

March 2026

Unexpected Coalition:

National Service and AI Disruption



**AMERICAN
SERVICE
PROJECT**



The report was conducted by **More in Common US** in partnership with **American Service Project**.

More in Common is part of a non-partisan, international initiative aimed at building societies and communities that are stronger, more united, and more resilient to the increasing threats of polarization and social division. We work in partnership with a wide range of civil society groups, as well as philanthropy, business, faith, education, media, and government in order to connect people across lines of division.

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Executive summary

1. **Trump voters overwhelmingly support national service (84%).** National service programs receive bipartisan support when clearly defined as mostly civilian roles and do not imply mandatory participation.
2. **Concern with AI-driven job displacement drives greater support** for national service.
3. Half of Americans (54%) want the government to play a more active role in helping young adults adapt to AI-driven job loss. **Republicans are 3x more in favor of active government action** (45%) than prefer it stay mostly out (16%).
4. In a scenario of AI-driven job loss among young people, **Americans are 7x more likely to support earned income through national service than a universal basic income-style solution.**
5. Broad support for national service is **contingent on programs being voluntary** and offering a mix of civilian and military roles.
6. Messages that emphasize **local impact** and the country's **responsibility to not leave any young person behind** performed well across groups. Republicans and Trump voters also favor patriotism framing. Gen Z respond positively to messages that highlight social connection and adventure.

Methodology

More in Common conducted online survey interviews between February 13th to 23rd, 2026, among a nationally representative sample of 3,151 U.S. adults, including 2,459 2024 Trump voters. The nationally representative sample was weighted to be representative of the U.S. population on gender and age (interlocked), race, education level, region, and 2024 presidential vote and turnout, based on the 2020 U.S. Census and the 2023 American Community Survey. The Trump voter sample was weighted on gender and age (interlocked), race, education level, and region. The weighting targets are based on the 2024 Edison Research Exit Poll. The margin of error (adjusted for weighting) is ± 1.75 percentage points for the national sample and ± 1.97 percentage points for the 2024 Trump voter sample. Margins are higher for subgroups.

From January 26–28, 2026, More in Common surveyed 193 respondents from its qualitative research panel “Americans in Conversation” about their attitudes towards universal national service, areas of support, skepticism, and ambivalence.

This report applies the “Beyond MAGA” Trump voter segmentation model developed by More in Common, based on its nationally representative Beyond MAGA Wave 1 survey of 2,478 self-identified 2024 Trump voters conducted in April 2025. The segmentation was developed in two stages—clustering followed by classification. Additional details on the segmentation methodology are available in the methodology chapter of [Beyond MAGA: A Profile of the Trump Coalition](#).

Numbers in data visualizations are rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures may total to larger or smaller than one-hundred percent due to rounding.

Beyond MAGA segmentation

Based on over 18,000 interviews, [Beyond MAGA: A Profile of the Trump Coalition](#) identifies four distinct types of Trump voters:

MAGA Hardliners represent the fiery core of Trump's base. They are fiercely loyal, deeply religious, and animated by a sense that America is in an existential struggle between good and evil, with God firmly on their side.

Anti-Woke Conservatives are relatively well-off, politically engaged, and deeply frustrated by the perceived takeover of schools, culture, and institutions by the progressive left.

Mainline Republicans are middle-of-the-road conservatives who play by the rules and expect others to do the same. Most do not follow politics closely. For them, Trump's strength is that he advances familiar conservative priorities: securing the border, keeping the economy strong, and preserving a sense of cultural stability.

The **Reluctant Right** is the most ambivalent cohort of Trump's coalition, and the group most likely to have voted for Trump transactionally: the businessman who was "less bad" than the alternative. Many feel disconnected from national politics and believe politicians do not share their priorities.

Guiding questions

1

Who supports national service?

- How widespread is support for national service among Americans, particularly beyond the center-left?
- What nuances exist within the Trump coalition and across generations?
- How do fears of AI-driven job displacement, influence support for national service?

2

What program design maximizes support?

- What program designs or elements are necessary to build and sustain public support?
- Is support for national service conditional on particular program designs?

3

How to message around national service?

- Which message framings resonate across party affiliations?
- What messages resonate within President Trump's coalition?
- How do message preferences differ across generations?

4

Where does Gen Z stand on national service?

- How supportive is Gen Z of national service compared to other generations?
- What broader social trends, including loneliness and isolation among Gen Z, provide context for national service?
- What program designs or messages make Gen Z more likely to participate?

Who supports national service?

Framing matters: support rises when national service is presented as an opportunity, not a requirement

In a preliminary pilot study, we tested two distinct definitions of national service with over 200 Americans on More in Common's online qualitative panel.

The “**expectation**” **framing**, which implies universal requirement, elicited mixed reactions.

- Many Trump voters oppose mandatory opposition, citing individual freedom, the right to choose one's path, and distrust of the federal government's ability or intentions to administer a compulsory program.
- Even among supporters for national service, backing is often conditional on participation remaining voluntary.

By contrast, the “**opportunity**” **framing** generates broader support across party lines. When national service is presented as a guaranteed opportunity, more panelists, including more Trump voters, focus on its perceived benefits, such as building skills, contributing to the country, and providing a sense of purpose.

Framing matters: support rises when national service is presented as an opportunity, not a requirement

[Expectation framing]

“Universal national service means all young adults are asked to serve the nation to address urgent needs for a defined period, in civilian or military roles, with pay, support, and benefits.”

“I don’t think that it should be mandatory. I think the beauty of America is that you are free to choose what you do.”

— Jon, 55-year-old White man, Devoted Conservative, MAGA Hardliner, Republican from Mooresville, North Carolina

[Opportunity framing]

“Universal national service means every young adult is guaranteed the opportunity to serve the nation to address urgent needs for a defined period, in civilian or military roles, with pay, support, and benefits.”

“This is a great way to help young people get a good start in life and teaches them the values of hard work and being dedicated civilians.”

— Julia, 43-year-old White woman, Moderate, Anti-Woke Conservative, Republican from Carlton, Minnesota

Most Trump voters support voluntary, civilian-focused national service

Strong bipartisan support for national service: more than 8 in 10 Democrats and Republicans back national service programs under this definition, including roughly four in ten who strongly support them.

