AmeriCorps State and National Program Start-up Guide

Pre-application through First Year Implementation

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

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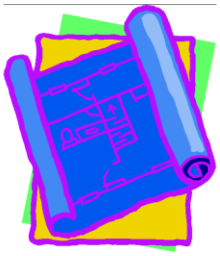
GUIDE INTRODUCTION



Welcome to AmeriCorps! This AmeriCorps Program Start-up Guide is designed to help you get your program up and running so that you can join the thousands of communities across the nation that are getting things done for America through AmeriCorps. Since 1992, individuals like you and organizations such as yours have engaged in substantial service to communities through AmeriCorps. Congratulations on taking the courageous step to help your fellow citizens and your community through your commitment to service.

There are many facets to the successful management of an AmeriCorps program. This publication will help you understand the components and take you through the steps to initiate, organize, and successfully manage an AmeriCorps program. From recruiting staff and AmeriCorps members, to establishing community partnerships, to evaluating the impact of your members and their service, this Guide contains information and suggestions to lead you through the first year of an AmeriCorps program.

Program Start-up Guide Design

The experiences of other AmeriCorps programs teach us that the pre-application through the first six-months of operations are the most critical phases. To ensure your success, we paid close attention to the tasks relevant to the first six-months of program implementation and operations. However, you will also find program information for months seven through 12. Frequently there are repeated processes during this time period so less information is included.

✓ **We organized all tasks according to these important time phases:**

- Pre-application
- Pre-award
- 0-3 months
- 4-6 months
- 7-12 months

✓ **Four major program components are explained in each time phase, starting with the pre-award phase:**

- Program Development and Management
- Community and Site Partnerships
- Member Development and Support
- Financial and Grants Management

The chart below illustrates the structure and scope of the Program Start-up Guide.

Program Time Phases

Pre-application	*Pre-award*	*0 – 3 months*	*4 – 6 months*	*7 – 12 months*
1. Community Assessment 2. Creating the AmeriCorps Workplan	1. Program Development and Management 2. Community and Site Partnerships 3. Member Development and Support 4. Financial and Grants Management	1. Program Development and Management 2. Community and Site Partnerships 3. Member Development and Support 4. Financial and Grants Management	1. Program Development and Management 2. Community and Site Partnerships 3. Member Development and Support 4. Financial and Grants Management	1. Program Development and Management 2. Community and Site Partnerships 3. Member Development and Support 4. Financial and Grants Management

Program Components

Organizing Features

✓ The information in the Guide is organized using a question and answer format.

- **What do you need to know?**
- **Why do you need to know it?**
- **How do you do it?**
- **Additional questions**

✓ The Guide includes important features that will help you keep your program in compliance with the regulations and laws that accompany your grant. It also contains a few enhancements that will make your job easier and put your program on a path to excellence.

- **Resource List**
- **Glossary:** An extensive glossary to help you navigate new and unfamiliar terms used in AmeriCorps.
- **Tools for Success:** A section at the end of many chapters with examples, checklists, and forms.

Target Audience for the Guide

The content of this Guide was developed for program staff of CNCS direct grantees. Direct grantees are AmeriCorps National programs, tribal programs, and State Service Commissions. The Guide may also be useful for subgrantees of state commissions who are starting or managing AmeriCorps programs. Please note that references to CNCS Program Officers and Grants Officers refer to the individuals at CNCS who support direct grantees. Subgrantees will have state Program Officers or other non-CNCS support staff. Subgrantees may also have additional requirements and guidance to follow from their parent organization or state commission, and that information will not be contained or referenced in this Guide.

How to Use the Guide

There are several ways to use the information in the Guide. We recommend that initially you focus on the time phases to ensure you complete all necessary tasks.

1. You can read the Guide cover-to-cover.
2. You can scan the table of contents or the index and choose the topics that can help you right away.
3. You can focus on the specific program time phase in which you are working.
4. You can use the Guide as an overall program-tracking tool.

To ensure the highest degree of relevancy, we have gathered information and resources from conversations, focus groups, and from persons who have successfully managed programs from start-up to sustained growth. We hope the Guide can help you minimize frustrating mistakes or delays by providing clear, useful information.

Please note that the information contained in this Guide was compiled over several years (approximately 2000-2005). The program development guidance remains relevant to current AmeriCorps programs; however, you must be sure to refer to your current grant year terms and conditions (formerly called grant provisions), updated federal regulations, and other current CNCS guidance for all grant and program management requirements. If you have any questions about this Guide and how it relates to your current year requirements, please contact your CNCS Program Officer.

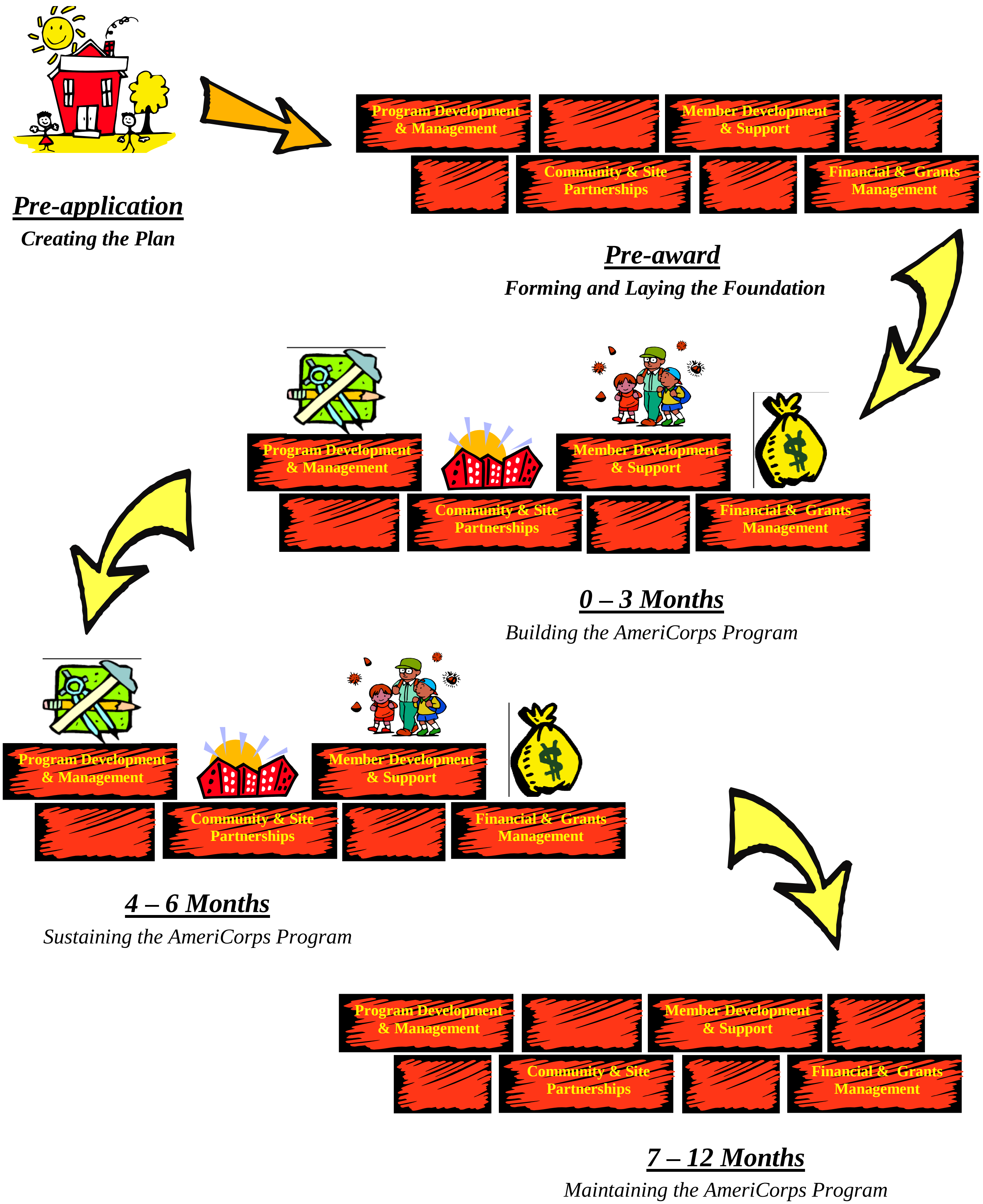
While CNCS staff have reviewed all documents in this manual, the examples are non-sanctioned policies or best practices for you to use as you decide is appropriate. The contents of this Guide do not constitute the CNCS official interpretation of factual or legal questions.

Getting Things Done

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is pleased to provide you with this Guide. The Corporation, in addition to being the primary grantor of AmeriCorps funding, is the hub of a system of assistance that includes your host or parent organization, your state commission, Internet resources, and many other publications. The AmeriCorps Program Start-up Guide is an introduction to a network of assistance dedicated to your program's success.

Welcome to AmeriCorps!

Building Your Program: From Vision to Fruition



Resources

AmeriCorps Alumni	www.americorpsalums.org
AmeriCorps Gear and Signage	www.nationalservicegear.org
AmeriCorps Legislation	www.nationalservice.gov/about/legislation
AmeriCorps Grant Terms and Conditions	www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/managing-americorps-grants
Education Award Information	www.americorpsalums.org **and** www.americorps.gov/members/edaward.html
Member Enrollment	https://my.americorps.gov
National Service Knowledge Network	www.nationalservice.gov/resources
National Service Programs Funded by CNCS	www.nationalservice.gov/impact-our-nation/state-profiles
State Service Commissions	www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions

Glossary of Terms

Administrative costs	Administrative costs are costs associated with the overall administration of a program.
AmeriCorps member, corps member, member	An individual serving on a full-time or part-time basis in an AmeriCorps program who is eligible to receive an education award or alternative post service benefit.
AmeriCorps National Service Network	The network of all AmeriCorps programs, including AmeriCorps State/National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC.
AmeriCorps Promise Fellows	Promise Fellows serve in a leadership corps of approximately 500 full-time AmeriCorps members who spearhead community efforts to deliver the Five Promises of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future to children and youth across the nation.
AmeriCorps NCCC	AmeriCorps NCCC is a 10-month, full-time residential program which combines the best practices of civilian service with the best practices of military service, including leadership development and team-building.
AmeriCorps State and National	Members participate in local service programs operated by not-for-profits, local and state government entities, Indian tribes, territories, and institutions of higher education, local school and police districts, and partnerships among any of the above.
AmeriCorps VISTA	Members of AmeriCorps VISTA work and live in the communities they serve, creating or expanding programs that can continue after they complete their service.
Benefits	AmeriCorps member benefits **do not** include paid time off, paid holidays, or paid sick leave. Time is credited, however, for voter registration, voting, jury duty, and military reserve and guard duty (for a period of no more than the two-week annual active duty). Also included in AmeriCorps member benefits are training/education, health insurance (for full-time AmeriCorps members not otherwise covered), and child care (for eligible full-time AmeriCorps members).
Community-based agency	A private nonprofit organization (including a church or other religious entity) that is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community and is engaged in meeting human, educational, environmental, or public safety community needs.
Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the Corporation	A federal corporation which funds AmeriCorps State and National, Learn and Serve America programs, and Senior Corps projects. The Corporation was authorized by the signing of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993.
Corps	This word is used to describe a team of AmeriCorps members.

Education award	A benefit that AmeriCorps members may receive after **successful completion of a term of service.** The award is paid directly to a lending or educational institution and may be used to pay off federal student loans (Perkins, Stafford, PLUS, etc.) or to finance college, graduate school, or approved vocational training.
eGrants	The Corporation for National and Community Service's online grant application and management system.
End outcomes	End outcomes are the positive changes that your program ultimately hopes to achieve for beneficiaries. End outcomes address community conditions or needed changes in the condition, behavior, or attitudes of beneficiaries.
General Equivalency Diploma (GED)	A degree obtained by examination that may substitute for a high school diploma. A Member must agree to obtain a GED or high school diploma before using his or her AmeriCorps education award.
Host site	This is a group or organization that acts as a project sponsor and is responsible for the actual location where a project is to be performed. This entity may provide task specific training, technical assistance supervision, or other services as agreed to in a contract or other formal agreement between the program and the host site.
Intermediate outcomes	Intermediate outcomes are changes or benefits experienced by your service recipients during the course of their service.
Living allowance	A living allowance is a stipend, not a wage or salary. It is provided to AmeriCorps members enrolled and active in an AmeriCorps program.
National and Community Service Act of 1990	The Act of 1990 was passed by Congress and signed into law in 1990 to establish the Commission on National and Community Service.
National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, the Act	The Act of 1993 amended the National and Community Service Act of 1990, to establish the Corporation for National Service by combining the Commission for National and Community Service and ACTION.
National service identity	The sense of purpose and membership in a common program that all AmeriCorps members share. National identity can be promoted and strengthened by everything from buttons and T-shirts to reflection activities, common national service projects, and civic education. AmeriCorps program staff play a key role in cultivating a national service identity, training members to represent the field and the program well, and continually promoting the program and field in local communities.
National Service Trust Fund, the Trust	The trust fund in the United States Treasury Department was established by the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 to hold and to disperse AmeriCorps education awards.
Non-displacement	AmeriCorps members may not perform any services that would result in a paid employee losing a job or a failure to hire a paid employee.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB)	The federal government's Office of Management and Budget assists the President in preparing the annual federal budget and oversees its execution. OMB must approve CNCS regulations, applications, forms, and any other documents that affect the public.
Outputs	Outputs refer to the amount of work or products completed and services delivered by your program. Examples include service hours completed by members and volunteers, neighborhood cleanup projects completed, and disaster preparedness training sessions conducted.
Performance measurement	Performance measurement is the process of regularly measuring the outputs and outcomes produced by your program. Performance measurement allows you to track both the amount of work done by your program and the impact of this work on your program beneficiaries.
Program	A coordinated group of activities linked by common elements such as recruitment, selection, and training of participants and staff, regular group activities and assignment to projects organized for the purpose of achieving the mission and goals of national and community service.
Project	An activity or a set of activities carried out as part of a program.
Request for Proposal (RFP)	Request for Proposal issued by CNCS, or another agency, to solicit program applications for available grant funds.
Service site	A service site is a place where service is being performed by AmeriCorps members and perhaps other people who are volunteers and/or employees. A service site is **not** a work or job site; it should not be referred to with that terminology.
Stakeholder	One or more people or organizations that have a high degree of interest in your organization's vision, mission, and success.
State Service Commission	A 15 - 25 member, independent, bipartisan commission appointed by a governor to implement service programs in a state. Each state commission receives funding from CNCS and is overseen by an executive director.
Term of service	A term of service is determined by each program and must contain at least 1,700 hours served within 9 to 12 months (full-time); a minimum of 900 hours served within 2 years (part-time).
Training and Technical Assistance (TTA)	The support and assistance provided to AmeriCorps programs to strengthen program operations.

Pre-application Introduction

The decision to consider starting an AmeriCorps program is a huge one. Becoming part of the national service network brings opportunities for both your organization and the community you serve. It also brings significant additional work for your organization.

By reviewing the pre-application process and the things you will need to complete prior to submitting the AmeriCorps grant application, you will know whether your organization is ready and willing to proceed in completing the application.

***Caution*:** Applying for this federal grant is a lengthy process. Although there is some technical assistance available, we suggest you thoroughly review the requirements of the AmeriCorps grant application. While your organization may have had federal grants in the past, AmeriCorps has a number of specific infrastructure requirements that many federal grants may not have.

Pre-application Success Checklist

✓	***Community Advisory Group (CAG)***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Decide on size of Community Advisory Group (CAG).		
	Have interviews and discussions w/prospective CAG members.		
	Copy and provide relevant materials for CAG.		
	Schedule first CAG meeting.		
	Decide next steps, including meetings, mission, and outcomes.		

✓	***Community Needs Assessment***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	CAG and program staff create a community needs assessment.		
	Identify and train data collectors.		
	Conduct community needs assessment.		
	Compile community needs assessment data.		
	Debrief CAG on findings and identify next steps.		
	Develop AmeriCorps program workplan using community needs data.		

✓	***AmeriCorps Program Workplan***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Establish ongoing dialogue with State Service Commission or CNCS Program Officer regarding the AmeriCorps program.		
	Gather letters of support from community.		
	Identify potential donors.		
	Identify host/service sites.		
	Create a stakeholder list.		
	Locate needed resources.		
	Identify who AmeriCorps members will be.		
	Identify where and how you will recruit AmeriCorps members.		
	Outline the big picture/vision of the AmeriCorps program.		

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP

What is a Community Advisory Group (CAG)?

A Community Advisory Group or CAG is composed of community members familiar with the community's needs and the people who live there. Additionally, it may include members who are knowledgeable about your organization's mission, policy and procedures, national service, and AmeriCorps. Once identified, the CAG advises and informs your efforts to serve the community.

Why should you develop a Community Advisory Group?

CAG members can be the power behind your program's agenda. They can help to identify potential service site partners, enhance your organization's community visibility, identify community needs, and assist in resource generation.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓	Identify desirable community members you would like as a part of the advisory group.
	✓	Invite prospective CAG members to your organization for a service experience, roundtable discussion, and introduction to program beneficiaries.
	✓	Educate advisors about your program and its objectives, mission and vision, and national service and AmeriCorps.
	✓	Recruit prospective CAG members, who will support and advance your organization's mission, to become full group members.
	✓	Formalize the CAG structure; establish the goals, agenda, and meeting schedule.
	✓	Involve members in on-going evaluation of program components, organizational sustainability, and community impact.

SUGGESTED	•	Listen! Find out who the respected members of the community are and what they are interested in.
	•	Communicate! Take the opportunity to begin building a strong, trustful relationship with potential advisory group members.
	•	Cultivate relationships with these community members.
	•	Collaboratively establish the expectations of the group.

<u>Additional Questions</u>

Who do we invite to join the CAG?

Cultivate relationships with respected members of the community committed to its improvement; people who are willing to work collaboratively to move things forward. Select your partners carefully. Be sure that prospective group members support and buy-in to your mission, that they are actively committed and have the time to carry out their responsibilities with the group.

How do we best engage the CAG?

You can involve advisors in leveraging influence, getting new resources, serving as community ambassadors, and standing up on behalf of your organization. There are many other possibilities for involving community advisors in your AmeriCorps program.

Community Needs Assessment

What is a community needs assessment?

A community decides what its needs are and if your program can best address those needs.

Why should you conduct a community needs assessment?

An assessment helps you to build a solid, trusting relationship with the community. First, community members must be collaboratively involved in determining what happens in their community. This can significantly increase buy-in, participation, and cooperativeness. Second, your organization can determine whether a particular community is a good fit for the services the organization has to offer. Third, the needs assessment helps you be more strategic in using scarce resources to address the identified gaps in services or community resources.

How do you do it?

Suggested	
✓	Assign staff member(s) to collect the assessment data.
✓	Ask the right questions (use mostly open-ended questions that begin with "what" and "how").
✓	Involve the members of your Community Advisory Group and community partners or stakeholders in gathering data for the community needs assessment.
✓	Review the data collected with the Community Advisory Group and other stakeholders.
✓	Determine whether your organization's proposed services meet the community's articulated needs.
✓	Use the data collected to inform the writing of your program measurements, the selection of community partners, member recruitment activities, and other aspects of your program.

Additional Questions

What are some ways we can collect information?

There are many ways to find out what the community perceives as its needs. You can hold focus groups, implement a written survey, go door-to-door and talk with community members, or interview people currently receiving services. Be sure to get a good cross section of community members. This will help you really determine what the community identifies as its priorities.

What do we do with the information once we collect it?

A first step might be to hold a public meeting and share your findings with the community. By further engaging community members, they will continue to feel invested in the process of developing a program that meets their needs. Once you and the community have reviewed the data, use it to clarify your program objectives, select your service site partners, and inform your staffing decisions.

CREATING THE AMERICORPS PROGRAM WORKPLAN

What is a program workplan?
At this point your organization has accomplished two things. First, an advisory group has been recruited and members have agreed to support your program concept. Second, a community needs assessment has been conducted and the data collected supports the implementation of your organization's program or service idea. The next step is to create a workplan that consists of letters of support, assessment data, resources needed and available, stakeholders, potential donors, and community data.

Why should you complete a program workplan?
The workplan enables the organization to identify what needs to be done, and what resources are available or that need to be collected. It provides a clear structure for the work of creating and implementing the program.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓	Gather letters of support from supportive community members and organizations.
	✓	Identify potential donors.
	✓	Identify potential service/host sites where your AmeriCorps members might perform service.
	✓	Create a vision statement and a statement of need for the program.
	✓	Create a stakeholder list.
	✓	Locate all resources that are available to you and necessary for running the program. This includes building space, transportation, volunteers, technology, and other relevant resources.
	✓	Identify areas where you need resources.
	✓	Identify how you will recruit potential AmeriCorps members.
	✓	Outline a vision of what the program will look like once it is operational. Make an explicit statement about what makes your program different or unique. Describe gaps in existing services and how the program concept will fill those gaps.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
Who should we talk to as we begin this process? *Begin preliminary discussions with your State Service Commission or with CNCS. Learn how they function, what they do, and what they have to offer your program; identify their community improvement focus areas. Ask questions.*

What if other organizations have done or are doing the same type of service program we want to do? *Take the time to find out what their successes and challenges were. Learn about their best practices. If there is an AmeriCorps program in your area, see if there might be a duplication of services for the community you anticipate serving.*

EGRANTS: SUBMITTING THE AMERICORPS APPLICATION

What is eGrants?
eGrants is an integrated, secure, web-based system developed by CNCS to automate the entire grants management process. It allows applicants to find grant opportunities, apply for grants, and manage their grant reporting over the Internet. The system also allows CNCS to review applications, award grants, and manage those grants.

Why do you need access to eGrants?
eGrants is your key to AmeriCorps funds. All AmeriCorps program applications are reviewed and managed via the eGrants system. Initially, applicants use eGrants to apply for AmeriCorps program funds and track the status of their proposals through the review process. If funded, the system is used by grantees to apply for continuation grants, request grant amendments, submit reports, and update contact information.

How do you use eGrants?
Access eGrants at www.nationalservice.gov/eGrants. Follow the *Getting Started* steps to learn more about the system, its hardware requirements, and how to create an account. Once you create your account and establish a username and password, you will be able to log on to the system and access its application and administrative functions.

