Overview of Member Development

One of the goals of AmeriCorps is to expand educational opportunity and build future leaders. While the education award provides the expansion of educational opportunity for AmeriCorps Members who successfully complete a term of service, the AmeriCorps service experience is the mechanism by which Members are molded into future leaders.

AmeriCorps programs must have a Member development plan that ensures Members receive high quality training to provide effective service. By offering strong and meaningful New Member Orientation and ongoing training to Members, the program can:

1. **Increase Member knowledge** – Members learn more about the community in which they are serving and what National Service entails.
2. **Broaden attitudes and perspectives** – Training leads to an increased sense of empowerment, civic values, a service ethic, and a broader understanding of how individuals and communities are interconnected.
3. **Help Members develop skills** – Members learn valuable skills specific to their service (e.g. tutoring/mentoring, teaching, nutrition education, volunteer mobilization, environmental conservation) as well as general, transferable skills (e.g. leadership, problem-solving, effective communication) to prepare them for life after AmeriCorps.
4. **Improve Member effectiveness** – Well-training Members provide high quality, high impact service and increase the value of the AmeriCorps program to the organization, service site, or sponsor.
5. **Improve organizational quality** – Highly competent Members significantly improve the quality of services provided by the sponsor organization(s).

6. **Promote Member retention** – Meeting the individual and professional goals of each Member increases Member satisfaction and leads to greater Member retention.

7. **Promote lifelong ethic of service** – Providing Members with the skills and confidence necessary for successful service leads to a lifetime commitment to service and civic engagement.

**Requirements**

Member development must consist of and/or adhere to the following:

1. The program must conduct an **orientation** for all Members. Orientation should be held at the commencement of service.

2. The program must adhere to the **Missouri-specific Member development requirements** including First Aid & CPR certification, citizenship training, and disaster response training.

3. The program must provide **skills training related to direct service activities** to Members to ensure effective delivery of services.

4. The program must provide **Life after AmeriCorps** training to Members.

5. The program must maintain an **agenda and sign-in sheets** for each orientation and training session.

6. The program must adhere to the **80/20 rule** – no more than 20% of [overall] Members’ hours may be dedicated to training.
Member Orientation

Overview of Member Orientation
Member orientation lays the foundation for a successful term of service. One of the most important responsibilities of a program director, manager, or supervisor is to prepare Members for their service term. Incoming Members need to understand the big picture of National Service (including its history and culture) and the critical role it plays in tackling community challenges. Locally, Members need to learn about their specific program, sponsor organizations (if applicable), and community needs. Members should understand how service differs from employment and what is expected of them at their sites.

Note: Orientation should be held at the commencement of a Member’s term of service.

Planning Member Orientation
The following are helpful questions to guide the planning of Member orientation:

1. Is the project for an individual, a team, or a combination of the two?
2. How varied are Member service activities?
3. Who is responsible for onsite orientation: a site supervisor, other project staff, or a combination of the two?
4. Do Members enter the program once or twice a year?
   a. *(Note: For AmeriCorps State programs, it is not a best practice to have sporadic Member enrollments/service start dates.)*
5. What are the critical foundation skills needed by most Members?
6. Does the project require a specific set of start-up skills for which Members must be immediately trained?
7. How often will the program director be in contact with Members?

**Components of Member Orientation**

Member orientation should include the following topics:

- Overview of National Service
- Overview of CNCS programs
- Overview of the MCSC
- Overview of the organization’s mission and goals
- Icebreakers or teambuilding activities
- Overview of Member benefits
- Allowable Member activities (versus prohibited activities)
- Program code of conduct and disciplinary procedures
- Member rights and responsibilities
- Drug-Free Workplace Act requirements *(41 U.S.C. 701 et seq.)*
- Organizational policies and procedures *(e.g. dress code, sexual harassment policy, mileage/expense reimbursement policy, risk management procedures, grievance procedure, etc.)*
- Member position description
• Performance measurement and reporting
• Member training requirements and evaluation
• Talking about AmeriCorps (a “how-to” session)
• Any outstanding Member forms and/or paperwork

