



Where Federal Dollars Deliver

FY2026 Funding Priorities from the Invest in What Works Coalition

Few of the legislative branch’s responsibilities bear more weight or consequence for everyday Americans than the decisions made in appropriations committees.

In the coming weeks, lawmakers in the Senate and House Appropriations Committees are expected to put forth budget recommendations for the next fiscal year that could significantly affect programs and services that Americans have come to rely on — many of which are delivering real, measurable results in communities across the country.

To bring those results to life, **Results for America is releasing a collection of stories that spotlight evidence-based programs making a measurable difference for children, families, workers, and students** — from early learning and digital access to public housing revitalization and college mentoring. Each story spotlights community-driven solutions, tracks measurable outcomes, and shows how federal investment fuels what works on the ground.

For FY’26, Results for America advocates for more investments in these critical grant programs. Working in partnership with the Invest in What Works Coalition, a network of more than 60 organizations working to advance evidence-based outcomes, our collective funding and language requests for FY’26 focus on funding programs that spur innovation, promote continuous learning, and provide solutions with proven track records that work all across the country.

Alongside these funding requests, we’re also calling for a **government-wide standard to prioritize evidence in all competitive federal grant decisions**. By embedding evidence requirements into Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) and Requests for Proposals (RFPs), federal agencies can better direct resources toward what delivers. That means steering funds toward proposals that put forward programs with a track record of improving peoples lives — in neighborhoods, schools and communities nationwide.

At Results for America, our focus is on ensuring policymakers have the tools, training, and evidence they need to make informed decisions. By shifting federal dollars toward programs that deliver, Congress can ensure taxpayer investments are used effectively — and that more communities benefit from solutions that get results.



AmeriCorps: Service That Strengthens Communities

How National Service Fuels Local Solutions

Overview

AmeriCorps State and National Grants empower communities to solve pressing problems while also giving individuals a meaningful opportunity to serve.¹ They support local nonprofits, schools and agencies that mobilize AmeriCorps members to improve education, expand access to health services, strengthen workforce pathways and more.

Independent evaluations show that AmeriCorps State and National Grants deliver significant returns for American taxpayers — ranging from \$2.95 to over \$50 for every federal dollar invested — through improved academic outcomes, increased earnings and reduced reliance on public programs.

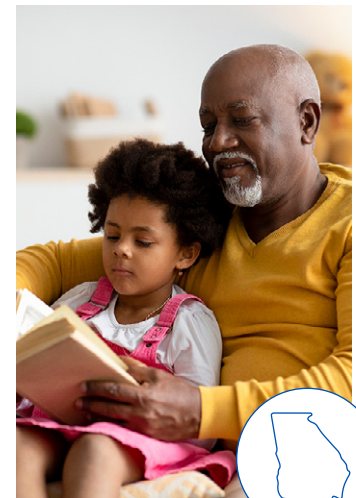
How AmeriCorps Members Make a Difference

AmeriCorps members serve through trusted local organizations — like schools, libraries, and community nonprofits — that know what their communities need. These organizations receive AmeriCorps grants to support and train members, who commit to a year of service tackling local challenges. During that time, members earn a modest living allowance, and upon completion, they receive an education award that helps pay for college or student loans. It's a practical way to make a difference — while building skills, purpose, and opportunity

Proven Community Impact

Reading Corps in Georgia

In schools across Georgia², AmeriCorps members are helping children learn to read — and building unexpected friendships in the process. Since launching in 2022, Reading Corps has grown to more than 75 schools statewide. The program delivers daily, high-dosage tutoring, with evidence showing that participating students can make up to three-quarters of a year's reading progress in just one semester.³ What sets Georgia's model apart is its co-generational design: older and younger tutors serve side by side throughout the school day, building literacy skills — and lasting intergenerational connections — together.⁴