Additional Questions
How do you start a new grant application? *All organizations requesting funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service must complete the Application for Federal Assistance (SF424) in eGrants. When the SF424 screen opens, there may or may not be data in the fields. If your organization has had a previous grant with the Corporation, the information from the old grant may appear. To begin your new application, click the Create Application button. A pop-up window will be displayed with your organization's name already filled in. You can proceed with your application from here. You only need to use the Create Application button once for each application you start. For more information on starting your application, go to* ***Section 3*** *of the online eGrants manual.*

What can we do if we cannot access or connect to eGrants? *If this is your first time trying to access eGrants, go to* ***Section 1.2*** *of the online eGrants manual. This will give you step-by-step instructions for how to set up your computer for eGrants. If you continue to experience problems, contact the eGrants help desk.*

What is a grantee administrator? *The grantee administrator (GA) is a member your organization's staff who is responsible for maintaining the organization's eGrants account. The role is usually assigned to the first user to create an account for an organization.*

Who is responsible for maintaining account security? *The grantee administrator is responsible for monitoring user accounts and ensuring that no unauthorized users have access to organization information. If an individual leaves an organization, they should no longer have access to eGrants. The grantee administrator must deactivate their account.*

Who updates our organization's information? *The grantee administrator is responsible for updating the organization's contact information, when necessary.*

What can I do if I forget my password? *If you already have an eGrants account and you forget your password, you must reset your password. Go to the Corporation's website and click the* ***Forgot Password*** *button. The Reset Password screen will be displayed. Enter the correct information, as prompted. A confirmation screen will be displayed and your new password will be sent to you by email. For more information, go to* ***Section 2.2*** *of the online eGrants manual.*

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: ORGANIZATION EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Planning Regarding the Total Organization

Rating *	Indicator	Met	Needs Work	N/A
Indicators ratings: E=essential; R=recommended; A=additional activities to strengthen organization				
E	1. The organization's purpose and activities meet community needs.			
R	2. The organization frequently evaluates, by soliciting community input, whether its mission and activities provide benefit to the community.			
R	3. The organization has a value statement that is reflected in the agency's activities and is communicated by its constituents.			
A	4. The value statement includes standards of ethical behavior and respect for other's interests.			
E	5. The organization has a clear, meaningful written mission statement which reflects its purpose, values, and people served.			
R	6. The board and staff periodically review the mission statement and modify it to reflect changes in the environment.			
E	7. The board and staff develop and adopt a written strategic plan to achieve its mission.			
A	8. Board, staff, service recipients, volunteers, key constituents, and general members of the community participate in the planning process.			
E	9. The plan is developed by researching internal and external environments.			
R	10. The plan identifies the changing community needs including the agency's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.			
R	11. The planning process identifies the critical issues facing the organization.			
R	12. The plan sets goals and measurable objectives that address these critical issues.			
E	13. The plan integrates all the organization's activities around a focused mission.			
R	14. The plan prioritizes the agency goals and develops timelines for their accomplishments.			
A	15. The plan establishes an evaluation process and performance indicators to measure the progress toward the achievement of goals and objectives.			
R	16. Through the program work plan, human and financial resources are allocated to insure the accomplishment of the goals in a timely fashion.			
A	17. The plan is communicated to all stakeholders of the agency -- service recipients, board, staff, volunteers, and the general community.			

Planning Regarding the Organization's Programs

Rating *	Indicator	Met	Needs Work	N/A
Indicators ratings: E=essential; R=recommended; A=additional activities to strengthen organization				
E	1. Programs are congruent with the agency's mission and strategic plan.			
A	2. The organization actively informs the public about its programs and services.			
A	3. Clients and potential clients have the opportunity to participate in program development.			
R	4. Sufficient resources are allocated to ensure each program can achieve the established goals and objectives.			
R	5. Staff has sufficient training and skill level to produce the program.			
A	6. Programs within the organization are integrated to provide more complete services to clients.			
R	7. Each program has performance indicators to insure that the program meets its goals and objectives.			
R	8. Performance indicators are reviewed annually.			
A	9. The agency networks and/or collaborates with other organizations to produce the most comprehensive and effective services to clients.			

Planning Regarding the Organization's Evaluations

Rating *	Indicator	Met	Needs Work	N/A
Indicators ratings: E=essential; R=recommended; A=additional activities to strengthen organization				
R	1. Every year, the organization evaluates its activities to determine progress toward goal accomplishment.			
A	2. Stakeholders are involved in the evaluation process.			
R	3. The evaluation includes a review of organizational programs and systems to insure that they comply with the organization's mission, values, and goals.			
R	4. The results of the evaluation are reflected in the revised work plan.			
A	5. Periodically, the organization conducts a comprehensive evaluation of its programs. This evaluation measures program outcomes.			

Source: United Way of Minneapolis Area

SO YOU WANT TO BE AN AMERICORPS PROGRAM

Example: Things To Do Checklist

INITIAL PROCESS	
	Recruit, invite, and train a Community Advisory Group.
	Implement a Community Needs Assessment.
	Select community members to discuss the program idea.
	Create the AmeriCorps program work plan: • Collect letters of support. • Identify resources in the community. • Create a supporter and stakeholder list. • Identify potential in-kind and cash donors. • Determine the number of AmeriCorps members needed. • Identify service/host sites if AmeriCorps members will be at sites other than your organization. • Outline a tentative program budget.
	If you are an existing organization, you will need to conduct an internal audit to identify the current financial systems and controls.
	Service/host sites are engaged in an on-going dialogue. • Service/host organizations conduct an internal audit to determine their capabilities and resources. Outcomes, issues, and remedies are discussed. • Service/host sites determined based on available resources, funds, and supervision of members as well as meaningful, quality service projects.
	Draft scope of work with service/host site.
	Create work group to execute the grant application process.
	Submit the AmeriCorps grant application in eGrants.

PRE-AWARD PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! You have received your letter from CNCS indicating that you have been awarded a grant to start an AmeriCorps program. The next few months of preparation and grant negotiation will begin building the foundation for your AmeriCorps program, and the work will be significant. The Pre-award section is designed to help your organization prepare itself by implementing the vision for your AmeriCorps program and developing the necessary systems to ensure your program can be successful.

***Caution*:** Make sure you completely understand the requirements of the grant. Be sure to be in consistent communication with your CNCS Program Officer about what your organization needs to complete before you can draw down funds for your program. It is critical that you have clarity on what your next steps need to be.

Pre-award Success Checklist

✓	***Program Development and Management***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Review performance measures developed in your AmeriCorps application.		
	Develop annual calendar for program.		
	Develop organizational chart.		
	Review, update, and develop staff job descriptions.		
	Assess organization for potential legal and financial risks.		
	Develop a staff recruitment plan (if needed).		
	Develop a staff training and orientation plan.		
	Review and update organization's policy, procedure, and regulation manuals to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps grant terms and conditions.		
	Develop or download necessary program data collection tools.		
	Complete a presentation to your board.		

DEVELOP AN ANNUAL CALENDAR

What is an annual calendar? It is a program-based calendar that identifies the major program activities and events for the next 12-months**.**

Why do you need an annual calendar? The calendar helps the organization effectively plan its program cycle and allows every member of your organization to view important events and activities. Additionally, it can decrease the likelihood of scheduling conflicts, serve as a record of events and activities, identify AmeriCorps member service hour targets, and operate as an organizational communication tool.

How do you do it?

SUGGESTED	
	• Identify the staff person responsible for updating and maintaining the annual calendar.
	• Establish criteria to use for adding items to the annual calendar.
	• Determine when the annual calendar process should start and end.
	• During staff and AmeriCorps member retreats, review, discuss, and approve the calendar.
	• Use a standard calendar making software to create your annual calendar.
	• Provide copies to all staff and AmeriCorps members.

Additional Questions

What kinds and numbers of events should be noted on an annual calendar? *Consider limiting entries to activities/events that impact the AmeriCorps program. Some of these events could include State Service Commission or CNCS reporting deadlines, member service hour targets, national service days, staff and member orientation and training activities, service partner holidays, breaks, or special events that impact the AmeriCorps program, community service projects, retreats, and staff or member development activities.*

DEVELOP AN ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

What is an organizational chart? An organizational chart is a visual representation of lines of supervision for all staff. Whether you have an existing program and are incorporating an AmeriCorps program or you are starting a brand new AmeriCorps program, you will need to revise the organizational chart to reflect new lines of supervision.

Why do you need an organizational chart? A well-conceived and articulated organizational reporting structure will go a long way toward strengthening lines of communication, supervision, accountability, and responsibility. Staff members need to understand their roles and responsibilities – particularly with the addition of the AmeriCorps program.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓	Determine if existing staff will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the AmeriCorps program **or** if new staff must be hired as allowed by the terms of your grant.
	✓	Consult with your community partners to determine how staffing structures might need to be adjusted if you have AmeriCorps members placed at their sites.
	✓	Revise your organizational chart to reflect the inclusion of the AmeriCorps program.
	✓	Revise or create staff job descriptions to reflect added duties and responsibilities.
	✓	Communicate with existing staff the proposed changes to the organizational chart and how the changes affect them.
	✓	Ensure that the percentage of time staff members work with the AmeriCorps program matches the approved grant and budget narratives.
	✓	Establish timesheets to track hours separately for activities paid for by the AmeriCorps grant.

Additional Questions

Can I hire new staff and bill it to the AmeriCorps grant? *Yes. So long as your budget and grantee agreement support a new hire. You cannot bill for the position if a staff member is not doing work for the AmeriCorps program. The creation of timesheets with clear explanations of what work was done with which AmeriCorps program is crucial to preventing any inappropriate charges to the AmeriCorps grant.*

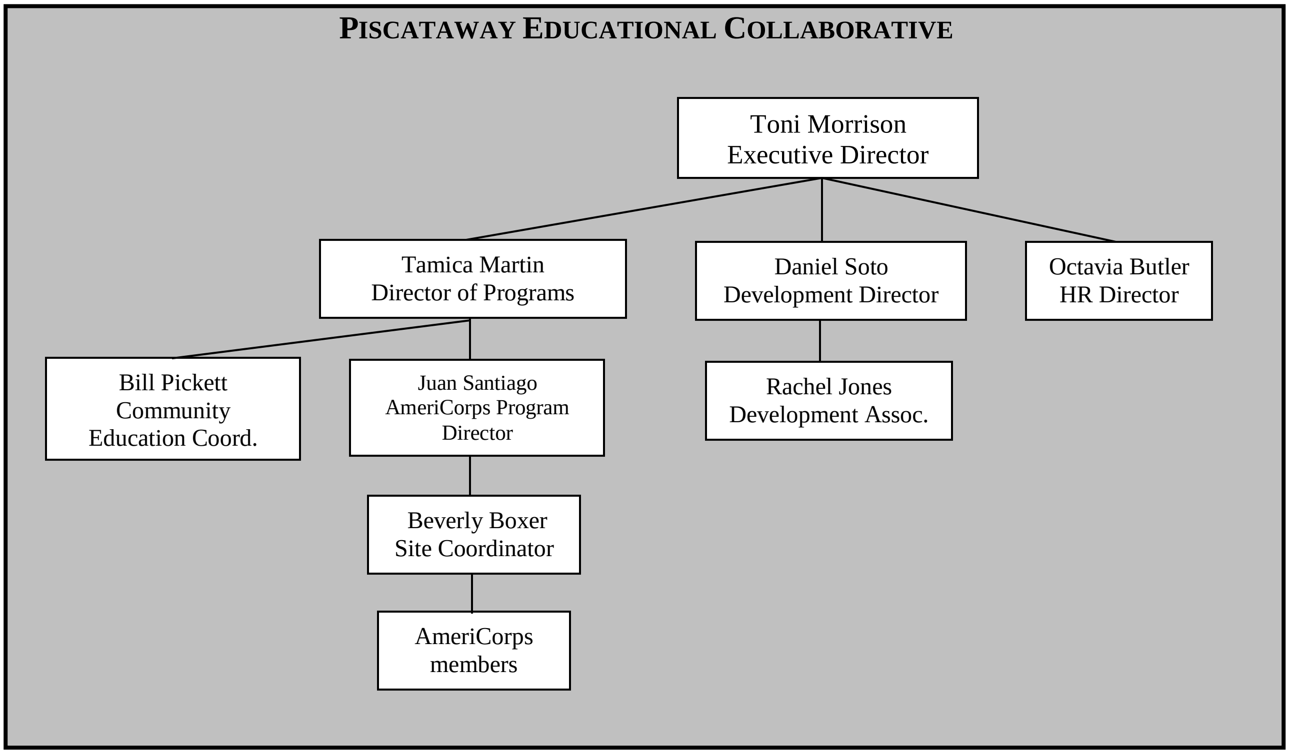
Should our organizational chart also show staff members whose services are not billed to the grant? *Yes. It shows a complete picture of all the staff in your organization dedicated to your AmeriCorps program.*

Can I charge a position to the AmeriCorps grant if that person is not working on the AmeriCorps program? *No. When timesheets are created, be sure there is clear explanation of what work was done with what program. This is crucial to preventing any inappropriate charges to the AmeriCorps grant.*

How can I safely add AmeriCorps responsibilities to existing staff members' work assignments? *Make sure that new staff job responsibilities are compatible with the staff member's capabilities. Not all staff members are ready to tackle the responsibilities of managing AmeriCorps members or handling the administrative reporting necessary. Also, ensure that the* *roles and lines of responsibility are clear.*

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



An organizational chart provides the following information:

- Each department, position title, and staff member's name.
- Lines of supervision as they relate to the AmeriCorps grant.

DEVELOP STAFF JOB DESCRIPTIONS

What is a staff job description?
A job description identifies the responsibilities, tasks, functions, and reporting structure for a position. After you have revisited and up-dated your organizational chart, you need to update staff job descriptions to reflect any new duties or supervisory responsibilities.

Why do you need job descriptions?
The job description helps focus an organization's work by making explicit the responsibilities of each position**.** A staff member uses it to accomplish the tasks and duties in their sphere of responsibility. A supervisor uses the job description as the basis to evaluate staff and program performance.

How do you do it?
Writing a job description requires three basic steps:

1. **Conduct a job analysis**. Examine the tasks and sequences of tasks necessary to perform the job. The analysis looks at the areas of knowledge and skills needed by the job. (**What activities or functions does this job entail? What special skills are needed to complete the activities or functions? How can staff performance be appraised?)**
2. **Establish a job title and salary.** The title and salary should correspond to the level of responsibility. (**Does the title reflect the responsibilities? Is the position adequately compensated?**)
3. **Write the job description**. Job descriptions should be written in brief and clear sentences.

SUGGESTED	
	• Determine the percentage of time each staff member will be working with the AmeriCorps program. Ensure this matches the information from your grant.
	• Complete the job analysis for each position required to operate the AmeriCorps program.
	• Write or update all staff job descriptions to reflect new responsibilities associated with the AmeriCorps program or changes in existing responsibilities.
	• Communicate with existing staff the proposed changes to the organizational chart and how the changes might affect them.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
Do I have to have a job description for every staff member? *Yes, at least as it relates to the AmeriCorps program. It is an effective practice to have job descriptions for every staff member of your organization to ensure responsibilities are clear.*

Are there special considerations in selecting and assigning staff members to supervise AmeriCorps members? *Yes. Members are not traditional volunteers nor are they regular paid staff. AmeriCorps supervisors must focus on the tasks of the project <u>and</u> the task of developing the program members in their charge. To the extent possible, select staff members with prior supervisory experience and who enjoy dealing with the unexpected. Build flexibility into the supervisory job description.*

Tools for Success

Example: Tips for Writing a Job Description

WRITING A JOB DESCRIPTION

Keep each statement in the job description crisp and clear.

- **Structure your sentences in classic verb/object and explanatory phrases.** For example, a sentence about the description of a Program Coordinator might read: "Develops a Pre-service Orientation in collaboration with the AmeriCorps Program Director."
- **Use verbs in the present tense.**
- **Tell why, how, where, or how often for clarity.** For example: "Collects all member timesheets on a bi-weekly basis for payroll purposes."
- **Use unbiased terminology.** Use the "she/he" approach or construct sentences in such as way that gender pronouns are not required.
- **Avoid using words that are subject to differing interpretations.** Try not to use words like "frequently," "some," "complex," "occasional," and "several."

Adapted from the National Women's Business Center, Washington, D.C.

A job description should include:

- **Job Title**
- **Job Objective or Overall Purpose Statement** - A summary describing the broad function and scope of the position and be no longer than three to four sentences.
- **List of Duties or Tasks Performed** - The item-by-item list contains each and every essential job duty or responsibility that is critical to the successful performance of the job. The list should begin with the most important functional and relational responsibilities and continue down in order of significance.
- **Description of the Relationships and Roles** the occupant of the position holds within the organization, including any supervisory positions, subordinating roles and/or other working relationships.
- **Job location -** Location where will the work be performed.
- **Salary Range -** Range of pay for the position.

RISK MANAGEMENT

What is risk management?
Risk management is the strategic process of assessing your organization's vulnerabilities and putting remedies in place**.** Generally, this process involves reviewing the operations of the organization, identifying potential threats to the organization and the likelihood of their occurrence, and then taking appropriate actions to address the possible threats.

Why do you need to address risk management issues?
It can protect your organization from catastrophic loss or damage. With the recent increase in rules and regulations and employee-related lawsuits, risk management is becoming a management practice that is every bit as important as financial or facilities management.

How do you do it?
Web-based checklists for assessing risk management can be found in the Tools for Success section below. Complete an organizational risk management assessment in the following areas:

- Professional management culture and practices.
- Personnel policies up-to-date and reflective of AmeriCorps rules and regulations.
- Insurance and liability coverage.
- Legal protection.
- Sound financial management systems and procedures.
- Volunteer management policies.
- Fundraising procedures and policies.
- Resource management (people, computers, records, and facilities).

Also consider these issues:

- Staff could complete an anonymous survey to determine how safe and inclusive they feel.
- Identify organization's blind spots through surveys or external audits.
- Take authentic steps to address an organization's blind spots.
- If you are a parent organization, make sure your subgrantees are in compliance with all relevant grantee regulations and organizational policy.
- Conduct site monitoring and formal and informal site visits. Use a risk management checklist to determine vulnerable areas.
- Ensure you have a sexual harassment policy and/or non-discrimination policy in place and use it actively if/when issues are identified.
- Consider AmeriCorps member and staff activities that might expose your organization to risk (private use of cars, transporting children, etc.).

<u>Additional Questions</u>
Which systems should I review first for potential liabilities? *A thorough review of your employee handbook, organizational policy and procedures, and subgrantee policies and procedures should be important first steps in assessing potential areas of liability.*

What local resources could I draw on for assistance in conducting a risk management assessment? *Find out if you have board members with legal backgrounds who can review organizational policies. Additionally, consider local colleges and universities that might have a department that works on identifying risk management issues and would review your organization* *on a pro bono basis.*

What CNCS departments can help us identify or address risk management issues? *The Office of General Counsel can provide guidance to clarify potential problems.*

HUMAN RESOURCE SYSTEM

What is a human resource system?
A Human Resource (HR) system is a critical set of structures that help build and sustain an organization. This system guides everything from how the staff is evaluated to the expected length of the workday to the provision of health benefits, to procedures for how staff are hired, trained, and retained. Here are the five basic components of an HR system:

1. **Staff Compensation and Benefit**s – Are our salaries competitive? Do we offer other benefits that make working in our organization appealing? Are the staff compensation and benefits aligned with the grant application guidelines?
2. **Staff Recruitment** – What positions need to be filled? How will they be filled? Do we have resumes or applications on file that we can review?
3. **Staff Orientation and Training** – Now that we have a great staff, how do we prepare them great staff to accomplish our mission?
4. **Policy, Procedure, and Regulation Compliance** – What are our policies and procedures? Are the policies and procedures in writing? Are our supervisors trained to ensure compliance and fair application of regulations?
5. **Staff Retention** – Do we have a performance and recognition system for our staff? Is the work environment conducive to retaining staff?

Why do you need an HR system?
An HR system ensures the consistent application of policy, procedure, and regulation necessary for a strong, healthy organization. In addition, it enables senior management to identify and respond to staff performance issues, compensation and benefits, and training needs.

How do you do it?
Whether you are working with an existing or an emerging HR system, you must integrate AmeriCorps policies and procedures.

REQUIRED	✓	Review the AmeriCorps grant terms and conditions. Identify those AmeriCorps-specific issues that need to be addressed within your organization.
	✓	Review your organization's existing Employee Handbook to ensure AmeriCorps grant and program requirements are included.
	✓	Review current HR protocols to ensure your organization is proactive in managing risks.

STAFF COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

What are staff compensation and benefits?
Compensation is the salary staff are paid. Benefits typically refer to retirement plans, health insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, and vacation.

Why do you need staff compensation and benefits?
A solid package of compensation and benefits attracts and keeps an outstanding staff. They can foster high morale and keep up with the competition. Benefits and compensation packages are great ways to motivate employees to take on additional responsibilities within the organization.

How do I do it?

SUGGESTED	• Research comparable organizations in your network to determine a competitive salary range.
	• Consult with HR professionals to link staff job responsibilities with competitive compensation.
	• Create a booklet or document that outlines/details, at a minimum, your health and dental plan, leave and vacation policies, and professional development opportunities. Policies should be formalized to maintain consistency across all staff and avoid any confusion.
	• Update the Employee Handbook to reflect the AmeriCorps-specific requirements that affect staff.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
What can I do if I do not have an HR department in our organization? *You have several options. You might identify local corporations that could loan your organization an HR professional to craft your policies and procedures. You also might try a job share with another nonprofit organization. Also consider recruiting retirees with relevant experience who could volunteer in your HR department.*

What is the average salary and benefits of AmeriCorps program staff? *It depends on many things: the size and geographic location of your organization, age of the organization, scope of services, community served, etc. To gather this information, check with AmeriCorps programs in your network or contact your State Service Commission or CNCS for recommendations on finding salary and benefit information.*

STAFF RECRUITMENT PLAN

What is a staff recruitment plan?
A staff recruitment plan is a timeline that outlines and guides the process of creating or updating position descriptions, recruiting and hiring outstanding staff, and orienting and training all staff for new responsibilities.

Why do you need a staff recruitment plan? It ensures that staffing vacancies are filled in a timely manner following a standard set of criteria.

How do you do it?

