AmeriCorps FAQs

The entire AmeriCorps FAQs and other helpful resources may be found at https://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/managing-americorps-grants.

Withholding Member’s Stipend

FAQ C. 18. May a program temporarily withhold a member’s living allowance if the member has failed to submit his or her timesheets for two or more weeks?

A program may temporarily withhold a member’s living allowance if the member has failed to submit timesheets. The member agreement must clearly state the policy, and the withholding must be temporary, and not result in the program docking the member’s living allowance.

Reference: 2007 AmeriCorps grant provisions IV. H. (it was moved to FAQ as of 2008 and is no longer in the provisions)

Allowable Minor Disciplinary Actions

FAQ C. 24. What are allowable minor disciplinary actions?

The grantee may temporarily suspend or impose a fine on a member for minor disciplinary reasons, such as chronic tardiness, as outlined in the conditions of the member agreement.

When a member is suspended as a minor disciplinary action, should he or she continue to accrue service hours and collect the living allowance?

The period of suspension does not count toward a member’s required service hours. Further, members who are suspended for minor disciplinary reasons may not receive a living allowance for the suspension period.

How should fines be collected as a minor disciplinary action?

If determined to be necessary for improvements in member performance or attendance, the grantee may impose a reasonable fine on members for minor disciplinary problems consistent with the member agreement. The fines may not be calculated on an hourly basis. For example, a member who is an hour late may not be fined an hour’s worth of living allowance. Instead, the grantee should establish a written policy on fines, which is not linked to an hourly rate.

The grantee may deduct fines from that portion of the member’s living allowance that is paid by non-federal funds. Before making any deductions, the grantee should consider how this might affect the status of members under employment laws, including minimum wage and unemployment compensation. Further, a grantee that deducts in this fashion may be required to provide additional matching funds.
Unemployment Insurance Related

FAQ C. 63. Is an AmeriCorps member eligible for state unemployment insurance if he or she is released from service?

An AmeriCorps member’s eligibility for state unemployment insurance is a matter of state law that is determined on a state-by-state basis. AmeriCorps grantees should consult their own state unemployment agency to determine the eligibility of members in their state for unemployment insurance. Payment into unemployment systems is not an allowable cost unless required by state law.

FAQ C. 64. If an AmeriCorps member loses a job outside of service in AmeriCorps, is the individual eligible to receive unemployment compensation for the loss of that position or would continued service in AmeriCorps preclude the person from being considered unemployed?

This is a state law question and the answer will differ from state to state. Some states view AmeriCorps service as employment in the unemployment compensation context, and others do not. Each state has to interpret its laws and determine whether it views AmeriCorps service as employment or not. If the state has not previously taken a position on this issue, the state commission can try to persuade them one way or the other, but the state unemployment agency will make the final call.

Federal Employment Status of Members:
https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Frequently_Referred_Resources_about_the_Employment_Status_of_AmeriCorps_Members.pdf