efficient” data organization.

Furthermore, in addition to validating the impact of AmeriCorps members on data organization efficiency, Table 5 helps demonstrate the percent change as well.

FIGURE 4: Data Organization Efficiency Before and After, Percent of Total

NOTE. Figure excludes data from 9 site supervisors who did not provide both before and after evaluations.

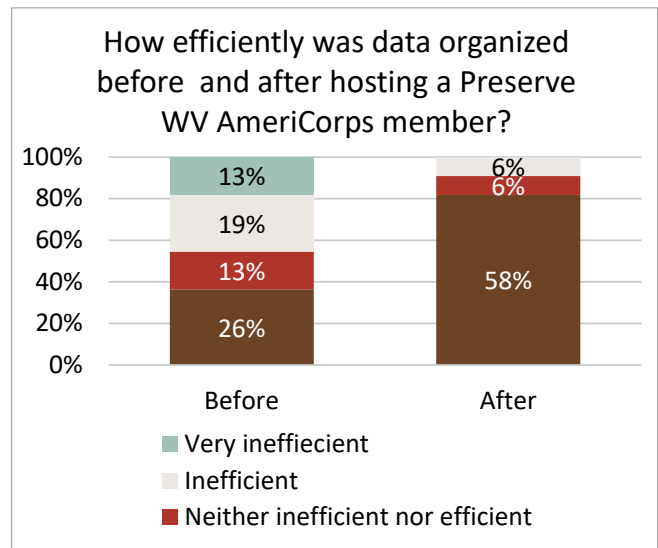


TABLE 5: Data Organization Efficiency Before and After

Level of Data Organization Efficiency	Before	After	Change (n)	Change (%)
Efficient	8	18	10	125%
Neither inefficient nor efficient	4	2	-2	-50%
Inefficient	6	2	-4	-67%
Very inefficient	4	0	-4	-
No before and after rating	9	9	n/a	n/a
<b>All ratings</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>

## Effectiveness of Organizational Processes

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of the 31 site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the effectiveness of organizational processes, such as managing events or volunteers (Figure 5). Furthermore, before hosting an AmeriCorps member(s), no organization rated their organizational processes as “very effective”; however, nearly one-third (32%) of site supervisors characterized their organizational processes in this way after hosting an AmeriCorps member.

*“One of the key aspects...is that they brought online recruitment. They created spreadsheets to organize recruiting, volunteers and jobs... The online recruiting made such a difference. It encouraged [new] people who were younger, more diverse to get involved.”*

*“We had a volunteer manual, applications, sign-up sheets, [and] job duties. There was more [consistent communication] between the organization and volunteers because there was someone regularly here...we had a point person for communication.”*

Figure 6 illustrates an overall improvement in ratings on organizational process effectiveness; these results are outlined in Table 6.

FIGURE 5: Impact on Effectiveness of Organizational Processes

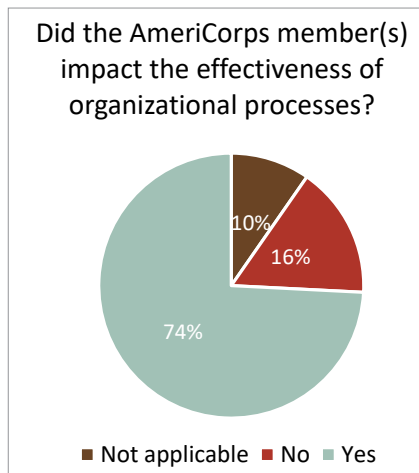


FIGURE 6: Impact on Organizational Process Effectiveness Before and After, Percent of Total

NOTE: Figure excludes data from 3 site supervisors who did not provide both before and after evaluations.

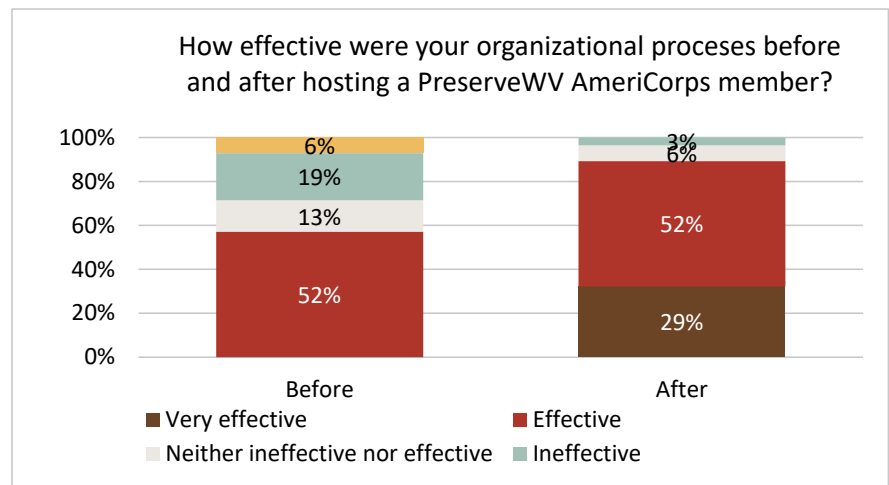


TABLE 6: Organizational Process Effectiveness Before and After

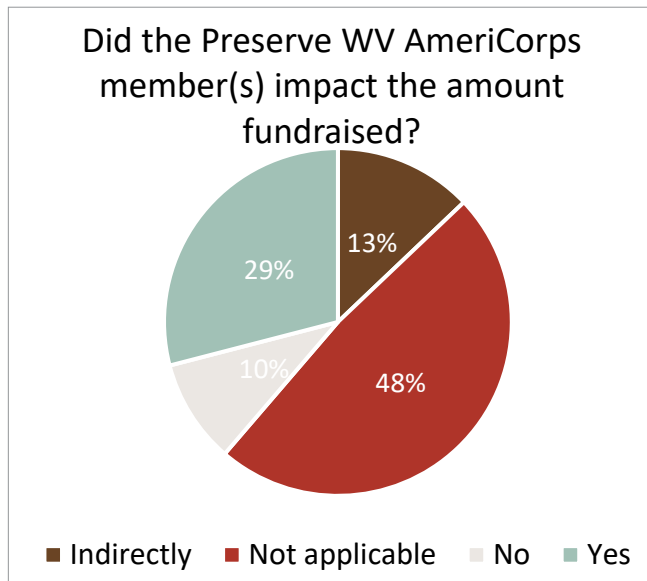
Level of Organizational Processes	Before	After	Change (n)	Change (%)
Very effective	0	9	9	n/a
Effective	16	16	0	0%
Neither ineffective nor effective	4	2	-2	-50%
Ineffective	6	1	-5	-83%
Very ineffective	2	0	-2	-100%
No before and after rating	3	3	n/a	n/a
<b>All ratings</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>



## Amount of Fundraising/ In-kind Contributions

The specific financial impact of AmeriCorps member(s) on the fundraising efforts of host sites was more difficult for supervisors to quantify. While 29% of the 31 site supervisors indicated that the AmeriCorps member(s) impacted fundraising and 13% indicated an indirect contribution (Figure 7),

FIGURE 7: Impact on Amount Fundraised



most indicated either no contribution or that this was not applicable to their organization (48%).

Additionally, supervisors found it difficult to compare the amount of money raised for non-operational expenses, both before and during the AmeriCorps member(s) service.

Changes in funding often occurred outside the context of AmeriCorps member(s) service. One example was a site that ran a large fundraising campaign for a special project the year before their member's service, which resulted in the subsequent year's fundraising efforts to appear low out of context. As a result, Figure 8 and Table 7 outline both average and median changes

FIGURE 8: Impact on Fundraising, Before and During

NOTE. Figure only includes the 12 sites who reported fundraising values.

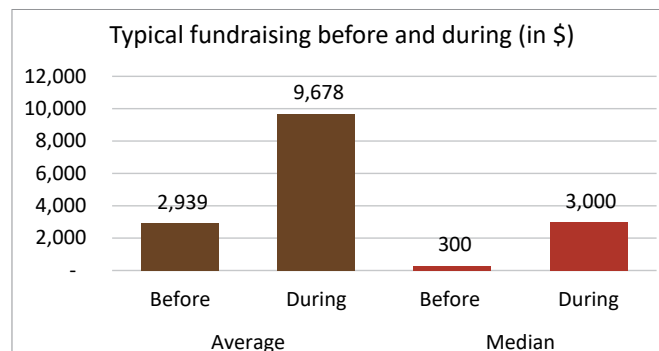


TABLE 7: Impact on Fundraising Before and During

Fundraising					
Average					
Sites	n	Before (\$)	During (\$)	Change (\$)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
All sites reporting fundraising	12	86,121	7,996	-78,125	-91%
<b>Sites with fundraising increase</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2,939</b>	<b>9,678</b>	<b>6,739</b>	<b>229%</b>
Median					
Sites	n	Before (\$)	During (\$)	Change (\$)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
All sites reporting fundraising	12	825	2,500	1,100	133%
<b>Sites with fundraising increase</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>667%</b>

in fundraising amounts. While the average amount fundraised decreased by 91% during AmeriCorps member(s) service, the median amount fundraised increased by 133%. This was largely due to one site's reported fundraising amount decreasing substantially by approximately one million dollars due to a large-scale capital campaign in the year prior to AmeriCorps member(s) service; as a result, the median change better represents typical changes in fundraising.

Additionally, when removing the minority of sites (n = 3) that reported fundraising decreases, the increase (667%) was even more pronounced.

Several site supervisors provided context and examples of the indirect and less-quantifiable fundraising contributions of member(s) (Table 8).

**TABLE 8: Examples of AmeriCorps Member(s) Contributions to Fundraising**

<b>Example quotes about AmeriCorps member(s)</b>	<b>Example projects fundraised by AmeriCorps member(s)</b>
<p>“They were able to facilitate smaller fundraisers for archival supplies and boxes we needed. They had the ability to do the smaller activities (which) allowed the Executive Director to focus on the larger federal activities and more complex fundraising opportunities.”</p>	<p>\$650 to support travel to a conference</p>
<p>“She did not do any fundraising, but she helped us map out the fundraising plan.”</p>	<p>\$200 to support summer camp programming</p>
<p>“[They increased] our capacity to be able to articulate the project, plan the project, and make contacts with people we were interested in funding our project.”</p>	<p>\$1,200 to support organizational expenses</p>

## Data Collection to Support Grant Applications

Nearly half (45%) of site supervisors indicated that their Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) contributed to data collection that supported grant applications, as illustrated in Figure 9.

Table 9 is a cross-tabulation reflecting both (a) whether the site collected data for grant applications before the AmeriCorps member(s) service and (b) whether the AmeriCorps member(s) contributed to that data collection. Note the cells highlighted in brown. The left-most teal cell indicates that the AmeriCorps member(s) contributed to this work when the organization had not collected data for this previously, which illustrates the added capacity that the member provided to their organization. The right-most teal cell indicates that nine sites collected data for grant applications before their AmeriCorps member(s) service but did not engage that individual in these efforts. This suggests a potential missed opportunity for sites looking to increase their grantmaking efforts.

FIGURE 9: Impact on Data Collection to Support Grant Applications

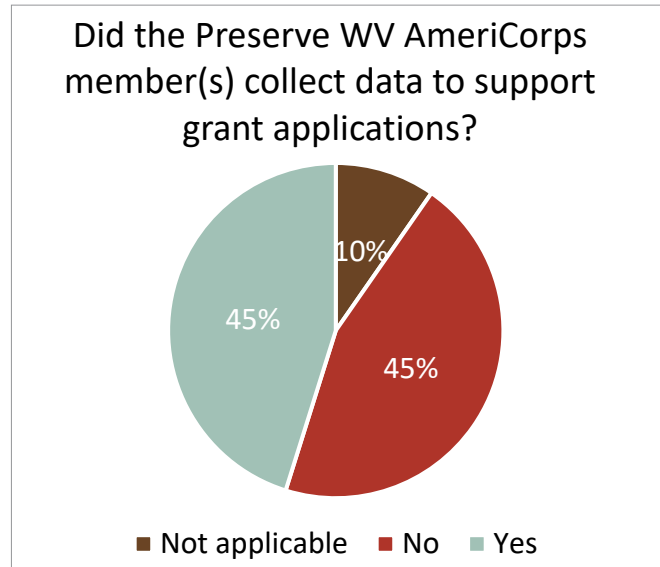


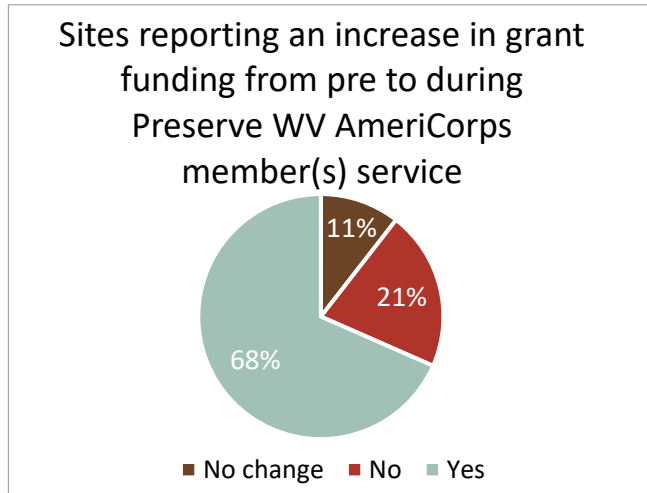
TABLE 9: Cross-tabulation of AmeriCorps Member(s) Contributions to Data Collection for Grant Applications

		AmeriCorps Member(s) Contribution to Data Collection for Grant Applications			
		Yes	No	Not Applicable	Total
Site Collected Data for Grant Applications Before AmeriCorps Member(s) Service	Yes	9	9	0	18
	No	5	5	0	10
	Not Applicable	0	0	3	3
	Total	14	14	3	31

## Grant Funding

Across the sites with available estimates of grant funding both pre and during AmeriCorps member(s) service (n=16), 68% experienced an increase in grant funding during this time span (Figure 10). These changes from before the AmeriCorps

FIGURE 10: Impact on Grant Funding



member(s) service to during their service, calculated by average and median amounts of grant funding by site, are outlined in Figure 11.