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="6">SUGGESTED</td><td>• Determine the positions responsible for the day-to-day operations of your AmeriCorps program responsibilities.</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Consult with your service site partners to determine how staffing structures adjustments for AmeriCorps members placed at their sites.</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Determine criteria for the selection committee. Identify members of the selection committee.</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Allow adequate time to advertise, review applications, set up and conduct interviews, evaluate candidates, and hire.</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Determine criteria for selecting staff. How will the candidates be evaluated?</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Review your interviewing skills. See Tools for Success below for a few tips.</td></tr>
</table>

Additional Questions

Where do I search to find a diverse pool of candidates? *Recruit in nontraditional places. Consider diversity of culture, age, persons with disabilities, and sexual orientation. Also don't forget nontraditional media sources like the Native American, African American, and Latino/Hispanic press. Local businesses, religious institutions, and community centers are other examples of nontraditional recruitment avenues. Consider the community your program serves. Talk to other organizations that seem to be attracting a diverse audience.*

Am I permitted to pay staff out of more than one source of money? *Yes. Make sure that staff timesheets reflect percentages of time on AmeriCorps-related activities. Ensure that any time charged to the AmeriCorps grant adheres to boundaries of the grant.*

Can I divide staff time with other organizational duties? *Yes. Be sure to clearly define where staff time is spent and make sure timesheets reflect the reality of the time and funds allocation.*

Do staff members need to have criminal history checks? *Yes. There are detailed instructions for conducting National Service Criminal History Checks for grant-funded personnel in the AmeriCorps grant terms and conditions. Check those requirements very carefully and confirm that your program is in full compliance with all required steps. Also, be sure you are aware of any additional checks that may be required by your parent organization, State Service Commission (if you are a subgrantee), your state/city, etc.*

Should I maintain a record of how we recruited candidates? *Yes! Document, in writing, the process used in selection of the new staff member(s) and retain in the resume/application and interview sheets of all candidates considered. Include signatures of interviewers or testers or* *panelists who judged or scored the candidates. Retain these records for a period of time determined by your HR department/parent organization or the State Service Commission.*

Can our AmeriCorps members be involved in staff recruitment? *No. AmeriCorps members' duties are restricted to activities specified by the performance measures in the grant.*

Tools for Success

Example: Recruitment Tips

RECRUITING STAFF - STRATEGIES

1. **Craft** outreach plan –
   - Consider classified ads in traditional and alternative media and publications.
   - Register with state job placement/search system. (In some states it is required if the position is federally funded.)
   - Register the job on Internet job search sites.
   - Register job with nonprofit association (if your state or community has one.)
   - Conduct targeted outreach to populations from which you wish to attract candidates. (Use word-of-mouth, print flyers, or newsletter announcements to include in worship bulletins, school, or business/professional publications.
   - Contact placement offices of educational institutions with the job announcement.
   - Share job announcement with AmeriCorps Alums and CNCS.
2. **Plan** how to accept applications and how to schedule interviews.
3. **Assess** resumes and applications in a triage manner. Typically placing resumes or applications in stacks of 1, 2, or 3. If more than one person is assessing the applications or resumes, agree beforehand on appropriate qualifying criteria.
4. **Prepare** interview format (questions and, if desirable, alternative assessments – testing, essay, presentation, etc.). Ask the same questions of all candidates and have all candidates perform the same alternative assessments; assess all candidates using the same criteria.
5. **Schedule** interviews with adequate time to assess the candidate and make a thorough record of the interview.
6. **Check** references of the candidate or candidates. Get the best picture possible of the potential new staff member's ability to perform the tasks outlined in the job description.

BASICS INTERVIEWING TIPS

1. Consider having multiple people at the interview to get a more objective and fair presentation of the candidate. Have all interviewers record and share their impressions of the candidate right after the interview.
2. While interviewing candidates, always apply the same questions to all candidates to ensure fairness. All questions should be in regard to performing the duties of the job.
3. Don't ask questions about race, nationality, age, gender, disabilities (current or previous), marital status, spouses, children and their care, or credit history.
4. Talk for, at most, 25% of the time. For the rest of the time, listen.
5. Consider asking some challenging, open-ended questions, such as: What skills do you bring to this job? What concerns do you have about filling this role? What was your biggest challenge in a past job and how did you meet it? What would make you quit?
6. Be sure to tell candidates of any relevant personnel policies, such as probationary periods for new hires.
7. Ask if you can get and check any references. Always check references and share them with the interviewers.
8. Find out when they can start if offered the job.
9. Explain to the candidates the next steps in the process and when they can expect to hear about the status of their application.

STAFF ORIENTATION AND TRAINING PLAN

What is a staff orientation and training plan?
A proactive staff orientation and training plan is a comprehensive annual professional development strategy that begins the moment a staff member is hired. It seems obvious, but this important contributor to employee success, morale, and participation is often overlooked.

Why do you need a staff orientation and training plan?
The benefits of a proactive and comprehensive orientation and training plan are significant. Consider this: your staff members enjoy increased knowledge of their own jobs and the organization; increased job satisfaction and morale; increased staff motivation; increased efficiencies in processes which result in better services to the community; increased capacity to adopt new technologies and methods; reduction of risk, e.g., training about sexual harassment; and reduced employee turnover.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Develop an orientation plan complete with staff roles, goals, tasks, information to be conveyed, program performance measures, and implementation timeline.
	✓ Review your AmeriCorps performance measures, organizational goals, or long-term plans decide what skills your staff need to run the AmeriCorps program.
	✓ Create a budget to accomplish annual orientation and training goals.
	✓ Consult, communicate, and include organization's staff and stakeholders in developing orientation and training plans.

SUGGESTED	• Consider a form of recognition or award for staff that receive high orientation performance measurement assessments.
	• Be proactive. Take the time to assess what skill sets the staff needs to operate the AmeriCorps program. Develop orientation and training plans accordingly.
	• Consider utilizing outside trainers to execute your training needs. Look for internal and local resources for potential trainers.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
What does staff orientation and training accomplish? *Investing in strong and consistent s orientation and training will pay dividends to your program for years to come. First, a great welcome and orientation leaves a new employee feeling valued and prepared. Second, continuous professional development can increase staff competence and contribution. Finally, on-going training can improve supervision and leadership techniques, thus increasing and sustaining high morale.*

Should I hire an external trainer for my orientations and training? *No and yes. It is best to have an orientation provided by an internal staff member with deep understanding of the program and staff jobs. However, if you do not have in-house expertise to address all of the training needs, then bring in a specialist to help you provide professional skill development (for example, supervisory skill development).*

Tools for Success

Example: Staff Training Topics

AmeriCorps Program Staff Training Topics—For Starters

The topics below represent skills and knowledge staff needs to execute the AmeriCorps program. These topics cannot be covered in one day—in fact, they will need to be addressed throughout the program year. Develop an annual training plan complete with goals, tasks, a schedule of staff meetings and retreats, roles, performance measures, materials, budget, and an implementation timeline.

1. **Communications:** Addresses staff, AmeriCorps members, and community.
2. **Computer skills:** Play close attention to building strong online data entry and management skills among all program staff in order to successfully navigate the CNCS online grant and management systems (e.g., eGrants, My AmeriCorps Portal). Cross train staff so that your program will be able to respond to CNCS requests quickly and accurately.
3. **Customer service:** Ensure the staff understands and meets all stakeholder needs, including AmeriCorps members, staff, community partners, and community members.
4. **Diversity:** AmeriCorps is designed to bring diverse community members together. Provide mindful cultural competence and diversity training to equip staff to successfully recruit, train, supervise, and celebrate a diverse corps of AmeriCorps members.
5. **Conflict resolution:** Be sure program staff are also fully prepared to manage conflicts that may arise within the program, amongst members, or with the local community.
6. **AmeriCorps 101:** History of national service, education award, life after AmeriCorps, prohibited activities, deadlines, member requirements for successful completion, program requirements, forms and reports, policies and procedures, reflection, and marketing.

STAFF RETENTION PROGRAM

What is a staff retention program?
Retaining staff in the nonprofit community can sometimes be challenging. The multiple tasks, long hours, or shifting goals may lead to frustration and burnout. A retention program recognizes, formally acknowledges, and celebrates the contributions and efforts of your whole staff.

Why do you need a staff retention program?
Simple. You want to keep quality staff members who contribute to the success of the organization. Also, AmeriCorps program management is difficult; it takes a good deal of work to build a strong program team.

How do you do it?

Support	Assess	Recognize
• Put staff in positions that are right for their skills. • Give staff the resources they need to do a good job. • Implement formal coaching, support, and professional development opportunities. • Create a work environment that is compatible with and reflects the organization's mission.	• Use clear performance goals to help you and the staff member measure successes and identify deficiencies. • Have regular performance dialogues to let staff know if they are on track and meeting expectations. Generally, employees want concrete feedback on how they are doing. • Provide ongoing support mechanisms and retraining to address performance issues.	• Reward employees with small tokens or symbol gifts, and with work they enjoy. Employees want to feel they are needed and wanted. • Create opportunities for formal recognition celebrations.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
Who is responsible for a retention program? *Your HR department should be in close communication with the managers and supervisors of your organization to identify and acknowledge high performing staff and work with staff who need to improve their performance.*

POLICY, PROCEDURE, AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

What does it mean to comply with regulations?

Basically, there is a set of requirements and policies that your organization must abide by once it accepts federal money. These procedures, regulations, or policies flow from federal, state, or local grant-making regulatory entities.

Why do you need to comply with regulations?

It is critical that all members of the AmeriCorps field maintain strict fidelity to the laws that govern the public AmeriCorps dollars. Managing an AmeriCorps program is a public trust, and it is extremely important that you know and follow the rules that govern these public resources. You must comply with all regulations to maintain good standing with CNCS and to protect the vital AmeriCorps resources for your community and to continue receiving the support and funding provided for in your grant. Consequences for noncompliance may include reductions or loss of grant funding, repayment of federal funds that may have been improperly spent, or disbarment from receiving federal funds. In the case of egregious misconduct or deliberate fraud or abuse, the program staff may be subject to civil and/or criminal legal action.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓	Become fluent in all AmeriCorps grant provisions, terms and conditions, FAQs, OMB Circulars, annual CNCS guidance, and related regulations.
	✓	Ensure all staff, including all fiscal staff and senior management, understands new and existing regulations.
	✓	Your HR representative or someone functioning in that capacity must ensure that new regulations are included in Employee Handbooks and that all staff are trained on relevant regulations.
	✓	Provide focused training on regulation and compliance issues to your staff. Make sure they understand what is needed as part of the AmeriCorps grant.
	✓	Find out if there are state regulations that you need to adhere to in the performance of your program or grant management duties.

<u>Additional Questions</u>

How can accepting the AmeriCorps program grant impact our current operations? *The new policies might require that you make significant changes in the climate and culture of your organization in order to fulfill the AmeriCorps program mission and adhere to all grant requirements.*

What happens if the program is not in compliance with the grant provisions or terms and conditions? *CNCS staff members work closely with grantee staff to address performance and compliance issues each year. Every effort is made to correct deficiencies and ensure full understanding and compliance with all parts of AmeriCorps program and grant management throughout each grant year.*

BOARD PRESENTATION

What is a board presentation?
Almost every organization has an advisory board or board of directors with oversight responsibility. In your organization, this board might be actively involved in the day-to-day activities or only meet quarterly for organizational updates. A board presentation is an opportunity to share information and receive input on the AmeriCorps program as it is created, launched, and implemented.

Why do you need to conduct a board presentation?
Keep your board updated on the development and implementation of the AmeriCorps program, any challenges or snags encountered, or support you might need that will come from the board members. Often the board is significantly involved in guiding an organization's activities including long-term planning, programming, community relations, and financial matters.

How do you do it?

SUGGESTED	• Discuss the timing, structure, and content of a board presentation with your Executive Director.
	• Create simple, clear handouts that illustrate the important points you want to make.
	• Make sure you have accurate information from key stakeholders, including other staff members.
	• Update the board on budget changes or other important financial issues.

Additional Questions
What are some simple strategies for a high impact presentation? *Anticipate questions that board members might have about program implementation and management issues. Create a briefing book that includes clear handouts, budget reports, performance measure data, stakeholder profiles, and any other relevant documents. Consider having your board meeting at or near a service site. Include site supervisors and members as appropriate (to talk about the program impact and service experience); it can be very powerful for board members to learn about the program's impact on the AmeriCorps member, the community served, and the clients.*

PROGRAM DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

What are data collection tools?
These are tools that help you keep track of the program's activities and gather data for require reports.

Why do you need data collection tools?
Running an AmeriCorps program is a multi-faceted process. There are many reports that must be submitted to CNCS in a timely manner. Data collection tools will allow you to keep an ongoing, written record of your progress toward meeting your results, tracking AmeriCorps member hours, documenting great stories about the impact of the program and the members' service, and keeping accurate financial records.

How do you do it?

SUGGESTED	• Identify the information needed for CNCS (and other stakeholder/funder) reporting.
	• Use the collected data to complete CNCS grant reports.
	• Work with evaluation experts/professionals to design and use effective evaluation tools. Refer to CNCS training materials for guidance on data collection.
	• Train you staff thoroughly and frequently on proper data collection for your program. Be sure to establish a timeline with deadlines so staff knows when and to whom the data collection tools should be submitted. Include CNCS report due dates in the timeline.
	• Provide staff training on the proper way to complete forms. Include AmeriCorps members, if appropriate for your program design.
	• Establish a monthly reporting process to ensure data collection tools are being used effectively and accurately. Be sure to build in adequate time to test all data and make any adjustments or corrections well in advance of the CNCS report deadlines.

Additional Questions

How can I get help in data collection? *Check with your CNCS Program or Grants Officer for specific guidance on the type and frequency of data collection. As CNCS implements new processes each year, there might be a variety of ways to collect service-related data. For example, if you have a college or university in your area check to see if there are students and professors available to create performance measurement tools and gather data. A second option is an external vendor specializing in performance measurement. Additionally, check within your parent organization or with other community partners to see if they have resources that may be able to help you.*

What types of data do I need to capture for performance measures? *Performance measurement is a crucial part of realizing change. A strong performance measurement plan ensures you can document your achievements and improve or refine your service and program activities.* ***Quantitative data:*** *Keep attendance at events, pre and post surveys and tests; track the number of service hours, the number of volunteers, number of service products completed; and complete formal and informal site visits to identify quantitative and qualitative data.* ***Qualitative data****: Take photos, keep journals, clip newspaper articles, collect letters, and document inspiring stories, quotes, or anecdotes about the impact your program has on your community.*

Do service site partners need to complete data collection tools? *Yes. Depending on your program model, service sites could be required to submit AmeriCorps member timesheets, satisfaction surveys, expense and travel reports, etc. Make sure you clearly identify requirements early. Site requirements should be detailed in a written agreement prior to the start of the members' service.*

Tools for Success

SO YOU WANT TO BE AN AMERICORPS PROGRAM
Example: Things To Do Checklist

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Ensure appropriate staff is available and willing to execute the AmeriCorps duties.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Meet with other AmeriCorps programs to learn about the process.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Have conversations with State Service Commission and CNCS State Program Director to gain a better understanding of process.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Continue conversations with potential donors.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Secure or designate office space.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">YOU HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED BY CNCS, WHAT NOW?</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Review the letter, email or notes from phone call carefully.
• Ask questions—many questions—if you don’t get answers or you don’t understand answers…ask again.
• Get answers in writing to ensure that all parties have the same information.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Find out from your CNCS Program Officer:
• What does it mean to be in negotiation?
• Is there a plan?
• Who manages it?</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Find out what the timeline is from CNCS to get your grant, to receive funding. That means the ability to draw down funds to your account.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Continue checking with your stakeholders or people involved with the planning committee/work group.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Make sure your financial department is on point with carrying out the grant responsibilities. Read the AmeriCorps Grant Terms and Conditions.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>If you are an independent AmeriCorps program, inform all stakeholders that you have received the AmeriCorps grant. If you are a parent organization/or multi-site program, inform them of the process. Set in measures to ensure everyone is informed.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Confirm that your program has a complete profile with all appropriate user accounts created in eGrants, so that you can begin to enroll members in the Trust (be aware of your internal policy regarding enrollment of participants).</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Begin to put together a 3-6 month work plan to execute starting your program.
• Use the AmeriCorps Program Start-up Guide to assist you through the first six-months of program development.
• Put together a recruitment plan.
• Secure enough funding to start your program—this funding should not include CNCS money—to be blunt this should be money in hand.
• Hire your staff/or train staff members about the initial start-up plan.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>What are the benchmarks? Identify them—make sure everyone responsible for executing them agrees on what they mean.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Design a data collection system to track and report progress on performance measures.</td></tr>
</table>

	Begin to create a training plan for the site supervisors. Bring them together for a preliminary meeting. Use the AmeriCorps Program Start-up Guide as a resource to prepare for the meeting. • In that meeting, discuss working relationships, roles, and responsibilities. • Discuss expectations. • Discuss preliminary position description for AmeriCorps members. • Complete paperwork. • Establish management systems. • Design preliminary Service Site Agreement.
	Email or call to check-in with your assigned CNCS Program Officer. Share concerns, improvements, and progress. Make sure you know the timeline and the expectations for all CNCS requirements and grantee obligations.
	Start planning your pre-service orientation and training for AmeriCorps members.
	Identify recruitment areas and start recruiting; make sure interviewees are aware of the program start-up timeline.

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

CHECKLIST OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT INDICATORS

General Human Resources

Rating *	Indicator	Met	Needs Work	N/A
Indicators ratings: E=essential; R=recommended; A=additional to strengthen organizational activities				
E	1. The organization has a written personnel handbook/policy that is regularly reviewed and updated: a) to describe the recruitment, hiring, termination and standard work rules for all staff; b) to maintain compliance with government regulations including Fair Labor Standards Act, Equal Employment Opportunity Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Family Leave Act, Affirmative Action Plan (if required), etc.			
R	2. The organization follows nondiscriminatory hiring practices.			
R	3. The organization provides a copy of or access to the written personnel policy to all members of the board, the Executive Director, and all staff members. All staff members acknowledge in writing that they have read and have access to the personnel handbook/policies.			
R	4. The organization has job descriptions including qualifications, duties, reporting relationships, and key indicators.			
R	5. The organization's Board of Directors conducts an annual review/evaluation of its Executive Director in relationship to a previously determined set of expectations.			
R	6. The Executive Director's salary is set by the Board of Directors in a reasonable process and is in compliance with the organization's compensation plan.			
R	7. The organization requires employee performance appraisals to be conducted and documented at least annually.			
A	8. The organization has a compensation plan, and a periodic review of salary ranges and benefits is conducted.			
A	9. The organization has a timely process for filling vacant positions to prevent an interruption of program services or disruption to organization operations.			
A	10. The organization has a process for reviewing and responding to ideas, suggestions, comments, and perceptions from all staff members.			
A	11. The organization provides opportunities for employees' professional development and training with their job skill area and also in such areas as cultural sensitivity and personal development.			
A	12. The organization maintains current records documenting staff time in program allocations.			

Source: United Way of Minneapolis Area.

Volunteer HR Management

Rating *	Indicator	Met	Needs Work	N/A
Indicators ratings: E=essential; R=recommended; A=additional to strengthen organizational activities				
E	13. The organization has a clearly defined purpose of the role that volunteers have within the organization.			
E	14. Position descriptions exist for all volunteers in the organization.			
R	15. The organization has a well-defined and communicated volunteer management plan that includes a recruitment policy, description of all volunteer positions, an application and interview process, possible stipend and reimbursement policies, statement of which staff has supervisory responsibilities over what volunteers, and any other volunteer personnel policy information.			
E	16. The organization follows a recruitment policy that does not discriminate, but respects, encourages, and represents the diversity of the community.			
E	17. The organization provides appropriate training and orientation to the agency to assist the volunteer in the performance of their volunteer activities. Volunteers are offered training with staff in such areas as cultural sensitivity.			
R	18. The organization is respectful of the volunteer's abilities and time commitment and has various duties to meet these needs. Tasks should not be given to volunteers simply because they are considered inferior for paid staff.			
R	19. The organization does volunteer performance appraisals periodically and communicates to the volunteers how well they are doing, or where additional attention is needed. At the same time, volunteers are requested to review and evaluate their involvement in the organization and the people they work with and suggest areas for improvement.			
R	20. The organization does some type of volunteer recognition or commendation periodically and staff continuously demonstrates their appreciation towards the volunteers and their efforts.			
A	21. The organization has a process for reviewing and responding to ideas, suggestions, comments and perceptions from volunteers.			
A	22. The organization provides opportunities for program participants to volunteer.			
A	23. The organization maintains current records documenting volunteer time in program allocations. Financial records can be maintained for the volunteer time spent on programs and recorded as in-kind contributions.			

Source: United Way of Minneapolis Area.

RISK MANAGEMENT

CHECKLIST TO EVALUATE A NONPROFIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rating *	Indicator	Met	Needs Work	N/A
Indicators ratings: E=essential; R=recommended; A=additional to strengthen organizational activities				
E	1. The roles of the board and the Executive Director are defined and respected, with the Executive Director delegated as the manager of the organization's operations and the board focused on policy and planning			
R	2. The Executive Director is recruited, selected, and employed by the Board of Directors. The board provide clearly written expectations and qualifications for the position, as well as reasonable compensation.			
R	3. The Board of Directors acts a governing trustees of the organization on behalf of the community at large and contributors while carrying out the organization's mission and goals. To fully meet this goal, the Board of Directors must actively participate in the planning process as outlined in planning sections of this checklist.			
R	4. The board's nominating process ensures that the board remains appropriately diverse with respect to gender, ethnicity, culture, economic status, disabilities, skills, and/or expertise.			
E	5. The board members receive regular training and information about their responsibilities.			
E	6. New board members are oriented to the organization, including the organization's mission, bylaws, policies, and programs, as well as their roles and responsibilities as board members.			
A	7. Board organization is documented with a description of the board and board committee responsibilities.			
A	8. Each board has a board operations manual.			
E	9. If the organization has any related party transactions between board members or their family, they are disclosed to the board, the Internal Revenue Service, and the auditor.			
E	10. The organization has at least the minimum number of members on the Board of Directors as required by their bylaws or state statute.			
R	11. If the organization has adopted bylaws, they conform to state statute and have been reviewed by legal counsel.			
R	12. The bylaws should include: a) how and when notices for board meetings are made; b) how members are elected/appointed by the board; c) what the terms of office are for officers/members; d) how board members are rotated; e) how ineffective board members are removed from the board; f) a stated number of board members to make up a quorum which is required for all policy decisions.			
R	13. The board reviews the bylaws.			
A	14. The board has a process for handling urgent matters between meetings.			
E	15. Board members serve without payment unless the agency has a policy identifying reimbursable out-of-pocket expenses.			
R	16. The organization maintains a conflict-of-interest policy and all board members and executive staff review and/or sign to acknowledge and comply with the policy.			
R	17. The board has an annual calendar of meetings. The board also has an attendance policy such that a quorum of the organization's board meets at least quarterly.			
A	18. Meetings have written agendas and materials relating to significant decisions are given to the board in advance of the meeting.			
A	19. The board has a written policy prohibiting employees and members of employees' immediate families from serving as board chair or treasurer.			

Source: United Way of Minneapolis Area

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: STAFF RECRUITMENT PLAN

Action Issue	Point of Contact	Deadline
Staff member responsible for recruitment process.		
Job description approved by HR or Executive Director.		
Position application completed (if used by your organization).		
Publicize job description. *(Include print, radio, and Internet deadlines.)*		
Last day to accept candidates' resumes and applications.		
Interview committee members identified.		
Interview committee members screen qualified resumes and applications.		
Begin and end 1st phase of interviews.		
Begin and end 2nd phase of interviews.		
Begin and end 3rd phase of interviews.		
Check references and background of top five candidates.		
Select final candidate.		
Date offer of employment is made.		
Date by which offer of employment must be accepted or rejected by final candidate.		
Date by which confirmation letter of employment and other materials are sent to candidate.		
Start date of employee.		

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: SERVICE SITE SATISFACTION SURVEY

This *Satisfaction Survey* should be completed by each Service Site Supervisor.

Service Site: ____ Date: _________
Person Completing this Form: ____

Please read each of the statements below and mark the appropriate box.

How would you rate the Corps members' ability in the following areas?	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Needs Improvement	Don't Know
Preparation to complete the assigned work					
Recruiting Reading Partner volunteers					
Placing Reading Partner volunteers					
Relationship with Reading Partner volunteers					
Relationship with Reading Partner schools (primary contact)					
How satisfied are you with the work of the Corps members?	Extremely Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Mostly Unsatisfied	Not at All Satisfied
WHY?					
How significant was the work of the Corps members to your organization?	Extremely Significant	Very Significant	Significant	Not Very Significant	Not At All Significant
WHY?					

