

# Guide to Member Management

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A successful recruitment strategy is the foundation to a thriving AmeriCorps program and the initial step necessary for programs to reach their desired community impact goals. AmeriCorps Members are the face of any program; selection and placement of Members is crucial to the overall health of AmeriCorps at the national, state, and local level. Being up front about both the benefits and challenges can help place Members who are more likely to complete their service term.

AmeriCorps recruits for diversity. Programs must be accessible to all persons with or without reasonable accommodation. The Missouri Community Service Commission (MCSC) expects all AmeriCorps programs to implement a written policy that addresses non-discrimination and non-harassment.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** AmeriCorps Members are **NOT employees**. By law, an AmeriCorps Member is defined as a “participant” in an approved national service position. By rule, “a participant shall not be considered to be an employee of the organization receiving assistance under the national service laws through which the participant is engaging in service.” (42 USC 12511 30B) This is a service experience where an individual can help a community to address unmet needs. It is also an opportunity for an AmeriCorps program to provide a Member with professional experiences and skills enhancement that will help prepare him/her for the next phase in their life.

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## ***I. Position Description***

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Every AmeriCorps Member must have a position description. The position description is included in the Member Service Agreement. For each different position, you must include a different position description. You are required to post your AmeriCorps position descriptions on the MyAmeriCorps portal.

Creating a written service position description sets the foundation for the recruitment process by outlining specific Member functions and activities. This description can help identify individuals that may be a good match for your program's service opportunity based on education, life experience, attitude, temperament, potential, and motivation.

Be careful to ensure that the position description does not include anything that would violate the prohibited activities, non-duplication, and non-displacement requirements. Do not include phrases such as "other duties as assigned" and "etc." when creating a service position description. Be descriptive and clear about the duties. Make sure position descriptions include the correct AmeriCorps vernacular. It is not a "job description" and they are not "potential employees." It is a "*position description*" and they are "*potential Members*."

The way service position descriptions are presented can strongly influence how your program is perceived; especially by those who have no prior knowledge of your organization or AmeriCorps. The recruitment process from an applicant's perspective generally begins when one views a service position description in an advertisement. A prospective applicant should be able to get a clear sense of your program's expectations and be able to assess if the role suits their goals and interests. Once a service position description is developed, it can easily be added to flyers, brochures, newsletters, group/mass e-mails, posters, websites and a wide variety of other outlets where your target applicants are likely to take note of this information.

Program staff must ensure that service position descriptions are carefully written and that the CNCS provisions including, but not limited to, the public notice of non-discrimination are upheld.

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## ***II. Program Policies and Procedures***

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During the start-up period, you should develop and document policies and procedures that lay the framework for how your program will be managed. A well-written and comprehensive set of policies and procedures will help your program run more efficiently and effectively, while also ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements. Some policies are mandated by grant requirements. However, you will need to create other policies that are tailored to your program and your organization.

Your program policies must ensure compliance with grant requirements, including, but not limited to:

- Alternate Service Plan
- AmeriCorps Member "safeguards"
- Drug-free Workplace
- Grievance procedures
- Member eligibility documentation
- Member information confidentiality
- National Service Criminal History Checks
- Non-Discrimination/Non-Harassment
- Prohibited Activities
- Reasonable Accommodations
- Recordkeeping

Other key policies may include:

- Member personal/sick leave
- Member selection, evaluation, and termination
- Standards of Member conduct, attendance requirements, and dress codes
- Requirements of sites for progress reporting, fundraising, training, and representing the AmeriCorps identity
- Communication hierarchies, etc.

The above-mentioned policies that you develop will serve as the basis for your site and Member Service Agreement. These policies should be included in any program manual or handbook that you distribute to sites and Members. It is a good idea to continue to develop and enhance policies and procedures that guide your program implementation throughout the program year.

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### ***III. Communicating and Establishing the Service Environment***

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To create a positive service environment, combine your unique AmeriCorps program style with a gratifying service experience. The Program Director's office should be a professional, confidential, and a safe place for individuals to communicate openly. The AmeriCorps logo should be posted in your office and in any common spaces utilized by Members. Training spaces and all meetings should also be a safe place for attendees and it is imperative that the environment be unattached to religious, political, and other practices or beliefs.

As appropriate communication is important for the success of your program, e-mails should be timely and respectful, and conducted in a professional manner. For best practices on e-mail etiquette, a great resource for you or your Members is <https://www.inc.com/guides/2010/06/email-etiquette.html>.

When the Program Director is out of the office for a short period of time or away for an extended period of time, it is important to inform your Members ahead of time. It is also imperative that an appropriate staff person(s) be identified as a point of contact who Members can address their issues and concerns to in the Program Director's absence.

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### ***IV. Supervising Members***

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AmeriCorps supervisors should focus on the required tasks of each service position and develop Members in their charge. The duties of AmeriCorps Members are restricted to activities specified in your program's approved grant application. Setting the tone and explaining your expectations as a supervisor is a key to Member success. A good

management style for supervising AmeriCorps members combines coaching, directing, supporting and delegating, rather than creating a dictatorial atmosphere. Program Directors should ask the following questions in order to create a positive supervising experience:

- ➔ How do I help Members understand what is supposed to be done and how to do it?
- ➔ What additional training might the Members need that I cannot provide?
- ➔ How do I consider the needs of Members throughout their term (at the beginning, in month six when their enthusiasm decreases, and at the end when they leave)?
- ➔ What can I do to inspire members to commit to a life of service?

