

2017-2018 AmeriCorps\*Texas Grantee

# Communications Toolkit

Updated: July 2017



Dear Grantees,

Congratulations on successfully completing the application process for the grant year 2017-2018! As Notice of Grant Award and funding notifications are being made, OneStar Foundation recognizes that notification can provide a natural point around which to engage with public officials. We are providing this tool kit as a resource for grantees to maximize this occasion as well as other opportunities that will arise during the grant year.

It is important that public officials are aware of the federal National Service funds being utilized within their districts and the services that your program provides to their constituents. The purpose of this toolkit is to equip grantees with resources to help educate public officials, highlight programming in districts, and invite public officials to engage with AmeriCorps\*Texas programs at significant points during the program year.

Public officials place a high value on opportunities to engage with organizations like AmeriCorps\*Texas grantees. In addition to helping them connect with groups that directly serve their constituents, it facilitates the gathering of information and statistics specific to their districts. Creating and maintaining these lines of communication is vital to telling our stories of impact and achieving the goals of AmeriCorps\*Texas programming.

In Service,

*The AmeriCorps\*Texas Team*

OneStar Foundation

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## **ONESTAR FOUNDATION & THE AMERICORPS\*TEXAS PORTFOLIO**

As the Governor-appointed state service commission for Texas, OneStar Foundation receives AmeriCorps State funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). To distribute these funds, OneStar holds an annual grant competition to select highly qualified AmeriCorps\*Texas programs. Our grantees utilize these federal grant funds to administer the AmeriCorps program within their organization. This includes the recruitment of AmeriCorps members who provide direct services to adults and children to address challenges facing communities across the state.

### **The 2017-2018 AmeriCorps\*Texas portfolio includes:**

- Amarillo Independent School District, \$303,953 - 55 AmeriCorps members
- American YouthWorks, \$134,300 - 10 AmeriCorps members
- Breakthrough, \$710,842 - 170 AmeriCorps members
- City Year, Inc. Dallas, \$605,000 - 50 AmeriCorps members
- City Year, Inc. San Antonio, \$1,403,600 - 116 AmeriCorps members
- CitySquare, \$1,151,176 - 292 AmeriCorps members
- CitySquare, \$74,927 to support a one year AmeriCorps Planning Grant
- College Forward, \$1,098,290 - 100 AmeriCorps members
- College Forward, \$75,000 to support a one year AmeriCorps Planning Grant
- Communities In Schools of Central Texas, \$685,634 - 84 AmeriCorps members
- Communities In Schools of the Heart of Texas, \$351,845 - 43 AmeriCorps members
- Equal Heart, \$451,016 - 109 AmeriCorps members
- Front Steps, \$455,000 - 35 AmeriCorps members
- Literacy Coalition of Central Texas, \$640,000 - 50 AmeriCorps members
- LoneStar College - Kingwood, \$343,553 - 106 AmeriCorps members
- National College Advising Corps, \$400,000 - 50 AmeriCorps members
- Project Transformation, \$725,732 - 157 AmeriCorps members

- Project Transformation, \$74,994 to support a one year AmeriCorps Planning Grant
- Reading Partners, \$ 453,250 - 37 AmeriCorps members
- Reading Partners, \$75,000 to support a one year AmeriCorps Planning Grant
- Relay Graduate School of Education, \$250,000 - 250 AmeriCorps members
- Teach for America, \$728,000 - 728 AmeriCorps members
- Texas A&M International University, \$317,727 - 70 AmeriCorps members
- The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, \$618,288 - 170 AmeriCorps members
- Travis Co. through Travis Co. HHS, \$363,618 - 32 AmeriCorps members
- United Way of El Paso County, \$265,516 - 20 AmeriCorps members
- University of Houston, \$276,528 - 40 AmeriCorps members
- University of North Texas, \$ 508,598 - 110 AmeriCorps members
- UT Austin Charles A. Dana Center, \$1,070,783 - 88 AmeriCorps members

## OVERVIEW OF ONESTAR BOARDS

OneStar Foundation has two boards:

**OneStar Foundation Board (OSF):** The OneStar Foundation Board, whose members are appointed by the Governor, oversees the mission and vision of OneStar to improve the lives of Texans. It also provides administrative and support services to the National Service Commission, a nonprofit corporation affiliated with OneStar and managed by the OneStar National Service Commission Board (see below).