Comments:

____
____
____
____
____

Return completed form to: _____________________
By this date: _______________

Thank You!

EXAMPLE: LISC AMERICORPS SITE SATISFACTION SURVEY

Name of LISC Site Supervisor: ______________________________ Position: ________________

Name of Placement Site: ___________________________________ City: ___________________

Name of LISC AmeriCorps Member: ___________________________ Date: _________________

LISC AmeriCorps is asking our placement sites to evaluate our work as a national initiative. Please respond to the following questions regarding your experience with the program. Your comments will help us to strengthen our programs and services. Thank you for your time and continued support.

1. Place a check in the box or boxes next to the activities, programs and/or services provided by the LISC AmeriCorps Member at your site.

☐ Housing Counseling ☐ Housing Development ☐ Neighborhood Revitalization
☐ Youth Enrichment Programs ☐ Tax Preparation Assistance/Job Training/Referral
☐ Volunteer Recruitment ☐ Work with Neighborhood Groups ☐ Workshops/Training
☐ Publishing Newsletters ☐ Distribution of Resource/Informational Materials
☐ Other

2. For how long have you been supervising the work of this member: _______ months.

3. Using the rating scale below, please rate LISC AmeriCorps for each of the following items.

5 = Excellent	**4** = Good	**3 =** Average	**2** = Fair	**1** = Poor	**N/A=Not applicable**

ITEM	RATING	COMMENTS
1. How well did the objectives & suggested activities for the program fit the mission and scope of work of your organization?		
2. How clear were LISC AmeriCorps service objectives and the expectations of the program?		
3. How would you rate the member's level of preparation for the placement and the service activities?		
4. How would you rate the training offered to members in helping them perform their service activities?		
5. How would you rate the benefit of monthly meetings to members?		

5 = Excellent	**4** = Good	**3** = Average	**2** = Fair	**1** = Poor	**N/A** = **Not applicable**

ITEM	GRADE	
6. How would you rate the AmeriCorps member's ability to meet organizational needs?		
7. How would you rate the member's ability to meet community needs?		
8. How would you rate the member's ability to recruit and train volunteers to take on the responsibility for initiating events or activities that are of benefit or interest to the community?		
9. How would you rate the organization's capacity to offer an increased level of services to the community as a result of the AmeriCorps member's placement?		
10. How well do you think the organization will be able to sustain the work begun by the member after the member has completed service?		
11. How well did LISC do in helping to solve any placement site or other member/program related issues you may have encountered?		
12. How would you rate the level and effectiveness of communication between LISC and your organization?		
13. How would you rate the level of support you received to manage the AmeriCorps member?		
14. How effective is the LISC AmeriCorps program at attracting and recruiting people into the community development field?		
15. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the LISC AmeriCorps program.		
Other:		
Other:		

Please describe any ways your organization benefited through the participation of an AmeriCorps member. Cite examples, wherever possible.

.____

____

Please describe any ways the larger community benefited by having an AmeriCorps member placed at your organization:

Please describe any partnerships or collaborations formed with other organizations as a result of the AmeriCorps member's work.

Please tell us how you raise the match requirement for the member's placement.

Comments/suggestions on ways to strengthen the LISC AmeriCorps program:

NetDay AmeriCorps Bridge

Member Service Log

For program administration use only
Entered in Program Log on ___________
Initials _________

Name ____ ***Service for the week of*** ____________________________________

Date	School	Activity Code (see service log instructions for codes)/Location	Morning Hours			Afternoon Hours			**Total Hours**	Activity Hours	
	Site Supervisor Initials		Time In	Time Out	# of Hours	Time In	Time Out	# of Hours		Direct Service	Training & Other
M											
T											
W											
Th											
F											
S											
Su											
Total Hours											

Member Signature *Date*

Project Coordinator Signature *Date*

<u>Service Log Instructions</u>:

1. Complete service log daily using the activity codes below.

Acceptable NetDay AmeriCorps Bridge Activity Codes

1 = Refurbishing computers in classroom and computer labs
2 = Troubleshooting software problems, installing hardware and software
3 = Technology Instruction with teachers
4 = Technology Instruction with students
5 = Assisting students, teaching skills, and other responsibilities in PowerUp labs
6 = Service project planning, service preparation, additional service activities (as approved by Project Coordinator)
7 = Member Training/Meetings
8 = Service Project
9 = Community Outreach (volunteer recruitment, newsletters, presentations, distribution of literacy materials)

2. Use the fractions below for tracking hours:

15 minutes = .25	45 minutes = .75
30 minutes = .50	on the hour = .00

3. Lunch breaks should not count as service hours, so complete the form accordingly.

4. Add your morning hours and afternoon hours and place the total in the total hours column.

5. Divide your total hours according to the activities you performed (direct service or training). Record these activity hours in the appropriate columns. **Please note that adding the hours listed in the activity columns should equal the number in the total hours column.**

   Direct Service: activity codes 1 – 6 and 8

   Training & Other: activity codes 7 and 9
   ***Training includes all activities that pertain to your individual development as an AmeriCorps member.

6. Check math to make sure hours are added properly.

7. All service logs must be signed and dated by member and site supervisor. Your service log will be sent back to you for completion if this information is missing.

8. Each site can enter information here, as to when and where members should complete and return service logs. (Be sure to give schedule to National Director of AmeriCorps Programs and Director of Finance and Administration.

Pre-award Community and Site Partnerships Introduction

Community service will require the development of relationships. These relationships might be between your organization and the service sites (places where Corps members will perform service) or with other community agencies in your area. One key to having successful, productive relationships is strong communication, clarification, and agreement around responsibilities, requirements, and outcomes.

This section provides the guidance to assist you in identifying organizations that share your organization's service vision. It will also provide concrete steps to initiate the creation of successful partnerships.

Pre-award Success Checklist

✓	***Community and Site Partnerships***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Establish service site selection criteria.		
	Outline, clarify, and specify service site and parent organization roles and responsibilities.		
	Identify potential service site partners. Have initial discussions.		
	Develop the Request for Proposal (RFP).		
	Review RFPs using the service site selection criteria. Select suitable organizations.		
	Respond to RFPs with acceptance or rejection letter.		

*B*UILDING *C*OMMUNITY *P*ARTNERSHIPS

What is a community partnership?
A community partnership creates synergy among two or more organizations to better address the unmet needs of a community.

Why should you develop community partnerships?
The partnership organization can strengthen service by providing and identifying resources, leveraging community assets, avoiding duplication of services, serve as a site placement, or serve in an advisory capacity.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Identify potential partners. Discuss mutual interests and opportunities to enhance services.
	✓ Clearly understand the organizational mission and culture of potential partners. Are they a good fit with your organization's mission?
	✓ Identify the expectations, roles, and responsibilities of your community partners.
	✓ Communicate! Make and take the opportunity to begin building a strong, trusting relationship with potential partners.
	✓ Educate your community partners about AmeriCorps and national service.
	✓ Monitor your work together in an effort to sustain the partnership and identify and build new ones.

SUGGESTED	✓ Identify other local national service programs/projects and discuss their experiences related to building partnerships.
	✓ Make sure each organization is clear about their respective mission, goals, and approach to service in the community.
	✓ Ensure your program goals are congruent with the missions of partnering organizations.
	✓ Make sure there is a common or shared goal towards service in the community.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
How important are these community partners*? Very important! Community partners can broaden or extend the reach of your program's capacity by identifying needs and resources. If you are new to the community, community partnerships can help open doors and navigate the local environment.*

What organizations should I chose as partners? *Cultivate relationships with education, religious, public safety, and business organizations and leaders. Identify potential community partnerships through these relationships. Determine whether prospective community partners are known and respected in the local community.*

Example: Keys to Building Successful Partnerships

By Andrew Huff

AmeriCorps VISTA Source.

Collaboration is vital to any successful project or initiative. The more organizations work together and combine efforts, the more productive and effective they can be. While overlap of services is one of the most common problems facing community-based organizations and nonprofits, it can be resolved quite easily. Here are some of they keys to successful collaborations.

- **Formulate a vision early in the process and remind people of it constantly.**
  If people aren't clear about why they are sitting through a three-hour meeting, you have already lost them. Having a clear vision allows participants to see the long-term goal, as well as how their particular organization fits into that goal.
- **Develop a common understanding of the issues and the partners.**
  If everyone is on the same page from the beginning, the process will move more smoothly. It is important to have everyone clear on the issues at hand, as well as which organizations are represented and how they plan to contribute to the collaboration. Brief presentations from each organization may also help the group understand the project and available resources.
- **Create ownership among partners.**
  Before the group moves forward, develop a consensus around common beliefs and ground rules. Creating ownership is a way to bring the collaborating organizations together and see themselves as one, as opposed to many. Getting everyone involved in projects and events and delegating specific tasks to people can help create this feeling of ownership.
- **Seek common ground and act.**
  Finding areas of agreement is not always easy, especially when collaborating with a variety of organizations, all of whom have their own ideas and agendas. Start by identifying mutual interests in the project at hand. Ask everyone to focus on a mutually desired result. Not only will this make action quicker and easier, but it will also build trust, reduce anxiety, and encourage open communication among participants. Creating short-term, measurable goals is a way to ensure that the group is able to seek common ground, take quick action, and remain focused.
- **Stop occasionally and evaluate the process.**
  Don't be afraid to stop and ask, "How are we doing?" Evaluating the process gives participants a chance to openly voice opinions about the direction of a project. Not only does this put a magnifying glass on the process you are using and how successful it is, but it also gives the opportunity to check in with participants to determine how they are feeling about what is taking place. Let participants know from the beginning that a performance measurement plan will be a part of the process.
- **Be patient and have some fun.**
  There is no single way to create a successful collaboration. Remember to be patient and flexible. Also, don't be afraid to have fun and enjoy the people with whom you are working. We can all learn so much from each other if we remain open and positive. If you have fun and enjoy the people involved in the collaboration, it won't seem like work at all.

Successful collaborations require work on the part of all those involved. Like any process, change is likely to create some measure of chaos. The most important thing to remember is to learn to live with this tension and go with the flow. The group and the cause will thank you for it. A strong collaboration can create a network of participants that can reach quicker and further than any single organization and enable you to get things done in half the time. So make some calls. Set up some meetings. Get the community involved. And have a good time. You will soon be on your way to creating successful collaborations.

Partnership Roles and Responsibilities

What are partnership roles and responsibilities?
This is a formal understanding of the activities, leadership, and management role each organization will assume. For example, an organization that has the role of handling all Corps member benefits will likely incur the specific responsibility for filing and maintaining all financial reports for the partnership.

Why do you need to specify partnership roles and responsibilities?
In any great partnership, it is helpful to understand and discuss what each partner's role and relevant responsibilities will be in the relationship. This is an opportunity for you to explicitly identify the role each organization performs to accomplish the AmeriCorps performance measures and what resources they bring to the table. The key point here is to be as explicit as possible in identifying the specific roles each organization will play in the members' service life.

How do we do it?

SUGGESTED	✓ Review the Suggested Organization Responsibilities worksheet.
	✓ Once roles are outlined, it is crucial that key staff from both organizations sit down, discuss, and clarify their understanding of those roles. By being explicit now about each organization's commitments, you will avoid misunderstandings down the road.
	✓ Develop written documents. Suggestions include a Memorandum of Understanding (outlines role, responsibilities, expectations, and important dates) and an annual calendar of events and activities.

IDENTIFY AND PARTNER WITH SERVICE SITES

What is a service site partnership?
Basically, a service site is a formal relationship between your organization and another organization. A service site is the day-to-day host of your AmeriCorps members during their term of service. AmeriCorps members are placed at the service site to provide hands-on service to the community. Your organization and the service site form a partnership, with each accepting responsibility for specific aspects of the AmeriCorps member's experience and the service projects. It is highly recommended that you use or adapt the service site selection criteria *(see box below)* to help you objectively assess and choose the strongest service sites from among your potential partners.

Why should you identify and partner with service sites?
The primary reason to develop a service site partnership is to meet your program's performance measures and to provide a transformational service experience for AmeriCorps members. Additional benefits include increased organizational impact, sharing resources, developing new leaders, increased professional development opportunities, and broadening the scope of programs.

HOW DO YOU DO IT?

REQUIRED	✓ Review the Service Site Selection Checklist to identify components of a strong service site relationship.
	✓ Create a Request for Proposal (RFP) and proposal evaluation tools to identify and select qualified service sites. This can go a long way to ensuring you have good working relationships with your sites and a quality service experience for your Corps members.
	✓ Inform local organizations of the RFP opportunity.
	✓ Create a Memorandum of Understanding/Service Site Partnership Agreement in preparation for the completion of the RFP process.

SUGGESTED	✓ Review your grant terms and conditions. Determine what things your organization must do. Decide how these apply to a potential partnering organization.
	✓ Set a timeline to guide the prospective partner phases. Phases could include partner identification, site review using criteria, and finalizing partnership; meet with a potential partner during the Pre-award phase to discuss the criteria.
	✓ Communicate! Make and take the opportunity to begin building a strong, trusting relationship with partners.
	✓ Partnerships work well if they include the following: o A clear definition of the roles, responsibilities, and accountability of partners. o Active partner participation and frequent communication. o A diverse knowledge-base among partners. o A plan for sustainability and capacity building. o An effective advisory group committee. o A proactive, well-qualified program director.

Additional Questions

I have a great friendship with the Executive Director of another organization. Can't I just bypass the service site selection process and partner with them? *Don't enter into a partnership without conducting a thorough review process first. This should include interviewing staff, on-site visits, reviewing record-keeping processes, etc. Make sure that all parties are clear on the expectations and responsibilities.*

How often should we communicate with our service site partners? *Interact with your partners at least several times a month, if not more. Invite service partners to program meetings, consider holding joint staff meetings or meetings with service site supervisors. Keep open and consistent lines of communication.*

EXAMPLE: SERVICE SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

- Sites must offer service activities that meet the service performance measures of the program.
- Sites must be able to provide enough service activities to keep AmeriCorps members occupied, but not over-burdened.
- Sites must be accessible to members.
- Sites must provide a safe working environment for members and service recipients.
- Sites must appoint a staff person to supervise your AmeriCorps members at each site where they serve (AmeriCorps Site Supervisor).
- Sites must provide orientation and training for AmeriCorps members on-site.
- Sites must have site supervisors willing to meet the AmeriCorps program requirements and have the time and ability to manage the AmeriCorps members at their sites.
- Sites must have the capability and capacity to meet administrative obligations.
- Sites must have the capability and capacity to meet any financial obligations.

Adapted from the Catholic Network of Volunteer Service website.

CONDUCT A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

What is an RFP Review and Selection Process?
An effective way to proceed in identifying, reviewing, and selecting service site partners is to institute a competitive selection process. A Request for Proposal (RFP) is a formal document that invites a prospective service site partners to submit a proposal describing how AmeriCorps members would serve at the service site, what types of training are necessary, who is responsible for supervising members, and what resources are available. The submitted proposals are then reviewed and rated according to pre-determined criteria and an objectively-run process. The organizations with the highest rated proposals are selected to become partners.

Why do you need an RFP Review and Selection Process?
The RFP document itself serves several important duties: it helps a prospective service site partner clearly evaluate whether their needs fit your performance measures; it guides the thinking and program concept development of prospective partners; it serves as a platform for your organization to determine if the needs of the prospective partner fit your program performance measures. The selection process helps you manage what could become an unwieldy task. Depending on the number of organizations in your community, it is possible that dozens or hundreds respond to your RFP! Implementing a clear set of selection criteria, a timeline, and process for reviewing proposals will enable your organization to select the best-qualified partnering organizations and do it without bias.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Determine how many service site partners your organization wants to partner with over the service year. Start with fewer versus many sites; each partner is a relationship that will need development and ongoing support.
	✓ Create a Request for Proposal using a template; identify the elements important to your organization and incorporate those into your RFP template.
	✓ Establish an RFP release, submission, and review process timeline.
	✓ Recruit and train a committee of stakeholders (these could be staff, advisory group, or community members) to assist with the selection and scoring process. Decide how to address conflicts of interest that might arise.
	✓ For the actual review, determine critical components as "must haves" in submitted proposals, use the Request for Proposals Rating Sheet to identify the best organizations, and create a scoring rubric and form to guide a reviewer in scoring each proposal.
	✓ Follow the timeline established to review and select partner organizations; provide timely written responses to organizations selected or rejected.
	✓ Review the Four Phases of the Service Site Selection Process.

Additional Questions

In a competitive process, are we allowed to select organizations we already know and are comfortable with? *Yes, you may select familiar organizations or long-standing partners and colleagues. In fact, they can be great assets. Just be sure they are well-suited to the AmeriCorps program requirements and performance measures.*

CREATING THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

What is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)?

The Memorandum of Understanding has many names; these include Host Site Agreement, Letter of Understanding, or Statement of Agreement. The basic purpose remains the same. This document explicitly outlines the roles, responsibilities, requirements, expectations, and functions between your organization and the partnering organization.

Why do you need an MOU?

The MOU ensures that each organization understands what it is committing itself to over the life of the service year. It protects your organization, the AmeriCorps members, and the service site from any miscommunication or misunderstanding of requirements and expectations.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Review the Memorandum of Understanding Organization Responsibilities template. This can be used to create your MOU.
	✓ Conduct a site visit using the Service Site Selection Checklist. Review your findings with staff.
	✓ Once you've clearly identified the roles, it is crucial that key staff from both organizations sit down, discuss, and clarify their understanding of those roles. Being clear about what each organization is committing to will alleviate potential stress down the road.
	✓ Write your MOU. Review the MOU Basic Elements to Include Checklist. Review the MANYCorps Booster Host Site Agreement.
	✓ Once the MOU is signed, check out the Plan for New Programs used by MANYCorps to guide the development of their new programs.

Additional Questions

How detailed should we write our Memorandum of Understanding/Statement of Agreement?

Provide sufficient detail in the following areas: human resources support, training and investment, site monitoring, financial support, material support, performance measurement support and reporting. It is important that crucial things that could negatively impact any of these areas be clearly addressed.

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: SERVICE SITE SELECTION CHECKLIST

This is a sample document that can be tailored to your organization's needs. Below are suggested questions and organizing themes to assist in the identification, review, and selection of a prospective partner.

GENERAL SERVICE SITE INFORMATION

- Organization's mission statement
- Organization type
- Organization's partnerships or affiliations

<u>Service Site's Proposed Project or Service Activities</u>

- What are the service project activities AmeriCorps members will perform?
- How often will AmeriCorps members perform the service activities?
- What community need is being addressed?
- Describe the community and the people who will be impacted by the service.
- What skills do AmeriCorps members need to be successful on this project?
- Who will supervise the AmeriCorps members?
- Will the AmeriCorps members serve full-time or part-time?

<u>Service Site Roles and Responsibilities</u>

- Draw a sample organizational chart showing the Host Site AmeriCorps Supervisor, AmeriCorps member roles, and relevant supervisory structures.
- Describe the AmeriCorps member Host Site orientation and on-going training process.
- Identify a timeline for orientation and on-going training.
- Does the organization have appropriate office space (computer, telephone, etc.) and materials for AmeriCorps members?
- Does the Host Site agree to complete and return performance measurement materials in a timely manner?

<u>Host Site Environment</u>

- Is the Host Site building accessible to people with disabilities?
- Is this a safe professional environment for AmeriCorps members?
- What skills do AmeriCorps members need to be successful on this project?
- Who will supervise the AmeriCorps members?

EXAMPLE: LISC OPERATING SITE SELECTION PROCESS

BACKGROUND

Each year in late January or early February, the National Office of the LISC AmeriCorps program solicits expressions of interests to participate in the AmeriCorps program from our field offices. This invitation is extended to those who are currently a part of the program, and to field offices who may be interested in hosting an AmeriCorps program in their city.

The request for proposals from the field allows the National Office to prepare an application to the Corporation for National and Community Service that reflects what LISC and its CDC partners hope to accomplish by sponsoring AmeriCorps members. The AmeriCorps grant is funded in three-year cycles. The first and fourth year of the grant are considered new competitive application periods, while the intervening years are considered as continuation periods. The application addresses community need, who defined the need and how that need will be addressed by member activity. The proposal should also include some general description of member duties, how the program will be managed at the parent, operating and site levels; and discuss member selection criteria, evaluation plans, plans for sustainability and collaboration with other partners be they private, public, or non-profit including other AmeriCorps programs. Objectives are typically designed to address three areas: Getting Things Done, Community Strengthening (including volunteer recruitment), and Member Development.

In general, LISC members have been involved in activities that address the Corporation's Human Needs Issue area. This includes direct service activities as follows:

GETTING THINGS DONE

- homeownership (counseling and the physical development of housing units)
- neighborhood revitalization (green space/public space improvement, clean-ups, community gardening, and planning other neighborhood events)
- work with children (leadership development, improving self-esteem, after school and summer enrichment programs, and establishing sports and other recreational leagues)
- increasing economic opportunities for communities (outreach and assistance for federal and state earned income tax programs, job training, job placement, and job referral)

COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING

- volunteer recruitment
- work to form and strengthen neighborhood and tenant associations and groups (including crime watches and other neighborhood safety initiatives)
- improving awareness of available services to communities

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

- provide pre-service orientation (nationally and locally)
- provide skill development opportunities that insure member success (local training, monthly meetings)
- provide leadership development training and opportunities
- provide training and mentoring to improve chances of member retention in the community development field

SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

Existing sites are considered for renewal based, in part, on the thoroughness of their applications. Consideration is also given to:

- responsiveness to providing reports and other requested information on a timely basis
- attendance at regional and national trainings and CNCS sponsored events
- AmeriCorps member retention
- the degree to which CDCs have honored their match commitment
- the willingness to continuously improve the management of the local program

New sites are considered based on:

- the geographic distribution of sites in order to maximize impact on communities and facilitate regional training and on the potential for picking up sites previously served by another AmeriCorps program (Enterprise or other National Direct Sponsor)
- an application that thoroughly addresses issues of need, clearly articulates a plan to address those needs, and provides a program structure that includes the required elements of supervision and management
- strong indication of how the LISC office and proposed sites plan to meet match commitment

EXAMPLE: SERVICE SITE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Delta Service Corps Host (Service) Site

Host sites must:

- Be nonprofit 501(c)3 or public agencies.
- Provide opportunities for corps members to perform direct service that addresses either education and/or human needs in communities within the Delta regions of Arkansas, Louisiana, or Mississippi.
- Work in coalition with at least one other public or private agency, preferably both.
- Demonstrate an ability to achieve measurable outcomes.
- Not use a Delta Service Corps member to displace any paid employee providing the same or similar service at the site, including any position for which a salary was paid within the last six months.
- Not use a Delta Service Corps member to displace any current volunteers providing the same or similar services at the site.
- Not offer Delta Service Corps members a salary or wage.
- Certify that the agency is a Drug-Free workplace and in compliance with the requirements for federal grant recipients under Section 5153 through 5158 of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988.
- Offer services without regard to age, religion, disability, political affiliation, veteran status, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, or national origin.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Host sites must:

- Provide a non-federal cash match of $2,600 to cover costs associated with the corps member's living stipend. (Note: This match is reimbursable on a pro-rated basis should the corps member not complete the scheduled term of service and not be replaced by another corps member.)
- Have liability insurance that covers the Delta Service Corps member while performing service on behalf of the agency.
- Provide corps members with an orientation and any agency-specific training they will need to carry out their assigned tasks. Orient agency staff about the Delta Service Corps and AmeriCorps and the roles and responsibilities of any corps members assigned to the agency.
- Designate an appropriate supervisor to supervise the corps member's day-to-day performance, as well as to evaluate the corps member quarterly and to approve the corps member's timesheets, service plans, and progress reports.
- Allow corps members to attend scheduled Delta Service Corps sponsored events, trainings, and service projects.
- Provide the corps member with any resources and tools needed to perform effectively.
- Provide corps members with appropriate mentoring and leadership opportunities that will enhance their professional development, including encouraging the corps member to participate on agency committees, working groups, or boards.
- Notify the Delta Service Corps in a timely manner of any problems with the corps member's performance, including failure to report to the site, unprofessional behavior, etc.