*“...The president for the historical society did not know how to write a grant at the time, so it was only because of the AmeriCorps [member] being there that made it happen.”*

*“[One AmeriCorps member] ...assisted in grant writing, but for the most part that is not something AmeriCorps are involved with. [But] grant funding went up substantially when [one member in particular] was there. [However] all of the activities that AmeriCorps members do for us gives us data to submit [in grant] applications.”*

While the average, per-site change in grant funding during this time span decreased by \$32,000, or -24% (Table 10), this was largely due to a handful of sites with large-scale, grant-funded projects in the year prior to AmeriCorps member(s) service. When only examining the majority of sites that experienced grant funding increases, the average change in grant funding was \$50,800, an increase of 58%. Notably, when low/high extremes are excluded (i.e., via median rather than average change), the increase among this group was \$58,000.

FIGURE 11: Impact on Grant Funding, Before and During

NOTE. Figure only includes the majority of sites who reported a grant increase (13 of 19).

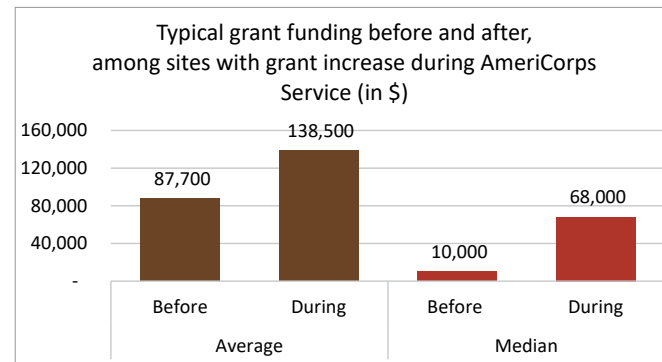


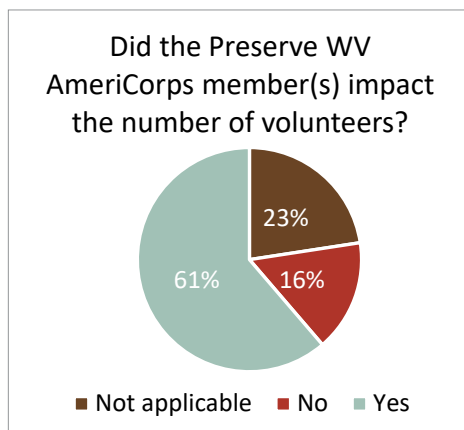
TABLE 10: Impact on Grant Funding Before and During

		Grant Funding			
		Average			
Sites	n	Before (\$)	During (\$)	Change (\$)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
All sites reporting grant funding	19	133,500	101,500	(32,000)	-24%
<b>Sites with grant increase during AmeriCorps Service</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>87,700</b>	<b>138,500</b>	<b>50,800</b>	<b>58%</b>
		Median			
Sites	n	Before (\$)	During (\$)	Change (\$)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
All sites reporting grant funding	19	31,300	25,000	(6,300)	-20%
<b>Sites with grant increase during AmeriCorps Service</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>68,000</b>	<b>58,000</b>	<b>580%</b>

## Number of Volunteers

Among the 31 sites, 61% indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the number of volunteers (Figure 12). The average number of volunteers per site increased from 47 to 61 individuals (Figure 13) and the total number of volunteers increased from 1,164 individuals to 1,528 (Table 11). This change represents a 31% increase. The impact of AmeriCorps member(s) service on the number of volunteers managed by sites was also reflected in GPR data, which reflected comparable rates of growth. That data demonstrated a 45% increase in the “number of community volunteers managed by organizations and participants” from 2015-2019 (600 to 871 volunteers).

FIGURE 12: Impact on Volunteers



*“[The member helped] with certain volunteers that felt better with guidance. The AmeriCorps member could support and guide them.”*

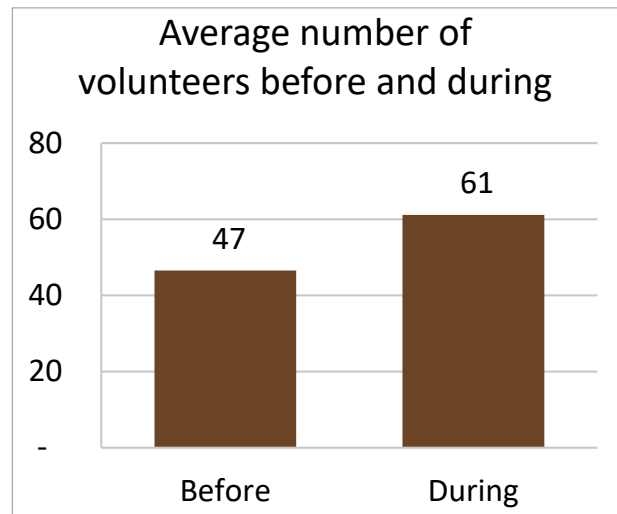
*“Through online recruitment...making friends in the community. They also recruited on social media [and] attracted a younger, more diverse crowd.”*

TABLE 11: Impact on Volunteers Before and During

		Volunteers			
		Total, All Sites			
Sites	N	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
All sites reporting volunteer numbers	25	1,164	1,528	364	31%
		Average, Per Site			
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
All sites reporting volunteer numbers	25	47	61	15	31%

FIGURE 13: Impact on Volunteers, Before and During

NOTE. Figure excludes data from 6 site supervisors who did not provide evaluations.



*“The member helped us identify volunteer projects and provide some volunteer training. Having someone there to assist volunteers was helpful.”*

## Number of Volunteers Trained

Evaluating the discrete number of volunteers trained—a measure more specific than volunteers managed—is an area for future data tracking for PAWV. However, the role of volunteer training was shared by some site supervisors in two data sources, the Volunteer Management surveys and the retrospective interviews.

*“Our AmeriCorps members conducted all of the volunteer orientation and trainings and would proactively prepare specific volunteer tasks for when our archive volunteers arrived to serve.”*

*“Having the AmeriCorps members helped us identify volunteer projects and provide some volunteer training.”*

*“[Our AmeriCorps member] helped train [volunteers], worked with them, and gathered volunteers to help with specific programs.”*

## Number of Events

More than half (58%) of the 31 site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the number of events for their organization (Figure 14). The average number of events per site increased from 6 to 10 during the AmeriCorps member(s) service (Figure 15).

*“Absolutely [they made an impact], they helped make it all happen. We have just one staff member, without AmeriCorps we would not have had [as many events].”*

*“She helped us organize it and promote it. She made it easier for us to have an event.”*

*“She inspired us and came up with the primary event. She helped to foster creativity and map out exactly what we were going to do.”*

The total events, across the 25 sites reporting this measure, increased from 141 events to 242, a 72% increase (Table 12). Aggregated data provided by PAWV also indicates the program’s impact in the number of events. The total number of events attributed to organizations with AmeriCorps members increased from 5 in program year 2015-16 to 84 in program year, a 1580% increase.

FIGURE 14: Impact on Events

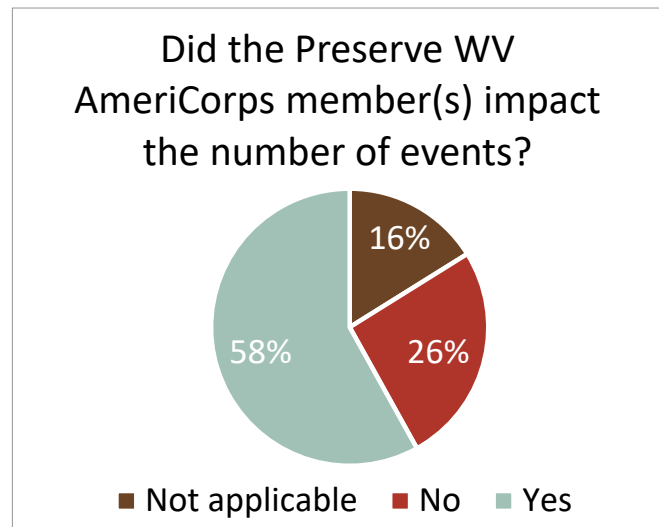


FIGURE 15: Impact on Events, Before and During

NOTE. Figure excludes data from 6 site supervisors who did not provide both before and after evaluations.

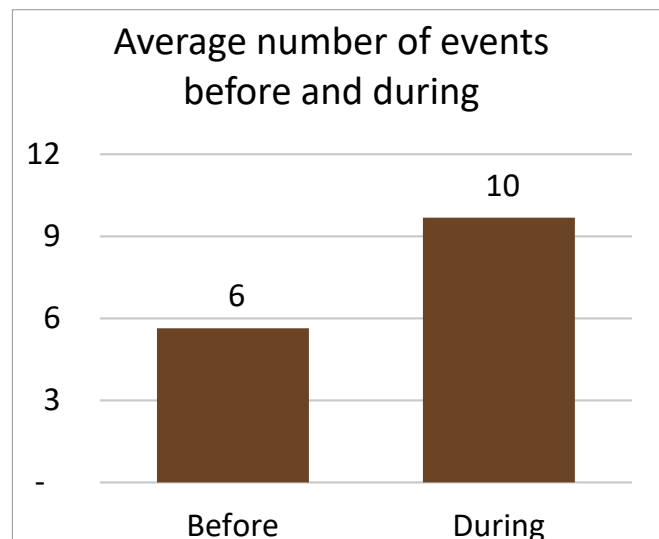


TABLE 12: Impact on Events Before and During

		Events			
		Total, All Sites			
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting event numbers</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>72%</b>
		Average, Per Site			
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting event numbers</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>72%</b>

## Type of Events

A plurality (45%) of the 31 site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the type of events (Figure 16) held by their organization. PAWV aggregated data indicates that several new events were held by member sites during program years 2015-2016. These new types of events included but were not limited to the following:

- Archives 101 Workshop
- First Annual Memorial Day Parade
- Children’s After School Performances
- “Our Shared Roots”
- Handmaid Market
- MLK Jr. Day Community Center Clean-Up
- History Roundtable
- Family Genealogy Workshop
- + many musical & performing arts events

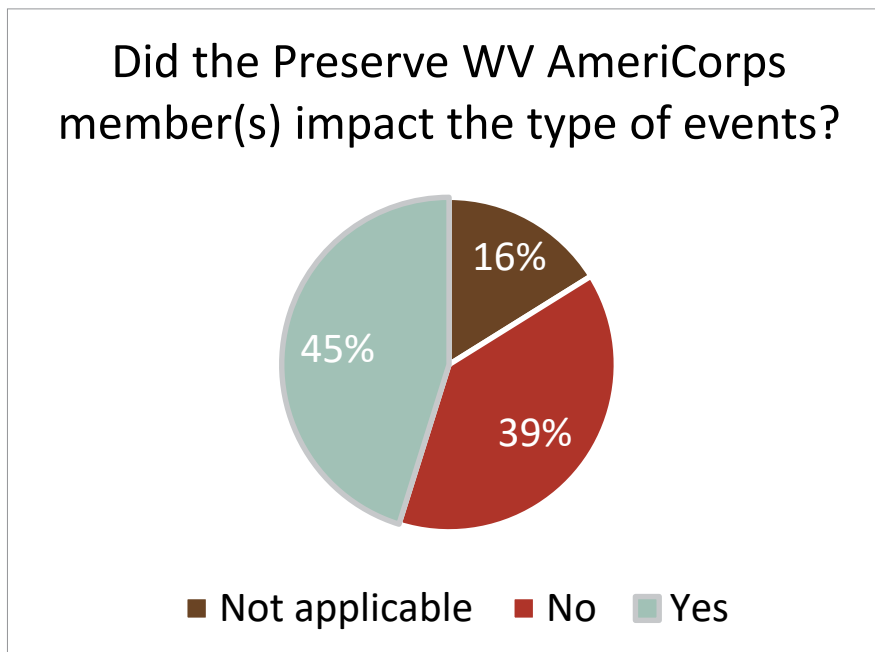
*“She came up with the idea for [a special] exhibit.”*

*“They impacted the topics of our educational events.”*

*“We would not have had [one special community event] without the AmeriCorps member writing grants for it.*

*“[They contributed] energy, youth, and fresh ideas from creativity and going to professional development opportunities. [They] provided the organizational capacity to do larger events.”*

FIGURE 16: Impact on Type of Events



## Number of New Events

Nearly two-thirds (61%) of site supervisors indicated that the AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the number of new events held by their organization (Figure 17). As displayed in Figure 18 below, the average number of new events per site increased threefold during the AmeriCorps member(s) service.

*“They increased [the number of new events]. They had to plan two outreach events.”*

*“Yes, [our AmeriCorps member] wrote grants for it and supplied ideas.”*

*“By having the AmeriCorps members, it allowed us to increase program presentations and the type of programs we were able to offer.”*

Among the 25 sites reporting this measure, the total number of new events increased substantially from before member(s) service (n = 9) to during AmeriCorps member(s) service (n = 83; Table 13). Furthermore, PAWV-generated datasets support this growth. In program year 2015-16, none of the 5 events (0%) ascribed to AmeriCorps member sites were new events; however, by program year 2018-19, 46% of the 84 events that year were new events.