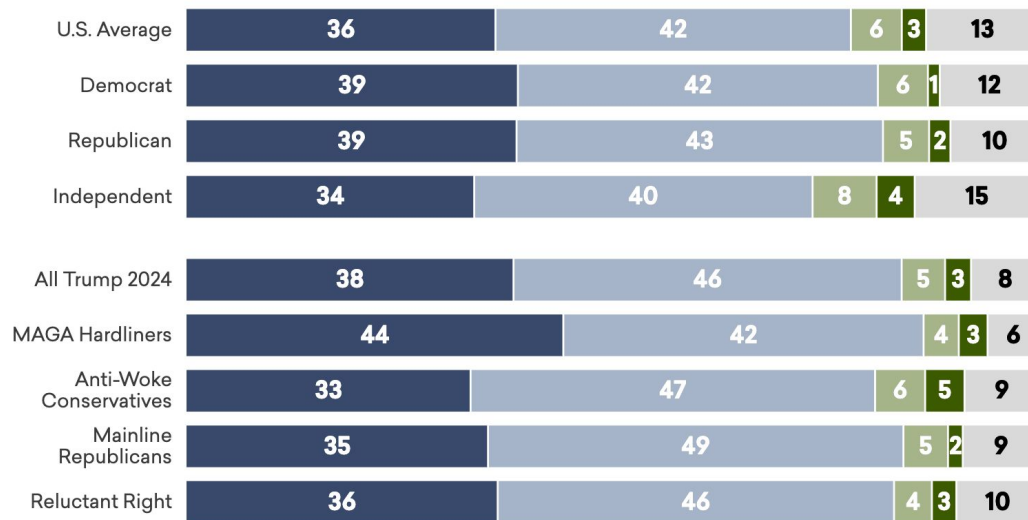
Within President Trump's coalition, MAGA Hardliners are the most enthusiastic supporters.

In recent years, there have been proposals for national service programs for young adults, in which participants would spend a defined period of time working primarily in civilian roles, such as community projects, building critical infrastructure, disaster response, or other public needs.

Based on this description, do you support or oppose national service programs for young adults?

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose ● Not sure

Percentage (%)



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Most Republicans favor government action in helping young people adapt to AI job loss than staying out entirely

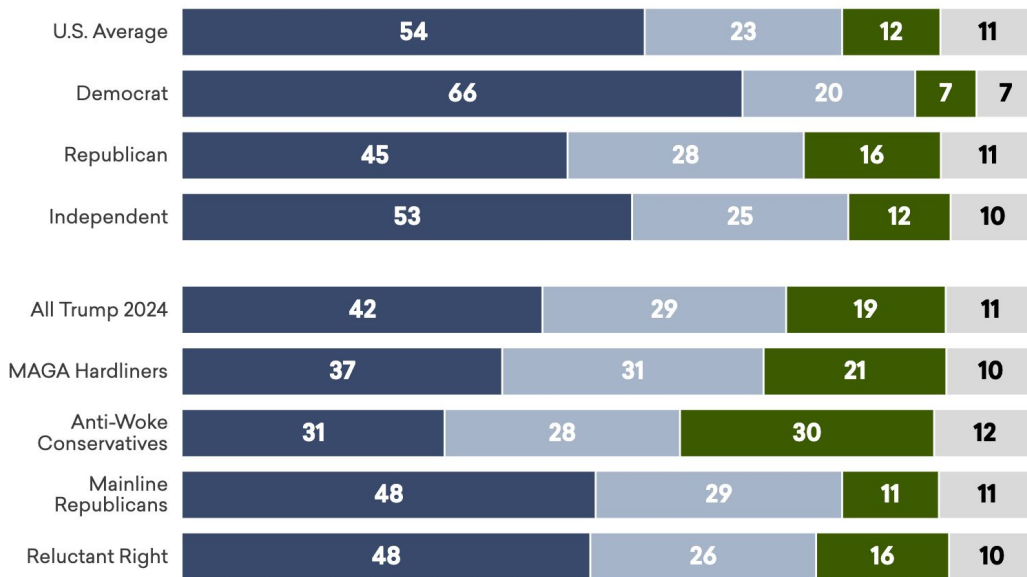
Republicans are 3x more likely to favor a more active role (45%) than to prefer the government stay mostly out (16%).

Within the Trump coalition, Mainline Republicans and the Reluctant Right are more likely to support a more active government role. Anti-Woke Conservatives and MAGA Hardliners are divided between active and more limited government involvement.

If AI reduces job opportunities for young adults, what role should the government play in helping young adults adapt?

● Take a more active role ● Take a limited role ● Stay mostly out ● Not sure

Percentage (%)



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Most Americans prefer earned contribution through service than direct financial support

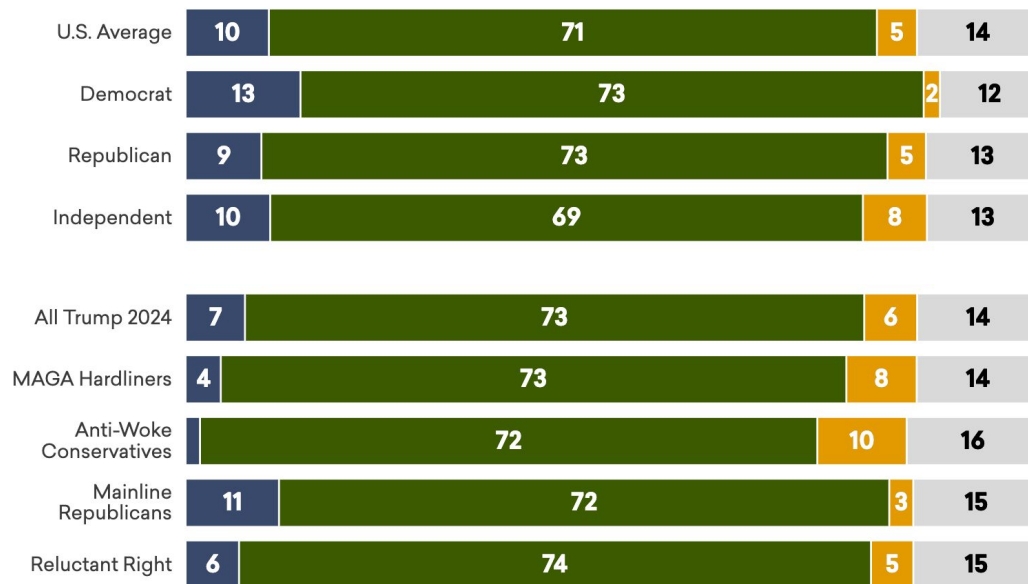
Americans are 7 times more likely to support opportunities to earn financial support and job training through national service than direct cash assistance.

