



*The Cabinet Office*

105 Front Street Hamilton HM 12 Bermuda  
Tel: 441-292-5501 Fax: 292-8397

5<sup>th</sup> February 2010

**National Service Plan Consultation Draft**

Dear Stakeholder,

In support of the Government's pledge to "reawaken" the commitment to volunteering in the people of Bermuda and to provide a framework for individuals to give back to the community, I would like to share with you the draft plan for the National Service Programme and invite your feedback on its contents.

It is the Government's aim to encourage young Bermudians between the ages of 24 and 30 to share their knowledge, skills and talents with our community by making a commitment to National Service. National service not only improves the lives of others, it improves the community overall. It encourages interaction between people living in a community and strengthens community connections. It can teach and give work experience, responsibility, self-respect, self-esteem, passion, hope, generosity, tolerance, cooperation and a sense of belonging.

This Government has reviewed successful National Service programmes by other countries throughout the world. Countries such as China, Kenya, South Africa, and the United Kingdom offer voluntary state sponsored programmes that have significantly benefited their communities. In the United States, the Corporation for National and Community Service sponsors several service options that have also proven to be enormously successful. In the Caribbean as well, countries such as Jamaica and the Bahamas have begun to implement national service plans.

Your views and recommendations are being specifically solicited in order to improve upon the draft plan prior to its finalization. The draft plan will also be available at [www.gov.bm](http://www.gov.bm). All submissions will be considered in earnest and should be sent to [national.service@gov.bm](mailto:national.service@gov.bm) or to the attention of:

The Cabinet Secretary  
Ref: National Service  
The Cabinet Office  
105 Front Street  
Hamilton, HM 12

Sincerely,

Dr. the Hon. Ewart F. Brown, J.P., M.P.  
Premier of Bermuda

Submissions should be received on or before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.  
Encl.



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

## **A PLAN FOR A NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMME FOR BERMUDA**

The National Service Programme is designed to provide opportunities for every young Bermudian to contribute meaningfully to our society and broaden their scope through mentoring younger peers and assisting the elderly.

### **Section 1**

#### **The Department for National Service**

1. The Department for National Service would be the headquarters and place of register for the National Service Programme. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, Home Affairs and Housing, the Department would be headed by a Director who would answer directly to the Permanent Secretary. The Director would be responsible for the strategic and policy direction as well as the management, administration and delivery of the programme. The Department would establish and maintain a database of all participating organizations and active national service enrollees. In addition to the Director, there would be an Administrative Officer/Assistant and Technical Support Officers. Full post duties and responsibilities are to be determined. The primary responsibilities of the Department would be:

- a) Management and administration of the programme;
- b) Recruitment and screening of National Service providers; and
- c) Monitoring, reporting, enforcement, funding and adjustment of programme delivery.

2. The Department would work in conjunction with public schools, the Bermuda College, community centres, hospitals, the Centre on Philanthropy, rest homes, rehabilitation agencies, youth groups, sports programmes, and other organizations that may provide outreach to young people, including youth with disabilities. The Director would be responsible for duties which include, but are not limited to recruitment, screening, monitoring and compliance.

3. The responsibility of the Recruitment and Screening Unit within the Department would be to:

- a) Act as a repository for community services and programmes;
- b) Educate and raise awareness about the need to give back to the community;
- c) Invite and solicit submissions from agencies and organizations who qualify;
- d) Promote national service by advertising benefits and advantages of participating in the programme;
- e) Act as the sign-up centre for national service activities;
- f) Assess and place applicants in approved programmes; and
- g) Develop additional incentive programmes.

4. The responsibility of the Compliance Unit would be to:

- a) Keep a register follow-up on those who have registered for National Service from the age of 24 to 30 years;
- b) Keep records on those who have set aside national service to pursue tertiary education;
- c) Acknowledge those who have completed their time served; and
- d) Continuously monitor and evaluate the programme operations.

### **Compliance**

5. Compliance with the National Service is goal and incentive oriented.

## **Section 2**

### **Eligibility**

6. All male and female Bermudians are eligible until the age of 30 but they must make a commitment no later than their 28<sup>th</sup> birthday.