FIGURE 17: Impact on New Events

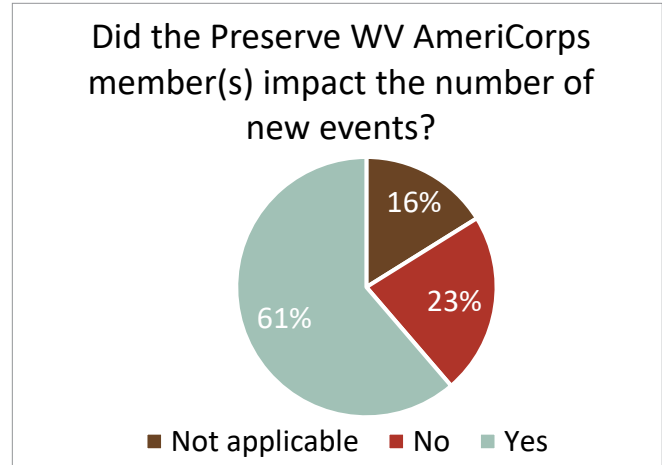


FIGURE 18: Impact on New Events, Before and During

NOTE. Figure excludes data from 5 site supervisors who did not provide both before and after evaluations.

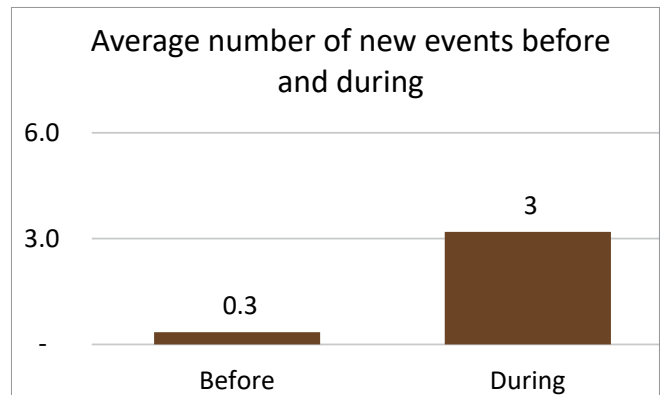


TABLE 13: Impact on New Events Before and During

		New Events			
		Total, All Sites			
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting new events numbers</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>822%</b>
		Average, Per Site			
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>Sites reporting new events numbers</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>822%</b>



## Number of Events Off-Site

Many supervisors noted during the interviews that off-site events were not applicable to their organization (39%); however, 32% of the 31 sites did indicate that the AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the number of new events held by the organization (Figure 19). On average, sites that increased the number of off-site events typically went from 2 before AmeriCorps member(s) service to 3 during member service (Figure 20).

*“She made it possible for us to visit schools.”*

*“We had to hold events off-site due to space constraints. [The AmeriCorps member] was able to direct those events off-site, or [allowed for] the ED to go off-site. [This] created flexibility for the organization.”*

Across the 23 sites reporting this measure, the total number of off-site events increased from 44 before AmeriCorps member(s) service to 65 during member(s) service as indicated in Table 14.

FIGURE 19: Impact on Off-Site Events

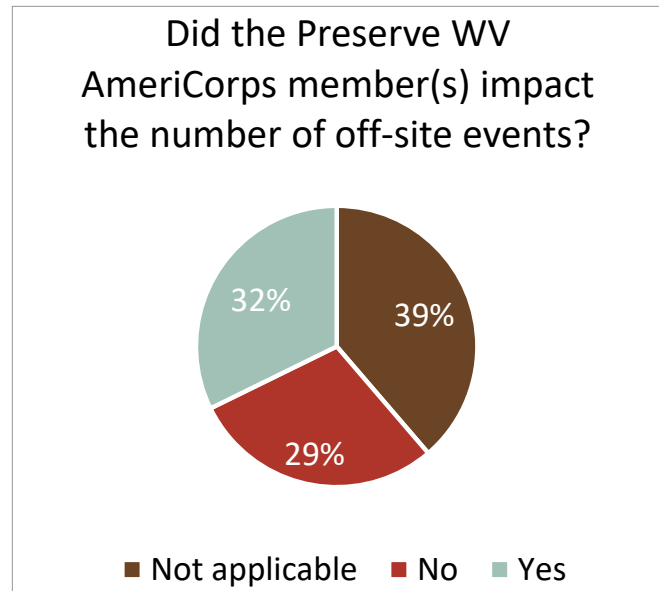


FIGURE 20: Impact on Off-Site Events, Before and During

NOTE. Figure excludes data from 6 site supervisors who did not provide both before and after evaluations.

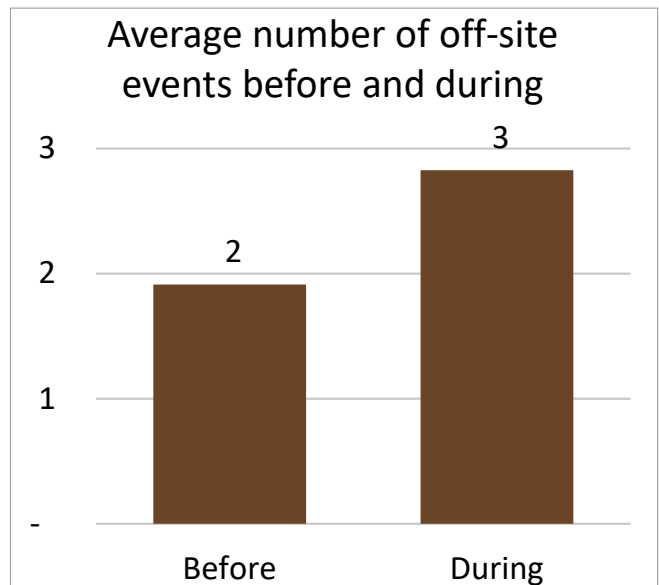


TABLE 14: Impact on Off-Site Events Before and During

		Off-Site Events			
		Total, All Sites			
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting off-site events</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>48%</b>
		Average, Per Site			
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting off-site events</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>48%</b>

## Number of Tours

Forty-two percent of all sites indicated that the AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the number of tours, such as audio tours or guides tours (Figure 21). More than a quarter (26%) of all sites, however, indicated that tours were not applicable to their organizations (e.g., statewide nonprofit, or historic district). Removing those sites, on average, the typical site increased the number of tours from 421 before AmeriCorps member(s) service to 460 during member service (Figure 22). However, these values overrepresent the typical number of tours, as they are weighted by one site with a high number of self-guided tours. Instead, the median number comparing sites before/during (2 and 12, respectively) the presence of an AmeriCorps member(s) better represent typical change in

tour numbers. This change is a 450% increase in the median number of cases (Table 15). PAWV aggregated data also includes tour counts from the 2017-18 and 2018-19 years. The number of tours ascribed to AmeriCorps member(s) during this two-year period decreased slightly, by 24% (17-18: 54 tours, 18-19: 41 tours).

*“The interest [for tours] was there, but [people] could never reach anyone at the Historical Society to give tours. The AmeriCorps member being there, answering phones, and promoting tours got it more attention.”*

*“The AmeriCorps member contributed to the planning. Having the manpower and time devoted to the task [helped].”*

FIGURE 21: Impact on Number of Tours

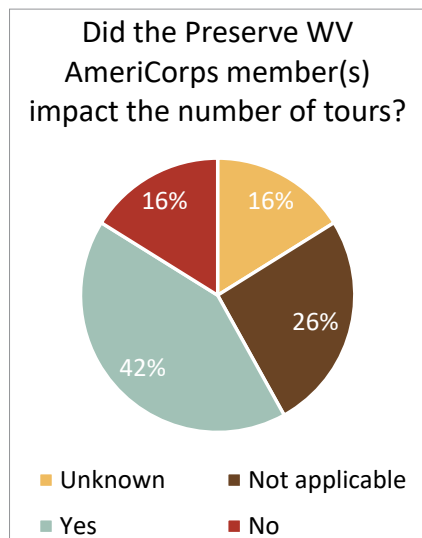


FIGURE 22: Impact on Tours, Before and During

NOTE. Figure excludes data from 14 site supervisors who did not provide both before and during evaluations.

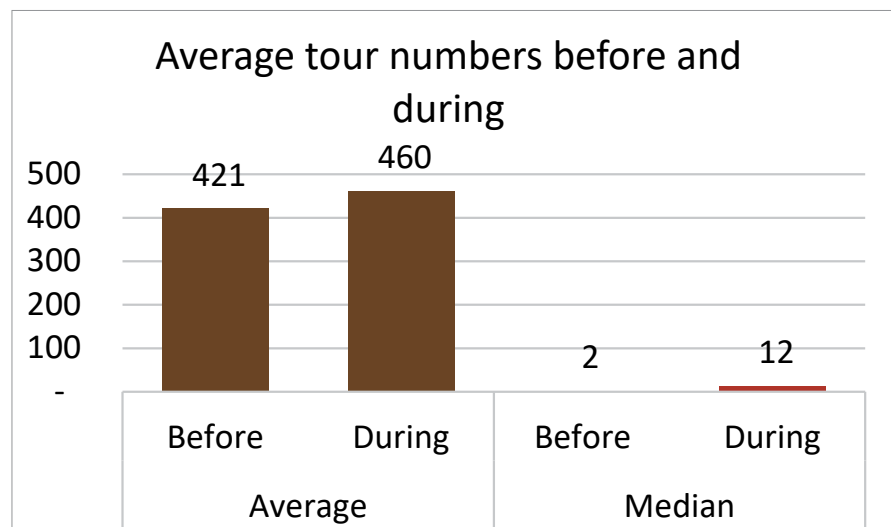


TABLE 15: Impact on Tours Before and During

		Tours			
		Average, Per Site			
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting tour values</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>9%</b>
		Median, Per Site			
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting tour values</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>450%</b>

## Type of Tours

PAWV aggregated data outlined the type of tours run by AmeriCorps members into three groups: walk-in, pre-organized group, and school field trip. A plurality (39%) of the 31 site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the type of tours held by their organization (Figure 23). Below, a few sample quotes from site supervisors illustrate how member(s) shaped tour type.

***“They wrote the script or explanation [for tours]. They would research the artifacts and share information that could be conveyed to the visitor.”***

***“They developed a model for the downtown walking tour.”***

***“She wrote the formal script that we all used as a basis for the tours. She gathered together all the stories, so the same story was told.”***

While the number of school field trip attendees decreased during this time, the other tour types increased in attendee counts (Figure 24).

FIGURE 23: Impact on Type of Tours

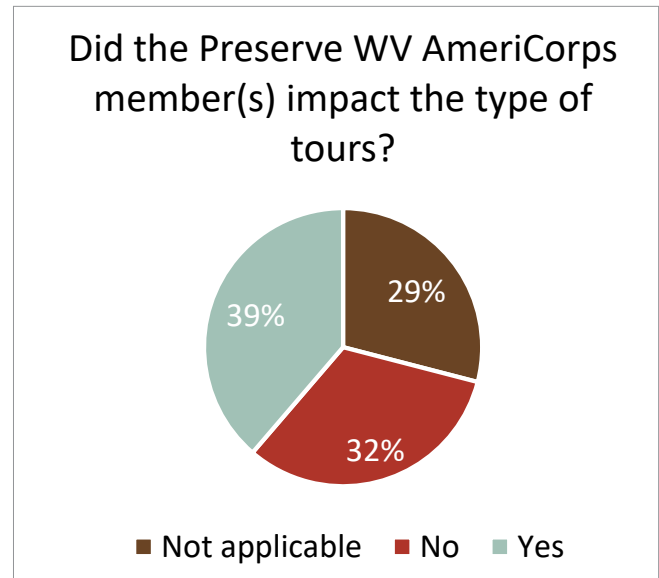
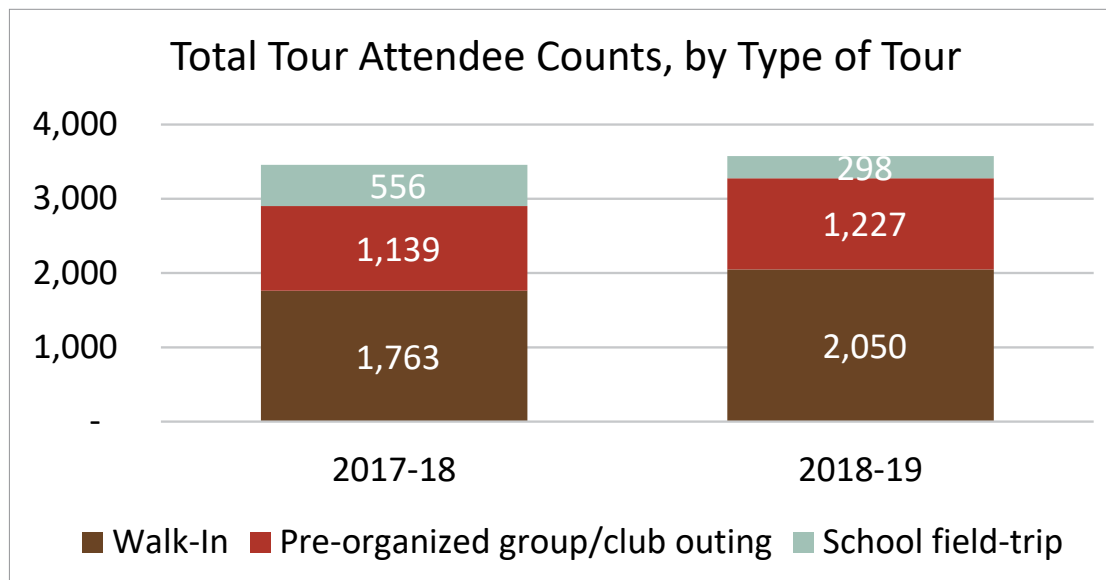


FIGURE 24: Impact on Type of Tours, 2017-18 to 2018-19



## Number of Patron Requests

Slightly less than one-quarter of organizations indicated that their Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the number of patron (research) requests (Figure 25). While the average number of requests increased from 87 to 108 from the year before member(s) service to the year(s) during, a small number of sites with large patron request counts influenced this average (Figure 26). Instead, a more typical representation of change is the median number of patron requests, which increased from 3 to 10 (before to during).