Preference for national service over direct financial support is bipartisan and consistent across Trump's coalition.

If AI reduces job opportunities for young adults, which of these approaches would you prefer the government take?

- Provide direct financial support, with no expectation to work
- Provide opportunities to earn financial support and job training by contributing through national service
- Other
- Not sure

Percentage (%)



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

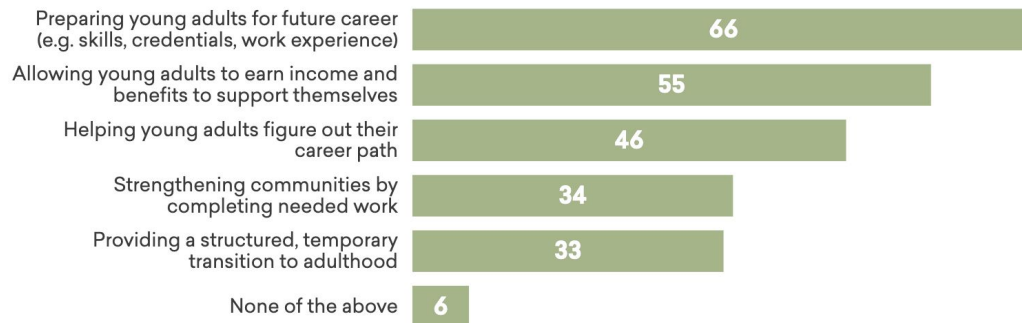
Career preparation and income are seen as the biggest benefits of national service

Across party lines, most Americans believe that in the face of AI-driven job loss, national service could help prepare young adults for future careers (66%) and allow them to earn income and benefits to support themselves (55%).

If AI reduces job opportunities for young adults, what role, if any, could a national service program play in helping young adults prepare?

● U.S. Average

Percentage (%)



Source: More in Common, 2026

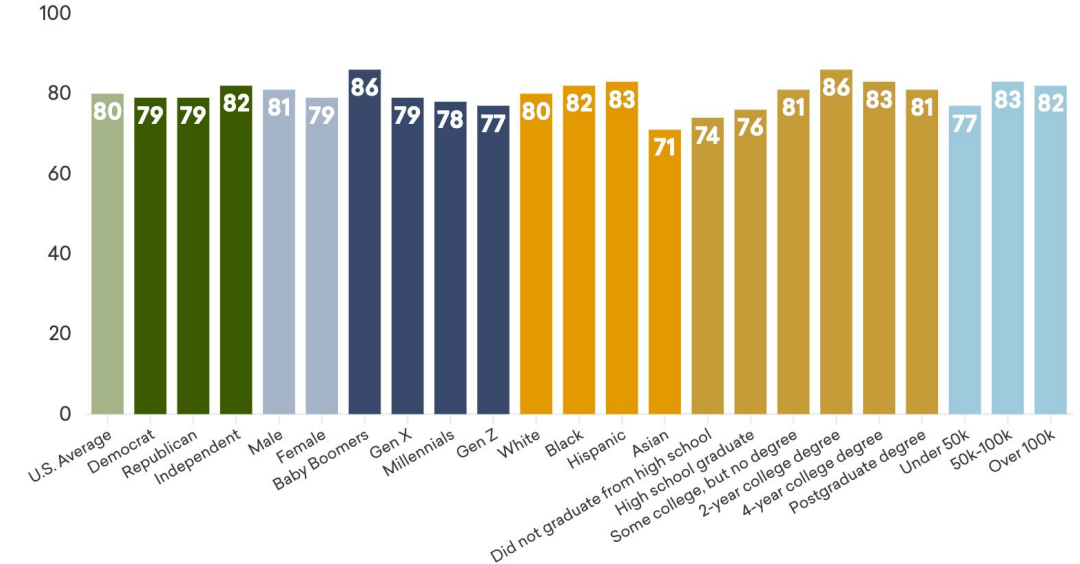
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Concerns with AI-driven job displacement cuts across partisanship and demographics

Overwhelming majorities of Americans across groups, including almost 8 in 10 Republicans, believe that AI will very or somewhat likely reduce jobs in the US in the near future.

How likely do you think it is that artificial intelligence (AI) will replace or reduce jobs in the US in the next 3-5 years?

Percentage (%) very or somewhat likely



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Americans concerned with AI-driven job loss are most supportive of national service

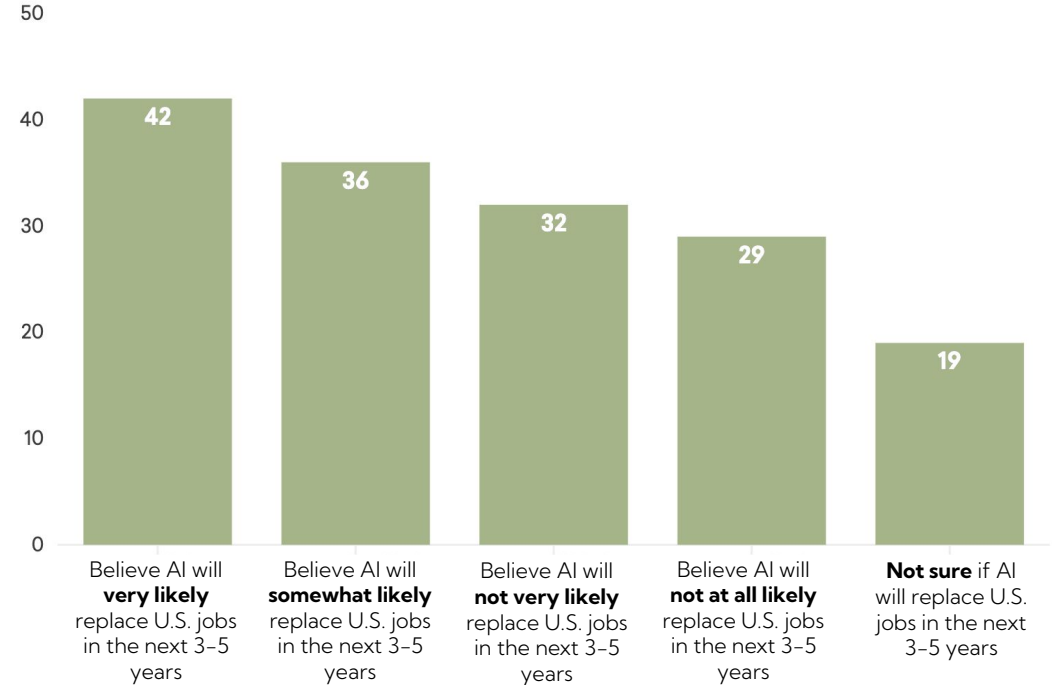
Among those who believe AI will very likely replace jobs in the next 3–5 years, 42% strongly support national service programs.