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: FOUR PHASES OF THE SERVICE SITE SELECTION PROCESS

Phase 1: Outreach and review of current partners.

- If your organization has existing partners, bring them together and review the service activities over the year, performance measurement data, and other relevant issues. This can be a time to determine whether your relationship will continue another year.
- Mail new applicants the RFP packet including any relevant material about your organization. Be sure your materials identify submission dates and general timeline.

Phase 2: Letter of Intent due from potential partners (date).

- If your organization chooses, have potential partners submit a letter of intent to apply. This can assist your organization in determining interested organizations and whether a sufficient number of organizations will be applying.

Phase 3: Proposal review and selection process (date).

- A committee reviews the proposals and makes selections using a fair and equitable process. If necessary, site visits might be utilized to gain a clearer understanding of the potential partner's activities.

Phase 4: Memorandum of Understanding signed (date).

- In this final phase, any negotiations, revisions, or clarifications to the original proposal are made. Once all details are satisfactory, a Memorandum of Understanding identifying the expectations, responsibilities, etc. is signed between your organization and the new partner.

EXAMPLE: CITY YEAR SERVICE PROJECT REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Cover Letter

(Date)

Dear (:)

City Year is a national service organization, which unites young adults, ages 17 to 23, from diverse racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds for a demanding year full-time community service, leadership development, and civic engagement.

City Year partners with nonprofit organizations or individuals to create a shared vision of social change, which address critical needs and solve problems in communities. City Year provides teams of young people from 4 to 20 as a unique resource that will help a social change organization accomplish both day-to-day and far-reaching goals in communities. The youthful energy, many talents, and dynamic commitment of City Year Corps members can be leveraged to improve lives and create programs that will have a transformative impact.

Partnering with other nonprofits, Corps members lead communities in service and citizenship. Projects include but are not limited to:

- Working with homeless shelters to expand their volunteers base
- Building playgrounds and gardens with local community members
- Designing and implementing violence prevention curriculums in schools
- Running a middle school service program called Young Heroes
- And much, much, more

If you are interested in working with City Year, please complete a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a service project that you would like to implement. We select our projects using the following process:

- **Complete RFP**

We recommend that this RFP is filled out in partnership with City Year and that the partners start by working on the project concept paper.

- **Submit RFP to Project Review Committee**
  Once the RFP is complete the committee will review the project. The committee will either: a) turn down the RFP or b) approve it and give suggestions for improvement
- **Upon project selection, City Year and partner sign contact**.
  Once the review committee, City Year, has approved the project and the partner will draw up and sign an agreement that lays out the expectations and responsibilities of each organization involved.

Thank you for your support. We hope to work with you!

Sincerely,

Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL RATING SHEET

Focus Questions

- Quality of outcomes: Are they in-line with City Year's program goals and mission?
- Do the activities listed support the outcomes? Are they valuable?
- Are the outcomes and activities measurable in terms of being transformative—from point A to point B? Are the measurables well thought-through?
- Why City Year? Does the project take advantage of the unique skill sets, diversity, and team model of CY Corps members?
- Quality of job descriptions: Do they match outcomes?
- Is there an investment in resources that reflects valuing the team?
- What are the capacity building/direct service break downs?
- Vision for collaboration: How is the organization engaging other community organizations and team sponsors?
- For schools and after-school programs: How are children led in service activities?
- What is the quality of the daily schedule?

City Year Service Project Request for Proposal

Contact Information Page

1. For the point person submitting this proposal, please complete section 1:

   First Name ______________________ Last Name ________________________

   Organization ______________________ Title ____________________________

   Address ______________________________ Day Phone ___________________

   City/State/Zip __________________________ FAX _______________________

   Email address ___________________________

2. The following people participated in completing this proposal:

   Name __________________________ Title_____________________________

   Organization ____________________ Day Phone _______________________

   Name __________________________ Title _____________________________

   Organization ____________________ Day Phone _______________________

   Name __________________________ Title _____________________________

   Organization ____________________ Day Phone _______________________

3. If you are a service partner or private sector sponsor, please provide a brief description of your history with City Year.

4. If you are a service partner or private sector sponsor, please submit the mission statement of your organization.

5. What length of time is needed to complete this project? ____months, _____weeks

6. This project needs to start on ____________ and end by ____________.

7. How many Corps members will you need to implement this project?

8. Please identify potential funding sources.

City Year Service Project

Request for Proposal Concept Paper

City Year's mission is to put idealism to work by tapping the civic power of young people for an annual campaign of idealism that generates transformative community service, breaks down social barriers, inspires citizens to civic action, develops new leaders for the common good, and improves and promotes the concept of voluntary national service. City Year's vision is that one day the question most commonly asked of an eighteen year old is: "Where are you going to do your service year?"

9. Please provide a one-page concept paper of your proposal, including how this project fulfills City Year's mission and what will be the major impact of the project (short and long term).

Major Outcomes

10. Complete the following chart on the project's planned outcomes, measure of effectiveness and project activities. In describing how to measure outcomes, [1] you may refer to existing City Year instruments, measures, and tools; cite instruments, measures and tools from other sources; or state what new information you will obtain and how you will obtain it.

	What is (are) the activity (ies) that will generate this outcome?	**How will you measure the effectiveness of the activity (ies) in reaching this outcome?**
Example of a Major outcome *Young Heroes will believe that they will make a difference in the world*	*Weekly service activity* *Debriefs about service at the end of the day*	*Pre-post surveys of Young Heroes: measures about making a difference*
Major Outcome #1		
Major Outcome #2		
Major Outcome #3		

[See AmeriCorps Performance Measurement Toolkit regarding outputs and outcomes.]

City Year Service Project Request for Proposal

Roles and Responsibilities

10. Why are City Year Corps members the best resource for this project?

11. Complete the following information regarding the position(s) needed to implement the project:

Position Name	Brief Job Description	Hours/week needed in this position	# of people needed in this position

12. How will these human resources be recruited and selected?

13. Who will be the City Year leadership on this project and why?

City Year Service Project Request for Proposal

Training and Investment

15. The team on this project must represent what skills when it begins? Please be specific, such as: proficiency in Microsoft Windows, three people with basic construction skills, one person who is a resident of the neighborhood, etc.

16. What skills, necessary for the completion of the project, will be taught and by whom?

17. What are other organizations or individuals that will support this project and how?

18. Who from your organization will be the on-going liaison and advisor to the service project?

19. What other staff from your organization will be involved in the project?

20. What resources will your organization provide for the project?

- ❑ Office Space
- ❑ Computers
  - ❑ One
  - ❑ Two
  - ❑ Three
  - ❑ Other (please specify) ___________
- ❑ Printer
- ❑ Fax Machine
- ❑ Phone
- ❑ Funding
- ❑ Orientation to your organization
- ❑ Training
  - ❑ weekly
  - ❑ monthly
  - ❑ other (please specify) _______
- ❑ Advisory meetings
  - ❑ weekly
  - ❑ monthly
  - ❑ other (please specify) ______
- ❑ Other (please specify)_____________

City Year Service Project Request for Proposal

Training and Investment

21. Please identify potential funding sources.

22. City Year involves many private sector institutions in the sponsorship of a team or a service project. What role do you see employees from the sponsor institution playing in the service project?

Application Submitted by:

Name of point person __________________

Signature___________________ Date __________________

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

EXAMPLE:
BASIC ELEMENTS OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

1. Identify who the partners are and the beginning and ending dates for the agreement.

2. Identify who is the lead agency. It is appropriate to include a contingency phrase such as "If the application for funding is approved…."

3. Describe the nature of the shared project. You may wish to add a brief statement about why the parties are collaborating—shared mission, applicable elements of capacity, history of working together, etc.

4. Outline the roles and responsibilities of the partners. Be brief, clear, concise, and concrete. Include information on how each partner will acquire and track measurements/data relevant to the service activities.

5. Financial arrangements: How much, when, how, who, etc.

6. If no funds are exchanged, is there any in-kind value? How much? Justify as in a budget narrative.

7. Accountability and performance measurement expectations. Be brief, clear, and concrete.

8. Process for parting ways if there are problems: notice, obligations, etc.

9. The MOU must be signed and dated by both organizations participating in the agreement.

Adapted from the Missouri Community Service Commission: Getting Started Guide

Tools for Success

Example: Organizational Responsibilities of the MOU

Below are some suggested items to include in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Human Resources Support

(Organization Name)__________ will:

- recruit and prepare qualified Corps members.
- hold AmeriCorps members accountable for the desired service results and will work with members on their professional development and behavior.
- Regular communication with the Host Site via phone, facsimile, email, and face-to-face. __(Name)__________ will meet on __(day of the week)__ with members for supervision, training, feedback, guidance, and other support.

Orientation and On-going Training

(Organization Name)__________ will:

- conduct a national service orientation.
- hold an orientation for Host Site supervisors.
- provide leadership, professional development, and skills training for members.
- Conduct member retreats during the months of __________, ________, _________.
- AmeriCorps members will receive an orientation to your organization __(date)____ to prepare them for a successful service year.
    - The orientation will include an understanding of organizational structure, organization's mission, service activities, prohibited activities, service timeline, staff meeting schedule, and all other appropriate topics.
- AmeriCorps members will participate in all host site training relevant to the accomplishment of service activities.
- *Other information as required.*

Site Monitoring

(Organization Name)__________ will:

- conduct four formal site visits during the service year. A formal evaluation tool will be used to assess partnership functions. (*Identify the dates of formal site visits.)*
- conduct informal site visits on an on-going basis.

Financial Support

(Organization Name)__________ will:

- *Indicate what type of financial obligation the organization incurs.*

Material Support

(Organization Name)__________ will:

- The host site agrees to provide the following
    - AmeriCorps member uniforms.
    - Office space – including access to bathrooms, tables or desks, meeting space, etc.
    - Secure storage space for personal belongings.
    - Telephone, computer, and copier access.
    - Transportation access (public accessibility).
    - *Other information as required.*

Evaluation/Performance Measurement Administration

(Organization Name)__________ will:

- Complete all entries into the Portal.
- Complete all required performance measurements with the timely input from host sites.
- Collect and share data on members' activities, accomplishments, and number of hours served.
- *Add other information as required.*

EXAMPLE: MANYCORPS BOOSTER HOST SITE AGREEMENT
Mid-Atlantic Network of Youth & Family Services

This is formally recognize the agreement between the Mid-Atlantic Network of Youth & Family Services (MANY) and __(name of program)___________ to host AmeriCorps Education Award Program members as MANYCorps Boosters in service at your program.

____name of program___________, as the Host Program, has requested and been granted the following member slots for the 2001-2002 program year:

- ☐ _____ Part-time (900 hours)
- ☐ _____ Reduced Part-time (450 hours)
- ☐ _____ Summer - Reduced Part-time (381 hours)
- ☐ ______ Other (please specify)

The Host Program agrees to implement the AmeriCorps program in accordance with the AmeriCorps 2001-2002 Program Provisions. Specifically, the Host Program agrees to:

- Submit two program reports on member activities and accomplishments according to report format on the following dates:
  April 15, 2002 and October 15, 2002.
- Conduct best efforts to recruit the number of AmeriCorps members awarded to this Host Program in a timely manner.
- Provide members with an AmeriCorps uniform and assure members are appropriately identified as AmeriCorps members when in service.
- Ensure orientation, training, and supervision of MANYCorps members to prepare them for their service assignments. Include full-corps events and training sponsored by MANY specifically for the AmeriCorps program.
- Submission of accurate documentation of member service hour and activity logs within 30 days of the close of each month.
- Implement programming to address the program objectives indicated and evaluate progress towards accomplishing those objectives.
- Identify Program staff to oversee the member supervision and support and act as point of contact for MANY's program monitoring.

____________________________	____________________________
MANY Program Director	Host Program Signature
____________________________	____________________________
Signature	Signature
______________	__________________
Date	Date

Example: MANYCorps Plan for Training and Monitoring New Program Sites

MANYCorps operates at 8 unique program sites delivering support service to youth and families in high-risk situations. The following process will be implemented in the first year of each new MANYCorps program to assure a successful start-up of a quality community service program.

Program Start-up (summer)

- ✓ Identify/Hire Program Coordinator who will assume responsibility for program implementation and any other key staff.
- ✓ Meet with key staff to review project implementation and develop joint workplan, including:
    - Host site agreements with service sites
    - Operating site agreement between program and MANY
    - Develop plan for member recruitment
    - Plan for integrating AmeriCorps into agency structure
    - Develop plan to address member development, support, and supervision
    - Develop plan to address Community Strengthening objectives
    - Develop plan to address Community Service objectives
    - Develop evaluation plan
    - Develop plan for training and technical assistance support
    - Review program workplan - share feedback and revise as indicated
    - Plan member orientation training
    - Plan staff orientation training
    - Review and approve staff and member position descriptions
    - Review and approve member agreement
- ✓ Deliver/order Program Start-up materials, including:
    - Program Director's Handbook
    - Member Handbooks
    - Member AmeriCorps gear
    - Recruitment materials (brochures, applications, posters)
    - MANYCorps Policies and Procedures Handbook
- ✓ Meet with financial staff to develop plan for funds distribution and train on eGrants
- ✓ Facilitate Program Coordinator attendance at New Program Director training sponsored by CNCS
- ✓ Train program staff in eGrants
- ✓ Develop APR map with site
- ✓ Conduct Staff Orientation Training (see Site Director Training and Orientation, attached)

First Quarter

- ✓ Plan and implement member orientation training
- ✓ Identify staff and members to attend MANYCorps Member Orientation Training and MANY's Annual Conference
- ✓ Review member MIP and enrollment forms - give feedback and approve as indicated
- ✓ Facilitate participation in local Launch Day activities and other national service days through the year
- ✓ Site visit to program sites and member focus group (November)
- ✓ Review Time Logs - give feedback

Second and Third Quarters

- ✓ Site visit(s) to program sites/cluster leadership** and member focus group
- ✓ Review and update plan for continuing training and technical assistance support (to be done as needed but formally at site visits)
- ✓ Review Time Logs (monthly for new program sites)
- ✓ Review data collected to date and identify challenges and develop action plans to address challenges identified (January)
- ✓ Review data collected and entered in APR - give feedback as indicated (April)

Final Quarter

- ✓ Develop plan for service closure for members
- ✓ Review program site accomplishments and challenges
- ✓ Review program progress report and give feedback

Pre-award Member Development and Support Introduction

You are well on your way in the process of identifying and implementing the systems necessary to operate your program. A significant component of your program will be the AmeriCorps members you recruit and train to serve your local community.

Recruiting great AmeriCorps members whose personal values reflect the ethic of service can make the difference between a strong, productive service to the community and a program struggling with the challenges of attrition and ineffective service. The results of your recruitment process will directly impact several areas, including morale, motivation, respect, retention, quality of service projects, relationships with service partners and community members, funding, and your ability to focus on the program rather than spend the majority of your time addressing problems. This section and the ones to follow on Member Development and Support will guide you in recruiting and training a strong corps of members.

Pre-award Success Checklist

✓	***MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Develop member recruitment plan.		
	Develop member administration plan.		

DEVELOP A MEMBER RECRUITMENT PLAN

What is a member recruitment plan?
AmeriCorps members are a key component of an effective and successful program. A corps member recruitment plan is a strategic and purposeful roadmap to identify and recruit people best suited for your program.

Why do you need a member recruitment plan? Member recruitment is a very involved process that requires organizational resources, creative ideas, foot work, monitoring, and follow-up. Some recruitment strategies will work, others will not. The more time and effort you put into your recruitment plan, the more likely you are to find great member candidates.

How do you do it?

SUGGESTED	✓ Develop a set of recruitment criteria with your service sites. What skills, qualities, attributes, etc. does a person need? When will members start? Where will they be placed?
	✓ Consider these questions when developing your recruitment plan. Also check out the Recruitment Start-up Checklist. • **What** are the specific activities AmeriCorps members may be doing? • **Why** would someone want to join our AmeriCorps program? *(Consider the intangible or experiential benefits of the program. Then consider tangible benefits including stipend, education award, training, and life preparation.)* • **Where** (or at what kinds of events) can we reach out to potential AmeriCorps members to join our program?
	✓ Identify potential recruitment opportunities, activities, and events. See Recruitment Ideas.
	✓ Calculate the budget costs for publications, recruitment events, or other needs.
	✓ Engage your service site partners in the process of developing the recruitment plan and assisting or recommending potential AmeriCorps members.
	✓ Actively involve your service site partners in the corps member interview and selection process.
	✓ List your program on the CNCS recruitment web page. Use the CNCS recruitment web page to identify candidates.

MEMBER ADMINISTRATION PLAN

What is a member administration plan?
As the recruitment process for AmeriCorps candidates gets underway, your organization needs to begin implementing a member administration plan for enrolling members and maintaining their individual records**.**

Why do you need a member administration plan?
There is a significant amount of documentation and paperwork needed for each corps member. Along with the paperwork, eGrants and the Member Portal (on-line databases to track AmeriCorps program information) need to be updated. Key elements of your plan include: outlining a list of tasks that need to be accomplished, adding a timeline, and identifying responsible persons to complete tasks.

How do you do it?

SUGGESTED	✓ Identify the person(s) responsible for completing and entering all member information. This is particularly important if you do not have a Human Resources department.
	✓ Set up and prepare the program's eGrants account. Contact your State Service Commission or CNCS Program Officer for information on training and eGrants access.
	✓ Ensure that you have sufficient quantities of forms in case of mistakes or misplaced documents.
	✓ Set up individual member files. Include all forms needed for each member and a Member File Checklist that identifies completed forms and other documents in member's file.
	✓ See the Program Development and Management Pre-award section's Human Resource Plan.

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: RECRUITMENT START-UP CHECKLIST

- ✓ Consider how much time you have before you need AmeriCorps members in place.
    - Do you need members in 6 weeks or 6 months?
    - Your plan needs to reflect your timeline.
- ✓ Who is available to work on your recruitment campaign with you?
- ✓ How much is your recruitment budget?
- ✓ How many positions are you recruiting for?
- ✓ What are the positions?
    - Do you have member position descriptions?
- ✓ What materials do you have to use for recruitment?
    - Do you need to develop new materials?
    - Do you need them in different languages and formats?
- ✓ What is your target number of applications that you will need to fill your positions?
    - Many programs need at least 2 completed applications for each position.
- ✓ Is a support framework in place for members, including a supervisor and member policies?
- ✓ Does your staff understand the role of your members?
    - Do they understand their roles in relation to the members?
- ✓ Do you have adequate space and resources for your members?
- ✓ Do you have an orientation and training plan in place for your members?

From Catholic Volunteer Services of America

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: RECRUITMENT IDEAS

Include photos of members engaged in community service activities in your recruitment brochures. If possible, make a video that shows members in service; these videos can be shown at local churches and educational institutions.

1. Network your program - when you speak to a group or attend meetings, mention your program, if appropriate, and share publicity and recruitment materials with individuals. Be sure to follow up with interested individuals within 10 days.
2. Publicity can be beneficial - identify businesses/organizations that buy ad space and ask them to help promote your cause.
3. Always provide a member position description. By doing this, both you and potential applicants are more likely to understand an assignment.
4. Utilize your website to full advantage. Provide information about becoming a member in your program; advertise the benefits and rewards of serving in your program; promote the benefits to the community.
5. Contact the local newspaper to see if they will donate space in the classifieds for member positions. If necessary, pay for an advertisement in the Help Wanted section, built around enhancing professional skills and providing employment contacts and networks.
6. Sponsor a Volunteer Opportunity Fair with other groups - possible locations for a fair include schools, churches, community centers, shopping malls.
7. Contact your local TV/Cable stations to secure airtime to present on your services.
8. When giving a presentation to a large group, include AmeriCorps members. Hearing members talk about their experiences can be exciting and inspirational. Also, members are a great source of information for interested individuals.
9. Talk to personnel directors of large corporations, explain member opportunities, and ask if they can refer retirees and current employees to you.
10. Speak their language - what do you do that is of interest to prospective members? Highlight this in your presentation.
11. Level with potential members - tell them what they will do, how long they will be expected to do it, and who will benefit.
12. When trying to increase the diversity of members, reach out to leaders of different ethnic and racial groups to request their assistance with recruitment.
13. Remember to involve other community groups with your recruitment. Reach out to groups such as the Toastmasters Club, the Lions Club, the Rotary Club, and the Kiwanis Club for help with special service events.
14. Do not use guilt when trying to recruit.
15. Be honest and direct with people when recruiting. Do not minimize the work or the time needed.
16. Do not settle - avoid the concept of "a warm body through the door will do." If you cannot get the right person, do not take just anyone.
17. Illustrate with diagrams or pictures where people fit into the overall structure of your organization. An organizational chart helps people to visualize their role in relation to others and will create a better understanding of how AmeriCorps members function in your organization.

From Catholic Volunteers Services of America

EXAMPLE: MEMBER FILE CHECKLIST

Mid-Atlantic Network of Youth and Family Services

MANYCorps Site Visit

Program Name/Location:	______________________
Member Name:	______________________
Grant #:	______________________
Program Year:	______________________
Service Hours Term:	______________________
Date Enrolled:	______________________
Date Exited:	______________________

Are the following items in the member's file?	**Yes**	**No**
Member application	___	___
***Member enrollment form**	___	___
Is the member enrollment form signed and dated by the member? ➢ Approved by site supervisor via eGrants ➢ eGrants will check if the form was submitted within 30 days	___	___
Proof of age	___	___
Parental consent form (if member is under the age of 18)	___	___
Member contract that stipulates the following:		
• minimum number of service hours and other requirements (as developed by the program) necessary to successfully complete the term of service and to be eligible for the educational award;	___	___
• acceptable conduct;	___	___
• prohibited activities;	___	___
• requirements under the Drug-Free Workplace Act;	___	___
• suspension and termination rules;	___	___
• the specific circumstances under which a member may be released for cause;	___	___
• the position description;	___	___
• grievance procedures;	___	___
• other requirements as established by the program;	___	___
• is the contract signed and dated by the member?	___	___
Criminal background check if the member works with children or other vulnerable populations.	___	___

Are the following items in the member's file?	Yes	No

***Timesheets**:

• are they signed by both the member and the site supervisor?	___	___
• are they up to date?	___	___
• do the timesheets segregate/track separately hours for service v. hours for training?	___	___

eGrants checks the following:

• is the addition on each sheet correct?	___	___
• do the total hours from each time sheet add up to the number of hours claimed on the exit form?	___	___

Documentation of citizenship/naturalization/resident alien status:

Primary documentation of status as a US citizen or national: one of the following forms of documentation is acceptable:

- a birth certificate showing that the individual was born in the one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the US Virgin Islands, American Samoa, or the Northern Mariana Islands
- a United States passport
- a report of birth abroad of a US Citizen (FS-240) issued by the State Dept.
- a certificate of birth-foreign service (FS-545) issued by the State Dept.
- a certificate of naturalization (Form N-550 or N-570) issued by the INS
- a certificate of citizenship (Form N-560 or N-561) issued by the INS

-OR-

Primary documentation of status as a lawful permanent resident of the US: one of the following forms of documentation is acceptable:

- Permanent resident card, INS form I-551
- Alien Registration Receipt Card, INS form I-551
- A passport indicating that the INS has approved it as temporary evidence of lawful admission for permanent residence.