*“Whenever we got requests, [The AmeriCorps member] would go and get information. Once people found out they could get answers, they would request more.”*

*“She made herself more available, reached out to teachers more, and encouraged teachers and their students [to let her] help them. That increased research requests. [She was] so accessible and... [encouraged] them that she was available to help—sending reminders—on several occasions.”*

This is a 167% increase in the median number of patron requests (Table 16). Aggregated data provided by PAWV also indicates the program’s impact in the number of patron requests. The total number of patron requests ascribed to AmeriCorps member(s) increased from 43 in 2016-17 to 88 in 2018-19 calendar years, a 105% increase over the course of 3 years.

FIGURE 25: Impact on Patron Requests

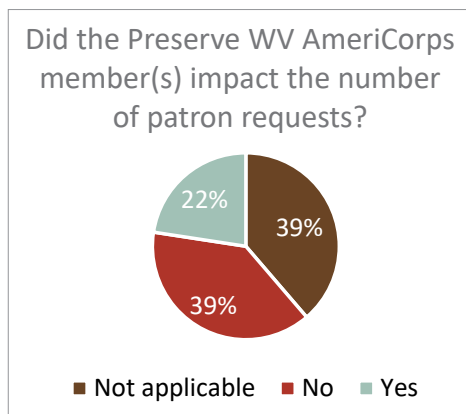


FIGURE 26: Impact on Patron Requests, Before and During

NOTE. Figure excludes data from 14 site supervisors who did not provide both before and during evaluations.

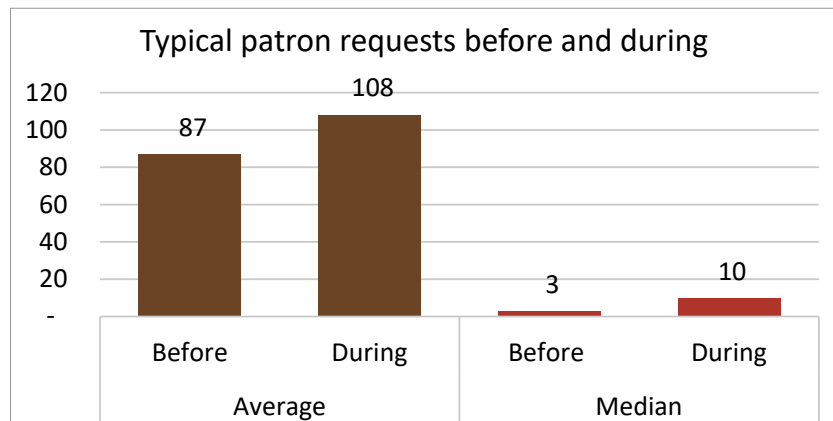


TABLE 16: Impact on Patron Requests Before and During

		Patron Requests			
		Average, Per Site			
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting patron requests</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24%</b>
		Median, Per Site			
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting patron requests</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>167%</b>

## Number of New Resources

Among the 31 sites, 61% indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the number of physical, historic, or cultural resources (Figure 27). The average number of new resources per site increased from 10 to 24 (Figure 28), which represents a 124% increase (Table 17). However, the more typical (median) number of new resources per site increased from 0 to 1 individual. GPR data supports these findings somewhat; for instance, from program year 2014-15 to program year 2018-19 the number of historic resources identified by members for long-term preservation projects decreased slightly from 26 to 22. This is likely explained by the different measure measured in each dataset (whereas interviews inquired about the preservation of any new physical, historic, or cultural resources—broadly defined—GPR data records “long-term preservation projects”).

**“They created content and the traveling exhibits.”**

**“It helped that we had someone with experience in managing new collections. They knew how to set up the floor plan, use [software] etc. It facilitated getting things processed and getting it into the hands of the public. Also, people saw that we had the capacity - someone there regularly to do that type of work - so it encouraged new donations of items. Before, [there was] no time or energy to manage collections.”**

**“Yes [he had an impact] through his research finding historic records [and] photographs.”**

FIGURE 27: Impact on New Resources

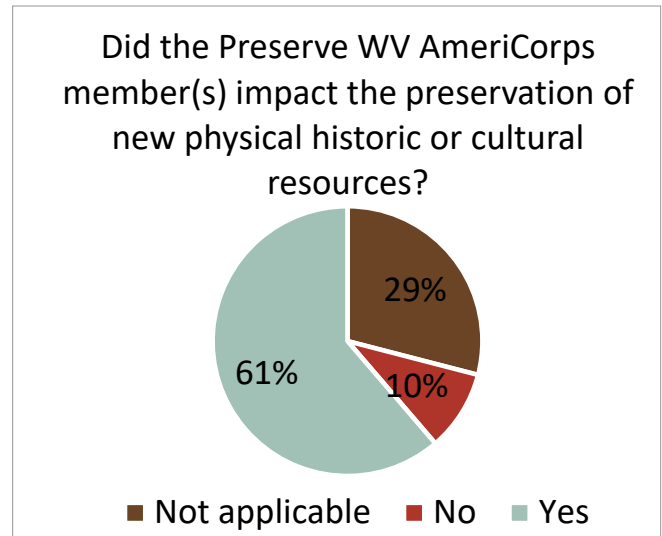


FIGURE 28: Impact on New Resources, Before and During

NOTE. Figure excludes data from 10 site supervisors who did not provide both before and during evaluations.

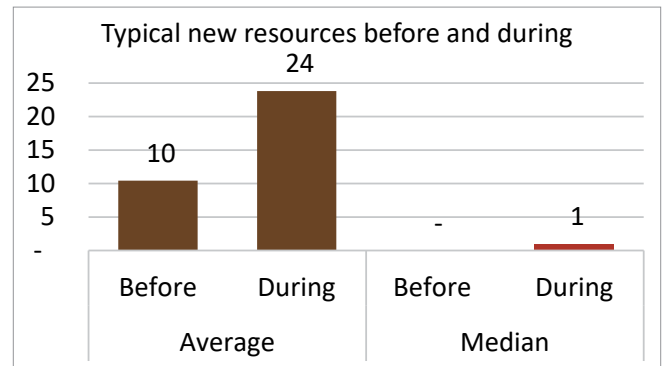


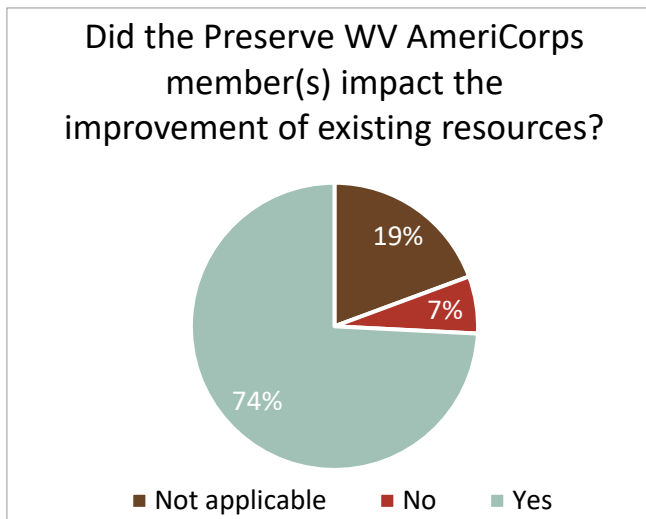
TABLE 17: Impact on New Resources Before and During

		New Resources			
		Average, Per Site			
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting new resources</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>128%</b>
		Median, Per Site			
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting new resources</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>

## Number of Improved Resources

Nearly three quarters (74%) of the 31 site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the number of improved physical, historic, or cultural resources for their organization (Figure 29). The average number of existing resources improved per site increased from 14 (before) to 263 (during) the AmeriCorps member(s) service (Figure 30). However, a better representation of the typical (median) number of resources improved per site is from 1 (before) to 4 (during) AmeriCorps member(s) service. This is a 300% increase in the number of sites reporting improvement in existing resources (Table 18).

FIGURE 29: Impact on Existing Resources



*“[They have] been following [a] preservation plan. We moved [a] collection out of climatized space and started re-housing everything in proper storage places. [They helped get] it organized by category, so it is easier to process. [They helped with] PastPerfect software.”*

*“[They helped with] the historical exhibit, the poster mini-exhibits, and the organization of the archives.”*

*“We had lost all of our collections information after being hacked. [One member] worked hard to get our collections digitized again. [Another] was able to work with our Director...without him we wouldn't have been able to get the shingles done as quickly, [and] he was also able to fix the stone steps in the fort. The cemetery would not have been fixed at all, because we don't have the time to do it with just us.”*

FIGURE 30: Impact on Existing Resources, Before and During

Note. Figure excludes data from 12 site supervisors who did not provide both before and during evaluations.

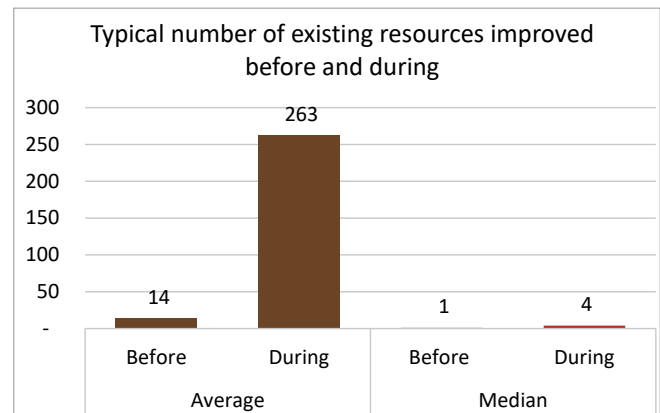


TABLE 18: Impact on Existing Resources Before and During

New Resources					
Average, Per Site					
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting existing resource improvement</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>1763%</b>
Median, Per Site					
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting existing resource improvement</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>300%</b>

TABLE 19: Marketing Initiative Counts, Before and During

Marketing Initiative	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
Brochures	2	2	0	0%
Blog posts	1	2	1	100%
Email, blasts, listservs	10	12	2	20%
Flyers	2	3	1	50%
Magazine	4	5	1	25%
Mail	2	4	2	100%
Newsletter	9	10	1	11%
Newspaper, art, ads	8	8	0	0%
Telephone	1	1	0	0%
Postcards	1	1	0	0%
Press releases	4	4	0	0%
Print advertising	1	1	0	0%
Radio	4	3	-1	-25%
Social media	2	2	0	0%
Facebook	19	26	7	37%
Instagram	4	8	4	100%
Twitter	2	3	1	50%
TV, news, ads	5	5	0	0%
Tourism agency	2	2	0	0%
Website/page	15	18	3	20%
YouTube	0	1	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23%</b>

### Number of Marketing Initiatives

In the year before AmeriCorps member(s) service, there were 98 counts reflecting several marketing initiatives across the 31 sites reporting (Table 19). This number increased by 23% to 121 in the year of AmeriCorps member(s) service.

## Type of Marketing Initiatives

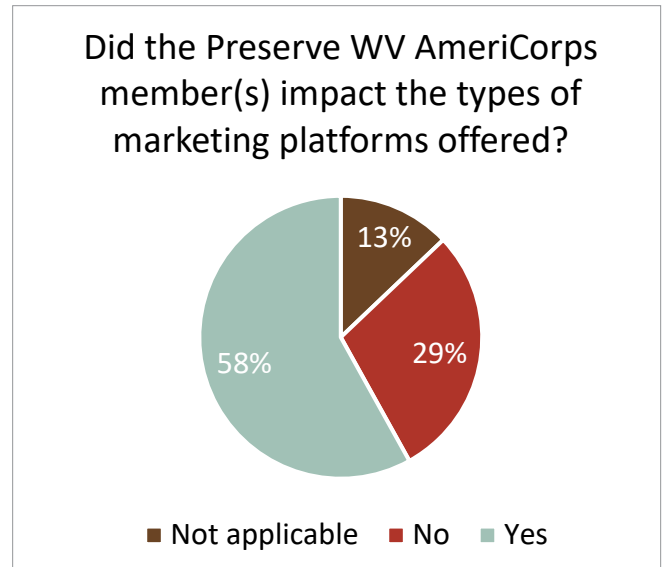
Most (58%) site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the type of marketing initiatives (Figure 31). Additionally, review of the type of marketing initiatives used before and during AmeriCorps(s) member service indicated that several types (particularly email, mail, Facebook, Instagram) were used across more sites during the year of AmeriCorps member(s) service, compared to the year before (Table 19).

***“She did...interesting digital marketing. She created some videos [that] marketed the historical exhibit and [described] historic facts, [which] we put online.”***

***“Our members helped create a user-friendly website...The materials attracted younger crowds and young families as well. People [had been] scared of downtown previously, but through the social media posts and fun facts, the perception of downtown changed and that had a lot to do with the AmeriCorps members. The members would share exciting news on the social media outlets.”***

***“The AmeriCorps members began writing newsletters, so we began sending them once a week, versus the previous three times a year...The AmeriCorps members got people to like us [on Facebook] and they shared information with the community. One AmeriCorps member created a schedule, so it automatically posted things on our website, Facebook page, calendar, etc....We had not used the calendar on our website until the AmeriCorps member came along.”***

FIGURE 31: Impact on Marketing Initiative Types





## Site Tourism

AmeriCorps members' impact on site tourism was measured via 5 measures during Phase 1, including:

- Number of Phone or Digital Service/Program Inquiries
- Number of On-Site Service/Program Inquiries
- Number of Visitors
- Number of People on Tours
- Number of Program Participants

### Number of Phone or Digital Service/Program Inquiries

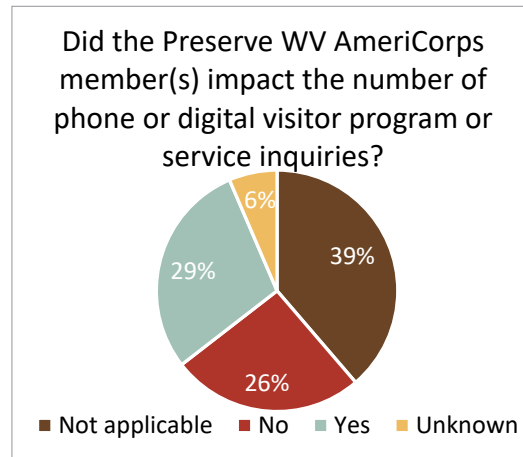
A smaller portion (29%) of site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the number of phone and digital inquiries (Figure 32). A larger portion (39%) shared that this measure was not applicable.