**OneStar National Service Commission Board (OSNSC):** The National Service Commission Board, whose commissioners are appointed by the Governor, promotes volunteerism in Texas and oversees the administration of the AmeriCorps programs for the state as prescribed and authorized by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).

As gubernatorial appointees, OneStar board members are a valuable resource and an important part of the OneStar team. Board members are located across the state and grantees are encouraged to involve area board members, as appropriate, when engaging with public officials. Please contact your OneStar Program Officer to facilitate communication with board members.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT

This section includes suggestions of recommended communications activities to successfully engage public officials.

- **Notify public officials:** Provide personalized notification to public officials of federal funding via letter, email, fax or phone call. Customize the template in this toolkit to highlight the positive impacts of your program on their constituents.
- **Use the press/media:** Distribute a press release announcing grant award notification and/or other important events or dates to local media contacts. Customize the template in this toolkit to include services your program provides and to show the impact your program has on the local community. Additional guidance on specific days of service will be provided at a later date.
- **Schedule a site visit:** Invite public officials and OneStar board members to visit your program to get an in-depth look at the services AmeriCorps members provide to constituents. Utilize program communication mechanisms such as social media outlets to maximize publicity surrounding visits.
- **Host an event:** Plan and host an event during the grant year to engage public officials, OneStar board members and the community. Events, specifically highlighting AmeriCorps members, can be centered around:
  - September 11<sup>th</sup> National Day of Service and Remembrance (September)
  - Opening Day/ AmeriCorps Member Swearing In (Fall)
  - Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service (January)
  - Mayor and County Day of Recognition (April)
  - AmeriCorps Member Graduation

- Additional dates, special events and opportunities unique to your program including receptions, recognition ceremonies and service projects.
- **Utilize social media:** Use Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms to highlight your program within districts and tag public officials in posts about funding notification and program impact.



## **KEY MESSAGES**

### **AMERICORPS WORKS FOR TEXAS by:**

- **Getting things done:** Every day in communities across Texas, AmeriCorps members address the most pressing challenges facing our cities and counties – from educating students for the jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and expanding economic opportunities to helping communities recover from national disasters.
- **Creating future leaders:** AmeriCorps members gain new and useful skills, advance their education and become more connected to their communities. As a result of their service, members are more likely to engage in civic activities such as volunteering and voting and are more likely to go into public service careers such as teaching, public safety, and social work.
- **Encouraging local control:** With the backing and support of a bipartisan board of Texans, OneStar Foundation selects strong organizations to administer AmeriCorps programs throughout the state. Funds are awarded to nonprofits, school districts, institutions of higher education, and local governments in Texas communities most familiar with the challenges and needs facing their fellow Texans.
- **Strengthening nonprofits and the volunteer sector:** AmeriCorps members help faith-based and community organizations expand programs to provide direct services to those vulnerable Texans who are most in need, including at-risk children and low-income families.

### **SERVICE AS A SOLUTION -THE AMERICORPS PROGRAM:**

- **Is cost-effective:** Given the many challenges facing our communities – and the fiscal constraints facing government at all levels – state and local officials are increasingly turning to national service as a cost-effective solution to meet local needs.
- **Utilizes data and evidence:** AmeriCorps\*Texas ensures maximum return on public investment by utilizing data and evidence to improve efficacy and strengthen programs that respond to Texas’s critical social challenges.

## **TALKING POINTS**

### **Statewide talking points:**

- AmeriCorps\*Texas engages nearly 3,000 men and women in intensive service each year at hundreds of locations across Texas, including nonprofits, schools, public agencies and community and faith-based groups.
- AmeriCorps members in Texas will contribute more than 3.4 million hours of service this year.
- AmeriCorps members will provide services to approximately 88,000 at-risk children and youth through AmeriCorps\*Texas programs this year including tutoring, intensive mentoring and programs to increase college readiness.
- AmeriCorps\*Texas programs will provide services to over 7,000 college students to support them in successfully completing their degree.
- Over 5,000 Texan adults will receive services through AmeriCorps\*Texas programs including job training, literacy skills, housing services, job placement services and services to alleviate food insecurity and long term hunger.
- AmeriCorps\*Texas programs harness some of the best qualities of Texans – innovation, hard work, service to others and community involvement – to find solutions that work for our state.
- Service to others is a hallmark of the American (and Texan) spirit and central to how we address challenges.

