

AmeriCorps*Texas Members' Inclusion 2013 Survey Report

Introduction:

This is the overall report of the results from the 2013 AmeriCorps*Texas Members' Inclusion Survey. This survey was done for the second time in Texas. This survey was conducted by the Texas State Service Commission, OneStar Foundation. The focus of this survey was to assess the current climate of disability inclusion within AmeriCorps*Texas and VISTA programs. This is the first time that VISTA members were surveyed by OneStar about their disability inclusion experience. This survey will help OneStar and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) collect information on AmeriCorps member experiences with disability inclusion, accommodation requests, as well as information about the recruitment process. We plan to use this information to help guide trainings for AmeriCorps program staff in order to provide members with more inclusive service experiences. Self-disclosure of any disability was not mandatory. All disclosed information will remain confidential and was only reviewed by OneStar Foundation staff.

Methodology:

The OneStar disability inclusion team, Suzanne Potts, Sr. Program Manager and Jane Murray, Sr. Program Manager, revised the survey, and Gabriella Medina, Graduate Fellow, assisted with analysis of survey results. It was previously created using examples from other state commissions including, Florida, Illinois, and Georgia. A few minor question revisions from 2012 were included. Edits were made and the 15 question survey was finalized. The team developed the survey in hard copy and transferred it into Form Assembly online which was then shared with AmeriCorps*Texas programs and the Corporation for National and Community Service's Texas State Office, who were then responsible for passing it along to AmeriCorps and VISTA members.. If requested, hard copy surveys were mailed to programs via U.S. mail. Respondents had more than three weeks to complete the survey. A Spanish version was also made available in hard copy format; the results of the Spanish survey were mailed in and an interpreter translated them back into English. The results were then entered into Form Assembly by OneStar staff for data collection and analysis.

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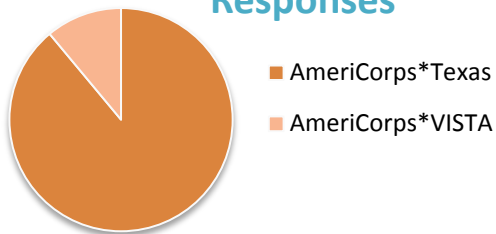
Data & Findings:

Completed Responses: 543

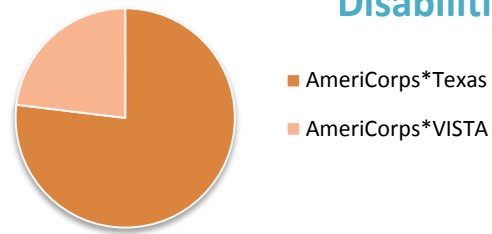
Response Rate: 38%

Veterans: 9

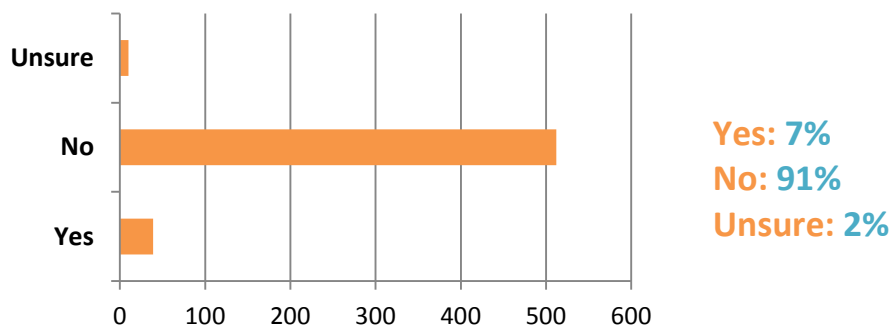
Number of Completed Responses



Number of Respondents with Disabilities



Number of respondents who considered themselves to be a person with a disability*:



***In 2012 only 6% considered themselves “Yes” or “Unsure” as people with disabilities, for an increase of 3% of people with disabilities for 2013.**

Type of disabilities disclosed*:

Speech Impairment, Hard of hearing, Deafness, Blindness or Visual disability, Psychiatric/Mental Health Condition, Systemic Lupus, Learning Disability, Epilepsy, Environmental Sensitivity, Spinal Cord Injury, Fibromyalgia, Chronic Pain, Diabetes, Cerebral Palsy, Cancer survivor with breathing issues, Arthritis, Orthopedic Traumatic Injuries, Gluteal Tissue Injury

*There was an overall increase in types of disabilities noted for 2013 as compared to 2012 survey data.