*“By promoting the museum and having a presence in the county, [the AmeriCorps member] generated interest. People would call and email asking questions about collections.”*

*“We’re not doing a lot of inquiries because our focus is [organizing] our archives.”*

*“We saw an increase in web traffic...The AmeriCorps members were responsible for responding to inquiries.”*

FIGURE 32: Impact on Phone or Digital Inquiries



Still, among those 8 sites reporting phone or digital inquiries values, the average number of inquiries increased from 94 to 152 (Figure 33). This is a 61% increase in average growth. However, a more typical representation is median growth, which increased from 48 to 136, or 23% (Table 20).

FIGURE 33: Impact on Phone or Digital Inquiries, Before and During

NOTE. Figure excludes data from 23 site supervisors who did not provide both before and during evaluations.

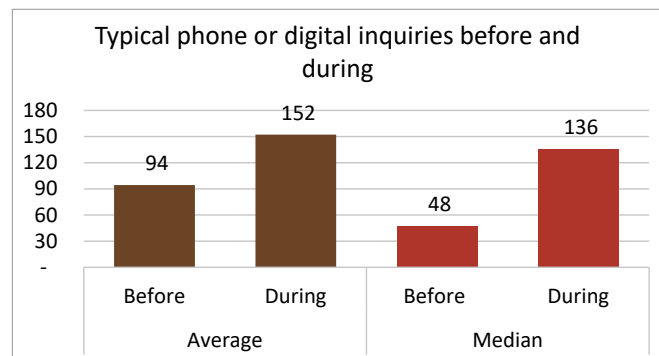


TABLE 20: Impact on Phone or Digital Inquiries

Phone or Digital Service/Program Inquiries					
Average, Per Site					
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
All sites reporting phone or digital inquiries	8	94	152	58	61%
Median, Per Site					
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
All sites reporting phone or digital inquiries	8	48	136	11	23%

## Number of On-Site Service/ Program Inquiries

Generally, fewer site supervisors indicated that the AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the number of on-site visitor program or service inquiries (19%; Figure 34). A plurality indicated that this measure was not applicable to their organization.

Among the 12 sites reporting on-site inquiries values, the average number of inquiries decreased from 475 to 323 (Figure 35). However, due to three sites with values exceeding 100, a more typical representation is median growth, which increased slightly from 50 to 53, or 5% (Table 21).

*“[Because] there were more people there [and] more hours, there were more people available. The AmeriCorps member could stay in the museum and another volunteer could give tours [so there] were more opportunities for questions.”*

*“Maybe in the future with the buildings are restored and completed, [the AmeriCorps member] may have an indirect impact on the on-site visitor inquiries.”*

FIGURE 34: Impact on On-Site Inquiries

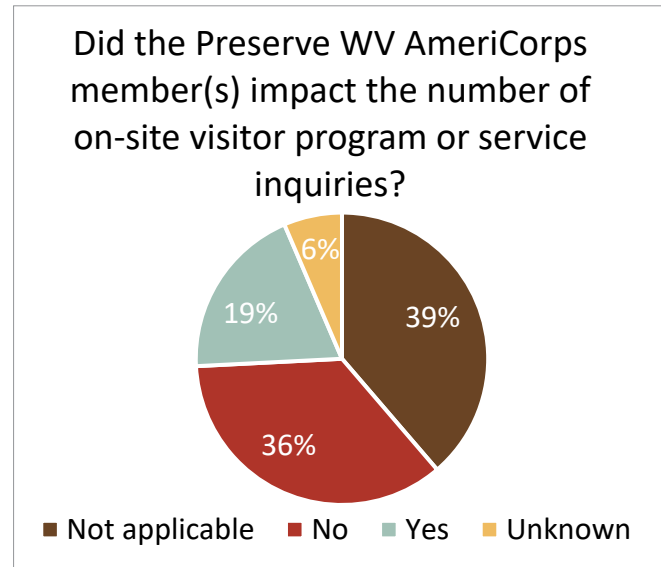


FIGURE 35: Impact on On-Site Inquiries, Before and During

NOTE. Figure excludes data from 19 site supervisors who did not provide both before and during evaluations.

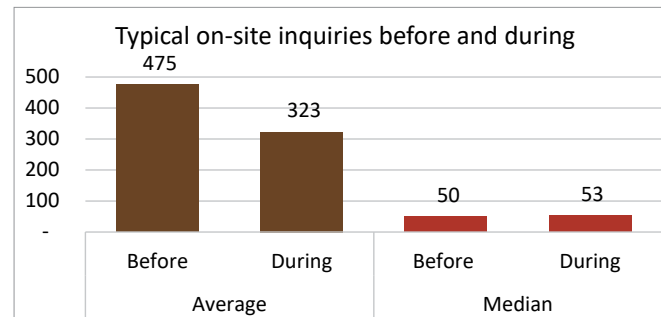


TABLE 21: Impact on On-Site Inquiries Before and During

On-Site Service/Program Inquiries					
Average, Per Site					
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting on-site inquiries</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>-152</b>	<b>-32%</b>
Median, Per Site					
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting on-site inquiries</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5%</b>

## Number of Visitors

Thirty-two percent of sites indicated that the AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the number of visitors, which includes counts of individuals on tours. (Figure 36). However, this value does not include programming. On average, the typical site increased the number of visitors from 2,114 before AmeriCorps member(s) service to 3,409 during member service (Figure 37).

***“They built the content for the tours. We wouldn’t have had an increase if they hadn’t built the content.”***

***“We haven’t recorded [visitor counts], so I don’t know.”***

***“They helped encourage volunteers to be there to have the museum open. One year we had a lot of volunteers who couldn’t make their shift, so just having the building open means a lot.”***

The median number of visitors before/during (2,037/725) also represent the change in visitor counts (Table 22). PAWV data also tracked visitor counts at sites hosting AmeriCorps members in program year 2017-18 and 2018-19. Over this two-year period, visitors increased 7% (from 25,962 to 27,816 visitors).

FIGURE 36: Impact on Visitors

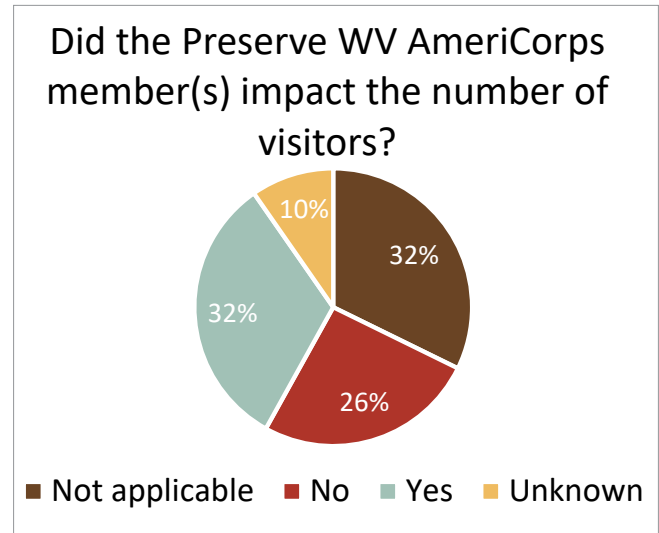


FIGURE 37: Impact on Visitors, Before and During

NOTE. Figure excludes data from 19 site supervisors who did not provide both before and during evaluations.

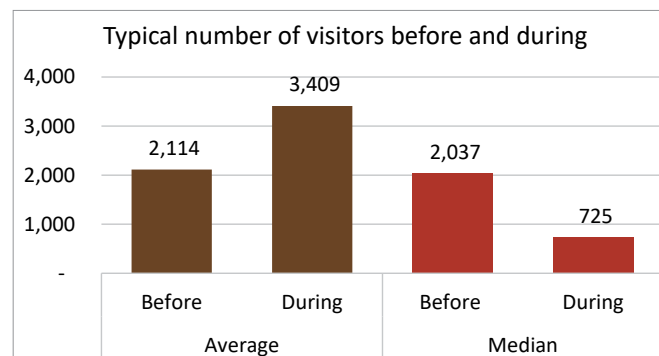


TABLE 22: Impact on Visitors Before and During

Visitors					
Average, Per Site					
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting visitor counts</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2,114</b>	<b>3,409</b>	<b>1,295</b>	<b>61%</b>
Median, Per Site					
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
<b>All sites reporting visitor counts</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2,037</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1%</b>

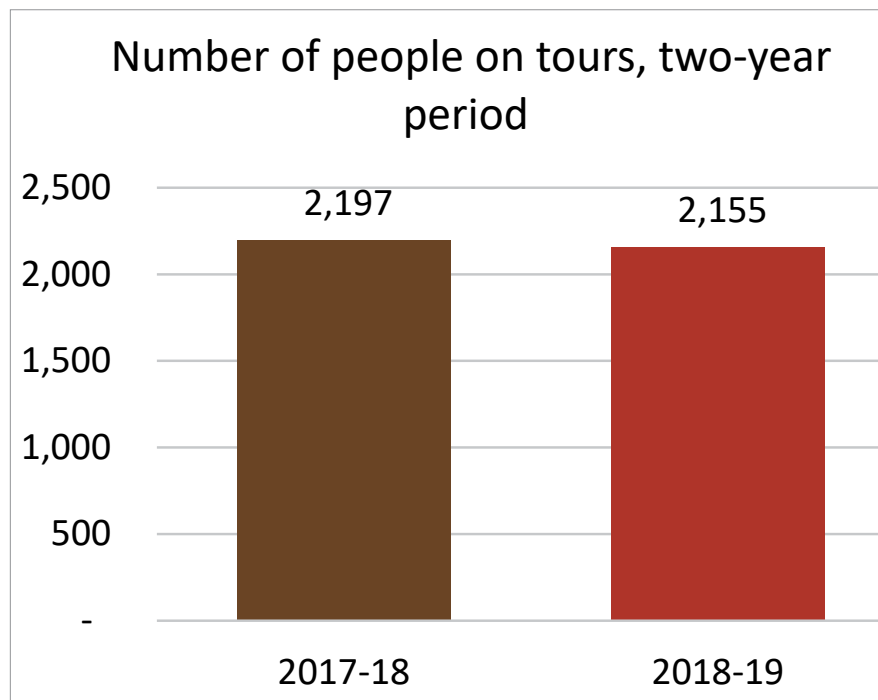
## Number of People on Tours

In addition to the number of visitors outlined above, PAWV data recorded the number of people on tours at AmeriCorps member site organizations. As demonstrated in Figure 38, the number of tour attendees ascribed to AmeriCorps members in this dataset remained fairly constant (17-18: 2,197 attendees; 18-19: 2,155 attendees).

***“The more people we had, the more we could provide tours. Our charter only says [we should host] only two open houses per year, [but we went] way beyond that.”***

***“We were able to be open longer [hours] and more days. We were able to advertise that we were available more often, so more people came.”***

FIGURE 38: Impact on Number of People on Tours



## Number of Program Participants

Approximately 60% of organizations indicated that their Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the number of program participants (Figure 39). While the average number of participants increased from 2,307 to 2,716 from the year before member(s) service to the year(s) during, a small number of sites with large patron request counts influenced this average (Figure 40). A more typical representation of change is the median number of participants, which increased from 180 to 300 (before to during). This is a 10% increase in the median number of participants (Table 23).

*“Having [the AmeriCorps member allowed] the ability to offer different types of programs, newer programs, and have a longer schedule.”*

*“[The AmeriCorps member’s contribution to] marketing, social media, and volunteer recruitment allowed the Director do to more fundraising and sponsorship requests.”*

*“Yes, because [the AmeriCorps member] hosted the program.”*

FIGURE 39: Impact on Program Participants

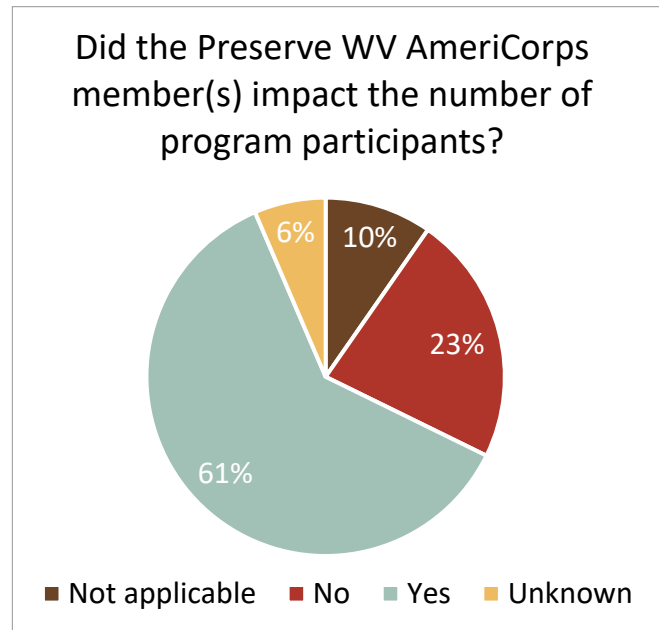


FIGURE 40: Impact on Program Participants, Before and During

NOTE. Figure excludes data from 17 site supervisors who did not provide both before and during evaluations.

