

Encore Service Act of 2008

What is the Encore Service Act?

The Encore Service Act offers Americans 55 years of age and older the chance to serve their communities and use their expertise to give back to their country.

Why is the bill needed?

- Throughout the United States, there are pressing unmet human, educational, environmental, and public safety needs -- needs that can be filled through community service.
- The potential pool of Americans 55 years of age and older who could provide valuable national service is enormous and expected to grow by more than 22 percent in the next ten years.
- More than half the individuals considered a part of the Baby Boomer generation are interested in providing meaningful service to their communities.
- Participation in national service as an older American can serve as an important pathway and transition experience, leading them to a second career in the public or nonprofit sector.
- Research shows that older Americans are not adequately connected to national service opportunities.

What does the bill do?

- Creates the Encore Service Program which provides Americans 55 years and older with opportunities to serve high-need communities in return for a stipend and education award, much like the AmeriCorps program. Education awards may be transferred to children, grandchildren or other designees and participants may serve full or part time.
- Creates an Encore Fellows program that places Americans 55 years of age and older in one-year management or leadership positions in public or private not for profits. These year long fellowships not only increase the capacity of public service organizations, they promote the concept of later life transitions into community and public service among professional that have finished their midlife careers.
- Creates a Silver Scholars program that awards Americans 55 years of age and older with an education scholarship of up to \$1,000 in exchange for volunteering with public agencies or private nonprofits between 250-500 hours a year. Education awards may be transferred to children, grandchildren or other designees.
- Expands the capacity of current Senior Programs by raising the authorization levels for the Foster Grandparent, Senior Corps and RSVP programs, raising program eligibility levels from 125% to 200% above poverty and modifies the age of eligibility so all programs are open to individuals 55 years and older.

How much does it cost?

The Encore Service Act authorizes \$326.7 million in new funding for fiscal year 2009, and such sums as necessary for subsequent years.