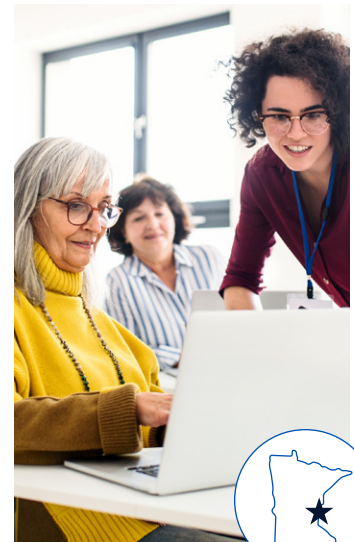


Vet Corps in Washington State

Returning to college after military service can be overwhelming. In Washington State, AmeriCorps members — many of them veterans themselves — are supporting this transition.⁵ Vet Corps members serve on college campuses to provide mentoring, help navigate benefits, and connect fellow vets with resources and community. These near-peer mentors provide academic advising, summer enrichment, and support with college applications and financial aid. A 2022 study found that VetCorps delivers up to \$17.52 in public value for every federal dollar invested.⁶

Community Technology Empowerment Project in the Twin Cities

In libraries, workforce centers, and nonprofits across the Twin Cities, AmeriCorps members are helping adults close the digital divide. Through the Community Technology Empowerment Project (CTEP), they deliver hands-on digital literacy training — covering everything from basic computer use to résumé writing and online job applications.⁷ An evaluation found employment rose by over 10% among previously unemployed participants, with 81% saying CTEP helped them get a job. These strong employment results among participants, combined with positive outcomes for AmeriCorps members in employment and education, helped drive the finding that CTEP delivers up to \$34.26 in public value for every dollar invested.⁸



Breakthrough Central Texas

In Central Texas, AmeriCorps members with Breakthrough support students from middle school through college graduation as near-peer mentors — offering academic advising, summer enrichment, and college coaching. Most participants are low-income and the first in their families to attend college.⁹ Evaluations show participants were three times more likely to graduate high school and nearly twice as likely to enroll in college than their peers — underscoring the program’s long-term impact.¹⁰ A 2022 study also found the program delivers strong economic returns — up to \$54 in public value for every federal dollar invested.¹¹

Why It Matters

These aren't one-off programs — they're engines of change rooted in local communities. AmeriCorps funding enables organizations to scale what works, reach more people, and deliver measurable returns. From improving literacy and digital access to supporting college success and veteran reintegration, service strengthens the fabric of our nation — one member, one organization, and one community at a time.

That's why there is growing bipartisan momentum to protect and strengthen national service. In April, Representatives Don Bacon (R-NE), member of the What Works Caucus, and a number of other Members, introduced the *Protect National Service Act*, which would prohibit federal funds from being used to weaken or dismantle the agency.¹² This legislation reflects a rising recognition across party lines of the agency's proven impact and local value.

The bill builds on earlier efforts — including a [joint letter](#)¹³ from the bill sponsors and Representative Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), and Rep. Don Bacon's [op-ed](#)¹⁴ decrying cuts to AmeriCorps that urges the White House to work with Congress on any proposed reforms. Together, these lawmakers are sending a clear message: national service isn't a partisan issue — it's an American one, and it deserves protection.

To keep building this momentum, sustained federal investment in AmeriCorps is essential. It ensures more communities can harness national service to meet local challenges — and more individuals can step up to serve.

The Invest in What Works Coalition is a network of more than 60 organizations working to advance evidence-based outcomes, delivering results for the American people through impactful federal programs. These programs, including AmeriCorps State and National Grants, are spurring innovation, promoting continuous learning, and providing solutions with proven track records that work all across the country.

Results for America is recommending Congress fund AmeriCorps at \$557M for FY'26.

Read more about the Coalition's funding priorities and requests [here](#).¹⁵





Full-Service Community Schools: Helping Students and Families Thrive

How Community Schools Power Student Success and Family Support

Overview

Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS), funded by the U.S. Department of Education, bring together educators, families, and community partners to help students thrive — by meeting their academic and non-academic needs through coordinated supports.¹⁶ National research shows a strong return on investment — \$3 to \$15 for every \$1 — driven by higher graduation rates, better health, and stronger attendance.

How Community Schools Meet Local Needs

Full-Service Community Schools operate as neighborhood hubs — bringing together educators, families, and community partners to surround students with the support they need to learn and grow. Each school tailors its approach based on local needs, built around four key pillars:

- **Integrated Student Supports:** Onsite health, mental health, and social services that remove barriers to learning.
- **Expanded Learning Time:** Enrichment programs offered after school, on weekends, and during the summer.
- **Family and Community Engagement:** Schools become trusted spaces where families connect, contribute, and lead.
- **Collaborative Leadership:** School staff, families, and local organizations work together to set priorities and drive results.