Would you be comfortable disclosing your disability to program staff*?

From those who said 'yes' or 'unsure' when asked if they considered themselves to be a person with a disability.

Yes: 57.1%
No: 14.3%
Unsure: 10.2%
No Answer: 18.4%

Overall

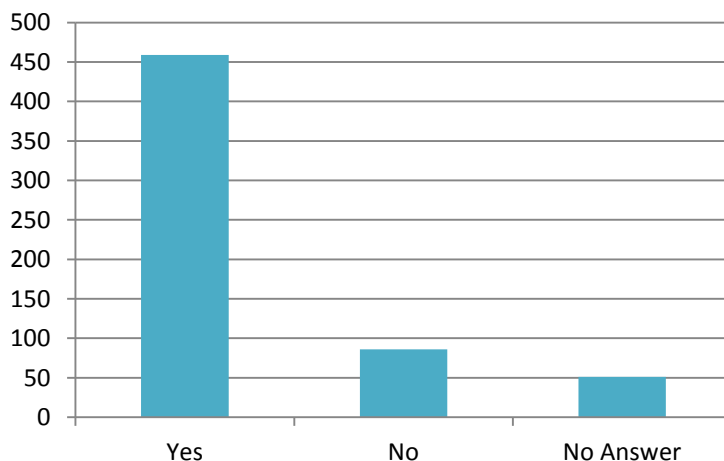
Yes: 25%
No: 3%
Unsure: 3%
I do not have a disability: 69%

From those who said 'no' when asked if they considered themselves to be a person with a disability.

Yes: 19.1%
No: 1.6%
Unsure: 2.0%
No Answer: 77.3%

*Due to variation in a few survey questions, this data was not reported in 2012 for the full report.

Do you feel that your program is inclusive of people with disabilities*?



Yes: 77%
No: 14%
No Answer: 9%

*Due to variation in a few survey questions, this data was not reported in 2012 for the full report.

Was your experience with recruitment inclusive*?

From those who said 'yes' or 'unsure' when asked if they considered themselves to be a person with a disability.

Yes: 53%
No: 6%
Unsure: 33%
No Answer: 8%

Overall

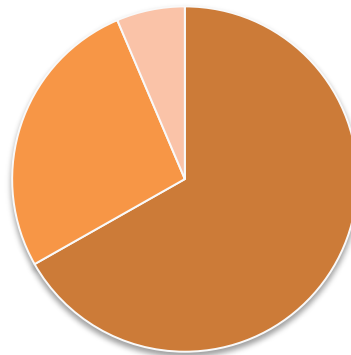
Yes: 56%
No: 7%
Unsure: 28%
No Answer: 9%

From those who said 'no' when asked if they considered themselves to be a person with a disability.

Yes: 59%
No: 7%
Unsure: 29%
No Answer: 4%

*In 2012, only 46% of members reported that they felt their programs were inclusive, an increase of 10%.

Did you know that reasonable accommodations are available*?



■ Yes: 66.8%
■ No: 26.8%
■ No Answer: 6.4%

*In 2012, 38% of the respondents did not know that reasonable accommodations were available, a decrease of 11% for 2013.

Did you request a reasonable accommodation?

Yes*: 3%

No: 25%

Unsure: 2%

N/A I do not have a disability: 71%

This number was 4% lower than the 2012 survey report.

If yes, was your reasonable accommodation request granted?

Yes*: 79%

No: 21%

If you would have known reasonable accommodations were available, would you have requested one?

Yes: 15%

No: 6%

Unsure: 3%

N/A I do not have a disability: 76%

*Of those who requested accommodations, there were 10% more requests granted than in 2012.