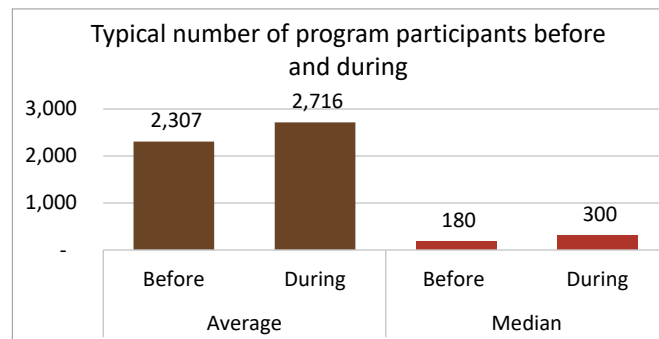


TABLE 23: Impact on Program Participants Before and During

Program Participants					
Average, Per Site					
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
All sites reporting program participant counts	14	2,307	2,716	409	18%
Median, Per Site					
Sites	n	Before	During	Change (n)	% Change
All sites	31	-	-	-	-
All sites reporting program participant counts	14	180	300	18	10%

## Site Service Organization Sustainability

AmeriCorps members' impact on site service organization sustainability was measured via 4 measures during Phase 1, which included the following:

- Quality of Events and Programs
- Care of Site Resources
- Programming Sustainability
- Resource Sustainability

### Quality of Events and Programs

Sixty one percent of the 31 site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the quality of events or programs (Figure 41). Furthermore, before hosting an AmeriCorps member(s), approximately one-quarter (27%) of sites rated the quality of events or programs as "Very good"; however, more than half (54%) of site supervisors characterized their events and programs in this way after hosting an AmeriCorps member(s) (Figure 42).

***"[One event] had become a bit stale. The AmeriCorps member brought in oral history interviews, which reinvigorated the event."***

***Before, the programs were folksy and homey and attracted an older group of participants...With AmeriCorps the dynamic became younger, and the events became more funky and fun [due to] the age and race [of attendees] ...It became more fun."***

FIGURE 41: Impact on Quality of Events and Programs

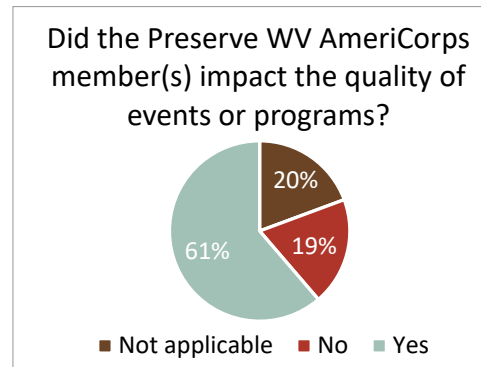
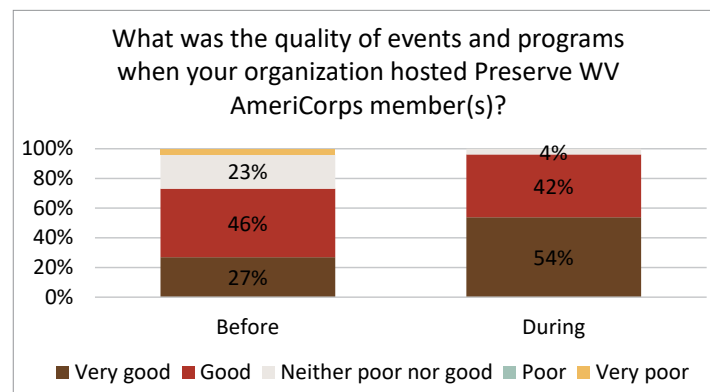


FIGURE 42: Impact on Quality of Events and Programs Before and During, Percent of Total

NOTE. Figure excludes data from 5 site supervisors who did not provide both evaluations.



***"Because our [AmeriCorps] members focus more on program development and presentation, I feel like a lot of them have spent time thinking about creative and innovative ways to do presentations at our sites. It allows us to be more dynamic in our offerings [and] has improved the quality for visitors."***

Table 24 illustrates an overall improvement in event and program quality.

TABLE 24: Impact of Quality of Events and Programs, Before and During

Quality of events or programs	Before	During	Change (n)	Change (%)
Very good	7	14	7	100%
Good	12	11	-1	-8%
Neither poor nor good	6	1	-5	-83%
Poor	0	0	0	-
Very poor	1	0	-1	-100%
No before and after rating	5	5	0	0%
<b>All ratings</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

## Care of Site Resources

Many (77%) of the 31 site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) positively impacted the care of site resources (Figure 43). Additionally, whereas approximately one-third (32%) of site supervisors stated their organization “poorly” cared for resources before hosting an AmeriCorps member(s), none rated their site’s care this way the year during AmeriCorps member(s) service (Figure 44).

***“They were very important to our efforts to organize and preserve collections. Having the manpower was important. Working with PAWV - the people they recruited really brought a lot of knowledge, expertise, and networking...which was huge for us.”***

***“Yes, [the AmeriCorps members] were able to be focused in on the collection. They made an important collection more discoverable. They were doing preservation measures. They put the collection in archival quality folders and boxes and made sure the items were stored in the proper environment...”***

***“Most definitely [they impacted the care of resources]. They were taking part of a collection that we had not gotten to. The clothing documents were being fully cleaned and introduced to the Past Perfect database. They were taking pictures and making it into a museum-quality database.”***

There was a 100% increase in the number of sites stating their organization cared for resources “very well” and 80% increase in those rating “well” (Table 25).

FIGURE 43: Impact on Care of Site Resources

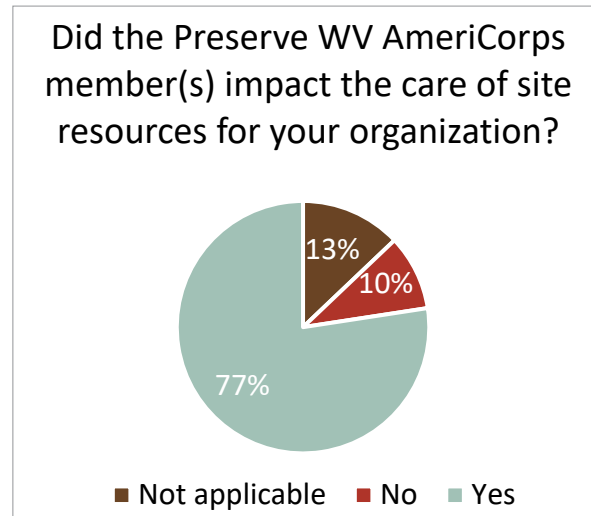


FIGURE 44: Impact on Care of Resources Before and During, Percent of Total

NOTE. Figure excludes data from site supervisors who did not provide evaluations.

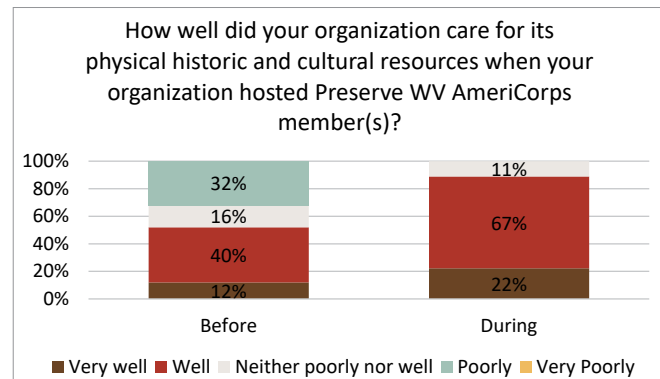


TABLE 25: Impact on Care of Resources, Before and During

Level of Care of Resources	Before	During	Change (n)	Change (%)
Very well	3	6	3	100%
Well	10	18	8	80%
Neither poorly nor well	4	3	-1	-25%
Poorly	8	0	-8	-
Very Poorly	0	0	0	-
No rating	6	4	n/a	n/a
<b>All ratings</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>

## Programming Sustainability

Sixty-one percent of site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the sustainability of their organization for the next 10 years (Figure 45). Whereas approximately one-third of site supervisors said it was “not probable” or “somewhat probable” that their organization could maintain its level of programming for the next 10 years in the year before AmeriCorps member(s) service, no one selected these options when describing the sustainability of their organization in the year after service (Figure 46).

*“While [other] volunteers are committed to projects, our AmeriCorps [members] have organized the collection in a way that we never would be able to do ourselves.”*

*“The organizational capacity and the new groups of volunteers really made a difference. [Given] turnover in the Director role, it helped to have the AmeriCorps members aid with that transition.”*

*“Yes, [they built] that name recognition. [There was] better quality programming, using that newsletter. [They were] active in a community and engaged, which puts the name out there. [They helped] build stronger networks [because we had] someone able to maintain those networks.”*

Moreover, the number of site supervisors who indicated “very probable” or “somewhat probable” when asked whether their organization could maintain its level of programming for the next 10 years increased by 44% and 100%, respectively (Table 26).

FIGURE 45: Impact on Programming Sustainability

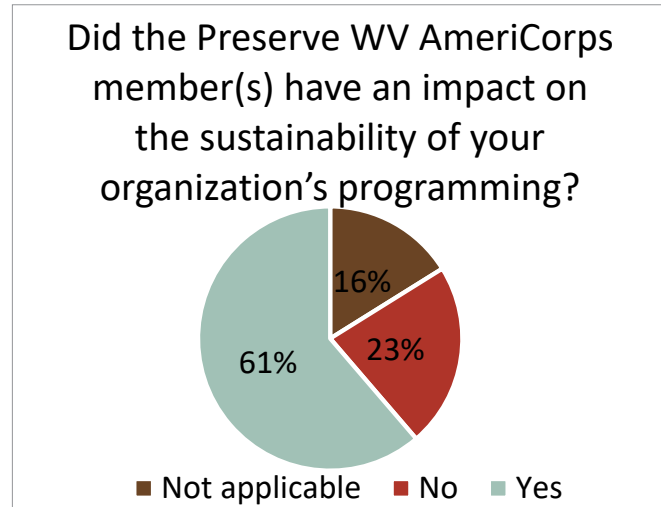


FIGURE 46: Impact on Programming Sustainability, Percent of Total

NOTE. Figure excludes data from site supervisors who did not provide evaluations.

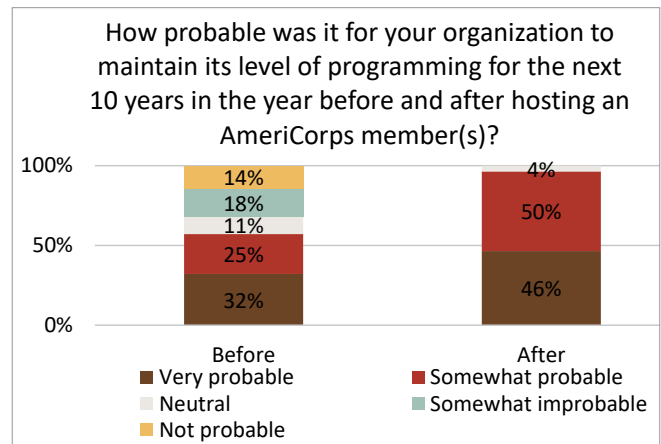


TABLE 26: Impact on Programming Sustainability, Before and During

Impact on Program Sustainability	Before	After	Change (n)	Change (%)
Very probable	9	13	4	44%
Somewhat probable	7	14	7	100%
Neutral	3	1	-2	-67%
Somewhat improbable	5	0	-5	-
Not probable	4	0	-4	-
No before and after rating	3	3	n/a	n/a
<b>All ratings</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>



## Resource Sustainability

Most (61%) of the 31 site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the sustainability of site resources, which included physical, historic, and cultural resources, for the next 10 years (Figure 47). Additionally, whereas 60% of site supervisors said it was “very probable” or “somewhat probable” that their organization could maintain its resources for the next 10 years in the year before AmeriCorps member(s) service, all indicated “very probable” or “somewhat probable” ratings for the year after AmeriCorps member(s) service (Figure 48). The number of site supervisors who indicated “very probable” or “somewhat probable” when asked whether their organization could maintain its resources for the next 10 years increased by 88% and 29%, respectively (Table 27).

***“The digitization of those archives has been important to sustainability. If something happened to the building, at least there’s a digital record.”***

***“[The AmeriCorps member] helped us become more sustainable. It was a dramatic shift...we’re trying to grow, survive, and thrive. Their help was appreciated and beneficial...they created the volunteer base and electronic system of finding, soliciting, and organizing volunteers.”***

***“Yes, [the AmeriCorps member contributed to the] long term preservation and maintenance plans... for the buildings. They gave future Directors the knowledge they needed to implement.”***

FIGURE 47: Impact on Resource Sustainability

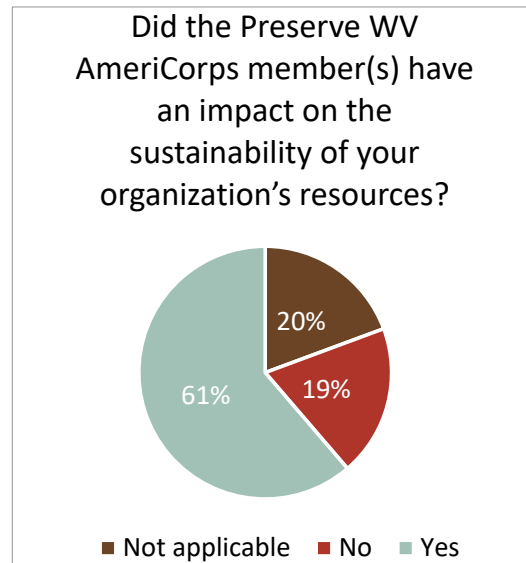


FIGURE 48: Impact on Resource Sustainability, Percent of Total

Note. Figure excludes data from site supervisors who did not provide evaluations.