Proven Community Impact

Leslie County Schools in Kentucky

In a rural Appalachian district where 80% of students face economic hardship, Full-Service Community Schools helped drive notable early results. A case study by the Harvard EdRedesign Lab¹⁷ found that kindergarten readiness rose to 79% — well above the state average of 53% — and that third-grade reading scores declined by just 6% during the pandemic, compared to a 23% statewide drop. These outcomes were supported by nearly 900 coordinated services in a single year, including dual-credit courses, onsite mental health care, and broadband access via Wi-Fi-equipped church parking lots.



Community Schools in New York City

New York City's FSCS initiative, launched in 2014, brings extended learning, health services, and family engagement to schools in high-need neighborhoods.¹⁸ Rigorous research¹⁹ found that participating schools saw reductions in chronic absenteeism, fewer suspensions, and increases in on-time grade progression and credit accumulation — helping more students stay on track to graduate. Positive effects were especially strong in elementary and middle schools, where schools also reported gains in student connectedness and teacher collaboration. Over time, schools became trusted hubs for families to access support — from mental health services to parent workshops — helping create a stronger sense of belonging and connection.

ABC Community Schools in Albuquerque

Launched as a pilot in 2007, the ABC Community School Partnership now coordinates services across more than 60 schools in New Mexico's largest district.²⁰ A rigorous case study²¹ found that a single full-time Community School Coordinator at Manzano Mesa Elementary generated \$7.11 in net benefits for every \$1 invested — driven by increased attendance, academic gains, and expanded family engagement. These benefits were monetized through grant dollars, in-kind services, and volunteer contributions, with effects isolated to the coordinator's role through a multi-step methodology. Across the network, schools report reduced student mobility, stronger parent involvement, and higher graduation rates, even amid widespread poverty.



Why It Matters

These aren't one-size-fits-all programs — they're place-based solutions rooted in real schools. FSCS funding helps communities scale what works, build stronger partnerships, and deliver results. From improving attendance and academic achievement to expanding access to family services, these schools help students thrive and strengthen the fabric of their communities.

With continued federal investment, more schools can become hubs of support — and more students can succeed, no matter their zip code.

The Invest in What Works Coalition is a network of more than 60 organizations working to advance evidence-based outcomes, delivering results for the American people through impactful federal programs. These programs, including Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS), are spurring innovation, promoting continuous learning, and providing solutions with proven track records that work all across the country.

Results for America is recommending Congress fund FSCS at \$443M for FY'26.

Read more about the Coalition's funding priorities and requests [here](#).²²





Promise Neighborhoods: Helping Communities Thrive From Cradle to Career

How Local Leadership and Wraparound are Improving Student Outcomes

Overview

Promise Neighborhoods, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, are place-based initiatives designed to support children and families from early childhood through college and career.²³ Each neighborhood is anchored by a local nonprofit, college, or tribal entity that coordinates services to tackle intergenerational poverty and systemic barriers. This model delivers measurable gains in areas like kindergarten readiness, school attendance, academic achievement, and graduation rates. Each Promise Neighborhood combines strong schools with tailored wraparound supports to meet local needs.

How the Pipeline Supports Families and Students

Promise Neighborhoods build a cradle-to-career “pipeline” of support, adapted to meet each community’s unique needs. This can include home visiting programs, early learning services, tutoring and academic supports, out-of-school enrichment, mental health care, family engagement, job readiness, and housing assistance.

Grants support a lead organization that works with schools, local government, and community partners to braid public and private resources into a coordinated system. Each Promise Neighborhood tracks progress across 10 shared results – from school readiness to safe neighborhoods – using data to drive continuous improvement and align strategies around outcomes that matter most to families.



Proven Community Impact

Indianola Promise Neighborhood in the Mississippi Delta

In rural Sunflower County, MS, Delta Health Alliance created a Promise Neighborhood that wraps families in education, health, and parenting support.²⁴ A case study²⁵ highlights one standout effort – the Literacy Fellows program – provides daily reading intervention to struggling third graders. It’s working: the pass rate on the state’s reading assessment jumped from 36% to 59% among at-risk students, a 23-point gain now known locally as the “Mississippi Miracle.” Even beyond the original grant, the program has been sustained through local investment and now operates through Indianola’s resource and referral center, reaching thousands of families with early childhood supports.²⁶



Knox Promise Neighborhood in Eastern Kentucky

In rural Knox County, KY, Partners for Rural Impact used its Promise Neighborhood grant to tackle chronic absenteeism through a community-wide attendance initiative.²⁷ By combining education, targeted family outreach, and fun incentives like movie passes and attendance competitions, a case study²⁸ found that middle grade attendance rose from 80% to 87% in a single year, and chronic absenteeism dropped significantly. These gains were fueled by trusted school-based staff, close coordination with community partners like the Chamber of Commerce, and a culture of encouragement – from school door greetings to personalized outreach. Although progress slowed during the pandemic, ongoing engagement strategies have helped sustain student participation and keep youth connected to school and learning.