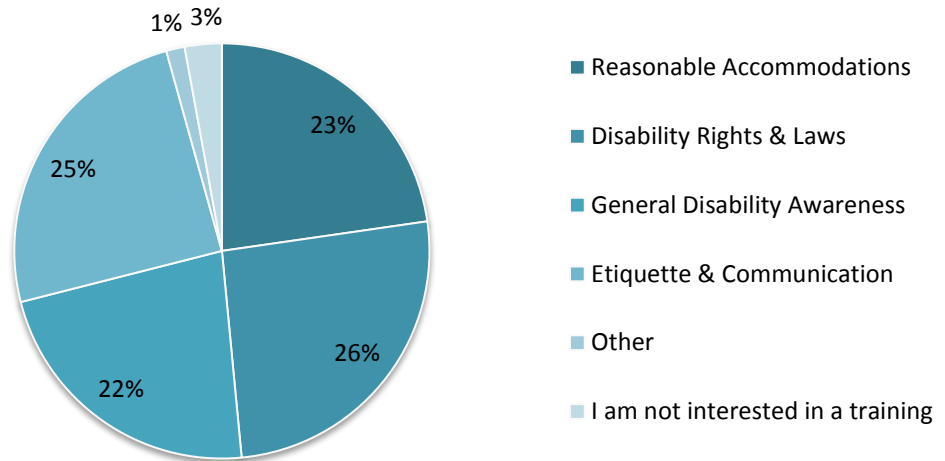
Would you be interested in training on disability inclusion?

Yes: 39%

No: 51%

No Answer: 10%

What types of trainings on disability inclusion are you interested in?



Confounding Variables:

Some of the limitations of the survey include the following:

- Members may not have understood the intention of the survey.
- The reading level of the survey may have been too advanced for some members.
- Questions may have been confusing or difficult to understand for members.
- There were many questions left unanswered. Paper copies had blanks left whereas the online version would require an answer.
- Not every member completed the survey.
- Difficulties in comparisons between 2012 and 2013 as numbers of members fluctuate and we are surveying different groups (this was the first year that AmeriCorps*VISTA members were surveyed in addition to AmeriCorps*Texas members).

Survey Recommendations:

For future surveys of this nature it is recommended that the following steps be taken:

- Have the survey reviewed in advance by more stakeholders including:
 - additional members of the disability community
 - a sample program site, to have actual member feedback
 - the whole Inclusion Team of Texas
 - other State Commission disability inclusion staff
- Be strategic when choosing the timeline for survey dissemination and collection
- Provide opportunity for survey translation into other languages where appropriate
- Provide incentives to programs who have the highest response rates
- Provide incentives to members for completing the survey
- Ensure the survey is designed to require responses to each question

Program Recommendations:

In 2012-2013, Texas AmeriCorps programs saw an overall increase in numbers of members serving who had disabilities and an increase in members' overall feeling that AmeriCorps programs were inclusive during recruitment. The general feeling of inclusiveness about the program remained the same as 2012. While the overall number of reasonable accommodations requested were lower than 2012, for those who requested them, the actual number of accommodations granted increased. There were a few significant variations in individual program responses as compared to 2012 specifically for those programs that were highly engaged with the Inclusion Team of Texas or OneStar Foundation inclusion staff, or Leadership Council Inclusion members.

Additional program recommendations include ongoing training about Reasonable Accommodations, Disability Rights and Laws, General Disability Awareness, and Etiquette and Communication. Identifying ways to document all requests for accommodations, regardless of cost, would also help AmeriCorps members and

programs understand the various ways programs do make accommodations. Specific AmeriCorps*Texas programs have also requested additional disability inclusion training after these survey results were shared. Continued outreach to the disability community, with special emphasis on the veteran community, would help to increase program numbers and support for those special populations. Ongoing inclusion efforts will be limited due to reduced CNCS resources for all AmeriCorps*Texas programs. The Inclusion Team of Texas will serve in an advisory capacity as needed. Continued resource and information sharing sessions at future OneStar and CNCS events and trainings are recommended in addition to any program specific training for members or staff.