

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2018
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-B017
TITLE: Financial Support for Administering the Episcopal Service Corps
PROPOSER: The Rt. Rev. George Wayne Smith
TOPIC: Budget

Directly Related: (Attached)

2009-D047 Commend Episcopal Service Corps
2000-A134 Establish an Episcopal Service Corps

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

2009-D077 Commend Young Adult Ministry Activities
2003-A065 Support Young Adult Leadership Programs
1991-D116 Affirm the Importance of Young Adults in the Life of the Church

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1976 through 2015, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives at 800-525-9329 before Convention or at Convention in the General Convention Secretariat.

B017 Financial Support for Administering the Episcopal Service Corps

Proposer	The Rt. Rev. George Wayne Smith
Endorsed by	Prior, The Rt. Rev. Brian N.; Bruce, The Rt. Rev. Diane M. Jardine
Sponsored by	
Page numbers	Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. N/A
HiA / Leg. Cttee	/
Current Status	Pre-Filed Resolution
Version	Original (as filed)
Review Status	Not yet reviewed

RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 79th General Convention embrace the ministry of the Episcopal Service Corps as a dynamic and transformational force in the lives of young adults and for the Episcopal Church; be it further
- 2 *Resolved*, That as a demonstration of this commitment to and investment in the long-term health of current and future local programs, the General Convention establish a financial commitment toward administration and care among the other young adult ministries in the Office of Formation; and be it further
- 3 *Resolved*, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$150,000 for the implementation of this resolution.

EXPLANATION

ESC Programs: For 9+ years the Episcopal Service Corps has brought together practitioners from across the church in the shared work of drawing young adults (18-30 years old) into deeper relationship with God through service. With the help of Trinity Episcopal Church in Manhattan, the then Fund for Theological Education, and this General Convention, ESC has grown from 6 grass roots organizations operating independently across the United States to 20+ programs spread across dozens of dioceses and touching the lives of over 1,000 corps members.

While each ESC program is unique and independent, they all share a common vision centered around seven core values: Service, Prayer, Community, Leadership, Vocation, Justice, and Network.

Communities of 3-20 corps members live in intentional community while serving full time at churches, schools, communities, non-profits, camps, and farms. Over the course of a year they eat meals, pray, build their leadership skills, and discern their common and individual vocations that seek and support the justice of God's kingdom. They are tied to one another, to their sponsoring parish or diocese, and to the broader community of programs in a network of support and growth that sustains them through their year of service and beyond.

Impact on Corps Members: Corps members, many of whom are recent college graduates, gain valuable experience living and working in diverse communities. They are supported, coached, and

challenged by their program directors and peers to build on their existing skillsets and mental models and step beyond their comfort zones. As result, corps members build valuable interpersonal and organizational skills but also emerge as leaders in their communities and in the broader church. Many alumni make their way to seminary while many others serve as clergy and lay leaders in our churches and dioceses. Every year, ESC invests heavily in helping young adults become leaders-of-faith in their communities, redefining Christian leadership in a world that desperately needs it.

Impact on dioceses: Episcopal service Corps programs also serve the dioceses in which they exist. As centers for ministry they provide a gathering place for young adults beyond the program and become hubs of relationship, community, and service. For many dioceses ESC programs have become incubators for yet more ministries as they push the bounds of what it means for the church to be present and active in the community. In doing so they energize neighboring parishes and provide a catalyst for the entire diocese to adopt new practices and approaches to young adult ministry.

Impact on the Episcopal Church: Episcopal Service Corps programs are distinctly Episcopal in prayer, reflection, and community and yet live on the edge of what it means to be part of the Episcopal branch of the Jesus movement. These communities of young adults are finding new life and connections in our Episcopal practices as they together discern their own vocations in the world. They are teaching us how to be present with and learn from the gifts of young adults. Together we are an engine discerning and developing the Episcopal Christian leaders the world is crying out for and in gathering together as leaders of our various programs, the Episcopal Service Corps becomes a learning community for innovative practices that raise up, draw in, and follow these leaders. Tied more closely into the broader church we hope we can all become learners and innovators together as we share stories, practices, and support for the flourishing of these ministries across our church.

The Functions of the Network: While each of ESC's programs functions autonomously, the network as administered by a 501c3, has served a key role in the expansion, growth, and health of programs by:

- Convening and nurturing a network of support, collaboration, and innovation between local programs through twice-annual in-person gatherings, regular virtual touchpoints, and multiple mediums for the sharing of resources, experience, and support (shared drive, email list, mentoring program, new program director support, consultation, etc.)
- Defining common expectations for excellence and good stewardship in program design and execution through covenanted relationship and targeted support of local programs including best practices, in person consultations, troubleshooting, and conflict management
- Intentionally developing and maintaining a common identity through branding, partnerships, and communications that tell our story and encourage young adults, service sites, dioceses, and parishes to invest themselves and their resources in our common work
- Facilitating the recruitment and selection of an increasingly diverse cohort of corps members through a common application, technical support, and mutually agreed upon deadlines and expectations

Discerning the ask (from the Board of ESC): It is these roles that the board of the Episcopal Service Corps requests this General Convention to embrace and finance during this triennium. After a long period of intentional discernment with our programs and stakeholders, we have mutually discerned that this moment in our history (as well as the history of our country and our church) calls for a thoughtful restructuring of ESC's common work to better respond to the evolving needs of a new

generation of young adults.

ESC represents a strong network of creative individuals and committed communities seeking to grow and innovate. In our current configuration, as an independent organization, we are not equipped to provide both the platform and resources for growth and innovation while also investing in infrastructure for long term sustainability. By moving ESC's primary functions under the direction of the Presiding Bishop's staff, ESC seeks to stabilize the network and plan for long term success. Bishop Curry has effectively built a team with the skills, passion, and orientation to effectively and faithfully facilitate the functions of ESC in close collaboration and under the direction of its member programs. Further, we believe it to be an act of good stewardship to leverage the resources housed within the Episcopal Church Center that already provide similar support functions for other networks of the Episcopal Church, including communications, anti-racism and safeguarding training, event planning, website management, legal and HR counsel, data collection and analysis, ecumenical collaboration, coaching, and organizational development.

While we realize this is no small invitation and ask, we believe that ESC is an important asset of our denomination and want to see it grow and thrive as part of the Episcopal branch of the Jesus movement. We hope you will join us in this work of imagination and new life and invite the Presiding Bishop's staff into a thoughtful and intentional process of discernment and strategic decision making over the coming months. We hope to design a new structure that is led and guided by the member programs, in joint discernment and decision-making for their mutual benefit and the service of young adults. We hope that it will be a structure that upholds our core values of leadership, prayer, vocation, network, community, service, and prayer. And we hope that it will be a sustainable structure that will strengthen our programs in their work while creating space for them to create new ways to engage young adults in a life of service, discernment, and prayer.



Resolution Number: 2009-D047
Title: Commend Episcopal Service Corps
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention commend the work of the Episcopal Service Corps in raising up future leaders for the Church and the world through offering opportunities for young adults to spend a year providing services to those in need and discerning vocation in the context of simple and sustainable Christian community.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), p. 383.



Resolution Number: 2000-A134
Title: Establish an Episcopal Service Corps
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the Executive Council establish an Episcopal Service Corps, to complement Volunteers in Mission and Jubilee Ministry, raising up the gifts of all church people by providing short and long term (3 months to 24 months) opportunities for volunteer service to all aspects of the life and ministry of the church.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Denver, 2000* (New York: General Convention, 2001), p. 681.