Is one of the ten types of documentation listed above present?	___	___
If no, has the program obtained written approval from the Corporation that the other documentation is sufficient to demonstrate the individual's status as US citizen, US national, or lawful permanent resident alien?	___	___

Are the following items in the member's file?	Yes	No

High School diploma/GED ___ ___

- If the member has not earned a diploma or high school equivalency, has the member signed a statement affirming that he/she has not dropped out of elementary or secondary school to enroll as an AmeriCorps participant? ___ ___
- If the member has not earned a diploma or high school equivalency, has the member agreed in writing to obtain high school diploma or equivalency before using the education award? ___ ___
- If the member has not earned a diploma or high school equivalency and is a dropout, is there documentation to show that the program has helped the member earn the equivalent of a high school diploma? ___ ___
- If the answer to all of the above is "no," is there documentation from an independent evaluator attesting that member is not capable of earning a diploma/GED? ___ ___

Documentation of Health Care Enrollment (if eligible) ___ ___

➢ Who's eligible?

- All full-time members (except Promise Fellows and EAO members) are eligible for health benefits.
  - Part-time members serving in a full-time capacity (except Promise Fellows and EAO).
  - If there are any questions on health care coverage, please check the provisions.

Documentation of Child Care Enrollment (if eligible) ___ ___

➢ Who's eligible?

- member is the parent/legal guardian (or acting in loco parentis) for a child under the age of 13 who resides with the member;
- member has a family income that does not exceed the state's income eligibility guidelines for a family of the same size. At a maximum, family income can be no more than 75% of the state's median income; and
- at the time of acceptance into the program, member is not receiving childcare from another available source.
- Part-time members serving in a full-time capacity who meet the above requirements may be eligible for child-care benefits.

Tax documents

- Is there a W-4 form to document tax withholdings? ___ ___
- If the program year is over, is there a W2 form? ___ ___

Loan Forbearance request form (if applicable) ___ ___

Publicity release form ___ ___

➢ If member is under 18, is the form signed by the parent/guardian? ___ ___

Member discipline documentation ___ ___

Mid-term performance evaluation ____ ____

End-of-term performance evaluation ___ ___

Are the following items in the member's file?	Yes	No
***Member End-of-Term/Exit Form** (if member has exited)	___	___
Is the form signed by the member in the two places indicated?	___	___
Checks the following:		
• Is the form approved by the site supervisor?	___	___
• Is the supervisor signature concurrent with or after the member's?	___	___
• Was the form submitted within 15 days?	___	___
• Was the member's term in compliance with the program requirements explained in section 9a? (This can be ascertained by looking at the enrollment and exit dates and comparing the number of months served to the type of service term. If the member was suspended that should also be taken into consideration.)	___	___
• Is the date on the exit form concurrent with or after the date the member exited?	___	___
• Do enrollment form and exit form for each individual reflect the same term of service? If no, go to change of status section?	___	___
***Documentation of Compelling Personal Circumstances** (if applicable)	___	___
• If the member received a pro-rated ed-award (check the exit form), is there documentation of compelling personal circumstances that falls within the parameters identified in the AmeriCorps provisions for the relevant program year?	___	___
Change of Status Form (if applicable)	___	___
• Do enrollment form and exit form for each individual reflect the same term of service?	___	___
• If not, is there an approved change of status form in the file that reflects the appropriate conversion?	___	___
• Was the conversion made within the first three months of the member's term? If not, is there evidence of grantee and CNCS approval?	___	___
• Was the form submitted to CNCS within 30 days? (Needs to be verified at CNCS.)	___	___

*Items with asterisk are files for which eGrants is the document of record. You should still keep paper copies of these items as a primary source. However, since eGrants automatically makes corrections, you should recognize that there might be some discrepancies between the paper and eGrants copy. This is acceptable since eGrants is the official record.

This checklist is based on the '99-'00 provisions. Be aware when you are looking at files from other program years that there are differences in the provisions from year to year. This checklist should not be construed as a substitute for either the provisions or common sense.

Signature of MANYCorps Staff member: ____________________
Signature of Site Supervisor: ____________________
Date of Site Visit: ____________________

PRE-AWARD FINANCIAL AND GRANTS MANAGEMENT INTRODUCTION

As you embark on assessing whether your organization wants to take on the implementation of an AmeriCorps program, one of the most important areas to carefully review are your organization's financial systems. This section provides you the information needed to identify the strengths and areas of improvement necessary to effectively execute the financial compliance requirements of operating the AmeriCorps program.

Pre-award Success Checklist

✓	*FINANCIAL and GRANTS MANAGEMENT*	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Review AmeriCorps Grant Provisions and federal policies.		
	Complete the Pre-award Fiscal Checklist.		
	Review list of common audit issues.		
	Initiate a complete financial audit. Address any areas of concern.		

STRONG FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

How can you avoid the common financial problems?
The organization's accounting system should record financial transactions by budget line item and program year, and should distinguish between federal and non-federal funds. You must retain thorough documentation that supports all expenditures and in-kind matching funds, as well as, time and activity reports. Every organization should segregate financial responsibilities as much as possible.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Establish good financial practices prior to grant award.
	✓ Know the rules and regulatory requirements.
	✓ Utilize standard accounting practices with ledgers that are supported by source documentation and that have a clear audit trail.
	✓ Have up-to-date written policies and procedures.
	✓ Document all staff and AmeriCorps member time through time and attendance records.
	✓ Be sure to stay within the 5% limitation on administrative costs for the CNCS federal funds.
	✓ Only process financial transitions with supporting documentation.
	✓ Establish good internal controls and segregation of duties.

SUGGESTED	✓ Attend appropriate financial management training.
	✓ Establish a relationship with local Certified Public Accountant.
	✓ Ask an independent auditor for continuous improvement feedback when they are conducting an audit.
	✓ Reconcile bank statements on a monthly basis.
	✓ Create Finance Committee for Board of Directors and charge them with reviewing monthly financial reports.

AMERICORPS GRANT PROVISIONS

What are AmeriCorps Grant Provisions?
The Grant Provisions are operating guidelines for AmeriCorps programs**.** The provisions are a set of requirements established by the federal government that grantees must follow and adhere to. Included in the provisions are the systems necessary for successfully executing the grant requirements.

Why do you need to adhere to the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions?
By accepting the public AmeriCorps grant funds and/or AmeriCorps member resources, you are accepting the rules and requirements that are attached to those resources. It is important to know that the strong stewardship of public resources is a central responsibility for CNCS and for CNCS grantees.

How do you do it?

Essential Practice	Recommended Practice	Suggested Practice
• Familiarize the organization with applicable OMB circulars and provisions. • Conduct a training to familiarize programmatic and fiscal staff with the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions, regulations, program performance measures, and fiscal reporting requirements. • Track federal and nonfederal funds separately. • Keep a clear audit trail that properly documents and records expenses. • Review the Financial System Description List to ensure you have the appropriate systems in place.	• Implement internal controls including written operating procedures and policies. • Setup the chart of accounts to record matching funds and federal funds separately. • Setup specific accounts to track Corps members expenses like member stipends, health insurance, member training.	• Create a summary sheet for each funding source. • Implement a plan for sub-grantee monitoring, oversight, and training. • Work the CNCS Grants and Program Officers to help understand and resolve programmatic and fiscal issues.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
Where can I find the AmeriCorps rules and regulations? *Your grant award and AmeriCorps grant provisions are primary sources for the information for the grant. Incorporated in the AmeriCorps grant provisions are the OMB Circulars. The Circulars are the regulations that apply to all federal funding.*

What are the most common financial problems in AmeriCorps programs? *The most common financial management problems with AmeriCorps programs are related to inadequate accounting practices, insufficient internal controls, and inadequate documentation and record-keeping. As a result of these problems, many programs also produce inaccurate financial reports.*

If I have subgrantees, am I required to do anything specific? *Yes. If your organization is sub-granting part or all of the funding you are receiving, you must develop and conduct a selection and review process for your subgrantees. Your organization will also need to establish contractual documents to outline the agreement between the organizations.*

How does the AmeriCorps State/National grant differ from other funding streams? *When organizations begin to operate an AmeriCorps grant they usually need to establish a few new accounts in their general ledger. There is a need to report separately for costs incurred for corps members; these accounts are not usual accounts for most organizations. Additionally, there is a need to separately keep track of member stipends, member health insurance, and member training costs.*

What are matching funds? What is an in-kind contribution? How do these relate to my grant? *Matching funds are additional funds raised by your organization through various sources and are used support the program. In-kind contributions are non-cash donations of goods or services (e.g., supplies, uniforms, or meeting space) that can be used to establish a cash value as match. There are established minimum levels of funds that an organization is required to raise as match. Matching requirements are found in the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions.*

Are we required to maintain records of our expenditures? *Absolutely. All expenditures should contain documentation that supports why a transaction is allowable for AmeriCorps purposes (i.e., brief descriptions, agendas, reports, etc.). Accounting records should trace back to source documentation. Documentation should support each expenditure and clearly identify: reasonableness, necessity, allow-ability, and adherence to grant guidelines.*

What kinds of things should we consider as we bring subgrantees aboard*? You should ensure that standard accounting practices, policies and procedures, and reporting mechanisms are established with your subgrantees. Consider developing or revising written policies and procedures for reimbursements, financial reporting, budget amendments, and other program requirements. You might want to review their annual audit to learn about their internal controls, their financial position and any problems or difficulties they may have.*

UNDERSTANDING FEDERAL POLICY

What is the federal policy governing the AmeriCorps grant?
The major federal policy or regulation that governs the grant comes from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The OMB Circulars will guide you to the successful implementation of the grant and the implementation of necessary management systems.

Why do you need to understand the federal policy?
Federal funds are subject to certain regulations, and it is important to be aware of these regulations and follow them. As the Program Director or the Executive Director charged with executing the AmeriCorps program, you must have an adequate understanding of the OMB Circulars to ensure that your program is in compliance.

How do I do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Consult the AmeriCorps Program Director's Manual, learn the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions, and examine the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars.
	✓ Applicable OMB Circulars vary by organization type. Confirm that your organization is adhering to the appropriate OMB guidance.

NONPROFIT LEGAL AND FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITIES

What are nonprofit legal and fiduciary responsibilities?
This is a set of rules and regulations that govern the receipt and use of public funds particularly by 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations. The Internal Revenue Service allows certain types of organizations to have a 501(c)3 status, which exempts the organization from paying federal income tax and allows the income that they receive to be tax deductible. These benefits do not come without responsibility, however. Restrictions limit how an organization can use funds it receives.

Why should you be concerned with the legal and fiduciary responsibilities?
Frankly, you don't want to jeopardize the impact your organization can make by not following the fiduciary responsibilities.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Your organization should read and understand all contractual documents and seek clarification prior to authorization. Do not sign documents that have not been read or reviewed by the organization's management and the Board of Directors.
	✓ Ensure a strong communication system is in place between the executive management and the Board of Directors. Both bodies are held accountable if funds are misused.
	✓ It is critical that the board is well informed about the organization's financial status and the regulatory obligations incurred by the AmeriCorps grant award. Review the responsibilities of the board.
	✓ Confirm that **<u>all</u>** staff members from service sites and the parent organization are thoroughly aware of legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
	✓ All staff must know and understand the prohibited activities associated with AmeriCorps.

SUGGESTED	✓ Familiarize the staff with the federal rules and regulations to ensure that regulations are being followed.
	✓ Establish a relationship with an external, informed auditor to ensure that funding and accounting systems are comprehensive and in compliance with federal guidelines.

PRE-AWARD FISCAL CHECKLIST

What is a pre-award fiscal checklist?
A pre-award checklist is a tool designed to assist an organization with a fiscal review to prepare for a pending grant award. There are many components to be reviewed and or established during your pre-award preparation. The checklist will assist in ensuring that adequate and appropriate fiscal and accounting systems are implemented and operational. The checklist is also an excellent way to assess your organization's strengths and weaknesses.

Why do you need to use a pre-award fiscal checklist?
A checklist will help you review and perform a self-assessment of your financial systems and implement needed systems to ensure grant compliance.

How do I do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Review the appropriate Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars to understand the broad requirements of your grant.
	✓ Involve the Board, management, and staff in fully understanding relevant parts of the Resource Section Pre-award Fiscal Checklist.
	✓ Enlist the aid of qualified individuals to review the information provided after the self-assessment.

Additional Questions
Where do I go for help once I have identified issues that need to be corrected or implemented?
Once you are a CNCS grantee, your CNCS Program Officer and Grants Officer will be your front-line support system.

ADDRESSING COMMON AUDIT ISSUES

What is an audit?
The type of audit referred to here involves the review of an organization's financial management processes and fiscal accountability practices. CNCS has an Office of Inspector General (OIG). The OIG conducts and supervises independent and objective audits and investigations of CNCS programs and operations. Based on the results of these audits and investigations, the OIG recommends policies to promote economy and efficiency and prevent and detect fraud and abuse in CNCS programs and operations.

Why do you need to care about audit issues?
Organizations that are aware of common financial management problems manage finances more effectively. As your organization prepares to implement the AmeriCorps program, some of your current systems, including your financial management systems, will need to be retooled. Understanding common issues that arise during a financial audit now can help you institute proper checks and balances to avoid issues in the future.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Carefully review the issues identified in the audit and ensure that your organization has developed policies and procedures to address each one. Cash management is an example of a common audit issue. Responsible cash flow management begins with accurate book-keeping records and financial statements. Cash flow projections can be done on a monthly basis for the upcoming fiscal year, estimating when the project will incur expenditures and will receive income from the grant. See the List of Common Audit Problems for additional information.
	✓ Consult the AmeriCorps Program Directors' Manual, learn the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions, examine the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars, and know the relevant rules outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations.
	✓ Maintain accurate and timely financial records from the start of your program with brand new AmeriCorps programs there are many things to do and it becomes easy to put off the financial management tasks. It is in your organization's best interest to report timely and accurate financial information through eGrants, to the State Service Commission, or to CNCS. Financial reports should be clear, concise, all-inclusive, and comparable (show financial activities over a period of time).

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: PRE-AWARD FISCAL CHECKLIST

INTERNAL ACCOUNTING	*Yes*	*No*	*N/A*
1. Do you maintain separate files for each contract you have?			
2. Do you have a file copy of the approved contract?			
3. Does your contract file contain a request for payment or request for funds form?			
4. Does your contract file contain forms for budget revision requests or changes?			
5. Does your contract file contain approved budget revisions?			
6. Does your contract file contain applicable correspondence from CNCS and from you?			
7. Does your accounting system provide for identifying receipts and expenditures of program funds for each contract?			
8. Does your accounting system have controls that prevent expenditures in excess of approved and budgeted amounts?			
9. Does only one individual have responsibility for and complete authority over financial transactions? (Explain your answer in the comments section.)			
10. Do you have fidelity bond(s) for responsible officials handling funds?			
11. Have you received a single audit report within the past year?			
12. Does the outside audit comply with OMB Circulars A-133?			
13. Have you submitted a copy of the audit report to your funder? (CNCS or Parent Organization, if applicable.)			
14. Does your organization have a chart showing lines of responsibility and duties of key personnel?			
15. Does your accounting system have procedures that govern the maintenance of accounts?			
16. Do you have an accounting manual?			
17. Do you have a chart of accounts?			
18. Are entries adequately explained or supported and approved by responsible personnel?			
19. Do you maintain approval authority for financial and accounting transactions?			
20. Do you have written guidelines for purchasing that meet OMB circular requirements? (If no, please explain below.)			
21. Are your accounting system and records secured?			
22. Is your backup documentation secured in limited access areas?			
23. Do you maintain source documentation to show the nature of each receipt and expenditure?			
24. Is record keeping separated from operations or handling and custody of assets?			
25. Are your funds on deposit in a bank with FDIC protection?			
26. Are balances exceeding the FDIC collaterally secured?			
27. Are safeguards in place that will assure that your organization's share of funding does not exceed legal or grant requirements?			
28. Are all reports reconcilable with the accounting records and system?			
29. Do you use a double entry bookkeeping system?			
30. Do you have written cash control policies and procedures?			
31. Are paid checks verified for date, name, and proper endorsements at reconciliation?			
32. Do you maintain effective control over accountability for all funds, property, and other assets?			
33. Do you have procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds from your organization and disbursement?			
34. Do you have procedures for determining that costs are reasonable and allowable?			
35. Do expenditures meet OMB cost principles requirement? (If no, explain below.)			

BOARD OF DIRECTORS/AUDIT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES	*Yes*	*No*	*N/A*
1. Does the Board of Directors have an Audit Committee?			

2. Does the Audit Committee have defined duties and responsibilities that are documented in a Board of Director's resolution, or elsewhere?			
3. Is there evidence in the minutes that the Board of Directors or designated committee approved the operating budget?			
SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROLS	***Yes***	***No***	***N/A***
1. Are clear lines of authority and responsibility documented in an organization chart?			
2. Are there written management policies establishing responsibilities for management personnel in line and staff functions?			
3. Are written accounting policies and procedures established to describe the accounting system and ensure that similar transactions are processed consistently?			
4. Are the duties and responsibilities as outlined in written policies communicated to employees?			
5. Has the Executive Director responded to internal control deficiencies pointed out through the most recent audit, if any?			
6. Does the program keep on hand a current copy of applicable financial regulations or guidelines?			
7. Do the bookkeeper's duties exclude the following functions: • Receiving cash or checks • Opening the incoming mail • Preparing bank deposits • Signing checks			
8. Does an individual other than the person who prepares the bank deposit slip actually deposit it in the bank?			
9. Do the duties of the person preparing the bank reconciliation exclude: • Posting to the books of account • Handling cash • Signing checks			
10. Are checks, after being signed, controlled and mailed out by an individual who does not have any other accounting duties?			
BUDGETING AND MANAGEMENT REPORTING	***Yes***	***No***	***N/A***
1. Are actual expenses compared with budgeted expenses on a monthly basis? • Do the reports display variances for each expense? • Is there a policy requiring that the reports be prepared within a prescribed number of days after month-end?			
2. Does the recipient prepare and use an annual overall financial plan or operating budget to allocate its resources and provide a system of evaluating control?			
3. Is there an organized process for ensuring the development of budget information?			
4. Where feasible, are common or indirect costs accumulated into cost pools for allocation to projects, contracts and grants?			
5. Are bases used to allocate cost pools equitable and approved by management?			
6. Does the program allocate common costs on a rational basis?			
7. Have reports been prepared and submitted in accordance with management's policies?			

ACCOUNTING SYSTEM	Yes	No	N/A
1. Has a chart of accounts been established which includes all accounts in the accounting system?			
2. Does the organization use a double-entry accounting system?			
3. Are transactions in the accounting records properly authorized, as evidenced by supporting documentation containing the signature of appropriate approving officials?			
4. Are employees and officers who handle assets or perform significant financial duties bonded?			
5. Has a general policy with respect to insurance coverage been defined and procedures instituted to insure that all significant business risks have been covered?			
6. Is insurance coverage periodically reviewed with a competent insurance agent?			
7. Does the recipient have an accounting and finance manual that stipulates the duties of employees within the accounting and finance function?			
8. Are the accounting policies followed by the organization in agreement with those stipulated in the organization's accounting and finance manual?			
9. Are employees required to take annual vacations, and are duties assigned to others in the absence of an employee on vacation or otherwise absent?			
BANK ACCOUNTS	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**
1. Is each bank account authorized by the Board of Directors or by the person delegated by the Board? • Is delegation of this authority documented in the Board of Directors' minutes?			
2. Have bank statements been reconciled monthly to the general ledger?			
PAYROLL	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**
1. Does the payroll register list employees paid by: • Name • Check number • Gross pay • Withholdings • Net pay			
2. Are attendance records maintained for employees?			
3. Are they approved by the employee's supervisor?			
4. Are records of vacation, sick leave and compensatory time (if applicable) maintained for employees?			
5. Does the employee's record include time accrued, taken, and the available balance?			
6. Do employees have personnel files which include documentation concerning: • Position reclassifications • Salary rates • Withholding authorizations • Terminations			
7. Are personnel policies established in writing?			
8. Do the written personnel and/or payroll records include the following or similar records: • An attendance record • Vacation, sick and other excused leave records • Individual payroll record form • Payroll register • Notification concerning appointments, terminations, position classifications and salary rates			

TIMESHEETS	*Yes*	*No*	*N/A*
1. Does program have separate timesheets for employees and members?			
2. Is the timesheet a pre-printed form?			
3. Are timesheets signed and dated by the employee or member?			
4. Are timesheets approved by an employee authorized to approve timesheets?			
5. What length of time does the timesheet cover?			
6. Are member timesheets maintained in the member file by program year?			

Tools for Success

Example: LIST OF COMMON AUDIT PROBLEMS

Time cards/sheets

- No time cards or documentation for staff hours charged to the grant.
- Unsigned time cards for staff and members.
- Time cards are signed weeks later by the supervisor.
- No designation of time/allocation on staff member's time card.
    - a.) Estimated time as opposed to actual time.
    - b.) Allocation of time is based on budget and is not reflective of actual activity.
    - c.) Time allocation is indicated at 100% even though staff member is an officer of the organization who performs other functions not solely related to the grant.
- Lack of activity reports for staff member(s) if time is charged to more than one grant.

Member Records

- No timesheets or documentation of member hours.
- Incomplete member records.
- Missing member eligibility documentation.
- No member contracts on file.
- No supervisory signature on timesheets.
- Member timesheets are not entered into the program log in a timely manner.

Lack of Written Policies and Procedures

- Written policies and procedures are required by A-110, Subpart C, b.6 (45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 253).