### **Localized talking points:**

- More than [NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED] individuals (or children or adults) living in [AREA- CITY OR COUNTY OR DISTRICT] receive services from AmeriCorps members at [NAME OF PROGRAM].

- AmeriCorps members at [ORGANIZATION NAME] provide [TYPE OF SERVICE] to [NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES] Texas children/adults/youths per year.
- [GIVE EXAMPLES OF AMERICORPS MEMBER ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT SPECIFIC TO YOUR PROGRAM]

**REMINDER:** Localized talking points are suggestions. Please insert language specific to your program to highlight the impact within individual communities. Public officials need to know the localized impact of national service programs and how your services affect their constituents. Be specific. If possible, incorporate narratives into the points. Numbers need to be humanized.

- **Example:** XYZ Organization provides intensive mentoring and college readiness programming to at-risk children in Austin. Last year, 100 of our students graduated high school and advanced to college. Many of these children were the first member of their family to ever attend college. Through AmeriCorps\*Texas, XYZ provided the resources and mentors necessary to help these children achieve their dreams.

## **SCHEDULE A SITE VISIT**

Invite public officials and OneStar board members to visit your program to get an in-depth look at the services AmeriCorps members provide to their constituents. It is important that public officials see the impact that AmeriCorps\*Texas programs have in their districts and the services provided to their constituents.

**Schedule the visit.** Public officials spend part of their time within their home districts and set aside time to meet with constituents and organizations like yours. For example, U.S. Congress members are usually home during recesses (the month of August, end of December and a few weeks in the spring).

- **Send a formal invitation letter.** Even if you speak with one of the official's staff members to schedule the visit, follow up with a formal letter (template included in this toolkit) noting the date and time of the visit.
- **Be flexible with date and time of the visit.** Having multiple options for the date and time of the visit will increase your chances of finding a meeting time that works for everyone.
- **Talk to the scheduler for the public official directly and be persistent!** You will likely need to follow up multiple times in order to schedule a visit. If you are offered a visit from one of the public official's staff members, consider accepting. This is a great first step to building a relationship with the public official.
- **Have a rough agenda and a list of attendees prepared** so that the scheduler can inform the official of what to expect at the site visit.
- **Hold the visit at a service location that is within that public official's district.** Officials will want to see how your program affects their constituents.
- **Invite OneStar board members and staff** to attend the event.

**Use the press to publicize the visit.** Press coverage can be beneficial for all parties including your organization and the public official.

- **Send out a press release** with details of the event (template included) 3-5 days before the event. Consider **sending a media advisory** (template included) inviting the local press to attend 5-7 days before the event (if applicable).
- **Coordinate press invitations (media advisories) with the public official's office** as not all officials prefer press at site visits. Having press at your visit might distract attendees from the purpose of the visit (highlighting the impact of your program) so consider beforehand if it is a good fit for your event. Ensure that all parties are in agreement on this issue as no one wants to be caught off-guard should members of the press be present.

**Make the agenda impactful.** Consider the amount of time appropriate for a site visit. For busy public officials, one hour might be the maximum time available and visits could be as short as fifteen minutes.

- **Include brief talking points** to educate attendees about national service and your AmeriCorps program.
- **Make sure branding is visible.** The AmeriCorps logo should be clearly visible on all AmeriCorps members and on signage.
- **Include current AmeriCorps members and alums** to highlight stories of service.
- **Utilize service beneficiaries' stories** to highlight the impact of programming on constituents.
- **Engage in activities that you feel will highlight the services you provide** such as inviting the public official to serve with the members while they

provide services (if appropriate) or to participate in a service project with members at your organization.

- **Determine a location for the visit** that highlights the service being performed by members. If possible, avoid an office and instead tour a service site or meet with members at their service location. This will allow the public official to experience the service that your members are providing to their constituents.
- **Choose attendees carefully and make sure that everyone stays on message.** Choose attendees who can be trusted to make a good impression when meeting with public officials. During these visits they are representing not only themselves and your organization, but OneStar, national service and CNCS. Consider distributing talking points to all attendees ahead of time to ensure that as much time as possible is spent highlighting your program, the services you provide and your impact in the community.
- **Maintain flexibility.** Planning is necessary and helps events run smoothly; however, due to the nature of the work in the public sector, schedules might change quickly. Consider having contingency plans to ensure that, even with possible last minute adjustments, events are still successful.