This suggests that as AI-driven job loss persists, support for national service may increase.

Do you support or oppose national service programs for young adults?

Percentage (%) strongly support national service programs

● U.S. Average



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

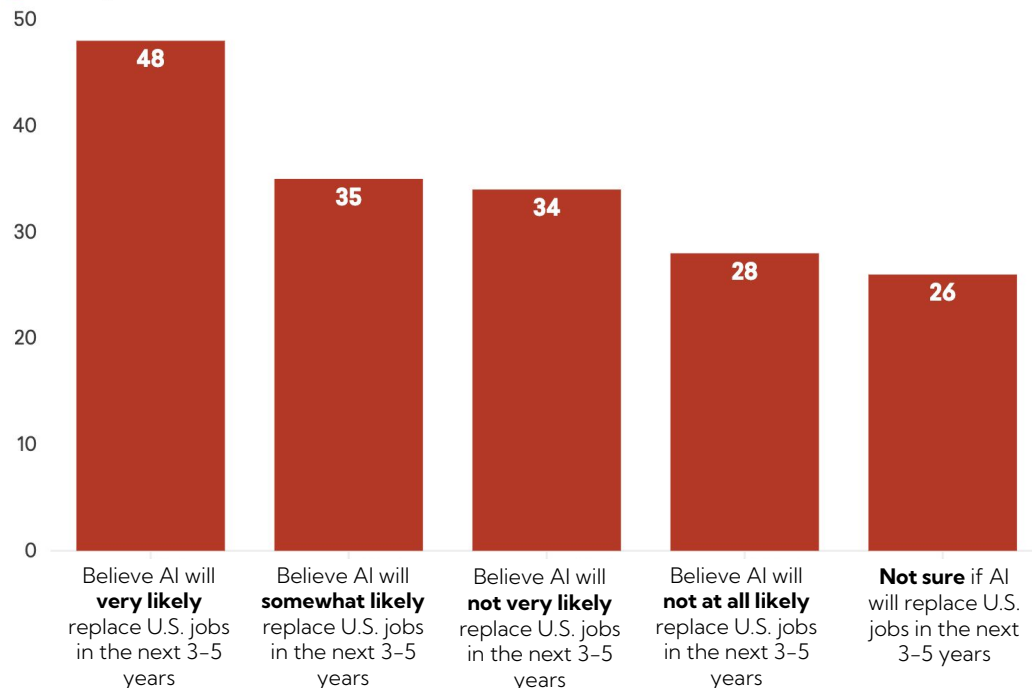
The same trend holds for Trump voters

Among Trump voters who think AI will very likely replace U.S. jobs, nearly half (48%) strongly support national service.

Do you support or oppose national service programs for young adults?

Percentage (%) strongly support national service programs

● All Trump 2024



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

What program design maximizes support?

What program design maximizes support?

- Participation is **voluntary** or expected for all, but not mandatory
- Includes **both civilian and military** roles, but not primarily military
- Civilian roles should include **skilled trades and apprenticeships** (e.g., construction, electrical, plumbing) and **healthcare support**, followed by infrastructure building and repair, education support, community improvement, disaster response, and conservation
- Program prioritizes **transferable skills** for future employment, a sense of direction and **purpose**, and **guaranteed pay** and benefits
- Employer-recognized job training or **credentials**, and a living **wage**, are essential to public support for national service

Americans are wary of mandatory national service program

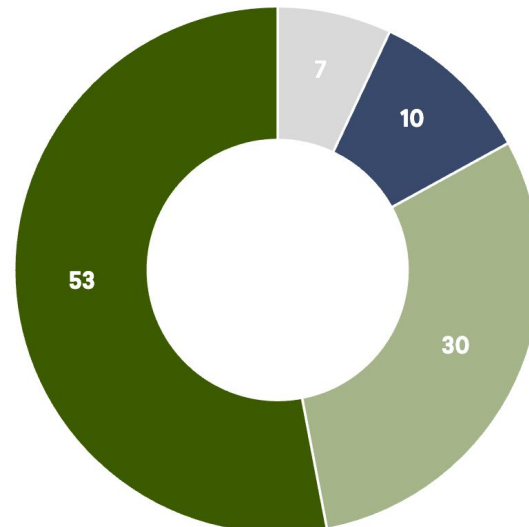
Only 1 in 10 Americans think the programs should be mandatory for all.

Around half across groups think it should be made optional but available to every young adult (53%).

Around one third think it should be expected for all but not required.

If a national service program were created for young adults, do you think it should be...

- Mandatory for all
- Expected for all, but not required
- Optional, but available to every young adult
- Not sure



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Most Americans across groups favor national service with a mix of civilian and military roles

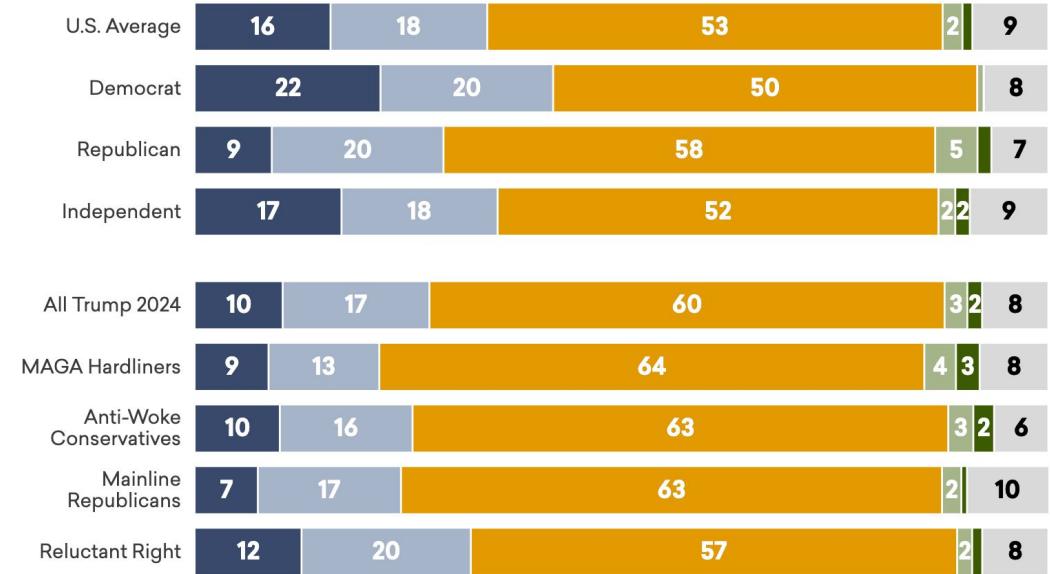
Almost 9 in 10 think the program should offer a mix of civilian and military roles (53%) or

Few want national service to be mostly or only military service.