Methods of Member Orientation
Providing a meaningful and engaging orientation is critical for a strong start to the Members’ term of service. Some example orientation delivery methods include (but are not limited to):

• Testimonials from AmeriCorps Alums or returning Members
• Brainstorms, discussion, and/or negotiation with Members or with a larger team (e.g. other program/project staff)
• Interviews/discussions for Members with key community leaders, program board members, or beneficiaries
• Fields trips with strategically assigned tasks to complete
• Shadowing opportunities (Members shadow others performing similar or related activities)
• Invite Members to attend staff, advisory board, and community meetings
• Ask other staff, colleagues with other organizations, and other experts to share knowledge and best practices
• Secure free or low cost skill training from various community resources (e.g. community colleges, libraries, community adult education programs, etc.)
• Engage with local AmeriCorps programs on relevant topics
**Sample Member Orientation Agenda**

*Based on a 2-day orientation, not inclusive of training specific to direct service activities.*

**UNITED WE SERVE AMERICORPS PROGRAM**

**Member Orientation Agenda**

### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Facilitator Note</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Member Arrival &amp; Sign-in</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:15 AM</td>
<td>Welcome &amp; Introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45 AM</td>
<td>Icebreaker Activity</td>
<td><em>Facilitated by 2nd-yr Members</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:15 AM</td>
<td>• History &amp; Culture of National Service</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Overview of CNCS and MCSC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Overview of Program Mission/Goals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Overview of Community Stakeholders</td>
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<td><strong>Facilitator Note:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Break: 11:00 – 11:15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 PM</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 PM</td>
<td>Review/Q&amp;A of Morning Topics</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 PM</td>
<td>• Member Terms of Service</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Member Benefits</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Member Training Requirements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Member Position Description</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Allowable vs. Prohibited Activities</td>
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<td><strong>Facilitator Note:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Break: 2:30 – 2:40</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
<td>Q&amp;A / Closing Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30 PM</td>
<td>Announcements/Clean-up/Sign-out</td>
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### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Facilitator Note</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Member Arrival &amp; Sign-in</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:05 AM</td>
<td>Announcements</td>
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<td>9:15 AM</td>
<td>Game or Activity to Review Day 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45 AM</td>
<td>• Member Rights &amp; Responsibilities</td>
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<td>• Code of Conduct / Disciplinary Procedure</td>
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<td>• Grievance Procedure</td>
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<td>• Program-specific Policies</td>
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<td><strong>Facilitator Note:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Break: 11:00 – 11:15</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 PM</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 PM</td>
<td>• Timekeeping</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Performance Measure Tracking and Reporting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Member Evaluation Procedure</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00 PM</td>
<td>Best Practices from Peers</td>
<td><em>Facilitated by 2nd-yr Members</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
<td>Closing Reflection Activity / Distribution of AmeriCorps Service Gear</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30 PM</td>
<td>Announcements/Clean-up/Sign-out</td>
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Missouri-Specific Member Development

The Missouri Community Service Commission (MCSC) has developed Missouri-specific performance measures that all programs are required to track and report progress to MCSC on a quarterly basis until completion. These requirements are as follows:

1. CPR Training/Certification

**Requirement:** 100% of Members must receive CPR training (at a minimum) and/or certification.

**Timeline:** Members should receive CPR training/certification within the first quarter of their term of service.

**Documentation:** A copy of the Member’s certification card or certificate of completion should be maintained in the Member’s file. *Note: If a Member only receives CPR training without certification, then the program must document a justification in the Member’s file (e.g. reasonable accommodation).*

2. First Aid Training/Certification

**Requirement:** 100% of Members must receive First Aid training (at a minimum) and/or certification.

**Timeline:** Members should receive First Aid training/certification within the first quarter of their term of service.

**Documentation:** A copy of the Member’s certification card or certificate of completion should be maintained in the Member's file. *Note: If a Member only*
receives First Aid training without certification, then the program must document a justification in the Member's file (e.g. reasonable accommodation).