Camden Promise Neighborhood in New Jersey

In Camden, NJ – one of the state’s highest poverty areas – the Promise Neighborhood initiative focused on boosting academic achievement through intensive school-based supports and strong community partnerships.²⁹ A case study³⁰ found that the initiative used real-time data to identify students in need and guide targeted outreach. Campaigns like “Strive for Five” promoted attendance with positive messaging and schoolwide incentives, reframing absenteeism as a call for support rather than punishment. The results were striking: the share of third and fourth graders performing at or above grade level in math



at target schools tripled during the grant period, underscoring the power of coordinated, data-driven student supports.

Why It Matters

Promise Neighborhoods aren't temporary programs — they're community-built pipelines for long-term change. Whether boosting reading scores in Mississippi, improving school attendance in Kentucky, or driving academic gains in New Jersey, each initiative shows what's possible when local leadership, federal support, and shared commitment come together. Sustained investment is key to expanding these pipelines and delivering results in more communities — ensuring that every child has a real chance to thrive, from cradle to career.

The Invest in What Works Coalition is a network of more than 60 organizations working to advance evidence-based outcomes, delivering results for the American people through impactful federal programs. These programs, including Promise Neighborhoods, are spurring innovation, promoting continuous learning, and providing solutions with proven track records that work all across the country.

Results for America is recommending Congress fund the Promise Neighborhood grant program at \$93M for FY'26.

Read more about the Coalition's funding priorities and requests [here](#).³¹





Choice Neighborhoods: Transforming Public Housing Into Paths to Opportunity

How Housing Investments Are Changing Lives and Communities

Overview

Choice Neighborhoods, a grant program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), helps communities replace distressed public housing, support families, and attract new investment.³² By focusing on housing, people, and neighborhoods, the initiative supports comprehensive transformation through partnerships with housing authorities, local governments, and nonprofit developers.

Independent evaluations show that Choice Neighborhoods improves housing quality, raises household income and employment, and delivers strong returns. Since 2010, grantees have completed more than 6,000 new housing units, attracted over \$125 million in local investment, and achieved resident satisfaction rates above 75%.³³

How the Model Strengthens Communities

Each Choice Neighborhoods initiative addresses a community's specific needs through a holistic, three-part strategy:

- **Housing:** Replace distressed public and HUD-assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income homes that are well-managed and integrated into the neighborhood.
- **People:** Support residents through case management, education, health care access, and workforce development.
- **Neighborhood:** Invest in parks, infrastructure, economic development, and other community amenities to create safe, vibrant places to live.

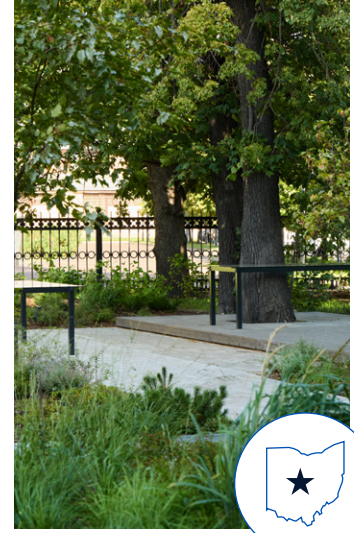
Grantees work with a network of partners — schools, health providers, community organizations, and city leaders — to create and implement a shared vision for long-term change.



