

Guide to Member Development

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I. Overview of Member Development

One of the goals of AmeriCorps is to expand educational opportunities for those who serve as AmeriCorps Members and build future leaders. Fostering a meaningful AmeriCorps service experience is one of the mechanisms through which this goal is accomplished.

AmeriCorps Programs are required to provide AmeriCorps Members with high quality knowledge- and skill-based training necessary to effectively perform service activities.

Member training should be designed to:

1. **Promote Member retention:** Meeting the individual and professional goals of each Member increases Member satisfaction and leads to greater Member retention.
2. **Improve Member effectiveness:** Well-trained Members provide high quality, high impact service and increase the value of the AmeriCorps Program to the organization, site, or sponsor.
3. **Improve organization quality:** Highly competent Members significantly improve the quality of services provided by sponsor organizations.



Having a strong, meaningful & clear professional development plan provides Members the support they need to successfully complete their term of service.

4. **Help Members develop skills:** Example skills include effective communication, conflict resolution, diversity and inclusion, leadership, outdoor education, volunteer and resource mobilization, and partnership development.
5. **Increase Member knowledge:** Members learn more about the community they're serving and what National Service entails.
6. **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.
7. **Augment site and sponsor training:** Member development can reduce the burden of training for service sites and sponsor organizations.
8. **Promote lifelong engagement:** 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:

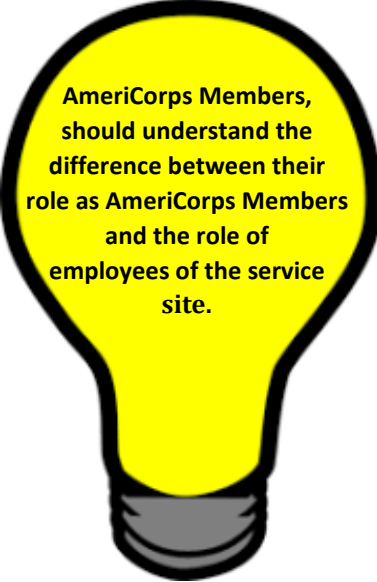
1. **New Member Orientation.** The AmeriCorps Program is **required** to conduct an orientation for all AmeriCorps Members at the commencement of service. Orientation should cover topics such as the history of National Service and AmeriCorps; Member rights and responsibilities; AmeriCorps rules and regulations, including those related to prohibited activities; the Program's code of conduct; etc.
2. **Missouri-Specific Member Development.** The Missouri Community Service Commission requires AmeriCorps Members to be trained or certified in CPR, First Aid, citizenship, respectful treatment, and disaster preparedness. MCSC also requires Programs to leverage five (5) volunteers per Member Service Year (MSY).
3. **Service-Related Training.** The Program is **required** to provide training related to the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for effective service delivery.

4. **Life after AmeriCorps Training.** The Program is **required** to provide Life after AmeriCorps training to Members to prepare them for life after service to review their options in terms of serving another year with the Program, serving with a different stream of national service, becoming employed, or enrolling in a trade school or college/university to continue their education.

****Compliance Notes****

- ➔ The Program is **required** to maintain an **agenda** and **sign-in sheet** for each training session. *Note: Training agendas and sign-in sheets are auditable documents and should be retained per the Program's records retention policy.*
- ➔ **80/20 Rule:** No more than 20% of aggregate [combined] Member hours may be dedicated to training.

II. New Member Orientation



AmeriCorps Members, should understand the difference between their role as AmeriCorps Members and the role of employees of the service site.

Overview of New Member Orientation

New Member Orientation lays the foundation for a successful term of service. One of the most important responsibilities of a program director or site supervisor is to prepare AmeriCorps 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, service site locations, and community needs. Members should understand how service differs from employment and what is expected of them at their sites.

****Compliance Notes****

New Member Orientation should be held at the commencement of a Member's term of service.

Planning New Member Orientation

The following questions will guide the planning of New Member Orientation:

1. Is the project for an individual, a team, or a combination of the two?
2. How diverse 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?
(Note: For AmeriCorps State programs, it is not a best practice to have sporadic Member enrollments/service start dates.)
5. What AmeriCorps requirements must Members learn?
6. What are the critical foundation skills needed by most Members?
7. Does the project require a specific set of start-up skills for which Members must be immediately trained?
8. How often will the program director be in contact with Members?

Components of New Member Orientation

New Member Orientation should include the following topics:

- Overview of National Service and CNCS programs
- Overview of the MCSC
- Overview of the organization's mission and goals
- Icebreakers or teambuilding activities
- Overview of Member benefits
- 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.)*

AMERICORPS LANGUAGE 101:

1. AmeriCorps Members should be referred to as AmeriCorps Members not volunteers.
2. The AmeriCorps experience is a term of service; not a job or internship.
3. AmeriCorps Members serve, not work.
4. AmeriCorps Members receive a living allowance, not a salary or wage.