If a national service program for young adults were created, do you think it should offer...

● Civilian roles only ● Mostly civilian roles ● A mix of civilian and military roles
● Mostly military service ● Military service only ● Not sure

Percentage (%)



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

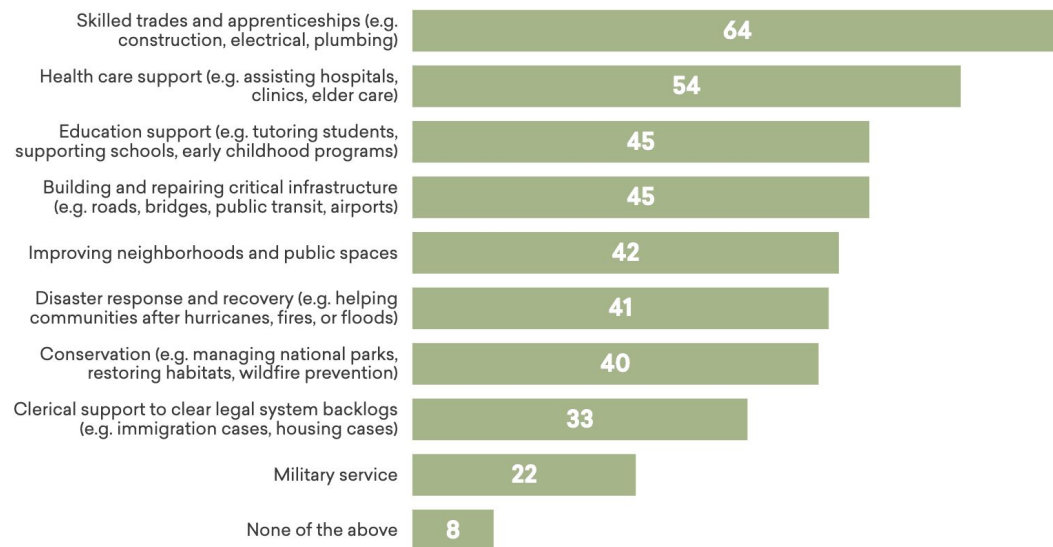
Skilled trades, health care support, and education support are the most popular roles

Other roles including building and repairing critical infrastructure, improving public spaces, disaster response, and conservation are also favored by many.

If a national service program for young adults were created, which types of roles would make the program more appealing to you?

● U.S. Average

Percentage (%)



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

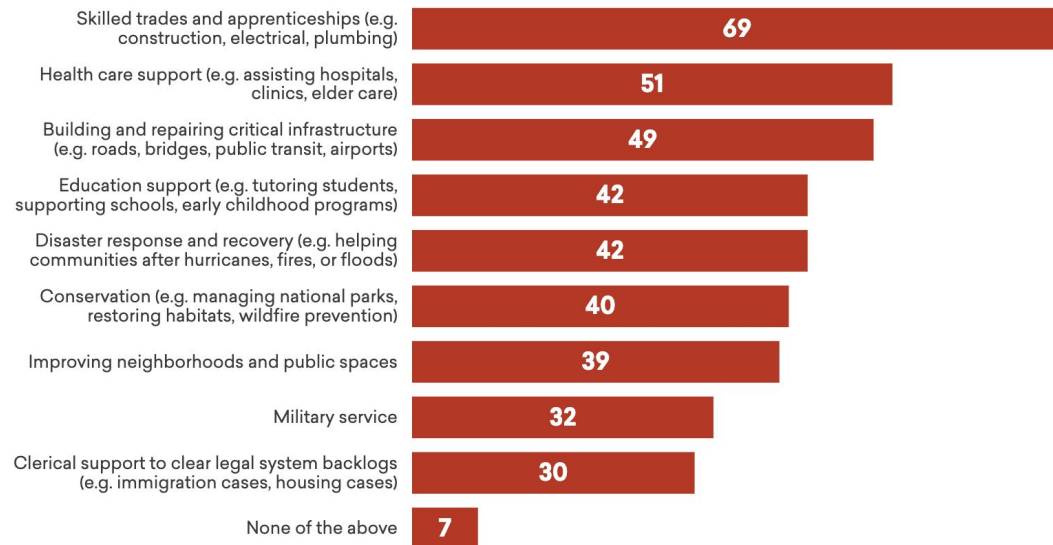
Trump voters especially favor skilled trades, as well as healthcare support and building critical infrastructure

Almost 7 in 10 Trump voters find skilled trades, such as construction, electrical, plumbing, as appealing roles for national service programs.

If a national service program for young adults were created, which types of roles would make the program more appealing to you?

● All Trump 2024

Percentage (%)



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Most Americans across party lines prioritize transferable skills