7. All persons who choose to commit to this programme must complete a requirement of 16 hours of service per month for a total period of two years in order to qualify for the benefits.

8. Except for mental or physical illness, where it is determined that an individual is unfit to serve in the National Service; he/she may be reassigned to other community service alternatives to be determined.

9. It is proposed that individuals having served (12) twelve months or more in the Regiment may request a transfer to the National Service Programme, pending approval from the Bermuda Regiment. As the commitment to the Bermuda Regiment is also of national significance, this would hinge upon the supplemental number of recruits available to fill that spot.

## **Vetting**

10. Once registered for the national service, individuals must go through a qualifying screening process to ensure that the safety and best interest of all participants are protected. These measures would include but are not limited to:

- a) police and court background checks;
- b) physical and mental health examinations.

11. If a candidate seeks placement by the Department, screening for level of education, vocational training, and professional work experience would be conducted. In addition, candidates may notify the programme if they have a disability or religious affiliation that would impact their placement in certain programmes.

## **Section 3**

### **National Service Programme Criteria**

12. The National Service Programme shall be aimed at nurturing an individual's skills and interests in a manner that is beneficial to Bermuda and its people. This is consistent with both developing career goals and further assisting in communities after the period of service is complete.

13. The National Service Programme shall:

- a) Meet an identified need in the participant;
- b) Provide a meaningful community benefit; and
- c) Encourage collaboration among young adults through the sharing of knowledge and talents.

14. Individuals may either select an activity of their choosing involving youth or seniors, or they may seek to be referred by the National Service Department. Subject to the Department's approval, national service may include, but is not limited to:

- a) Tutoring core subjects in the education system or in an educational programme;
- b) Provision of professional advice by those who are in the health, legal or financial sector about subjects such as money management, civil rights, and nutrition;
- c) Coaching youth or holding an office in sports programmes;
- d) Serving on private or Government Boards that involve or relate to youth or seniors;
- e) Serving as a volunteer to youth or senior agencies/organizations;
- f) Working on project proposals from various organizations involving youth or seniors; and

g) Serving as a resource for the Department of National Service by assuming leadership responsibilities as delegated by staff, i.e. coordinating/leading various volunteer activities.

15. Subject to the Department's approval, those who are between the ages of 24 and 30 who already serve in a volunteer capacity may continue in that capacity.

16. Those who already serve in a voluntary mentoring, coaching or professional advisory capacity would qualify for national service hours as determined by the National Service Department.

17. Service to organizations for profit, to labour unions or to organizations with political affiliations will not count toward National Service.

## **Section 4**

### **Processes for accommodating National Service**

#### **Public Sector**

18. Government and Quango organizations would allow employees to train and mentor young people giving them an insight into a future career, all the while allowing employees to gain their national service hours.

19. The public sector would be encouraged to give their employees a minimum of one (1) hour of service per month from their work time in order to assist them in carrying out national service activities within the community.

#### **Private Sector**

20. Businesses within the private sector would allow those who qualify to gain their national service hours by training and mentoring their younger peers so that they may gain practical knowledge of businesses in Bermuda's economic sector.

21. Businesses would be encouraged to give their employees a minimum of one (1) hour of service per month from their work time in order to assist them in carrying out national service activities within the community

#### **Bermuda College**

22. The Bermuda College would make national service opportunities available to students which shall include college-based volunteer programmes already implemented

on campus, i.e. tutoring, maintenance, sports programs, events held on campus, and outreach initiatives.

### **Co-op Study Programme**

23. Students certifying in programmes such as wood work, electronics, motor mechanics and computer technology at the Bermuda College would gain service hour credit for tutoring in maintenance/technical programmes within schools.

## **Section 5**

### **Incentives for those providing National Service**

24. The following are proposed incentives to offer participants during and/or once national service is completed:

- a) Free public transportation;
- b) One of criteria for Government Further Education awards;
- c) Low interest bank loans;
- d) Discount card packages from various retailers;
- e) Discounts at TCD on licensing fees;
- f) Public recognition once service is completed;
- g) Badges/certificates of completion;
- h) Supportive organizations will be eligible for benefits.

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2010