#### **Utilize public engagement tools to highlight the visit.**

- **Take** and utilize photos. Wherever possible, include AmeriCorps\*Texas branding.
- **Utilize social media** and other communications tools to announce the event to your supporters.
- **Create hashtags** specific to your event and/or use #AmeriCorpsWorks
- **Tag** AmeriCorps\*Texas, OneStar Foundation, CNCS, and AmeriCorps social media accounts in all your event posts.

**Don't forget to thank the public official for taking the time to visit your site and remind them how crucial national service programs are to their constituents.**

**\*\* Remember: The purpose of a site visit is to educate public officials about the services you provide, to provide an opportunity to build relationships with public officials and to highlight the impact of the services your AmeriCorps\*Texas members provide in local districts and areas. \*\***

**PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE: GRANT AWARD NOTIFICATION**



(add  
grantee  
logo)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date:

Contact: [MEDIA CONTACT]

Telephone: [PHONE]

Email: [EMAIL ADDRESS]

Website: [ORGANIZATION WEBSITE]

**[ORGANIZATION NAME] Announces AmeriCorps Grant  
from OneStar Foundation**

**Funding will support [NUMBER OF MEMBERS] AmeriCorps members to meet local  
needs**

City, State – [ORGANIZATION NAME] today announced that they are the recipients of [DOLLAR AMOUNT] in federal AmeriCorps funding from OneStar Foundation, the Governor-appointed state service commission. This funding is expected to generate an additional [MATCH AMOUNT] in local resources to increase community impact and return on federal investment.

This grant will support [NUMBER OF MEMBERS] AmeriCorps members in [GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF MEMBERS] who will address critical challenges in [FOCUS AREA SUCH AS EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENT, ETC.]. Through this



funding, AmeriCorps members will [DESCRIPTION OF AMERICORPS MEMBER ACTIVITIES].

“National service is an essential part of the solution to many of the challenges facing our state,” said Elizabeth Darling, President/CEO of OneStar Foundation. “These AmeriCorps members will meet pressing local needs and strengthen Texas communities as they develop civic and leadership skills to last a lifetime. I congratulate [ORGANIZATION NAME] and thank all those who serve their communities through AmeriCorps.”

[OPTIONAL: QUOTE FROM ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP]

Every day, in communities across Texas, AmeriCorps members address the most pressing challenges facing our cities and counties while gaining new and useful skills, advancing their education, and becoming more connected with their communities. In Texas, more than 52,000 AmeriCorps members have served 70 million hours and earned more than \$156,670,000 in education scholarships. AmeriCorps members have been serving with [ORGANIZATION NAME] in [GEOGRAPHICAL AREA] since [INCEPTION DATE] and have provided needed services to [NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED] each year.

##

[ADD ORGANIZATIONAL BOILERPLATE MESSAGE]

OneStar Foundation is the Governor-designated National Service Commission in Texas and administers the AmeriCorps State grant program. Governor-appointed board members oversee the legal and policy governance of the AmeriCorps\*Texas program portfolio. Learn more at [www.onestarfoundation.org](http://www.onestarfoundation.org).

AmeriCorps is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that engages millions of Americans in service through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, the Social Innovation Fund, and the Volunteer Generation Fund, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit [www.NationalService.gov](http://www.NationalService.gov).

*-- end--*

## PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE: EVENT OR VISIT



(add  
grantee  
logo)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date:

Contact: [MEDIA CONTACT]

Telephone: [PHONE]

Email: [EMAIL ADDRESS]

Website: [ORGANIZATION WEBSITE]

**[PUBLIC OFFICIAL] to visit [ORGANIZATION] to [PURPOSE OF THE VISIT,  
example: recognize AmeriCorps program] in [AREA]**

[CITY, STATE]- [ORGANIZATION] invited [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] to visit the organization to learn more about services provided and people served, to meet and interact with AmeriCorps members, and to recognize the impact of the work accomplished by these members. During the visit, [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] will be [ACTIVITIES FROM AGENDA].

Every day, in communities across Texas, AmeriCorps members address the most pressing challenges facing our cities and counties. In [AREA], AmeriCorps members serve with [ORGANIZATION] and provide services to [PROGRAM SPECIFIC DATA AND MESSAGING HERE].

AmeriCorps members fill a critical role in local areas by serving as a cost-effective solution to meet many local needs and by providing direct services to the most vulnerable Texans including at-risk children and low-income families. On [DAY OF THE WEEK OF VISIT], [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] will be able to see firsthand how AmeriCorps members work to tackle the needs of the community through [PROGRAM SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES].