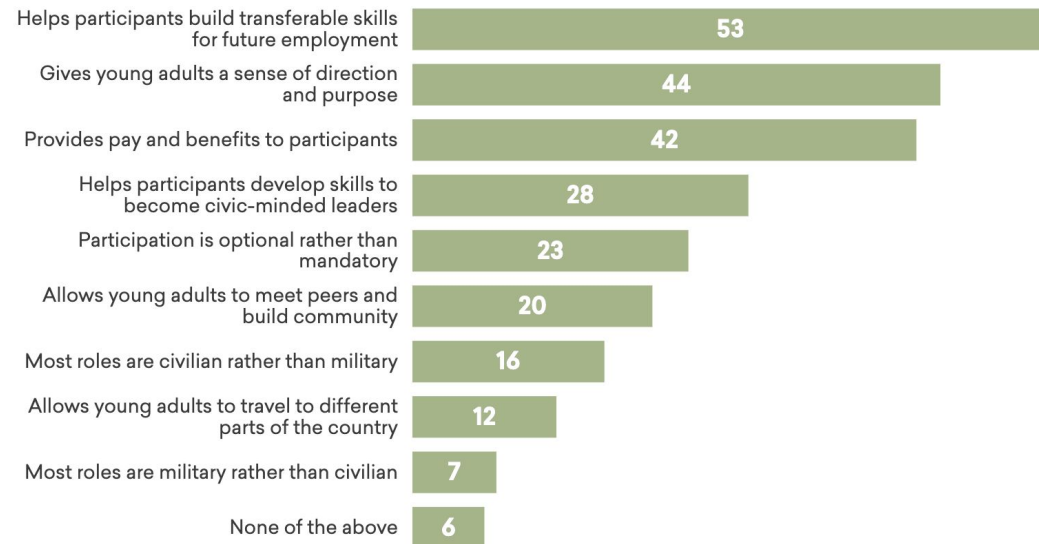
Many also say they will be most supportive of national service programs that give sense of direction and purpose (44%), and pay and benefits (42%).

Republicans/Trump voters across segments especially prioritize transferable skills (59%) and sense of purpose (48%) .

Which program elements would make you most supportive of a national service program for young adults? Select up to three.

● U.S. Average

Percentage (%)



Source: More in Common, 2026

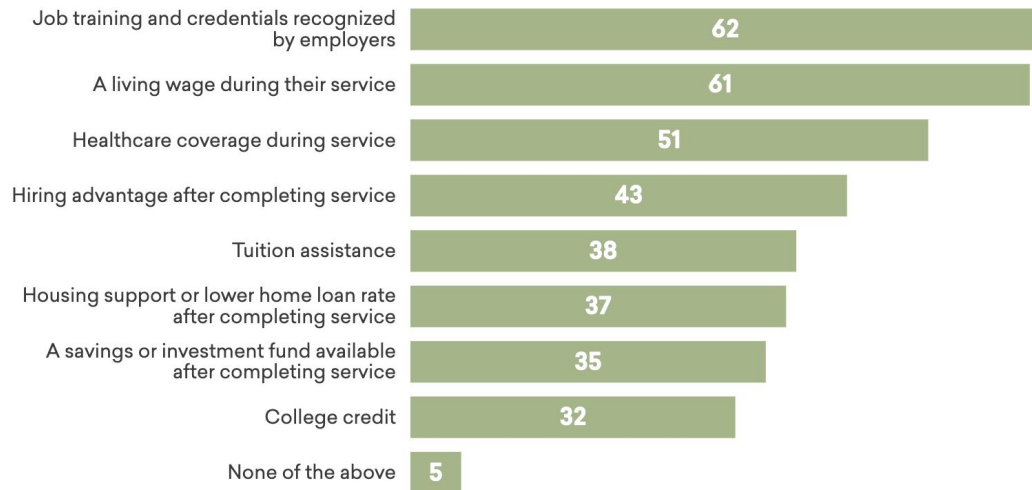
Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Most Americans across groups believe national service participants should receive job credentials and living wages

If a national service program for young adults were created, what should participants receive in return for their service? Select all that apply.

● U.S. Average

Percentage (%)



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Public opinion varies on which institution should administer national service programs

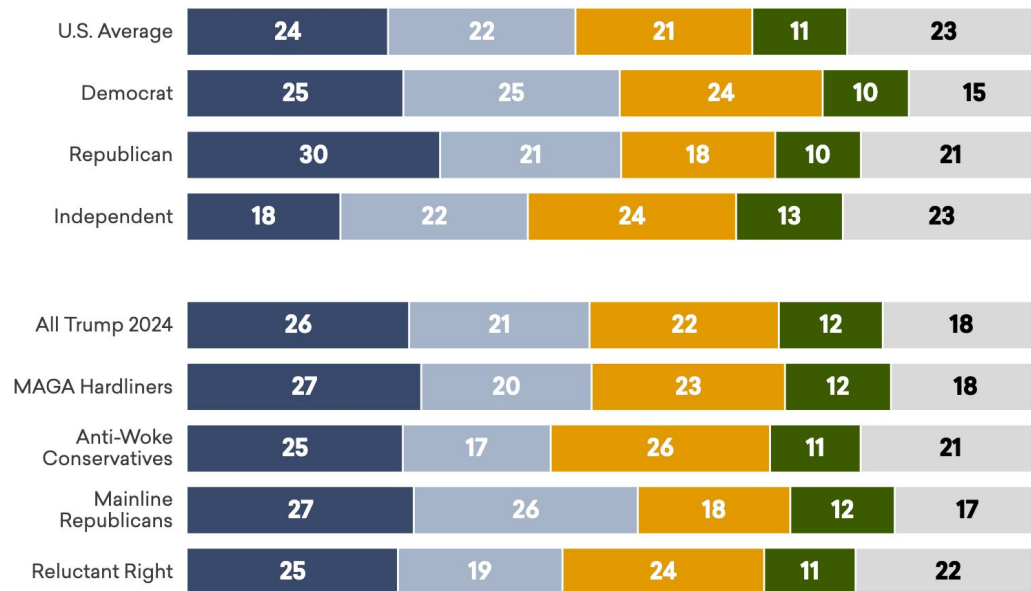
Roughly one-fifth favor the federal government, one-fifth prefer state governments, and one-fifth support an independent nonpartisan organization.

More than one-fifth remain unsure.

Which of the following should run a national service program for young adults?

● Federal government
 ● State governments
 ● An independent, nonpartisan organization
 ● Local communities
 ● Not sure

Percentage (%)



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

How to message around national service?

Messaging framework overview

[Patriotism]

National service would bring young Americans together to serve the country and strengthen the nation. It helps build patriotism, a sense of responsibility, and a strong work ethic.

[Growth]

National service would offer young adults a shared rite of passage, a chance to take on meaningful challenges and be part of something bigger than themselves. At a formative stage of life, it can provide direction, confidence, and a stronger sense of purpose.

[Connection]

National service would give young adults the chance to meet peers and build lasting friendships through work as well as fun. It creates opportunities for teamwork, new experiences, and a stronger sense of belonging.

[Responsibility]

The country has a responsibility to ensure young adults are not left behind. National service would help them adapt by providing paid work, practical skills, and a pathway into a changing economy.

