What will visitors to the National Museum and Center for Service experience and who will be honored there?

The NMCFS will be unlike almost any other place that exists today, and it will certainly be different from what most people think of when they imagine a typical museum.

This will be a vibrant, dynamic, experiential space where visitors of all ages and backgrounds gain a hands-on, heartfelt sense of the full scope and breadth of service and why it matters. Rather than honoring a few selected “great” leaders, artists, or historical events, the NMCFS will celebrate the greatness in every person and the dignity of service as it happens every day and everywhere.

The NMCFS will also be an empowering place. With a goal of inspiring visitors to engage in service themselves, the NMCFS will provide multiple opportunities for people to connect with service projects and organizations, thereby enhancing participation, rejuvenating membership, and expanding contributions to organizations across the full spectrum of service. The rich and inspiring history of service and service organizations will also be presented, from the founding of the nation to the present day, conveyed in a way that makes the history come alive and have relevance to each person's own life.

Of special importance, the NMCFS will also include a memorial space — a place of reflection to honor those who have given their lives in service. Here, families, loved ones, and colleagues, along with visitors, will have an opportunity to pay their respects to those who have given their all for the benefit of others.

What will the National Center for Service do?

In addition to a museum, as a Center for Service the NMCFS will be a focal point, a place to host special exhibitions and events, convene meetings and conferences, create and distribute media content and curriculum, and support service organizations large and small. The Center for Service will also help inspire and establish similar museums and centers in every state in the country and internationally so the full story of service can be told wherever it occurs.

How will the NMCFS inspire others to take action?

The NMCFS will inspire action through programming, both original and partner led, to provide meaningful experiences that support all facets of the civic engagement and service learning cycle. Americans will be able to investigate the issues and determine what causes they are passionate about, and commit to take action. Resources and space will be available for people to engage in designing solutions for the complex problems in the world, and preparing to take action. Finally, it will be a space to communicate the impacts of the action, recording, celebrating and honoring the everyday American.

Where will the NMCFS be located?

Exactly where the NMCFS will be located has not yet been determined but the ideal location will be very near the National Mall in the Nation's Capital. The foundational importance of service and the lives of those who serve deserve a location of no less stature and significance. That is where we celebrate and commemorate the people and the events that made our nation what it is today. It may be that a new building, yet to be constructed, will eventually house the NMCFS, but a more rapid and economical option could be to adapt an existing building in a suitable location.
How will the NMCFS reach all Americans beyond the physical space in Washington, DC?

The physical space in Washington DC will be a starting point for celebrating service, in all its forms across America. Through partnering with other museums across the country, the NMCFS will be accessible to all Americans through pop-up exhibits and events. Additionally, through meaningful virtual/online programming, the NMCFS will invite Americans to engage, honor, learn and be inspired directly from their home.

Do we really need a physical museum?

Our nation has many war memorials and monuments to military service, and that is fitting. But there is no signature place in our nation’s capital, or anywhere else in our country to honor and tell the stories of the millions of Americans who give themselves in other ways to serve our nation and the world. In essence, we are only telling a portion of the American story and missing an opportunity to experience and inspire the American spirit of service.

The NMCFS recognizes and supports all the many existing organizations that are dedicated to publicizing and promoting service. Its goals are to complement and amplify those efforts, working in partnership to convene, connect and elevate their good work.

Simply put, a National Museum and Center for Service is needed, perhaps now more than ever, filling a profoundly important gap in how our nation understands and tells its story to its own citizens and the world.

Who supports this and how does the NMCFS become reality?

Establishing a new national museum of any kind is a complex process and doing anything on or near the National Mall is a daunting proposition. Nevertheless, like those who serve in unimaginably difficult places, we are absolutely committed to this mission and determined to make it happen.

The National Museum and Center for Service has received formal endorsements from leaders from many of the largest and most recognized service organizations, including directors of the Peace Corps, Multiplying Good, Rotary International, Members of Congress and many others. We have received over $200,000 of pro-bono professional services, over 2000 hours of leadership from an experienced advisory group and growing financial support from individuals, philanthropic organizations and corporations.

Who is leading this effort?

Former Congressman Brian Baird conceived the idea and has gathered an exceptionally experienced advisory group of volunteers with decades of experience in nonprofit leadership, policy, museum design, fundraising communications, education and citizen engagement. To view the full team visit www.nmcfs.org/aboutus.

Still have questions? Email us at hello@nmcfs.org