[QUOTE FROM ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP]

Funding for AmeriCorps\*Texas programs is provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) through OneStar Foundation, the governor-appointed State Service Commission for the state of Texas. OneStar Foundation administers \$14.6 million in federal AmeriCorps funds, placing AmeriCorps\*Texas members across the state.

##

[ADD ORGANIZATIONAL BOILERPLATE MESSAGE]

OneStar Foundation is the Governor-designated National Service Commission in Texas and administers the AmeriCorps State grant program. Governor-appointed board members oversee the legal and policy governance of the AmeriCorps\*Texas program portfolio. Learn more at [www.onestarfoundation.org](http://www.onestarfoundation.org).

AmeriCorps is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that engages millions of Americans in service through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, the Social Innovation Fund, and the Volunteer Generation Fund, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit [www.NationalService.gov](http://www.NationalService.gov).

-- end--

**MEDIA ADVISORY TEMPLATE: EVENT OR VISIT**



(add  
grantee  
logo)

**MEDIA ADVISORY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date:

Contact: [MEDIA CONTACT]

Telephone: [PHONE]

Email: [EMAIL ADDRESS]

Website: [ORGANIZATION WEBSITE]

**[PUBLIC OFFICIAL] to visit [ORGANIZATION] to recognize AmeriCorps program  
in [AREA]**

Who:

What:

Where:

When:

Why: Every day, in communities across Texas, AmeriCorps members address the most pressing challenges facing our cities and counties. In [AREA], AmeriCorps members serve with [ORGANIZATION] and provide services to [PROGRAM SPECIFIC DATA AND MESSAGING HERE].

[ORGANIZATION] invited [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] to visit our organization to learn more about the services we provide and people we serve, meet and interact with AmeriCorps members and thank them for their national service.

[INSERT LANGUAGE WITH SPECIFICS OF AGENDA/ ACTIVITIES FOR THE  
EVENT]

###

**LETTER TO PUBLIC OFFICIAL TEMPLATE: FUNDING  
NOTIFICATION**



(add  
grantee  
logo)

[DATE]

[TITLE AND NAME OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL]

[ADDRESS]

Dear [TITLE AND LAST NAME OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL],

We are pleased to announce that [ORGANIZATION] received a federal AmeriCorps grant for 2017-2018 from OneStar Foundation, the governor-appointed State Service Commission. This grant will provide us with [AMOUNT] in federal funding which we will use to generate [MATCH AMOUNT] in local matched resources. This will allow us to place [NUMBER OF MEMBERS] AmeriCorps members in areas where they are needed the most, including [AREAS], which are within your own district.

AmeriCorps members provide critical cost-effective solutions to the challenges facing those individuals living in your community. At [ORGANIZATION], AmeriCorps members [PROGRAM SPECIFICS ABOUT ACTIVITIES]. Locally, they provide [NUMBER OF HOURS] hours to [NUMBER OF THOSE SERVED] individuals/at-risk youths each year.

Over the next several months, individuals from all ages and backgrounds will begin training and orientation in preparation for service as an AmeriCorps members at [ORGANIZATION]. This yearlong commitment these AmeriCorps members will make comes from a desire to serve their fellow Texans, gain new skills, further their higher educational goals, and above all, to make Texas a better place to live for us all.

We would love to tell you more about our program. Please call us at [PHONE NUMBER] to schedule a visit or with any questions.

Respectfully,

[APPROPRIATE LEADERSHIP SIGNATURE]

## LETTER TO PUBLIC OFFICIAL TEMPLATE: SITE VISIT INVITATION



(add  
grantee  
logo)

[DATE]

[TITLE AND NAME OF OFFICIAL]  
[ADDRESS]

ATTN: Scheduler

Dear [TITLE AND LAST NAME OF OFFICIAL],

[ORGANIZATION NAME], a [BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION, example: non-profit organization providing services to vulnerable and at-risk children and adults] in [CITY, STATE], invites you to visit our program during the next congressional recess, [DATES OF RECESS]. We are excited to be able to provide an opportunity for you to witness firsthand how, through AmeriCorps programming, we are addressing the most pressing challenges facing Texans.