[Adventure]

National service would give young adults the chance to meet new friends, try new things, and travel to places they might never otherwise go. It's an opportunity to meet new friends, gain independence, and have an unforgettable experience while figuring out what comes next.

[Local impact]

National service would strengthen local communities while giving young adults valuable hands-on experience. By working on real needs, participants can build skills, expand their networks, and make a tangible difference.

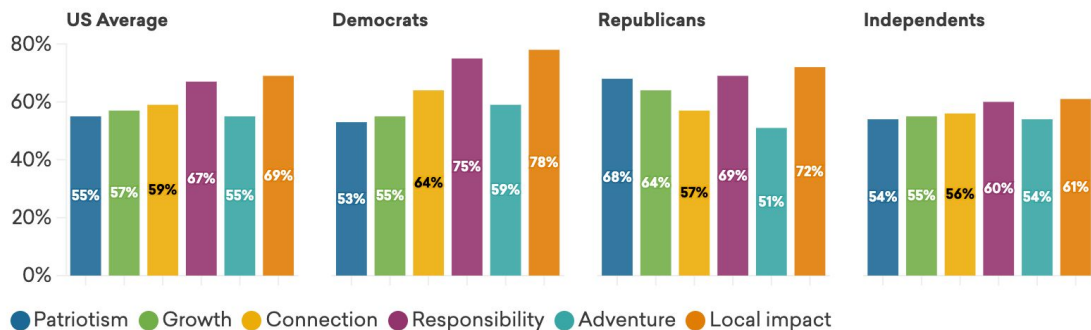
Messages emphasizing **local impact** and hands-on experience perform best, followed by messages highlighting the country's **responsibility** to equip young people with work and skills

Among Democrats, the top messages highlighted local impact through paid work, national responsibility to support young people, and building connections and belonging.

Among Republicans, the strongest-performing messages emphasized strengthening local communities through paid work, not leaving any young person behind, and **patriotism/serving the country**.

Independents showed no clear preference among the messages tested.

Effect of messages on support for national service programs by party affiliation
Net support = Much/somewhat more supportive MINUS much/somewhat less supportive



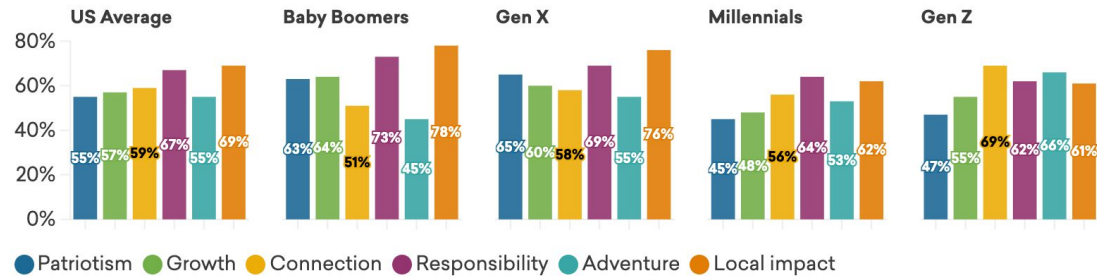
Source: More in Common, February 2026

Across generations, most messages resonate, especially those about **local impact** while **building skills** and **responsibility to provide work and skills**

Gen Z responded most favorably to messages emphasizing **connection**—meeting peers and building belonging through work—followed by the **adventure** message highlighting opportunities to meet new people and travel to new places.

Effect of messages on support for national service programs by generation

Net support = Much/somewhat more supportive MINUS much/somewhat less supportive

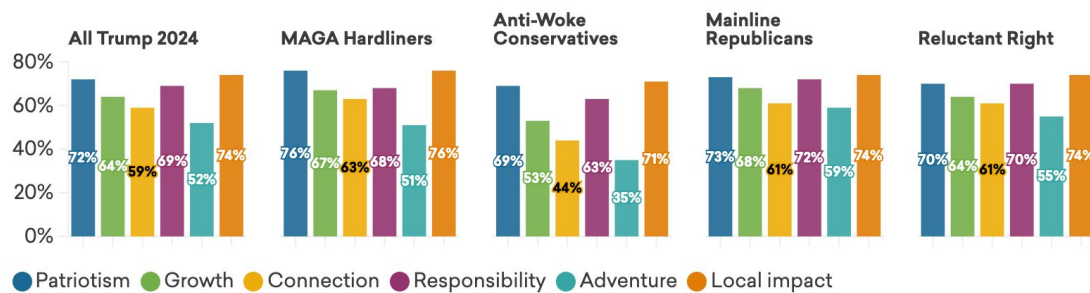


Source: More in Common, February 2026

Trump voters across segments respond most positively to messages emphasizing **local impact** through **paid work** and **patriotism** framing, followed by messages focused on the country's **responsibility** not leaving any young person behind

The adventure framing highlighting meeting new friends and traveling performs less well particularly among Anti-Woke Conservatives, and to a lesser extent among MAGA Hardliners.

Effect of messages on support for national service programs by Trump voter segments
Net support = Much/somewhat more supportive MINUS much/somewhat less supportive



Source: More in Common, February 2026

Where does Gen Z stand on national service?

Gen Z is the least enthusiastic generation about national service

Two thirds of Gen Z (65%) support national service, but enthusiasm is lower than among older generations.

Over one fifth are unsure.

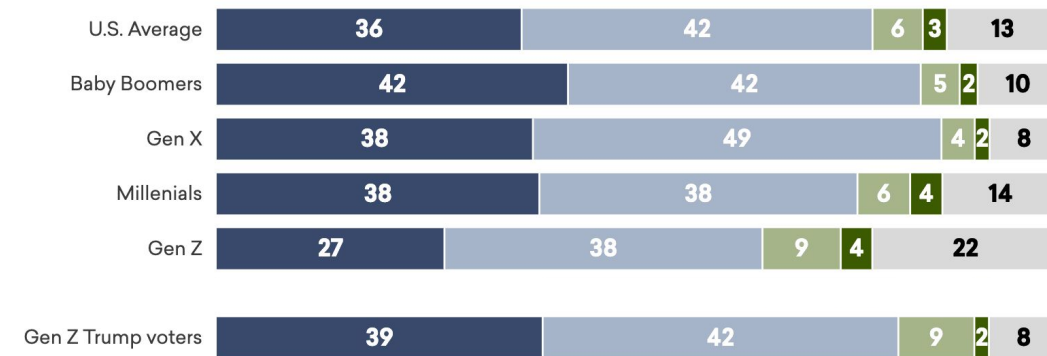
Gen Z Trump voters are much more supportive, with 8 in 10 backing national service.