Lack of Appropriate Documentation

- **Expenditures**
    - a.) Original invoices are missing.
    - b.) Receiving signature is missing.
    - c.) Approval for the expenditure is not available.
    - d.) Supervisor's authorization on invoice/check is missing.
    - e.) Required documentation and invoices are not stamped or marked paid to reduce the risk of double payment.
    - f.) Documentation is not maintained and accessible for purposes of management, as well as the CNCS review, or the required annual or semi-annual audits.
- **Match**
    - a.) Match is not verifiable by grantee's records.
    - b.) *Match documentation is missing the following information*: What was donated, signature of donor, amount donated, date of service, and how the donation was valued. (For example, if the donation was for a painter spending 5 hours painting a house and painters in the area get $20 per hour, the documentation should include the calculation of hours and the hourly rate.)
    - c.) The grantee has not maintained adequate documentation of in-kind match. The grantee should not record an in-kind donation as match until it is satisfied that the documentation is sufficient.
    - d.) The grantee is responsible to ensure that their subgrantees have adequate documentation on file.
- **Grantee's Accounting Records**
    - a.) Financial records don't identify costs by programmatic year, by budget line item, or don't differentiate between direct and indirect costs.
- **Subgrants**
    - a.) No written agreements with program subgrantees.
- **Subgrantees**
    - a.) Lack of oversight of subgrantees by grantee organization.

Source: http://epicenter.etr.org/ Contributed by Kristina Tecce, Walker & Company, LLP www.walkerllp.com

0 – 3 Months Program Development and Management Introduction

No time period is as intensive as the first three months of your AmeriCorps program. During the next three months, you will hire and orient new staff; recruit, enroll, and train your AmeriCorps members; establish relationships with community organizations; and conduct other tasks to build your program. Establishing effective management systems will go a long way to ensuring your program's success.

If you have an existing organization, you may need to adjust some of your current systems and processes or create new ones to accommodate AmeriCorps program requirements. This preparatory work may seem burdensome, but in the end, the resulting systems will keep your program running smoothly and should even strengthen your overall organization.
If you are beginning a program from scratch, you might be feeling overwhelmed by the many requirements related to AmeriCorps program start-up and wondering where to start. Based on the lessons learned by other AmeriCorps programs before you, this section will help you anticipate and develop the good start systems you need as a foundation.

0 – 3 Months Success Checklist

✓	***Program Development and Management***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Set up and activate your eGrants account.		
	Create partnership or subgrantee agreements.		
	Develop and implement a corps member pre-service orientation.		
	Develop and implement a corps member pre-service training.		
	Develop and implement a public relations plan.		

DEVELOP PARTNERSHIP OR SUBGRANTEE AGREEMENTS

What is a partnership or subgrantee agreement?
This document specifically identifies the role, responsibilities, and obligations between your organization and your service site partners or partnering organization. Whether you are a grantee or subgrantee with multiple sites seeking to build partnerships with local community organizations where Corps members perform service, it is important to spell out the roles, products, and/or services each organization is responsible for accomplishing.

Why do you need a partnership or subgrantee agreement?
Both parties have a written document that **clearly** describes how the two organizations will work together, what service(s) will be performed, when that service will be performed, what the financial and resource investments will be, who has supervisory responsibilities, and how the success of the service activities and the partnership relationship will be measured.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Conduct a site visit with key personnel from your prospective partnering organizations to identify site supervisors, task responsibilities, site-specific training requirements, working environment, on-site monitors, and required AmeriCorps systems.
	✓ Determine the financial and resource obligations.
	✓ Orient the partnering organizations to the AmeriCorps and national service philosophy
	✓ Train site supervisors on grant provisions, prohibited activities, working with members, reporting, performance measurement, etc.
	✓ Create a communication schedule or system with your partnering organizations.
	✓ Identify mutual goals and objectives and the possible tasks to be performed.
	✓ Look for strategic or unique alliances. This can strengthen and broaden the service experience.
	✓ Institute a performance measurement plan to assess the service activities and the partnering relationship.
	✓ Review the partner agreement document. Also review the Pre-award Community Site Partnerships section for more information on establishing partnerships.

IMPLEMENT A PRE-SERVICE ORIENTATION

What is a Pre-service Orientation?
A Pre-service Orientation (PSO) is an introduction to national service, the AmeriCorps philosophy and values, and the partner organization. The orientation has two essential components. The first is an important introductory event to familiarize your corps members with national service history, terminology, responsibilities, regulations and rules, benefits, prohibited activities, and service activities. The second component provides members with a context and overview of the host and/or partner organization.

Why do you need a Pre-service Orientation?
The PSO provides a framework for the service your members will contribute and the community context in which they will serve. An effective PSO is a must to get everyone off to a strong start.

How do you do it?

SUGGESTED	✓ Review the AmeriCorps Program Director's Handbook for Pre-service Orientation topics.
	✓ Involve your staff in developing various aspects of the orientation component.
	✓ Create an orientation agenda.
	✓ Identify and solicit help from external trainers if appropriate.
	✓ Create fun, interesting, hands-on activities appropriate to adult learners.
	✓ Take the opportunity to build esprit de corps (a sense of connection and community among your members and staff).
	✓ Create an evaluation mechanism to assess if the PSO has been effective. Use results to continuously improve the orientation.

Additional Questions
What percentage of service hours are allowed for training and orientation activities? *Great question. Programs can allocate only 20% of their service hours to orientation and training activities.*

How long is a PSO? *A PSO can be as long or as short as needed. It depends on your program and the service activities that members need to be prepared for. They may range from one day to two or more weeks. You decide what's best for your particular needs.*

Do we really need a PSO? *Do you ever! This is your first opportunity to set a positive tone for your program, begin building a strong, cohesive team, and clarify the rules and regulations to members.*

IMPLEMENT PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

What is a Pre-service Training?
A Pre-service Training (PST) helps your AmeriCorps members develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to perform well on their assigned service project. A PST is a requirement of your grant provisions.

Why do you need a Pre-service Training?
A PST prepares members for the service activities ahead**.** The Pre-service Orientation discussed earlier familiarizes members with national service history, terminology, responsibilities, regulations and rules, benefits, and service activities. In other words, it focuses on "what" the program is and "why" we do it. The PST complements an orientation by developing or enhancing the skills required for the particular service activities. Here the emphasis is on "how" to perform the service activities, and it also helps members to internalize the project's mission and goals.

How do you do it?

SUGGESTED	✓ Prepare and conduct a corps member needs/skill assessment. Use this data to design the PST.
	✓ Develop the PST design to address the skills needed by corps members. Clearly specify the outcomes you want to accomplish (e.g., "by the end of the PST, the member will be able to….").
	✓ Create a PST agenda and create, adapt, and/or collect support materials.
	✓ Create authentic learning experiences so members can apply training to service activities.
	✓ Prepare staff to model teamwork and service culture.
	✓ Monitor, assess, and evaluate. Ask Corps members for feedback and make immediate changes if needed. See the sample Pre-service Training Evaluation form.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
What percentage of service hours are allowed for training and orientation activities? *As mentioned in the previous section on the Pre-Service Orientation, programs can allocate only 20% of their service hours to orientation and training activities. That means 20% for <u>both</u> orientation and training activities.*

How long is a pre-service training? *It depends on your program and the service activities that members need to be prepared for. A typical length is several days, but some programs may need as long as a week or more depending on the program.*

Where should we do the actual PST? *Hold it wherever is appropriate for the training design and the budget allocated.*

How will I know if the PST is effective? *If your members are able to carry out their service activities well from the start of the program, then you've probably done a good job in organizing and conducting the PST. One key element for a great PST is to make sure the content and methodology of the training are appropriate to develop the types of skills required by the service activities.*

Member Recruitment and Enrollment Plan

What is a member recruitment and enrollment plan?
A recruitment and enrollment plan lays out the number of members your program will have; the process, structure, and format of the outreach/selection process; and the timeline to complete the entire process.

Why do you need a member recruitment and enrollment plan?
The plan helps focus your attention in selecting and enrolling people who are very well-suited for your program's needs and structure. Great corps members selected with care and consideration are more likely to remain through their term of service, have a powerful service experience, receive the benefits of national service, and contribute to the community in an excellent way.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Create a member position description including the exact qualifications, skills, duties, and responsibilities for the term of service.
	✓ Review the Member Recruitment Plan that you created in the Member Development and Support section to ensure your recruitment goals are on target.

SUGGESTED	✓ Prepare every staff member with a recruitment packet. Encourage staff to be constant and roving recruiters. Everyone in your organization should be able to succinctly say what your organization does, how it has been successful, and what members will do to serve their community.
	✓ Take into consideration the demographics of the community you serve. How will those demographics be represented in your group of corps members?
	✓ Cast your recruitment net wide.
	✓ Research traditional and nontraditional recruitment sources. Be mindful of where you recruit. Not every recruitment vehicle will provide you the best source of member applicants for your program.
	✓ Consider the needs or motivations of potential members. Is your organization prepared to support those needs?
	✓ Consult with your partner organizations and/or stakeholders throughout the process.

<u>Additional Questions</u>

Should I recruit more corps members than are in my grant to account for attrition or no-shows? *Yes. You can recruit extra members,* **but** *do not enroll more than your approved number of MSYs.*

Where can I get recruitment materials in alternative formats (i.e., language, visual impairments, etc.)*? Ask your service partners and organizations. They might have the capacity to translate materials. Also, contact CNCS for AmeriCorps materials in alternative formats.*

Tools for Success

Example: Non-traditional Recruitment Sources	
• *Fraternities and sororities* • *Religious institutions* • *Community celebrations* • *Musical events* • *Ethnic festivals* • *Community businesses*	• *Small businesses* • *Recreation centers* • *Sporting events* • *Civic organizations (Elks, Masons, Eastern Stars, Junior League, Jaycees)* • *Education and technical institutes*

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

What is a public relations plan?
Public relations is a process of is positively presenting your organization and its programs to the local community. You use PR to inform the community of your outcomes, impact, and new initiatives. A PR plan is an annual plan that outlines how you will engage the community and the media to be informed of important activities and events.

Why do you need a public relations plan?
Quite simply, your plan is one of the main ways that you will keep the community informed of the great things that corps members and the program are doing. By effectively using the media, you increase your organization's visibility. Why is visibility important? Because it can improve your program's sustainability, fundraising capability, and recruitment capacity.

How do you do it?

SUGGESTED	✓ Secure a copy of *A Guide to Working with the Media* by contacting the Office of External Affairs at CNCS.
	✓ Develop a media plan. See below.
	✓ Develop a media list. For each television, newspaper (traditional and alternative), magazine, newsletter, or other media outlet, your list should include the name, title, address, email address, phone number, and fax number of key reporters and editors. Many newspapers have beat reporters who cover certain topics such as education, crime, health, etc.
	✓ Create a press kit about important events at your program. Press kits may include a press release, media advisory, picture(s), your logo, and organizational history. Tailor your press kits to appeal and be accessible to the audiences you are trying to reach. For example, if a sizeable portion of your population does not read or speak English, then translate your media pieces into their first language.
	✓ Conduct media and community outreach training for staff. Everyone should be able to enthusiastically speak about the mission, facts, and services your program provides with the general public. You may choose to designate an official public spokesperson for the media.
	✓ Consider including a member of the media on your Community Advisory Board.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
Are there any restrictions on corps members giving interviews to the media? *Yes. Keep in mind the prohibited activities that govern the AmeriCorps member behavior while serving. This does not restrict the rights of a private citizen. However when wearing the AmeriCorps uniform or identification, or during service hours, members must abide by the grant provisions. During the orientation, programs should prepare AmeriCorps members to serve as ambassadors for service by having them practice and understand the program message and AmeriCorps public talking points.*

Where can I go to get help in developing a media plan? *Three places. First, contact the CNCS Office of External Affairs. They can provide guidance, feedback, and resources. The second place can be a local public relations firm. Consider building a relationship with a firm that could offer pro bono (or no-fee) services. Finally, contact your parent organization if you are a subgrantee or a partnering organization that has an in-house media department.*

What procedure should I follow that would allow a media photographer to take and publish photos of children and members from our after school program? *At the beginning of the program, each child and member should have a signed permission slip granting your program the right to use the child's or member's name and image in media events.*

Tools for Success

Example: Media Hot Tips

- Don't say "off the record." Everything is on the record!
- Make sure everything you say is something you would feel comfortable having printed on the front page of the daily newspaper.
- Be persuasive! Remember a typical urban media outlet has hundreds of potential stories to cover each day. Make your story stand out.
- Don’t expect your event to be covered because you faxed or emailed the press release. You MUST call to confirm receipt and to make a personal connection with a reporter or news editor. Develop a cordial and on-going relationship with your local media people.
- Think about the visuals. Always position cameras so organization logos or the event itself becomes part of the visual. Be sure to include the AmeriCorps logo.

EXAMPLE: PARTNER AGREEMENT DOCUMENT

Greater Holyoke Youth Service Corps
Partner Agreement Form 2002-2003

Mission Statement: It is the mission of the Greater Holyoke Youth Service Corps to enable youth to become leaders and role models in the community by enhancing their educational and professional skills.

This form will serve as the partnership agreement between the Greater Holyoke Youth Service Corps and <Name of Partner Organization>.

Organization Name: ____

Address: ____

Contact Name: ____

Phone: __________________________ Fax: __________________________

Project Site Address (if different from Organization Address):

____

____

GHYSC Schedule

The Greater Holyoke Youth Service Corps AmeriCorps members typically serve Monday-Friday 9:30-5:30.

Please determine the length and specifics of time you would like AmeriCorps members to serve with your program.

Length of Project		
______ short-term (less than 1 week)	______ long-term (several weeks)	______ ongoing (several months)

Number of Days	Number of Hours
_____________________ days per week _____________________ specific days (optional)	____________________ hours per day ____________________ specific hours (optional)

Partner Organization Responsibilities

- To provide corps members with adequate training, space, and supervision to ensure safe and effective service of the member.
- To provide corps members and GHYSC staff with orientation to the project, goals, rules, and organization staff that will have direct contact with corps members.
- To complete evaluations of corps members and GHYSC staff to ensure the service we provide to the community is needed and worthwhile to all those involved.
- To accomplish any goals set forth in the Partner Proposal Form.

Please add any responsibilities that are specific to the Project Site and staff:

____

____

____

Corps members are prohibited by the Federal Government from engaging in the following activities: ***Check your current-year AmeriCorps grant provisions to determine if any of the activities below are restricted only while serving in AmeriCorps.***

- Influencing legislation
- Engaging in partisan or election politics
- Organizing protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes
- Assisting or deterring union organizing
- Participating in assignments that displace employees
- Impairing existing contracts or collective bargaining agreements
- Engaging in religious activities during service hours
- Engaging in activities that pose a significant safety risk to participants
- Providing assistance to for-profit entities
- Participating in fundraising activities

GHYSC Responsibilities

- To recruit, CORI check, and provide general skills training before member placement at sites.
- To provide regular, on-going training for members to develop their skills toward better service and to promote their educational and professional skills (as mentioned above most training occurs on Wednesday mornings).
- To provide regular supervision and transportation of members. Members are supervised by the Corps Leader (transportation and informal visits to site) and the Community Outreach Coordinator (scheduling and__________). Any problems, issues, and changes can be directed to either the Corps Leader or Community Outreach Coordinator.
- To provide project calendars to the project sites, notifying partners of Member Development Activities and scheduled days off or any other dates when members will be unable to serve.
- To accomplish service outcomes outlined in the Partner Proposal Form and use performance measures to track progress.

- To resolve any issues dealing with members or scheduling in a timely and consistent manner.

Authorization

By signing both parties agree to meet the above responsibilities as part of the Partner Agreement Form.

By signing both parties agree and understand the terms and conditions of this agreement.

______________________________	______________________________
Signature of Community Outreach Coordinator	Signature of Partner Organization Representative
______________________________	______________________________
Date	Date

EXAMPLE: PRE-SERVICE TRAINING EVALUATION

Pre-service Training Evaluation
ABC After-school Program
January 30 - February 1, 2003

***WORKSHOP NAME*______________________________** ***DATE*_________________**
Presenter ______________________________________

SCORING: 1–NEEDS IMPROVEMENT 2-FAIR 3-GOOD 4-EXCELLENT 5-OUTSTANDING

	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, the workshop was effective in providing relevant information.					
The subject matter was presented in a clear, understandable manner.					
The trainer was well prepared and knowledgeable.					
The trainer effectively listened and responded to questions and concerns.					
The written materials were useful and easy to understand.					
The workshop topic was of great interest to me.					
The workshop met my expectations.					
What part of the workshop was the most useful to you?					
What was the least useful part of the workshop?					
What would you improve about the session?					

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: PREPARING FOR A MEDIA INTERVIEW

Giving an interview to the press can be intimidating for people not familiar with the process.

For all interviews

- Analyze the potential audience.
- Think through what you want to accomplish as a result of the interview.
- Be honest, enthusiastic, and open.
- Don't use jargon or acronyms.
- Try to get your major message out as quickly as possible.

TV and radio interviews

- Look at the interviewer and have a conversation with him/her.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. Don't make something up.
- Use anecdotes where possible; tell about how life was changed for a volunteer or a client.

For the press

- Frequently reporters take notes and can't write as fast as most people talk; so it's best to make simple, powerful statements rather than to ramble on. This way you can avoid being misquoted.

Articulating your program impacts for the media

- Need + Service Activity + Accomplishment = Outcomes. Use powerful words and strong verbs: initiated, inaugurated, and established.
- Speak in terms of results: what situation was changed, whose life was improved?
- Use measurable terms: percentage of improvement, numbers of people affected positively.

(Adapted from Epicenter – Effective Practices Information Center)

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: DEVELOP A MEDIA PLAN

Drafting a sound media plan each year will help you prepare for media attention, while conducting proactive media outreach. The plan should address three basic questions:

- **What are your public relations goals?** Determining your goals will enable you to focus your efforts and stay on track.
  - Who are your audiences?
  - Are you trying to recruit new AmeriCorps members?
  - Are you trying to increase awareness of your program?
  - Are you trying to build private support for your program?
- **What are your resources?** Determining the resources you have available for media efforts will help you set realistic goals.
  - What materials and tools do you already have that will help you carry out a successful media strategy?
  - What staff are available to help you carry out your media plan?
  - How much time can staff devote to media-related activities?
  - What is your estimated budget for media relations?
  - Can your partner organizations provide assistance or resources?
- **What is your timeline?** Determining your time, opportunities, and limitations will enable you to organize and prioritize media plans.
  - Are there specific projects you'll be working on at a certain time that you'd like to promote?
  - Your timeline should include a plan for participating in events that all national service programs take part in — such as Opening Day, Make a Difference Day, Martin Luther King Day, National Volunteer Week, and graduation/closing ceremonies.

(Adapted from A Guide to Working with the Media)

0 – 3 Months Community and Site Partnerships Introduction

During the pre-award stage of community and site partnerships, you worked to begin identifying and linking with local community organizations. Your goal was to develop relationships with organizations that could serve as service sites or complement your AmeriCorps program in other ways.

By now you should be well on your way to developing solid partnerships. You and your partners will be in the process of finalizing the Memorandum of Understanding.

In this section, you will be focused on creating and implementing Site Supervisor orientations for all your site partners. Most likely you will have more than one partner, so you will also learn about managing multiple sites to achieve maximum effectiveness.

0 – 3 Months Success Checklist

✓	***COMMUNITY AND SITE PARTNERSHIPS***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Develop a site supervisor orientation.		
	Review information on Managing Multi-site Partnerships and incorporate the ideas and suggestions as appropriate into your program and staff management.		

DEVELOP A SITE SUPERVISOR ORIENTATION

What is a site supervisor orientation?
A site supervisor orientation accomplishes several essential tasks. First, it introduces the philosophy and universe of national service. Second, the orientation familiarizes participants with the AmeriCorps terms and conditions. Third, it establishes shared administrative priorities. Finally, the supervisor orientation clarifies roles and responsibilities. The orientation is a huge step toward building a strong program, establishing close relationships among supervisors, sharing effective supervisory practices, and helping site supervisors feel invested in the AmeriCorps program.

Why do you need a site supervisor orientation?
Site supervisors are responsible for guiding and developing AmeriCorps members, ensuring the day-to-day service activities are executed, and satisfying administrative requirements. It is impossible to do this effectively without an orientation—an overview and understanding of the AmeriCorps service landscape plus the tools they need to operate the program successfully.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Assess whether the new site supervisors need basic supervisory or leadership skills training in addition to an AmeriCorps-specific overview and information.
	✓ Create an interactive and effective orientation based on the above assessment and on requirements of the AmeriCorps program. Use the Orientation Outline for AmeriCorps Site Supervisors to guide the development of your orientation. Prepare well. Don't skimp on information.
	✓ Hold the orientation prior to the start of the program year so site supervisors can help prepare their organization to put into place needed systems and structures.
	✓ Take advantage of the expertise of the site supervisors. Capitalize on the skills and resources they possess and consider using experienced site supervisors to facilitate aspects of the orientation.
	✓ Establish a plan for ongoing support, including requirements, regular meetings, deadlines, and responsibilities that site supervisors need to respond to. Present and discuss the support plan during the orientation. The Site Supervisor Ongoing Support tool can give you ideas of things to include.

Additional Questions
Where should we conduct a site supervisor orientation? *The least costly option is to have the orientation on-site at your organization or at one of the partnering organization's offices. If you have a large number of site supervisors, you might want to hold the orientation at an off-site location such as a retreat center or civic hall. If you decide to do the orientation off-site, make sure you have funds in your budget to cover the facility and materials costs.*

What happens after the site supervisor orientation? *Definitely make sure there is an ongoing support initiative. As the AmeriCorps program is implemented, your service site partners and site supervisors will have many questions and challenges. They will need opportunities for* *collaborative problem-solving and other types of assistance.*

MANAGING MULTI-SITE PARTNERSHIPS

What is a multi-site partnership?
Simply put, when your organization is working with one or more partner organizations where corps members are placed, you have multi-site partnerships. Multi-site partnerships can be difficult if organizations are geographically distant from one another or if there are a large number of partnering organizations in a local area.

Why do you need know about managing multi-site partnerships?
When you have multi-site partnerships, you are working in a programming situation that is relatively complex in terms of oversight, shared supervision, communication, and accountability. There are many places for breakdowns in both systems and support mechanisms, and too many breakdowns will jeopardize the program's effectiveness. To create a strong partnership network, you need tailored site supervisor orientation, policy training, national or regional corps member trainings, consistent and frequent communication, and regular site visits. Together, these components strengthen the program and foster success.

How do you do it?

SUGGESTED	✓ Conduct a strong site supervisor orientation program.
	✓ Develop an ongoing evaluation/continuous improvement instrument to determine the usefulness of field-generated effective practices.
	✓ Implement strategies and protocols for consistent communication and stick to them.
	✓ Implement strategies for Working Effectively with Multiple Sites.
	✓ Determine ways all personnel can meet at a single location for beginning, mid-year and end-of-year activities. Make sure you include funding for these meetings in your budget.
	✓ Conduct quarterly formal site visits and informal site visits as needed.
	✓ Conduct periodic training and team-building activities for site supervisors.

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: ORIENTATION OUTLINE FOR AMERICORPS SITE SUPERVISORS

[Note: This outline does not include the leadership training aspects of the site supervisor orientation. If your supervisors are new to the task of guiding and managing AmeriCorps members, then you will need to provide them with training to develop these skills.]