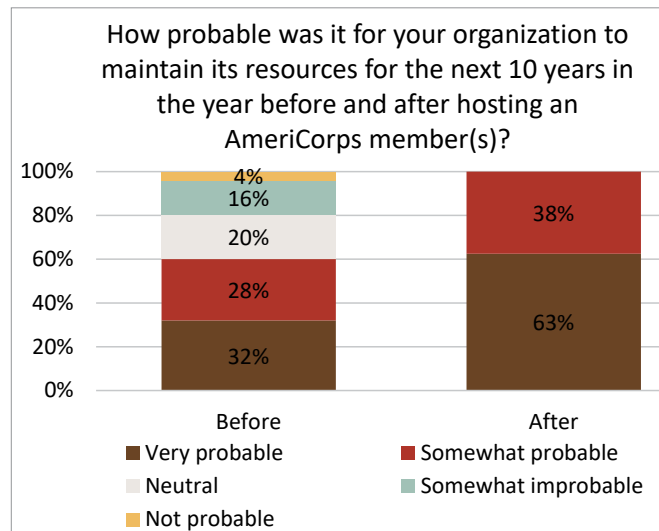


TABLE 27: Impact on Resource Sustainability, Before and During

Impact on Resource Sustainability	Before	After	Change (n)	Change (%)
Very probable	8	15	7	88%
Somewhat probable	7	9	2	29%
Neutral	5	0	-5	-100%
Somewhat improbable	4	0	-4	-
Not probable	1	0	-1	-
No before or after rating	6	7	n/a	n/a
<b>All ratings</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>

# Participant Impacts

## Career Development

While the scope of this retrospective report does not include analysis of AmeriCorps Member Interviews conducted during the winter in 2021, a separate analysis conducted by an Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands intern found that PAWV AmeriCorps members gained valuable career-related skills. This was measured via a survey that 89 of 110 former PAWV AmeriCorps members (81%) completed.

Results included but were not limited to:

- 61.4% of AmeriCorps members indicated that their service aligned with their career path.
- 47.8% increase in percentage of AmeriCorps members indicating professional skills in leading teams (47.7% → 95.5%).
- 20.5% increase in percentage of AmeriCorps members indicating professional skills in working independently (77.2% → 97.7%).
- 17.6% increase in percentage of AmeriCorps members indicating professional skills in problem solving (71.1% → 88.7%).

A more complete set of results can be found in the poster presentation by Chamberlain (2021), a copy of which is provided in Appendix B.

## Comparison Site Analysis

Data reflecting four comparison sites was conducted as part of Phase 2. However, Table 28 below provides a brief analysis of this report's results in relation to that of comparison sites. In doing so, the Eppley Institute research team sought to determine if the presence of AmeriCorps members at site sponsoring organizations impacted site capacity, tourism, and sustainability outcomes, relative to peer organizations. Eighteen measures were identified for analysis between comparison sites and PAWV AmeriCorps member(s) sites. The results in Table 28 indicate that among the measures evaluated, PAWV sites outperformed comparison sites on 12 out of 18 (67%) of the identified measures.

The results in Table 28 above must be contextualized by several key points. First, PAWV averages indicated here reflect total counts divided by 31 sites; this

analysis provided for the best comparison to the average of comparison sites, which were divided by 4, unless indicated otherwise. As a result, average values here may differ from those in earlier sections of this report, where only sites reporting that measure were included in average value calculations. Additionally, data reflecting comparison sites reflects the 2019-20 program year, whereas data reflecting PAWV sites reflects the "after" or "during" measure of the retrospective analysis (program years 2015-2019). Still, despite these limitations, we believe that the trend identified in Table 28 shows a positive impact of AmeriCorps member service for host sites, in comparison to a subset of peer sites.

TABLE 28: Comparison Site Measure Evaluation

Measure	Comparison Sites <sup>1</sup>	PAWV Sites <sup>2</sup>
Number of New Resources (Average)	1.3	16.3
Care for Resources (Percent "Very Well")	25%	19%
Data Organization Efficiency (Percent "Efficient")	50%	58%
Organizational Process Efficiency (Percent "Very Effective")	0%	29%
Grant Funding Received (Average in \$)	\$0	\$42,565
Volunteers Managed (Average)	9	49
Visitor Events (Average)	11	8
New Visitor Events (Average)	0	3
Off-Site Visitor Events (Average)	1.5	2.1
Number of Tours (Average)	12	15
Research Requests (Average)	8.5	59
Quality of Events and Programs (Percent "Very Good")	25%	45%
Number of Visitors (Average)	3277	1320
Number of Program Participants (Average*)	437 <sup>1</sup>	1227
Number of Pre-Site Inquiries (Average*)	740 <sup>1</sup>	39
Number of On-Site Inquiries (Average*)	245 <sup>1</sup>	125
Program Sustainability (Percent "Very Probable")	25%	42%
Resource Sustainability (Percent "Very Probable")	50%	48%

<sup>1</sup>Average calculated using denominator of 3, as one comparison site did not track this measure.

# Discussion, Limitations, and Recommendations

## Discussion of Findings

The 2015–2019 retrospective outcome evaluation study examined the impact that Preserve WV AmeriCorps program members have on sponsoring sites. Specifically, the retrospective outcome evaluation study sought to determine if having one or multiple AmeriCorps member(s) present at the site sponsor organizations impacted (1) site capacity, (2) site tourism, and (3) the sustainability of site service organizations.

The program evaluation focused on a retrospective pre- and post-test; this approach allowed for an understanding of changes at sites over time. A substantial portion of the data in this evaluation is an analysis of the 31 interviews that were conducted with site supervisors that gathered retrospective pre-post data for years 2015 to 2019. The findings are discussed in the categories of site capacity, site tourism, and site service organization sustainability, respectively.

### Site Capacity

Eighteen measures were used to evaluate the impact of AmeriCorps member(s) service on the capacity of the site sponsor organizations. Consistently, data obtained from site supervisor interviews indicated that having AmeriCorps member(s) generally impacted site capacity of the host organization. A summary of the site capacity impact of having AmeriCorps member(s) at the sponsor site as broken out by the 18 measures is summarized by Table 29.

### DATA AND PROCESSES

Seventy-one percent of the 31 site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the efficiency of data organization in their organization. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of the interviewed site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) made organizational processes more effective.

### FUNDRAISING AND GRANTS

The specific financial impact of AmeriCorps member(s) on the fundraising efforts of host sites was more difficult for supervisors to quantify. Despite nearly half of site supervisors indicated that their Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) contributed to data collection that supported grant applications, a larger portion (18 of 31, or 58%) collected data to support grant applications prior to having AmeriCorps member(s) present at the organization, which suggests a potential missed opportunity for sites looking to increase their grantmaking efforts.

Of the 31 sites evaluated, 19 reported seeking grant funding prior to having AmeriCorps member(s) support their organization. Of those 19 organizations, 13 reported an increase in grant funding obtained during their AmeriCorps member(s) term of service. The data gathered is inconclusive with respect to whether changes in grant funding received is due to capacity added by the AmeriCorps member(s). Still, one of the interview excerpts illustrated how an AmeriCorps member directly contributed to revenue generation:

***“They were able to facilitate smaller fundraisers for archival supplies and boxes we needed. They had the ability to do the smaller activities (which) allowed the Executive Director to focus on the larger federal activities and more complex fundraising opportunities.”***

### VOLUNTEERS

Among the 31 sites analyzed, 61% of supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the number of volunteers, with a 45% increase in the “number of community volunteers managed by organizations and participants” from 2015-2019. A change in the number of volunteers trained, however, was not determined and is an area for future data tracking for PAWV.

### EVENTS AND TOURS

Interviews with site supervisors indicated that the average number of events per site increased during the AmeriCorps member(s) service. Interviews also indicated that, overall, AmeriCorps members helped

TABLE 29: Overall AmeriCorps Members' Impact on Site Capacity

Measure	Impact of AmeriCorps Members		
	Yes	No	Inconclusive
Data Organization Efficiency	✓		
Effectiveness of Organizational Processes	✓		
Amount of Money/In-kind Contributions			✓
Data Collection to Support Grant Applications			✓
Grant Funding			✓
Number of Volunteers	✓		
Number of Volunteers Trained			✓
Number of Events	✓		
Types of Events	✓		
Number of New Events	✓		
Number of Events Off-Site			✓
Number of Tours	✓		
Type of Tours	✓		
Number of Patron Requests			✓
Number of New Resources	✓		
Number of Improved Resources	✓		
Number of Marketing Initiatives	✓		
Type of Marketing Initiatives	✓		

site organizations diversify the types of events held. Additionally, nearly two-thirds of site supervisors indicated that the AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the percentage of new events for their organization. While several supervisors noted that off-site events were not applicable to their organization, those who do hold off-site events noted a marginal increase during member service. In one example, the AmeriCorps member increased capacity and flexibility for the organization by increasing the number of individuals who could hold events off-site:

***“We had to hold events off-site due to space constraints. [The AmeriCorps member] was able to direct those events off-site, or [allowed for] the ED to go off-site. [This] created flexibility for the organization.”***

The presence of AmeriCorps member(s) seemed to increase the site organization’s capacity to provide site tours, with a marginal increase in the types of tours provided.

## **PROGRAM AND RESOURCES**

Many of the organizations in this evaluation do not respond to or receive resource requests from patrons or the public. Of those who do, less than half noted an impact on patron requests. Still, 61% of site supervisors indicated that the AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the number of new physical, historic, or cultural resources; and 74% of the site supervisors interviewed indicated that the AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the number of improved physical, historic, or cultural resources for their organization.

## **MARKETING**

The site supervisor interviews concluded that AmeriCorps members have increased and diversified the marketing efforts and initiatives within the host site organizations. Fifty-eight percent of sites noted that the AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the type of marketing initiatives. Several types (e.g., e-mail, mail, Facebook, Instagram) were employed more frequently in the years of AmeriCorps member(s) service.

Of the 18 measures comprising Site Capacity, 12 (67%) demonstrated an impact due to the AmeriCorps

member(s) service. This impact—spanning data collection and organization processes to events, tours, and fundraising (and more measures)—demonstrates the positive effects of AmeriCorps member(s)’ service on sponsoring sites. Either the AmeriCorps member(s) directly impacted the measures and processes, or the presence of the AmeriCorps member(s) helped relieve site staff of other obligations, which allowed them to impact the afore defined measures. Regardless of whether it was the direct efforts of the AmeriCorps member(s) or indirectly resulting from having the member(s) as additional help, site capacity was positively impacted in nearly 70% of the measures due to having the AmeriCorps member(s) at the service site. Given that nonprofit capacity has been demonstrated to have downstream effects on services and programs (Despard, 2017), the results indicated here are particularly promising and align with PAWV’s long-term, desired outcomes, including the improvement of historic resources, increase in cultural heritage tourism opportunities, and engagement with more visitors (Logic Model, Table 2).

## **Site Tourism**

Five measures were used to determine AmeriCorps members’ impact on site tourism. These measures examined changes in service and program inquiries, number of visitors, and the number of people participating in site tours and in programs (Table 30). This area of capacity building is more difficult to measure, as a percentage of the organizations participating in this evaluation do not have physical sites available to the public or do not engage the public in programmatic activities.

In interviews, site supervisors generally indicated that phone or digital inquiries or on-site visitor program or service inquiries (during a visit) were not applicable to their organization, regardless of the presence of Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s). Still, among those sites taking phone or digital service/program inquiries, a plurality reported AmeriCorps member(s) impact on this measure; the average increase was 61%. The impact on on-site service/program inquiries was less discernable. Of sites that have visitors, AmeriCorps members generally helped increase visitor numbers (average growth 61%, median growth 1%).

TABLE 30: Overall AmeriCorps Members' Impact on Site Tourism

Measure	Impact of AmeriCorps Members			
	Yes	No	Inconclusive	N/A
Number of Phone or Digital Service/Program Inquiries				✓
Number of On-Site Service/Program Inquiries				✓
Number of Visitors	✓			
Number of People on Tours			✓	
Number of Program Participants	✓			

The number of visitors participating in tours was not impacted, however, a majority of sites experienced a 10% increase in the median number of program participants during years when they had AmeriCorps member(s) compared to before. Furthermore, one example interview quote illustrated how the added capacity of an AmeriCorps member to focus on program participation impacted other areas of strategic priority to the organization:

***“[The AmeriCorps member’s contribution to] marketing, social media, and volunteer recruitment allowed the Director do to more fundraising and sponsorship requests.”***

West Virginia recognizes that tourism is an increasingly important component of the state’s economy and has prioritized several strategic areas of focus, including cultural and heritage-related tourism sites (AECOM, 2012). Due to the nature of participating sites in this evaluation, several

measures related to site tourism were not applicable or unchanged among most sites. However, increases in the number of visitors and program participants indicate promising outcomes for PAWV, as growth in these measures may ultimately result in sustainable economic, social, and cultural development in West Virginia (Logic Model, Table 2). The results of these measures also suggest that AmeriCorps member(s) service contributes to statewide tourism goals.

### Site Service Organization Sustainability

Measures for evaluating organization sustainability looked at changes in the quality of programs and resources, along with the organization’s anticipated ability to maintain the programs and resources over the next ten years. All four measure areas demonstrated improvement as a result of having one or more AmeriCorps member(s) support their host organization (Table 31). Site supervisors indicated an improvement in the quality of events or programs

TABLE 31: Overall AmeriCorps Members' Impact on Site Service Organization Sustainability

Measure	Impact of AmeriCorps Members			
	Yes	No	Inconclusive	N/A
Quality of Events and Programs	✓			
Care of Site Resources	✓			
Programming Sustainability	✓			
Resource Sustainability	✓			

offered by their organization as a result of their Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s). The following interview excerpt illustrates how AmeriCorps members at one site contributed creativity and innovation to program offerings:

***“Because our [AmeriCorps] members focus more on program development and presentation, I feel like a lot of them have spent time thinking about creative and innovative ways to do presentations at our sites. It allows us to be more dynamic in our offerings [and] has improved the quality for visitors.”***

Additionally, nearly 80% of site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the care of site resources within their organization.

