

Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) of the Army Community Service (ACS) Army Volunteer Corps (AVC) Program

CLEARINGHOUSE
FOR MILITARY FAMILY READINESS

Army Volunteer Corps (AVC) Program and the Army Volunteer Corps Coordinator (AVCC)

The AVC program helps Soldiers and their Family members, retirees and DoD civilians find volunteer opportunities with organizations within the larger Army community. The AVCC serves as the single point-of-contact at each Garrison to:



Conduct outreach activities and match the interests and skill sets of volunteers with organizations in need.



Serve as administrative managers for the AVC program (e.g., manages the Volunteer Management Information System (VMIS) that tracks volunteer hours, and oversees official awards acknowledging volunteer contributions).



Ensure legislative requirements for liability and background clearances (e.g., FBI fingerprint requirement for working with children) are met by volunteers as required.



Assist in maintaining readiness, sustaining communities, and enriching lives within the Army.

Management of volunteers is essential for an effective program and increases benefits for both the organization and the individual.

Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) of the AVC Program (based on Fiscal Years 2014/2015)

A robust CBA of the AVC program was conducted by examining expenditures for the program, the number of volunteer hours reported Army-wide and the subsequent monetary benefits generated from an effective administrative system. The methodology employed was modeled after a previously conducted economic examination of federally-funded, military and civilian national service programs (Belfield, 2013). The full CBA of the AVC Program report is available by contacting the Clearinghouse (see details below).

CBA Findings (based on Fiscal Years 2014/2015)



- **Average garrison produced 18,000 volunteer hours - 9 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.**
- **AVC program produced 3 million volunteer hours (1,393 FTEs) - a total fiscal benefit of \$52M.**
- **The fiscal return on investment (ROI) for the AVC program (e.g., taxable earnings, crime, health and welfare cost aversion, and taxable outputs) = \$15.25 for every \$1 spent.**
- **The societal ROI = \$36 for every \$1 spent (i.e., social, private, and fiscal benefits)**
- **90% likelihood of a positive fiscal and societal ROI.**
- **The AVC program's cost to produce an FTE volunteer is significantly smaller than all other national service programs. This efficiency is due, in part, because the AVC program employs a uniquely tailored, central management infrastructure system.**

For more information, contact **The Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State**

Phone: 877.382.9185

MilitaryFamilies.psu.edu

Key Benefits of Volunteering with the AVC Program



Soldiers spouses who have difficulty finding employment due to challenges associated with the military lifestyle use the AVC program to help enhance their career mobility.



The AVCC may work closely with the Employment Readiness Program to identify transferable skills for volunteer opportunities. Army policy allows for volunteer time to be applied to validate experience applicable for employment.



Volunteers enable organizations (e.g., non-profits) to extend their capabilities on behalf of Army communities.



In a previous evaluation, those who volunteered through the AVC program felt more connected to the military community and were significantly more satisfied with military life.

Soldier volunteers are more likely to say they intend to continue in the military beyond their current tour of duty.

Challenges of Conducting a CBA

Inherent challenges in examining volunteer programs include: unverifiable accounts of volunteer time, an assumption that volunteer labor is equal to paid labor, a focus on immediate rather than long-term outcomes, and comparisons of different volunteer populations and opportunities (e.g., full-time youth volunteers vs. adult volunteers, structured activities vs. informal interest-based opportunities).

Recommendations



Adopt measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of the AVC program and the AVCC, including guarantee of funding given the high probability for positive ROI.



Increase the accuracy of the VMIS by developing a mobile app for volunteers to track their hours more effectively. This app would increase the ROI by reducing the hours not reported in the current tracking protocol.



Implement a quality assurance system by conducting regular satisfaction surveys of volunteers and organizations using volunteers.



Conduct a robust evaluation of volunteer outcomes (e.g., satisfaction with volunteer opportunities, personal benefits from volunteering, and assistance with job placement).



Partner with U.S. Army Human Resources Command to track impact of the AVC program on service member Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal awards (i.e., promotion points and rank increases earned from volunteering).