Delivery Methods for New Member Orientation

Example delivery methods include (but are not limited to):

- ➔ Lectures or other media presentations (e.g. videos)
- ➔ Individual or group brainstorming or discussion
- ➔ Testimonials from AmeriCorps Alums or returning Members
- ➔ Discussions with key community stakeholders (e.g. local leaders, board members, or beneficiaries)
- ➔ Relevant training from local community-based organizations
- ➔ Relevant training from other staff, colleagues, or organizations with expertise in the service field
- ➔ Community scavenger hunts
- ➔ Collaboration with local AmeriCorps Programs

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

TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2020	
9:00 AM	Member Arrival & Sign-in
9:15 AM	Welcome & Introductions
9:45 AM	Icebreaker Activity <i>Facilitated by 2nd-yr Members</i>
10:15 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History & Culture of National Service Overview of CNCS and MCSC Overview of Program Mission/Goals Overview of Community Stakeholders <i>Facilitator Note: Break: 11:00 AM – 11:15 AM</i>
12:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM	Review/Q&A of Morning Topics
1:30 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member Terms of Service Member Benefits Member Training Requirements Member Position Description Allowable vs. Prohibited Activities <i>Facilitator Note: Break: 2:30 PM – 2:40 PM</i>
4:00 PM	Q&A / Closing Activity
4:30 PM	Announcements/Clean-up/Sign-out
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2020	
9:00 AM	Member Arrival & Sign-in
9:05 AM	Announcements
9:15 AM	Game or Activity to Review Day 1
9:45 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member Rights & Responsibilities Code of Conduct / Disciplinary Procedure Grievance Procedure Program-specific Policies <i>Facilitator Note: Break: 11:00 AM – 11:15 AM</i>
12:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timekeeping Performance Measure Tracking and Reporting Member Evaluation Procedure
3:00 PM	Best Practices from Peers <i>Facilitated by 2nd-yr Members</i>
4:00 PM	Closing Reflection Activity / Distribution of AmeriCorps Service Gear
4:30 PM	Announcements/Clean-up/Sign-out

III. 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 must 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 must 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 must 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. Respectful Treatment

MCSC is committed to providing Members a safe and healthy environment during their term of service. The service environment should foster a culture of dignity where every individual is respected and includes a policy that must address and respond to allegations of bullying, discrimination, and harassment (to include but not limited to sexual, emotional, physical, verbal, and non-verbal harassment). MCSC requires all AmeriCorps Programs to provide and adhere to a zero tolerance policy.

It is also the expectation that AmeriCorps Programs provide training and/or awareness to program staff, site supervisors, Members, volunteers, partner agencies, and others associated with the organization of this policy.

Requirement: 100% of Members must complete a Respectful Treatment training and/or certification.

Timeline: Members must receive Respectful Treatment 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.

4. Disaster Preparedness/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

Requirement: A minimum of 75% of Members must receive emergency response training.

Timeline: It is strongly 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 must be maintained in the Member's file.

5. **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.

Requirement: 100% of Members must receive citizenship training.

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.

6. **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 must 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

IV. 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 specific 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

The following list are suggestions of activities that can be used to help initiate discussion with Members to determine their next steps after the completion of their term of service. You may find it a best practice to develop a draft plan at the beginning of the service year as a blueprint. This “blueprint” could be compared to what their actual plan will be towards the end of their service year. It is recommended however, that these conversations are had throughout the year. This allows the Member time to begin working on their action plan. Reach out to your fellow experienced AmeriCorps Programs for ideas and best practices as well.



These are just a few examples and not all inclusive:

- Reflection activities that assist Members in understanding their individual strengths and weaknesses;
- Reflection activities that assist Members in understanding the transferrable 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 (*e.g. résumé writing; how to talk about the AmeriCorps experience in an interview, etc.*).

V. Member Development: On-line Resources

Developing an Individual Training Agenda:

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/senior-corps/living-curriculum/developing-individual-training-agenda>

Planning a Member Orientation:

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/member-and-volunteer-development/encorps/elements-member-orientation>

Teampedia (Encyclopedia of Teambuilding Activities):

<http://www.teampedia.net/wiki/>

Embracing Diversity:

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/member-and-volunteer-development/encorps/embracing-diversity>

FEMA Emergency Management Institute Independent Study Courses

<https://training.fema.gov/is/>

Conflict Resolution

<https://www.beyondintractability.org/>

****AmeriCorps Alums****

<http://www.americorpsalums.org/>

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