The AmeriCorps members serving with [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] share your commitment to addressing the needs of the people of [CITY/ AREA]. We invite you to visit our program and allow this inspiring group of members to share their stories of hard work, commitment and service. This visit will allow you to experience how AmeriCorps members tackle the critical needs of your community through/by [PROGRAM SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND/OR IMPACT]. I will be contacting your office in the next few weeks to schedule a visit. If your staff has any questions, they may contact me directly at [PHONE NUMBER] or [EMAIL ADDRESS]. I hope you can join us for a visit in [MONTH OF RECESS].

Sincerely,

[SIGNATURE OF APPROPRIATE LEADERSHIP STAFF]



## **SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE AND TEMPLATES**

### **Social Media Accounts to Follow and Tag:**

- OneStar Foundation
  - o Facebook: [@OneStarFoundation](#)
  - o Twitter: [@OneStarFdn](#)
  - o Instagram: [@OneStarFoundation](#)
  - o Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/89699113@N03/sets/>
  - o LinkedIn: [OneStar-Foundation](#)
- AmeriCorps\*Texas
  - o Facebook: [@AmeriCorpsTexas](#)
- CNCS
  - o Facebook: [@AmeriCorps](#) and [@NationalService](#)
  - o Twitter: [@AmeriCorps](#) and [@NationalService](#)
  - o Instagram: [@NationalService](#)
  - o Tumblr: [NationalService.Tumblr.com](#)
  - o Snapchat: [NationalService](#)
  - o LinkedIn: [Corporation for National and Community Service](#) and [AmeriCorps](#)

### **Best practices:**

- Tag public officials in posts when appropriate.
- Include photos in your posts (action pictures, showing impact and branded with the AmeriCorps logo).
- Use hashtags such as #AmeriCorpsWork or other appropriate hashtags.
- Discuss impact on the community and the impact of AmeriCorps members on your programming.
- Include links for relevant content such as links to press releases, information on websites, events, etc.

**Sample Facebook posts (sample posts for specific events will be available at a later date):**

- [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] visited us today to meet AmeriCorps members and to learn how their service helps provide solutions for [CITY/ AREA]. [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] spent the time [AGENDA SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES]. We want to thank them for visiting us and we appreciate their support of [ORGANIZATION], AmeriCorps\*Texas and National Service! We look forward to working with [PUBLIC OFFICIAL] in the future!
- [ORGANIZATION] is excited to welcome [number of members] new AmeriCorps members to help us [PROGRAM SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES BRIEFLY STATED]!
- We are pleased to announce that [ORGANIZATION] received a 2017-2018 AmeriCorps\*Texas grant for [AMOUNT] from @OneStarFoundation that will allow us to place [NUMBER OF MEMBERS] in [AREA]. We are excited that we will be able to continue providing (or “be able to provide services”) services through [PROGRAM NAME] to Texan children/ adults/ individuals in [CITY/ AREA]. If you would like to learn more about our [PROGRAM NAME], click here: [PROVIDE WEBSITE LINK]

**Sample Twitter posts:**

- Thanks to @[PUBLIC OFFICIAL] for visiting us today and for your support of our organization, @OneStarFdn and @NationalService!
- We had a great time with @[PUBLIC OFFICIAL] today! They met our AmeriCorps members & learned about their local impact! #AmeriCorpsWorks
- Excited to announce @AmeriCorps funding for 2017-2018 from @onestarfdn! We are pleased to be able to continue providing services for [AREA]!

## **Important Reminder on Prohibited Political Activity on Social Media**

*The following reminder was sent out to CNCS-funded programs by CNCS Chief of Staff Mikel Herrington on February 20, 2017:*

As part of their service duties, AmeriCorps State and National members, VISTA members, and Senior Corps volunteers may contribute to social media site design and/or communications on behalf of the sponsor or grantee organization to whom they are assigned. Similarly, as part of their grant-funded duties, sponsor and grantee staff of AmeriCorps State and National, VISTA, and Senior Corps projects and programs may also engage in social media activities as part of their grant-funded work or service.