Proven Community Impact

Columbus, Ohio

In Columbus, Choice Neighborhoods helped transform Poindexter Village into a 450-unit, mixed-income community — revitalizing one of the nation’s first public housing sites. Guided by the Blueprint for Community Investment and led by the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority and local partners, the project catalyzed over \$120 million in local investment. It brought new amenities to the Near East Side — including walkable streets, renovated parks, a medical clinic, and an intergenerational daycare center.³⁴ Outcomes data show that case management reduced reliance on public assistance and raised average household income from \$8,100 to \$12,700, while the neighborhood’s vacancy rate dropped by nearly half.³⁵



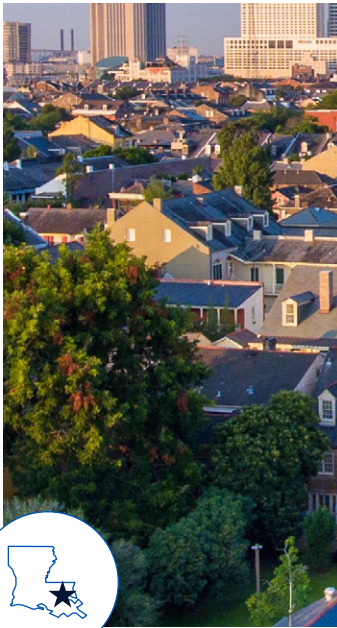
San Francisco, California

In San Francisco’s Eastern Bayview neighborhood, Choice Neighborhoods helped transform the aging Alice Griffith public housing site into a vibrant, mixed-income community. More than 450 new homes were built, and 43% of original residents returned. With a focus on early learning, job readiness, and family well-being, evaluations found that the initiative helped boost average household income from \$15,000 to nearly \$22,000. Meanwhile, home prices rose by over \$230,000 compared to similar areas, and the neighborhood saw steady population growth and declining vacancy.³⁶

Atlanta, Georgia

In Atlanta, Georgia, the Choice Neighborhoods initiative helped transform the former University Homes site while launching a citywide education partnership. Atlanta Housing and Atlanta Public Schools worked together to support students living in Choice housing with tailored services — mentoring, tutoring, and case management. According to a recent case study, 100% of high school seniors graduated during the 2022–2023 school year. Younger students saw a 90% pass rate in English and 95% in math; high schoolers achieved a 100% pass rate in English and 83% in math — demonstrating the impact of integrated housing and education support.³⁷





New Orleans, Louisiana

In New Orleans' historic Iberville-Tremé neighborhood — just steps from the French Quarter — Choice Neighborhoods helped transform one of the country's oldest public housing sites into new opportunity. The initiative replaced aging superblock-style housing with nearly 1,500 mixed-income units, while reconnecting the neighborhood with safer streets, new green spaces, and restored historic buildings. Program data show that more than half of residents participated in case management services, with many receiving support for medical care, job placement, and school success. The results are visible across the community: bachelor's degree attainment rose, health insurance coverage improved, and the neighborhood vacancy rate fell from 38% to 21%. What once felt cut off by highways and disinvestment is now a growing neighborhood — where families have more tools to thrive.³⁸

Why It Matters

When public housing fails, it affects far more than bricks and mortar — it undermines the stability of families and communities. Choice Neighborhoods shows what's possible when housing, education, economic opportunity, and community renewal are tackled together.

From higher household income and employment to improved neighborhood amenities and measurable returns on federal investment, Choice Neighborhoods is delivering results. But transformation doesn't happen overnight. Sustained investment in Choice Neighborhoods is essential to keep driving change — ensuring that families not only return to better housing, but thrive in stronger, safer communities.

The Invest in What Works Coalition is a network of more than 60 organizations working to advance evidence-based outcomes, delivering results for the American people through impactful federal programs. These programs, including the Choice Neighborhoods grant program, are spurring innovation, promoting continuous learning, and providing solutions with proven track records that work all across the country.

Results for America is recommending Congress fund the Promise Neighborhood grant program at \$450M for FY'26.

Read more about the Coalition's funding priorities and requests [here](#).³⁹



Institute of Education Sciences: Scaling What Works in Education

How Federal Research Infrastructure Fuels Classroom Success

Overview

Behind every effective classroom practice is a foundation of rigorous research. The [Institute of Education Sciences](#) (IES), the independent research arm of the U.S. Department of Education, plays a vital — often behind-the-scenes — role in helping educators, families, and policymakers understand what works and how.⁴⁰ From tracking learning outcomes to testing breakthrough interventions, IES helps scale strategies that improve student success and guides the nation's response to challenges like pandemic-era learning loss.

As states take on greater responsibility for education outcomes, IES ensures that flexibility is matched with clear standards, transparent data, and trusted tools — empowering local leaders to make informed decisions that get results.