Often, a universal challenge for this type of organization is long-term planning and stability. Sixty-one percent of site supervisors indicated that the Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s) impacted the sustainability of their organization for the next 10 years, all but eliminating the concern among organizations interviewed regarding if their organization could maintain its level of programming for the next 10 years, compared to prior to having support from Preserve WV AmeriCorps member(s). Similarly, AmeriCorps members increased the sustainability of site resources, which included physical, historic, and cultural resources, over the same projected timeframe.

Emphasis on the importance of nonprofit organizations' organizational sustainability has grown in the 21st century as several forces converge, such as (1) increased competition among a greater number of nonprofits, (2) entry of for-profit firms into some nonprofit service markets, (3) persistent challenges associated with a post-recession economy, and (4) higher expectations of accountability (Hopkins et al., 2014; Weerawardena et al., 2010). Despite this context, all four measures in the area of site service organization sustainability showed a demonstrable impact. This suggests a lasting impact of AmeriCorps member service on their sponsoring sites' long-term sustainability.

## Limitations of Study

As with any research initiative, this evaluation can be contextualized by several limitations. First, a known issue with retrospective pre-post analyses are weaknesses associated with limited or incomplete data, or the inability of participants to recall certain data points due to distortion or memory loss (Geldhof et al., 2018). For instance, while the retrospective pre-post analysis sought to analyze program years 2015-2019, PAWV aggregate data sources included measures such as tour counts and fundraising for two program years (2018 and 2019), when it is likely that tours and fundraising also occurred in other years.

Additionally, the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic shaped some responses. For instance, on some measures evaluated before and after the year of AmeriCorps member(s) service, respondents indicated an impact on measures like the quality of events (e.g., one site supervisor had utilized an AmeriCorps member to help plan for a large-scale event in 2020, which was ultimately cancelled). That being the case, it can be assumed that other elements were impacted by the changes forced on organizations due to the pandemic.

## Recommendations for Phase 2

The design of this study—which not only included the collection and analysis of Phase 1 data, but also sought to ready PAWV for future evaluations with data collection for Phase 2—positions PAWV well for successful future evaluations. It is recommended that future evaluations consider the following several areas for effective and sustained data reporting. First, where possible, maintaining consistent survey items and interview question wording will allow for valid and reliable pre-post analysis. Similarly, it is recommended that data collected and organized annually for other reporting (e.g., GPR) be entered into one consistent format, such as a spreadsheet that collects—on a per-sponsoring site basis by year—all relevant measures. This type of reporting will allow for easier and more accurate evaluations over time. To that end, while annual data collection is time-intensive, adherence to a set regime of pre



and post data collection each program year (i.e., through consistent contact with site supervisors through surveys and/or interviews) would improve the accuracy of program evaluation.

PAWV should also consider evaluating each measure for the appropriate duration of pre-post impact of AmeriCorps member(s) service. For example, measures related to fundraising and grants were evaluated based on the years prior to and during AmeriCorps member(s) service. However, given the time lag often associated with these efforts, where a grant application may be evaluated and funded many months later, a longer “post” evaluation of member impact may be more appropriate.

Finally, while results indicate that PAWV AmeriCorps host sites outperformed comparison sites on most metrics, the limited number of comparison sites (n = 4) in this evaluation also represents an area for potential improvement. Going forward, PAWV might consider identifying and including comparison sites outside of West Virginia, such as in other parts of Appalachia or other rural U.S. communities.

## Conclusion

Preserve WV seeks to further knowledge and support for historic and cultural resources through strategies including outreach, education, advocacy, heritage preservation, and tourism. Through its Preserve WV AmeriCorps program, it places AmeriCorps members at cultural and historic sites to further its goals related to cultural heritage tourism, historic resource preservation, and site capacity building. This Preserve WV AmeriCorps evaluation study sought to holistically evaluate program outcomes associated with AmeriCorps member service, dating back to 2015.

The results outlined indicate generally positive results across three targeted areas of site capacity, site tourism, and site service organization sustainability. Of 28 measures included in this Phase 1 evaluation, 68% denote that a majority of sites reported AmeriCorps member(s) impact. These results indicate that PAWV’s long-term, desired outcomes to improve historic resources, increase in cultural heritage tourism opportunities, engagement with more visitors, and sustainable development are on track. Additionally, the results of Phase 1 provided here will lay the groundwork for future evaluations, including but not limited to ongoing Phase 2 data collection, which will further advance the understanding of the program’s short-, medium-, and long-term benefits.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Volunteers and Site Sponsor Organizations

TABLE 32: Volunteers and Site Sponsor Organizations by Year

Sites	Town	County	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Adaland Mansion	Philippi	Barbour					1
Barbour County Historical Museum	Philippi	Barbour					1
Berkeley County Historical Society <sup>1</sup>	Martinsburg	Berkeley					1
Berkeley County Roundhouse Authority	Martinsburg	Berkeley					1
Carnegie Hall <sup>1</sup>	Lewisburg	Greenbrier			1		
City of Ronceverte	Ronceverte	Greenbrier				1	
Clio Foundation <sup>1</sup>	Huntington	Statewide		1			1
Clio Foundation	Morgantown	Statewide			1	1	2
Clio Foundation	Charleston	Statewide			1	1	
Clio Foundation	Based in Virginia	Statewide				1	
Cockayne Farmstead Preservation Project <sup>1</sup>	Glen Dale	Marshall	1	1	1	1	1
Craik-Patton House	Charleston	Kanawha		1	1	1	1
Doddridge County Historical Society <sup>1</sup>	West Union	Doddridge	1				
Eastern Regional Coal Archives <sup>1</sup>	Bluefield	Mercer		1			
Fairmont Community Development Partnership	Fairmont	Marion				1	
Fayette County Commission <sup>1</sup>	Fayetteville	Fayette				1	
Frank & Jane Gabor WV Folklife Center at Fairmont State University <sup>1</sup>	Fairmont	Statewide					1
Friends of Happy Retreat	Charles Town	Jefferson		1			
Harpers Ferry National Park	Harpers Ferry	Jefferson	1				
Harrison County WV Historical Society <sup>1</sup>	Clarksburg	Harrison	1	2	2	1	1
Heritage Farm Museum & Village	Huntington	Cabell/ Wayne				1	
Hinton Historic Landmarks Commission <sup>1</sup>	Hinton	Summers		1		1	1
Historic Shepherdstown Commission <sup>1</sup>	Shepherdstown	Jefferson	1	1	1		
Jackson's Mill <sup>1</sup>	Weston	Lewis	1	1	1	1	1
Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission <sup>1</sup>	Charles Town	Jefferson	1	1	1	1	1
Lewisburg Historic Landmarks Commission <sup>1</sup>	Lewisburg	Greenbrier		1			
Main Street Fairmont <sup>1</sup>	Fairmont	Marion	1	1	1	1	
Main Street Martinsburg	Martinsburg	Berkeley					1
Main Street Morgantown <sup>1</sup>	Morgantown	Monongalia	1				1

<b>Main Street Ripley</b>	Ripley	Jackson	1	1			
<b>Matewan Conventions &amp; Visitors Bureau<sup>1</sup></b>	Matewan	Mingo					1
<b>Monroe County Historical Society<sup>1</sup></b>	Union	Monroe	1		1		1
<b>National Coal Heritage Area<sup>1</sup></b>	Oak Hill	16 Southern WV Counties	1	1	1		
<b>New River Gorge National River<sup>1</sup></b>	Glen Jean	Fayette/ Summers/ Nicholas/ Raleigh		1			1
<b>New River Gorge National River</b>	Glen Dale	Fayette/ Summers/ Nicholas/ Raleigh			1		
<b>New River Gorge Regional Development Authority</b>	Hinton	Summers	1				
<b>Old Hemlock Foundation<sup>1</sup></b>	Bruceton Mills	Preston	1	1		1	1
<b>Pocahontas County Convention &amp; Visitors Bureau<sup>1</sup></b>	Marlinton	Pocahontas				1	
<b>Pocahontas County Opera House</b>	Marlinton	Pocahontas		1	1	1	1
<b>Preservation Alliance of West Virginia<sup>1</sup></b>	Morgantown	Statewide	1	2			
<b>Preservation Alliance of West Virginia</b>	Helen	Statewide			1	1	
<b>Preservation Alliance of West Virginia<sup>1</sup></b>	Elkins	Statewide				1	1
<b>Pricketts Fort Memorial Foundation<sup>1</sup></b>	Fairmont	Marion		1	1		
<b>The City of Mt. Hope</b>	Mt. Hope	Fayette					1
<b>Waldomore - Clarksburg/Harrison Public Library<sup>1</sup></b>	Clarksburg	Harrison	1	1	1		
<b>West Augusta Historical Society<sup>1</sup></b>	Mannington	Marion	1	1	1		
<b>West Virginia &amp; Regional History Center (WVU) <sup>1</sup></b>	Morgantown	Statewide			1	1	1
<b>West Virginia Association of Museums</b>	Morgantown	Statewide		1	1		
<b>West Virginia Association of Museums</b>	Wheeling	Statewide				1	
<b>Wheeling National Heritage Area Corporation<sup>1</sup></b>	Wheeling	Ohio	2	1	1		
<b>WVU BAD Buildings Program<sup>1</sup></b>	Morgantown	Statewide				1	1
<b>WVU Public History Program - National History Day<sup>1</sup></b>	Morgantown	Statewide			1		
<b>WVU Public History Program - Wiles Hill Alumni Association</b>	Morgantown	Monogalia			1	1	
<b>TOTAL</b>			19	25	24	23	25

<sup>1</sup>Indicates site supervisor participation in retrospective interviews (N = 31)

# Appendix B: Poster Presentation of AmeriCorps Member Survey Results

## A Comprehensive Look at the Impacts of an AmeriCorps Program on Former Participants



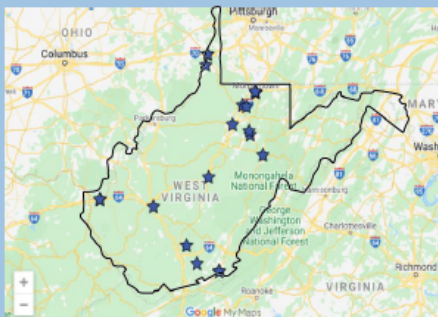
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### Introduction

AmeriCorps programs place participants at locations around the country providing them with the training and tools they need to work with local communities and further develop their personal and professional skills. The Preservation Alliance of West Virginia (PAWV) operates an AmeriCorps program that trains and places participants at sites with the goal of preserving historic sites and resources across the state. An unstated goal of the program is to increase participants' career-relevant skillsets and provide career pathways for the future, however, PAWV has not yet evaluated the impacts of the AmeriCorps program on participants. For this reason, this study examined the professional and soft skills that participants from 2015-2019 received from the Preserve WV AmeriCorps program. This evaluation will allow their organization to assess if the program is meeting its goals and provide insight into future improvements.



### Literature Review

Similar program evaluations that looked at the impacts of participation on AmeriCorps participants revealed two main points:

- > AmeriCorps alumni felt they impacted and helped the communities they were serving, would be more likely to do community service, and gained insight into future career paths (Cardazone et al., 2015)
- > AmeriCorps alumni were better able to understand what quality contributions to communities looked like, which could help many rebuild social capital (Simon & Wang, 2002)

These showed a positive effect of participation on former AmeriCorps members.

### Methods

- o The survey instrument was adapted from a 2015 study conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service (Cardazone et al., 2015)
- o The original study was meant for participants in the national AmeriCorps program. We omitted questions related to community involvement and organization as well as politics to focus specifically on the professional and soft skills outcomes.
- o We developed the survey instrument using Qualtrics and distributed it in February 2021 via email to all former participants from 2015-2019. We sent out three follow-up emails, giving participants a little over three weeks to complete it.
- o The survey was distributed to 89 former participants and we received 57 responses, including unfinished surveys, resulting in a 64% response rate.
- o We cleaned the survey and ran descriptive statistics on the data to identify the most interesting or surprising trends.

### Results

- o Soft skills questions were set up in a before-after pattern, in which growth was seen in every question from before participants' service to after. These questions asked about things such as problem-solving skills and conflict resolution.
  - > There was a 17.6% growth in participants' ability to deal efficiently with unexpected events
  - > There was a 28% increase in participants having the means to get what they wanted when opposed



Figure 1. Soft Skills Comparison Before and After AmeriCorps Service  
Q1: Dealing with Opposition, Q2: Accomplish Goals, Q3: Problem Solving in Unexpected Events, Q4: Development of Several Solutions

### Results (cont.)

- o Participants were also asked about professional skill growth, in a before-after set up and positive growth was observed in all questions.
  - > A total of 81.8% of participants said they were good or excellent at leading teams after their service, which was up from 47.7% before service
  - > Participants also demonstrated a 29.5% increase in being good or excellent at planning, coordinating, and managing events
- o Finally, participants were asked about the direction of their career path after their PAWV service.
  - > About 61.4% of participants said that their service already aligned with their career path
- o Participants were asked about cross-cultural interactions with co-workers and community members, including the ability to have respectful and enjoyable interactions.
  - > Limited increases in perceptions of ability pre- and post-program were shown in this question set, resulting in only a maximum of 4.2% increase for each question



Figure 2. Professional Skill Comparison Before and After AmeriCorps Service  
Q1: Working Independently, Q2: Communicating Verbally with Others, Q3: Communicate in Writing with Others, Q4: Leading Teams, Q5: Planning, Coordinating, and Managing Events

### Conclusions

From these initial findings, we are able to conclude that participants gain valuable career-related skills as well as more definition of their career path. The report done by the Corporation for National and Community Service in 2015 showed comparable results where their participants gained similar skills. This shows the value of service programs for participants at both the state and national level. Further research could be done on the community effects on and from participants with a state-level AmeriCorps program.

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