3. Emergency Response Training

Requirement: A minimum of 75% of Members must receive emergency response training. Emergency response training subjects include (but are not limited to):

- Incident Command Systems
- Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) Simulation
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Basic Training
- School Crisis/Emergency Response Training

Timeline: It is recommended Members receive emergency response training within the first quarter of their term of service.

Documentation: A copy of the Member’s certificate of participation or completion should be maintained in the Member’s file.

4. Citizenship Training

Requirement: 100% of Members must receive citizenship training. Citizenship training should be designed to:

- Foster within Members positive attitudes regarding the value of lifelong citizenship and service for the common good;
- Enhance the ability of Members to discuss and explore their community and the people, processes, and institutions that are most effective in improving community conditions;
- Enhance the ability of Members to plan effective service projects that respond to real community needs, and/or
- Develop the social, cultural and analytical skills necessary to effectively participate in American democracy.
Timeline: Members should receive citizenship training prior to the completion of their term of service. Ongoing citizenship training throughout the term of service will help foster an ethic of service and encourage a service culture.

Documentation: A copy of the Member’s certificate of participation or completion should be maintained in the Member’s file.

5. Volunteer Recruitment

In addition to the Member training requirements, CNCS expects and MCSC requires programs to leverage volunteers to engage in community service. Members may engage in volunteer recruitment and coordination.

Requirement: A minimum of five (5) volunteers per MSY should be recruited. Note: This is based on the number of MSY, not the number of Member slots (which may differ for programs with less-than-full-time Members).

Timeline: Volunteer recruitment is ongoing for the duration of the project period proposed by the program (up to a 12-month period).

Documentation: Programs should have systems to accurately track the number of volunteers (without duplication) and the number of volunteer hours contributed. Programs should also be able to track the number of volunteers in the following categories:

- Baby Boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964)
- College Students
- Disadvantaged Children/Youth
Life After AmeriCorps

The Missouri Community Service Commission (MCSC) requires programs to provide Members with Life After AmeriCorps training. Life After AmeriCorps training helps Members make a successful transition to life after service. It does not have to be restricted to one training session at a specified point of the program year. Providing tools and information at different stages of service can help Members weigh their options and make choices that pave the way toward future goals. Emphasizing post-program/service transition may help with the retention of Members.

Examples of Life After AmeriCorps training include (but are not limited to):

- Reflection activities that assist Members in understanding their individual strengths and weaknesses;
- Reflection activities that assist Members in understanding the transitional skills developed during the service experience (e.g. leadership, time management, project management, etc.);
- Training on how to use the Eli Segal AmeriCorps Education Award; and/or
- Training on preparing for the job search or a career (e.g. resume writing; how to talk about the AmeriCorps experience in an interview, etc.).
Member Development: Online Resources

Developing a Training Calendar:
http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/member-and-volunteer-development/encorps/developing-training-calendar

Maximizing Your Training Budget:
http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/member-and-volunteer-development/encorps/maximizing-your-training-budget

Member Orientation Topics
http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/member-and-volunteer-development/encorps/orientation-topics

Teampedia (Encyclopedia of Teambuilding Activities):

Citizenship Curriculum

FEMA Emergency Management Institute Independent Study Courses
https://training.fema.gov/is/

Conflict Resolution
http://www.crinfo.org/
Life after AmeriCorps

Getting the Most from the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award
http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/member-and-volunteer-development/encorps/getting-most-segal-americorps-education-award

**AmeriCorps Alums**
http://www.americorpsalums.org/

*Encourage Members to register with AmeriCorps Alums for networking and personal/professional development opportunities.*