In recent years, there have been proposals for national service programs for young adults, in which participants would spend a defined period of time working primarily in civilian roles, such as community projects, building critical infrastructure, disaster response, or other public needs.

Based on this description, do you support or oppose national service programs for young adults?

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose ● Not sure

Percentage (%)



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.



But many Gen Z are isolated, lonely, and don't feel a sense of purpose in life

Stark generational divides on loneliness and isolation:

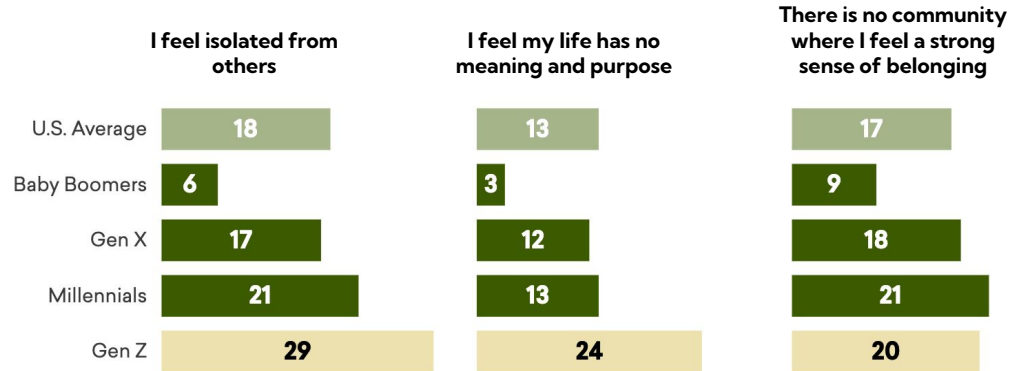
Nearly 3 in 10 Gen Z say they often feel isolated from others.

A quarter of Gen Z say they often feel their lives have no meaning and purpose.

One fifth of Gen Z say there is no community where they feel a strong sense of belonging.

Indicate how often each of the statements below is descriptive of you.

Percentage (%) selecting "I often feel this way"



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.



Most Gen Z also favor active government role in helping young people adapt to AI-driven job loss

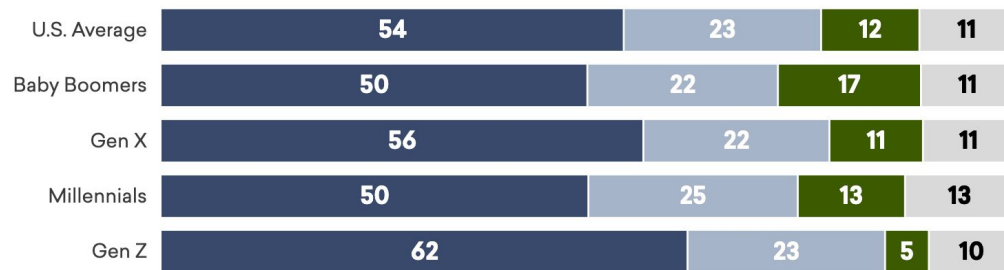
Over 6 in 10 Gen Z favor a more active government role, the highest level of support across all generations.

Only 5% say the government should stay out.

If AI reduces job opportunities for young adults, what role should the government play in helping young adults adapt?

● Take a more active role ● Take a limited role ● Stay mostly out ● Not sure

Percentage (%)



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.



Only 1 in 10 Gen Z favor direct financial support over national service

Although Gen Z is less enthusiastic about national service than older generations when evaluated on its own, they still favor it over UBI-style direct financial support.

If AI reduces job opportunities for young adults, which of these approaches would you prefer the government take?

- Provide direct financial support, with no expectation to work
- Provide opportunities to earn financial support and job training by contributing through national service
- Other
- Not sure

Percentage (%)



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.



Providing a sense of purpose, transferable skills, with pay and benefits may attract more Gen Z support

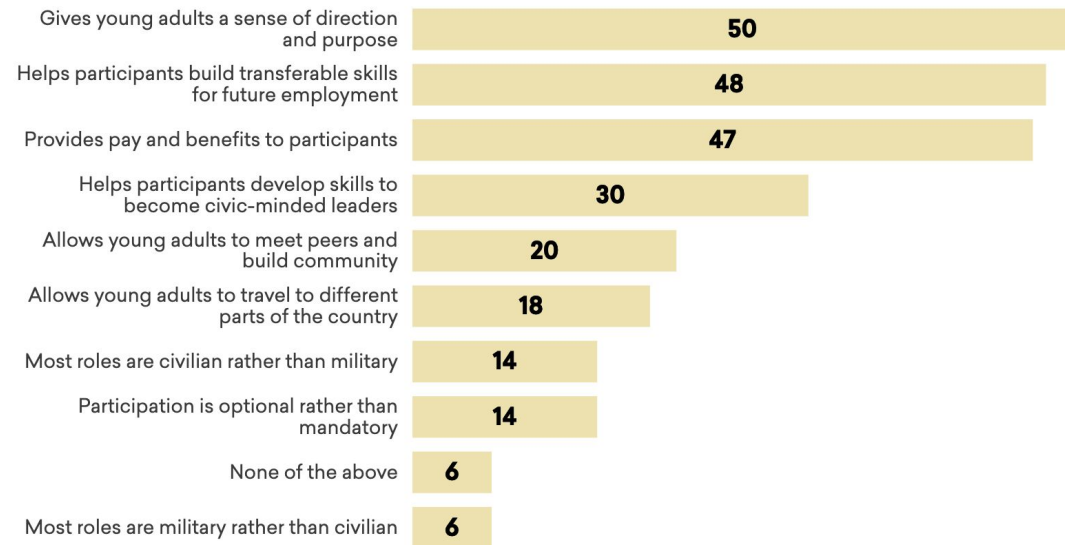
Only about one-fifth of Gen Z prioritize meeting new friends and traveling, even though connection and adventure messages resonate with them (section 3).

This suggests that although benefits like traveling and social connection make national service programs more appealing to youth, their core priorities are still gaining direction and building transferable career skills.

Which program elements would make you most supportive of a national service program for young adults? Select up to three.

● Gen Z

Percentage (%)



Source: More in Common, 2026

Note: Figure may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Thank you