How IES Supports Students and Educators

As the federal engine for education R&D, IES turns research into results — building the knowledge base that schools rely on every day. Its work spans five core areas:

- **Building Evidence:** Funding development and rigorous testing of innovative strategies to boost learning and achievement.
- **Evaluating Impact:** Conducting large-scale studies of federal education programs to determine what's working — and what's not.
- **Providing Actionable Data:** Through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), IES produces the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP — often referred to as the “Nation's Report Card”) and other critical indicators that help inform policy and practice.
- **Delivering Trusted Tools:** Through the What Works Clearinghouse, IES offers educators and families user-friendly summaries of effective programs and practices.
- **Upholding Quality:** Overseeing peer review processes to ensure research and grantmaking meet the highest scientific standards.

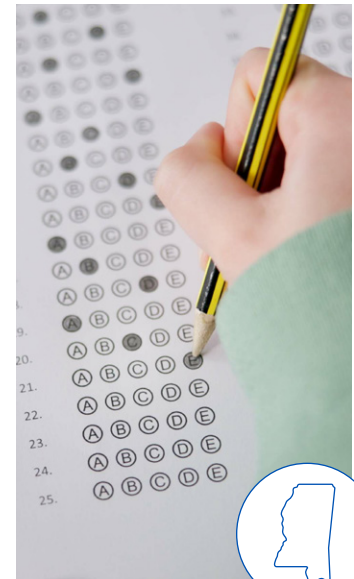
In a time of urgent need, IES helps states and school systems navigate uncertainty with trusted evidence and actionable insight — making sure every education dollar is guided by what works.

Proven Community Impact

Mississippi's Literacy Turnaround

In Mississippi, strategic investments in research and evidence transformed early reading outcomes — and set a new bar for statewide improvement. Starting in 2013, the state implemented the *Literacy-Based Promotion Act*, a comprehensive policy that trained all K–3 teachers in research-backed instruction aligned to the science of reading.⁴¹ These changes were supported by IES, which provided tools, coaching, and research through the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southeast.

The results were striking: Mississippi's fourth-grade reading scores on the NAEP, or the Nation's Report Card, jumped from 49th to 21st in the nation — earning the nickname “the Mississippi Miracle.”^{42,43} Behind the scenes, REL Southeast tracked teacher knowledge, evaluated classroom quality, and helped build a feedback loop between policy and practice. Even with one of the lowest per-pupil spending rates in the country, the state saw major gains, showing how federal R&D can unlock transformative local results.⁴⁴



ASSISTments in North Carolina

With support from IES, researchers at Worcester Polytechnic Institute developed ASSISTments — a free, web-based platform that helps middle school students strengthen math skills through personalized feedback, real-time practice, and actionable data for teachers. Since its creation, ASSISTments has reached more than one million students and 30,000 educators across the country.⁴⁵

A recent rigorous evaluation⁴⁶, also funded in part by IES, evaluated the impact of ASSISTments in North Carolina. The results were powerful: students who used the platform in middle school saw lasting academic gains, including higher performance in Algebra I two years later and greater on-time progression to advanced math in high school. The effects were especially strong for Black students, English learners, and students from low-income households — demonstrating the platform's impact across a wide range of learners and its potential to strengthen math achievement at scale.

Why It Matters

Progress in education doesn't happen by chance — it's built on evidence. From improving reading scores in Mississippi to boosting math achievement in North Carolina, IES plays a foundational role in helping schools scale what works. Its research, tools, and evaluations shape classroom instruction, guide funding decisions, and support millions of students each year.

But these gains don't sustain themselves. At a time when learning gaps are growing and school systems are under pressure to do more with less, continued investment in IES ensures that every education dollar is guided by rigorous research and proven impact. It's how we turn insight into action, and deliver better outcomes for the next generation of learners.

The Invest in What Works Coalition is a network of more than 60 organizations working to advance evidence-based outcomes, delivering results for the American people through impactful federal programs. These programs, including the Choice Neighborhoods grant program, are spurring innovation, promoting continuous learning, and providing solutions with proven track records that work all across the country.

Results for America is recommending Congress fund the Institute for Education Sciences at \$900M FY'26.

Read more about the Coalition's funding priorities and requests [here](#).⁴⁷



Endnotes

AmeriCorps: Service That Strengthens Communities

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