In view of the involvement of members, volunteers, and grant-funded staff in official social media activities on behalf of CNCS grantees and sponsors, this is a reminder that members, volunteers and sponsor/grant-funded staff are prohibited from engaging in certain activities during service or while working on grant-funded matters. With regard to service and grant-funded staff activities and matters specifically in the social media space (e.g., Twitter, Instagram, Facebook), please be reminded of the following:

Generally, as part of their official duties, members, volunteers and sponsor/grant-funded staff may design, launch, and operate social media sites on behalf of the grantee or sponsor organization. Moreover, they may communicate about official program and project-related activities associated with the grant or project. However, members, volunteers, and sponsor/grant-funded staff are strictly prohibited from engaging in the following types of communications on social media as part of their service or grant-funded activity:

- **Lobbying Activities** – attempting to influence the passage or defeat of legislation or proposals by initiative petition;
- **Electoral Political Activities** – engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to a public office;

- **Other Political Activities** – participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
- **Organizing Activities** – assisting, promoting, or deterring union organization, or organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes; and
- **Voter Registration Activities** – conducting a voter registration drive, or discussing options regarding transportation to the polls.

## **BRANDING & USAGE OF ONESTAR AND AMERICORPS LOGOS**

CNCS regulations ([45CFR § 2520.65](#)) prohibit the use of the CNCS logo and other national service insignia in any of the following ways:

- *Attempting to influence legislation;*
- *Organizing or engaging in protest, petitions, boycotts or strikes;*
- *Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;*
- *Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;*
- *Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;*
- *Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation or elected officials;*
- *Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, engaging in religious proselytization; or*
- *Supporting for-profit, commercial activities.*

### **Tips and Reminders:**

- When discussing your program with public officials and media, you are required to identify your program as “an AmeriCorps Program.” This requirement, along with the requirement that the AmeriCorps logo be displayed prominently on your website, can be found in the [AmeriCorps State Specific Terms and Conditions, section III](#). Additionally, identify OneStar Foundation as the Governor-appointed State Service Commission that administers the AmeriCorps program for the State of Texas.
- Ensure the AmeriCorps logo is prominently displayed in photos and that photos highlight AmeriCorps members, services provided and local impact.
- If you include pictures of people (we hope you do!) make sure you have permission from the individuals pictured to use the photos. Consider including a

media release (template included) as part of the registration for any event that you organize. If no pre-registration is on file, be sure to have paper copies of a media release on-site.

- Be sensitive to the populations you are serving, keeping in mind that there might be reasons not to post identifying pictures of certain populations, such as at-risk individuals or children, even if you have permission in writing.

**Standards for logos:**

- Do not alter the fonts or colors
- Never run the logo sideways, upside down, or placed within a shape
- Use logos proportionally; don't stretch or squeeze
- Don't use logos less than 1/2 inch high

**For links to logo files and additional guidance, see the resources page at the end of this toolkit.**

## MULTI-MEDIA RELEASE AGREEMENT TEMPLATE

Photographs and/or video may be taken at [NAME OF EVENT] and used for educational and marketing purposes.

Please select one of the options listed below:

Option 1- I hereby permit and authorize [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] to use my name, statements by me, photographs and/or likeness of me, video or audio in which I appear for purposes related to the mission of [NAME OF ORGANIZATION]. I understand my photograph or likeness may be copied, published and distributed by means of various media, including but not limited to, publications, placement on the organizational website, electronic communications, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media. I understand and agree that my authorization is given without the expectation of payment or any other consideration and without the right to inspect or approve the finished product. I understand and agree that these materials will become the property of [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] and that revocation will not apply in those instances in which [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] has acted upon this authorization prior to the revocation being received by [NAME OF ORGANIZATION].

Option 2- I do not permit or authorize [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] to use my name, statements by me, photographs and/or likeness of me, video or audio of me at any time without my prior written approval. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to avoid appearing in any photograph, giving statements or participating in any video or audio and agree to state this intention to the photographer, appropriate [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] staff and/or event organizer.

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SIGNATURE

---

PRINTED NAME

---

DATE

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **Branding:**

- [CNCS AmeriCorps Branding Messaging Guidance](#)
- [CNCS Logos: Guidance and files](#)
- [OneStar Foundation Website: Logos and Branding Materials](#)

### **CNCS Press Materials:**

- [Press Releases](#)
- [Official Statements](#)
- [Outreach Resources](#)
- [Marketing Materials](#)
- [Social Media Hub](#)
- [2017 Public Engagement Plan](#)
- [National Service in Texas](#)

### **OneStar Foundation Materials:**

- [Special Events and Initiatives Resources](#)

### **Miscellaneous:**

- [CNCS FAQs Regarding Restrictions on Legislative Lobbying and Partisan Political Activity](#)
- [Social Media for Non-profits: A Comprehensive Guide](#)
- [How to Write a Non-profit Press Release](#)
- [10 Tips for Getting Local Media Attention for Your Nonprofit](#)



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