Remaining consistent while providing Members guidance throughout their term of service is a productive way to be effective as a supervisor and mentor.

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### ***V. Member Orientation and Professional Development***

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The sub-grantee must conduct an orientation for Members. Orientation begins the onboarding process for Members and ongoing training reinforces the process. A Member Orientation and Training Plan provides valuable information on important requirements, pieces of information they will use throughout the service year, and other useful knowledge, skills, and abilities they will need to conduct themselves properly and have a successful year. From the beginning of the service year and throughout, Members are trying to determine their place within the program and are developing their understanding of what this year will provide to them. They need to clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, prohibited activities, as well as have an understanding of National Service and AmeriCorps.

Training is an opportunity for program directors to educate Members on a variety of topics and provide them with the tools necessary to be successful during their service. It is also a time to connect with other Members on a more professional and personal level.

Well-trained individuals provide high quality, high impact service and increase the value of the AmeriCorps program. Training helps Members develop skills in areas that they

might not have been introduced prior to AmeriCorps (e.g., effective communication, conflict resolution, diversity and inclusion, leadership, CPR/first aid, volunteer management, resource mobilization, and partnership development). In training, Members can learn more about the community they serve and what National Service entails. Training can also broaden attitudes and perspectives and increase their sense of empowerment, civic values and service ethic. Training can also promote retention and a lifelong engagement in service.

Lastly, training is also a helpful tool to assist in accountability and marketing. When Members are provided training on the program's performance measures, they are better equipped to help the organization accomplish those goals and communicate great stories to their supervisors. Incorporating former AmeriCorps Members into orientation can help create Member buy in as well as recruitment.

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## ***VI. Member Performance Evaluations***

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You are **required** to conduct a mid-term performance evaluation and a final (end-of-term) evaluation for all **half-time and full-time Members**. **Less than half-time Members** are **only** required to have an **end-of-term evaluation**. This is to be completed with Members each service year. All Members, regardless of length or term of service, must have an end-of-term evaluations conducted. This is necessary to: 1) evaluate performance; 2) determine eligibility for the Eli Segal AmeriCorps Education Award; and 3) determine eligibility for a second or additional term of service.

At a minimum, the evaluation must include:

- Whether the Member has completed the required number of hours;
- Whether the Member has satisfactorily completed assignments, tasks or projects;
- Whether the Member has met any other performance criteria, which has been clearly communicated both orally and in writing at the beginning of the term of service.

You may determine the format and contents of the evaluation to meet your needs and the needs of your Members as long as the minimum requirements are in place. This is an

opportunity for you to have a thoughtful discussion with the Member to reassess successes and challenges of his/her service year, any training needs to assist the Member in serving, and feedback from the Member on what changes may need to be made with the program, Member supervision, Member sites, etc.

Maintain written documentation that the Member received the mid-term and/or final evaluation. It is important to ensure that a Member who served previously is eligible to serve in your program and reasonable effort should be made to gather that information. You may be able to assume that a Member who received an education award served satisfactorily in the previous term. If a Member was released for cause without receiving an education award, follow-up with the Program that the individual formerly served with as a Member. You do not want to run the risk of enrolling an ineligible Member. Some or all of the costs associated with that Member can be disallowed. A participant will only be eligible to serve a second or additional term of service if that individual has received satisfactory performance review(s) for any previous term(s) of service. Mere eligibility for a second or additional term of service in no way guarantees a participant's selection or placement. Refer to the My AmeriCorps Portal to obtain information of a Member's past service.

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## ***VII. Member Management: Online Resources***

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Members are the heart and soul of AmeriCorps programs. Managing the recruitment, placement, orientation, training, supervision, and transition from service for each member is a big part of successfully managing your grant. This page includes resources for each phase of the member service cycle, and tools to support site supervisors and other organization staff.

### **Recorded Webinar Trainings**

Link- <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/ameri-corps/new-ameri-corps-program-start-institute>

- AmeriCorps Member Orientation and Training (August 9, 2018)
- AmeriCorps Member Recruitment (November 30, 2017)
- AmeriCorps Member and Site Monitoring and Reporting Requirements (August 23, 2018)
- AmeriCorps Member Supervision and Evaluation (December 14, 2017)

### **Orientation/Recruitment/Placement**

- AmeriCorps Recruitment Links: Information for Prospective AmeriCorps Members
- AmeriCorps 101: AmeriCorps State and National Member Online Orientation
- Civil Rights / Equal Opportunity Requirements
- Restrictions on Legislative Lobbying and Partisan Politics

### **Training and Development**

- My AmeriCorps Portal Training
- My AmeriCorps for Current Members

### **Transition and Recognition**

- President's Volunteer Service Award
- Segal AmeriCorps Education Award – comprehensive site helps Members maximize their post-service financial benefits