Program Overview: *Present the big picture of national service and your organization and ensure that each site understands its place in your organizational structure*.

- National service overview: national service history, AmeriCorps, Corporation for National and Community Service.
- Streams of service: Show the Corporation for National and Community Service's organizational chart. Explain the different streams of service and programs under the CNCS umbrella, with an emphasis on the organizational structure in your state. Explain where service program paths might cross and the role of the State Service Commission versus the CNCS State Office.
- Describe the history and mission of the sponsor organization and its connection to national service.

AmeriCorps Grant Terms and Conditions: *Review the basic terms and conditions of AmeriCorps service.*

Administrative Review: *Review the program and fiscal information needed to run a successful program.*

- CNCS grant application: Remind site supervisors that the Performance Measurement Worksheets are working documents and should be used to orient and guide new members.
- Financial agreements: Provide clarity on travel and training reimbursement processes and cost-share agreements, if applicable; review the terms, conditions and process for the stipend and education award; provide a schedule for pay periods; and explain who to call with questions on the living allowance.
- Reporting expectations and paperwork.
- Timeline/annual calendar: Explain which training, service projects, and team meetings are required and which are optional.

Roles/Responsibilities: *Review the different roles and responsibilities carried out by CNCS staff, program staff, site supervisors, and corps members.*

Recruitment: *If you will be coordinating member recruitment and placement, make sure that site supervisors are clear on the process and timeline, including a review of relevant deadlines and enrollment paperwork. If site supervisors have recruitment responsibilities, make sure relevant information is discussed.*

Adapted from Guccione, Lisa. "The Key to Supervisory Success," The Resource Connection. National Service Resource Center. vol. 5, no. 2. 2001.

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: SITE SUPERVISOR ONGOING SUPPORT

Ongoing Management

- The regular exchange of information should be a hallmark of your working relationship with your site supervisors.
- Both you and the site supervisors will get most of your information about the progress of your AmeriCorps program from the members themselves, through written and informal exchanges.
- While information from members is valuable, you will need more than that to manage your program effectively.

Site Visits

- Establish a schedule for regular site visits, the initial one within the first month of the program. Plan to hold at least two others, one at the midpoint of the service year and then a final one near the end of the program.
- During site visits, look for program achievements as well as challenges.

One-on-one and Group Meetings

- Set aside a regular time each month or quarter to meet with your site supervisors privately to exchange feedback on the status of the program. Use time during your site visit if necessary.
- If you have multiple sites, plan group meetings that bring together all of your site supervisors in order to develop the sense of community and exchange that you established during their orientation.

Resources for Site Supervisors

- It is important to give your site supervisors a sense of being a part of the mission of your AmeriCorps program and the larger national service network even though they may be working at different agencies and sites.
- In addition to group site supervisor meetings, make sure that site supervisors receive publications and information about AmeriCorps such as newsletters, upcoming trainings, and invitations to local or regional AmeriCorps events.

Adapted from the Catholic Network of Volunteer Service website ***Site Supervisor Orientation*** *www.cnvs.org/am-tr3e1.htm*

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH MULTIPLE SITES

The following ideas were shared during a workshop on multi-site management during the 2001 National Conference on National Service and Community Volunteering.

Working with site supervisors

- Provide technical assistance to potential site sponsors prior to them applying to the program so they understand the requirements for being a site.
- Decide which sites to place members based on a pre-determined set of criteria.
- Document the expectations of site supervisors and have each sign an agreement stating they understand what is expected of them.
- Conduct three days of orientation with site supervisors. Produce a site supervisors' manual that includes AmeriCorps prohibited activities.
- Focus on a few performance measures for the site and make sure everyone -- site supervisors and members -- knows what the desired outcomes are and that the program is on track to accomplish those.
- To create buy in, get site supervisors directly involved with the program.
- Encourage members to talk with staff at their site about the national service program and its performance measures.
- Encourage communication between and among sites.
- Keep communication clear and direct. Provide information through newsletters, conference calls, and the Internet.

Team-building and communicating with members

- More corps members at fewer sites works best. Place five to eight members at each site so members do not feel too isolated.
- Maintain a separate phone line for AmeriCorps members to contact you.
- Maintain a website for members to access updated information about the program such as meeting dates, reminders, forms, etc.

0 – 3 Months Member Development and Support Introduction

You are well on your way in the process of identifying and implementing the systems necessary to operate your program. A significant component of your program will be the AmeriCorps members you recruit and train to serve your local community.

Recruiting great AmeriCorps members whose personal values reflect the ethic of service can make the difference between a strong, productive service to the community and a program struggling with the challenges of attrition and ineffective service. This section and the ones to follow on Member Development and Support will guide you in recruiting and training a strong corps.

0 – 3 Months Success Checklist

✓	*MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT*	Scheduled	Completed
	Develop a member contract/service agreement.		
	Implement member interview and selection process.		
	Work with Human Resources to enroll new corps members.		
	Work with Human Resources to identify member benefits.		
	Implement a member file checklist.		

MEMBER INTERVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

What is the member interview and selection process?
This is a criteria-based process that includes standard questions, scoring rubrics, and organizational collaboration to select AmeriCorps members. In many ways, corps members are community ambassadors as well as community service providers. Therefore, it is imperative to establish a process to select members with attributes and characteristics that fit well with your organization and/or the service site.

Why do you need a member interview and selection process?
You need a roadmap to guide you to the best candidates for your program. The process of interviewing candidates and selecting members requires considerable time and focus. To ensure objectivity and thoughtful decisions, you will need to involve at least two staff plus the service site partners who will sponsor members.

How do you do it?

SUGGESTED	✓ Decide what interviewing techniques/mechanisms the interview and selection committee wants to use. The Planning Your Recruitment Process worksheet can provide ideas on conducting interviews (e.g., will interviews be conducted one-on-one, small group, large group, service activity?).
	✓ Decide how your service site partners, Community Advisory Group members, and community stakeholders will be involved in the process.
	✓ Train all interviewers in how to use the interview tools, document responses, and score candidates.
	✓ Recruit for quality not quantity.

Member Enrollment

What is the member enrollment process?
Getting members into your program is a basic three-step process. The first two steps, recruitment and selection, were discussed earlier. The final step is the enrollment process. At this point in your program development, you have received your AmeriCorps grant award and identified good candidates for the AmeriCorps member positions in your program. Now you need to make them official members of your program.

Why do you need a member enrollment process?
Whether you have five or 55 potential AmeriCorps members, you need a careful and detailed process to set up their member files, complete all their paperwork, and enroll them in the eGrants/My AmeriCorps Member Portal system.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Review the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions section on recruiting, selecting, and enrolling members.
	✓ Review relevant information regarding Team Leaders in the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions.
	✓ Decide whether the program will have a probationary period and establish a written policy. This probationary period can be up to 30 days (members must be entered into the Member Portal within 30 days). If a candidate is entered into the Portal immediately and drops from the program, your member attrition rate will be high and this will not reflect well on your organization.
	✓ An enrollment policy should include a clause about the payment of the AmeriCorps living stipend, if you will provide one to your members. An organization's option is to pay the stipend out of its own budget or to pay no stipend at all until the candidate has completed the probationary period. This policy must be clearly communicated to the candidate.
	✓ Verify a candidate's eligibility to be in the program prior to enrollment. See the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions for more information on member eligibility.
	✓ Include a Member File Checklist in each member's file. All requirements must be accurate and up-to-date. Check all member files and documentation carefully for accuracy, proper signature, and appropriate and complete data.
	✓ All member documentation is confidential and must be kept in a locked area.
	✓ Review with prospective members their personal issues or needs related to health care, child care enrollment, and student loan forbearance.
	✓ Complete all steps as required in the National Service Criminal History Checks guidance.

MEMBER CONTRACT

What is a member contract?
It is the comprehensive, official document that specifies the obligations and responsibilities of the AmeriCorps member. The member contract states the minimal qualifications, position description, length of service, number of hours for successful completion, requirements, expectations, benefits, grievance procedures, member rights and responsibilities, and other organizational policies.

Why do we need a member contract?
The member contract ensures that the member and the organization have a clear set of expectations and remedies if expectations are not fulfilled.

HOW DO YOU DO IT?

REQUIRED	✓ Review the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions to fully understand the obligations inherent in hosting and supervising members. The provisions also provide a list of required components of the member contract/service agreement.
	✓ Review your organization's policies and procedures and incorporate into the AmeriCorps Member Contract as appropriate.
	✓ Walk prospective corps members through the contract to ensure each member has a full understanding of their rights, responsibilities, and program requirements.
	✓ AmeriCorps prohibited activities outlined in the grant provisions must be included in the contract and reviewed during orientation.
	✓ Include a grievance procedure in the contract. Again, review this carefully with your prospective members.
	✓ All member documentation is confidential and must be kept in a locked area.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
Can team leaders discipline corps members? *No. Team leaders provide guidance and direction. The AmeriCorps Program Supervisor is the appropriate person to address any issues related to a corps member's violation of the prohibited activities, program code of conduct, or inappropriate behavior.*

What are the "must include" items to put in the member contract? *The grant provisions include a list of specific items that are to be included in the member contract. The following are some critical elements: The minimum number of service hours and other requirements (as developed by the Program) necessary to successfully complete the term of service and to be eligible for the education award; description of acceptable conduct; prohibited activities; requirements under the Drug-Free Workplace Act (41 U.S.C. 701 et seq.); suspension and termination rules; specific circumstances under which a member may be released for cause; position description; and grievance procedures. The contract may also include other program specific requirements as appropriate.*

MEMBER BENEFITS

What are member benefits?
Once corps members are enrolled into your program they become eligible for a number of benefits including training, a living allowance, health care coverage, accidental insurance, child care benefits, uniforms, and an educational award.

Why do member benefits matter?
Benefits support members during their service year. Most members do not have other means to secure these basic supports while serving in an AmeriCorps program; unless the benefits are provided, they would not be in a position to consider joining.

How do we do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Review the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions section on the benefits that members may receive.
	✓ Ensure that AmeriCorps members are properly enrolled in the Member Portal to receive the living allowance and education award.
	✓ Determine if members need and are eligible for child care and/or health care coverage.
	✓ Determine if members have student loans that need to enter into loan forbearance (where loan payments are suspended for a specific time period).
	✓ Implement an effective Life after AmeriCorps program.
	✓ Implement ongoing training and development activities.

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: PLANNING YOUR RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Recruitment is not a magical process of having people sign up, but is one of the most critical aspects of operating your program. Recruitment should be a strategic process that connects you to candidates who need what you have to offer and who possess the skills and aptitude to help you reach your results. The success of your recruitment process will have direct effects on several areas, including morale, motivation, respect, retention, quality of service projects, relationships with service partners and community members, funding, and your ability to focus on the program rather than spend the majority of your time addressing problems. The following ideas may be helpful to use in recruitment strategies.

Interviewing potential members

- Conduct **group interviews** of 10-15 candidates. Include members in this process and have a plan to discuss common situations and challenges.
- Use **behavioral interviewing** techniques. Prepare questions that cannot be practiced by the candidate the night before. For example, "This position requires a tremendous amount of patience and effective communication skills working with diverse populations. Tell me about a situation when you were successful in communicating and how it worked out. Tell me about a time where you needed to be patient and communicate and you were not successful. What happened?"
- Use **scenario interviewing**. People have learned in the past how to complete applications, resumes, interview, and provide references. Scenario interviews will help you get a sense for how prospective members would respond to some of the common challenges encountered in the service activities in your program. These scenarios may even be conducted as an informal role-play during the interview.
- Check references very carefully.
- Trust your judgment. If you have an uncomfortable feeling about an applicant, you might be right. What you see is what you get. Don't delude yourself into thinking that you will change them after the service term starts.
- Consider having partners and/or site supervisors sit in on the interviews.
- Connect with and/or visit a program with strong leadership and high-quality members. Find out what they think they did well and what they would do differently.
- Create an interview and selection process that includes multiple steps so that you have several opportunities to observe and interact with the candidates. For example, candidates come for an interview, visit a morning opening session, submit an application, take a test, meet with a member's council, etc.
- Invite more applicants to the orientation than you have slots. Some will not be interested.

Serving, ongoing screening, and orientation

- Establish some type of probation period.
- Develop an adequate orientation process. This should not be rushed. Invest time to build a functioning team of members who interact well with one another.
- Give all members a fair dose of what a typical program year will look like so that they can make an educated choice.

*Adapted from **Elements of a Successful Recruitment Process**, by Emilio N. Williams, formerly of the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (NASCC)*

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: MEMBER FILE CHECKLIST

	Yes	No	N/A	Comments/Documentation
1. Member application (signed)				
2. Member enrollment form				
3. Documentation of Eligibility • Age • Citizenship Status • High School Diploma/GED (see certification)				
4. Parental consent (*if member is under 18*)				
5. Evidence of providing GED opportunity				
6. Signed Member contract • Position description • Grievance Procedure • Term of Service • Performance Standards • Standards of Conduct • Other Program Requirements				
7. Documentation of criminal background check				
8. Time and activity logs, signed by member and supervisor.				
9. Documentation of health care enrollment				
10. Documentation of child care enrollment				
11. Tax Documents: W4 (beginning of year); W2 (end of year)				
12. Loan Forbearance Request form				
13. Publicity release from (signed by parent if under 18)				
14. Mid-term performance review				
15. End of term performance review				
16. Documentation of Compelling Circumstances				
17. Change of Status Form				
18. End of Term/Exit Form				

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: AMERICORPS CONTRACT

I. **PURPOSE**

It is the purpose of this agreement to delineate the terms, conditions, and rules of membership regarding the participation of __________________________________ (hereinafter referred to as the "member") in the ____________________________________ AmeriCorps Program (hereinafter referred to as the "Program").

II. **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

The member certifies that he/she is a United States citizen, a United States national, or a lawful permanent resident alien and at least 17 years of age (or at least 16 years of age if the member is an out-of-school youth and a participant in one of two types of youth corps defined under the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended).

III. **TERMS OF SERVICE**

A. The member's term of service begins on ____ and ends on ____. The program and the member may agree, in writing, to extend this term of service for the following reasons:

1. The member's service has been suspended due to compelling personal circumstances.
2. The member's service has been terminated, but a grievance procedure has resulted in reinstatement.

B. The member will complete a minimum of 1,700* hours (900 hours for part-time) of service during this period ***[*Or the exact number of hours your program requires -- must be at least 1,700 for full-time].***

C. The member understands that to successfully complete the term of service (as defined by the program and consistent with regulations of the Corporation for National Service) and to be eligible for the education award, he/she must complete at least 1,700 (900) hours of service and satisfactorily complete pre-service training and the appropriate education/training that relates to the member's ability to perform service ***[You should customize this section to note any specific training requirements or other service requirements of your program. E.g., CPR, first aid, mediation and conflict resolutions skills and service-learning activities].***

D. The member understands that to be eligible to serve a second term of service the member must receive satisfactory performance reviews for any previous term of service. The member's eligibility for a second term of service with this program will be based on at least a mid-term and end-of-term evaluation of the member's performance focusing on factors such as whether the member has:
1. Completed the required number of hours;
2. Satisfactorily completed assignments, tasks, or projects; and
3. Met any other criteria that were clearly communicated both orally and in writing at the beginning of the term of service.

E. The member understands, however, that the mere eligibility for an additional term of service does not guarantee selection or placement.

IV. POSITION DESCRIPTION

[In this section, the program should include the position description for the individual member to whom the contract applies. The position description should specify the types of duties, service activities, and assignments the member will be expected to complete.]

The name of the member's direct supervisor is ____.

V. BENEFITS

A. The member will receive from the program the following benefits:

1. A living allowance in the amount of $________________.
2. The living allowance is taxable, and taxes will be deducted directly from the living allowance.
3. The living allowance will be distributed ***[weekly/biweekly]*** by ***[direct deposit] [check]*** starting on _____[date]_____________________. The biweekly amount will be ___________.

2. ***[Health benefits (if the member is eligible). The health insurance policy is attached.]***

3. If applicable, a child care allowance of ________________ will be provided by the National Association of Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) directly to the provider, if the member qualifies for the allowance. (NACCRRA will distribute this allowance evenly over the term of service on a bi-weekly).

B. Upon successful completion of the member's term of service, the member will receive an education award from the National Service Trust. For successful completion of a full-time term, the member will receive an education award in the amount of $4,725. For successful completion of a part-time term, the member will receive an education award of ***[up to $2362.50—edit the amount per your current AmeriCorps grant guidance.]***

1. If the member has not yet received a high school diploma or its equivalent (including an alternative diploma or certificate for individuals with learning disabilities), the member agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent before using the education award. This requirement can be waived if the member is enrolled in an institution of higher education on an ability to benefit basis or the program has waived this requirement due to the results of the member's education assessment.

2. The member understands that his or her failure to disclose to the program any history of having been released for cause from another AmeriCorps program will render him or her ineligible to receive the education award.

C. If the member has received forbearance on a qualified student loan during the term of service, the National Service Trust will repay a portion or all of the interest that accrued on the loan during the term of service.

VI. RULES OF CONDUCT

A. At no time may the member:

1. Engage in any activity that is illegal under local, state, or federal law.
2. Engage in activities that pose a significant safety risk to others.
3. Engage in any AmeriCorps prohibited activities that include:
    - any activity involving attempting to influence legislation or an election or aid a partisan political organization;
    - helping or hindering union activity;
    - engaging in religious instruction;
    - conducting worship services;
    - providing instruction as part of a Program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship;
    - constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship;
    - maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship;
    - engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
    - organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
    - impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
    - participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political candidates, political platforms, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
    - or providing a direct benefit to a for-profit entity, a labor union, a partisan political organization, a religious organization, or a non-profit that engages in lobbying.

B. The member is expected to, at all times while acting in an official capacity as an AmeriCorps member:

[NOTE: The following are given as examples only. You should customize this section to include all relevant requirements for your program.]

1. Demonstrate mutual respect towards others.
2. Follow directions.
3. Direct concerns, problems, and suggestions to [*designate the appropriate program official here*].

C. The member understands that the following acts also constitute a violation of the program's rules of conduct:

[NOTE: The following are given as examples only. You should customize this section to include all relevant requirements for your program.]

1. Unauthorized tardiness.
2. Unauthorized absences.
3. Repeated use of inappropriate language (e.g., profanity) at a service site.
4. Failure to wear appropriate clothing to service assignments.
5. Stealing or lying.
6. **Engaging in any activity that may physically or emotionally damage other members of the program or people in the community.
7. **Unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of any controlled substance or illegal drugs during the term of service.
8. **Consuming alcoholic beverages during the performance of service activities.

9. **Being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs during the performance of service activities.
10. **Failing to notify the program of any criminal arrest or conviction that occurs during the term of service.

[***Your program may want to have these violations result in immediate termination or something more severe than having them remedied through the progressive disciplinary system described below. If so, you will need to move them out this section and add them to the subsection VII(B)(4) below.]***

E. Under the Drug-Free Workplace Act, you must immediately notify the AmeriCorps Program Director if you are convicted under any criminal drug statute. Your participation in the program is conditioned upon compliance with this notice requirement and we will take action for violation of this.

F. In general, for violating the above stated rules in section VI(C), the program will do the following (except in cases where during the term of service the member has been charged with or convicted of a violent felony, possession, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance):

1. For the member's first offense, an appropriate program official will issue a verbal warning to the member.

2. For the member's second offense, an appropriate program official will issue a written warning and reprimand the member.

3. For the member's third offense, the member may be suspended for one day or more without compensation and will not receive credit for any service hours missed.

3. For the fourth offense, the program may release the member for cause.

F. The member understands that he/she will be either suspended or released for cause in accordance with paragraphs (B), (D), and (E) of section VII of this agreement for committing certain acts during the term of service including, but not limited to, being convicted or charged with a violent felony, possession, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance.

VII. RELEASE FROM TERMS OF SERVICE

A. The member understands that he/she may be released for the following two reasons:
1. For cause, as explained in paragraph (B) of this section; or
2. For compelling personal circumstances as defined in paragraph (C) of this section.

B. The program will release the member for cause for the following reasons:
1. The member has dropped out of the program without obtaining a release for compelling personal circumstances from the appropriate program official;
2. During the term of service the member has been convicted of a violent felony or the sale or distribution of a controlled substance;
3. The member has committed a fourth offense in accordance with paragraph (E) of section VI of this agreement;
4. The member has committed any of the offenses listed in ***[Your program may want to add the **violations in section VI(C) 6-10 here or any others you deem appropriate]***; or
4. Any other serious breach that in the judgment of the director of the program would undermine the effectiveness of the program.

C. The program may release the member from the term of service for compelling personal circumstances if the member demonstrates that:

1. The member has a disability or serious illness that makes completing the term impossible;
2. There is a serious injury, illness, or death of a family member which makes completing the term unreasonably difficult or impossible for the member;
3. The member has military service obligations;
4. The member has accepted an opportunity to make the transition from welfare to work; or
5. Some other unforeseeable circumstance beyond the member's control makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for the member to complete the term of service, such as a natural disaster, a strike, relocation of a spouse, or the nonrenewal or premature closing of a project or the program.

D. Compelling personal circumstances <u>do not include</u> leaving the program:

1. To enroll in school;
2. To obtain employment, other than in moving from welfare to work; or
3. Because of dissatisfaction with the program.

E. The program may suspend the member's term of service for the following reasons:

1. During the term of service the member has been charged with a violent felony or the sale or distribution of a controlled substance. (If the member is found not guilty or the charge is dismissed, the member may resume his/her term of service. The member, however, will not receive back living allowances or credit for any service hours missed.)

2. During the term of service the member has been convicted of a first offense of possession of a controlled substance. (If, however, the member demonstrates that he/she has enrolled in an approved drug rehabilitation program, the member may resume his/her term of service. The member will not receive back living allowances or credit for any service hours missed.)

F. The program may suspend the member's term of service for violating the rule of conduct provisions in accordance with the rules set forth in paragraph (C) of section VI of this agreement.

G. If the member discontinues his/her term of service for any reason other than a release for compelling personal circumstances as described in paragraph (B), (D), and (E), the member will cease to receive the benefits described in paragraph (A) of section V and will receive no portion of the education award or interest payments.

H. If the member discontinues his/her term of service due to compelling personal circumstances as described in paragraph (C) of section VII of this agreement, the member will cease to receive benefits described in paragraphs (B) and (C) of section V.

VIII. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

A. The member understands that the program has a grievance procedure to resolve disputes concerning the member's suspension, dismissal, service evaluation, or proposed service assignment.

B. The member understands that, as a participant of the program, he/she may file a grievance in accordance with the program's grievance procedure. ***[Incorporate your grievance procedure into the body of this section.]***

IX. AMENDMENTS TO THIS AGREEMENT

This agreement may be changed or revised only by written consent by both parties.

X. AUTHORIZATION

The member and program hereby acknowledge by their signatures that they have read, understand, and agree to all terms and conditions of this agreement. (If the member is under the age of 18 years old, the member's parent or legal guardian must also sign.)

AmeriCorps Member	AmeriCorps Program Director
______________________	______________________
Signature	***Signature***
______________________	______________________
Name	***Name***
______________________	
Parent/Legal Guardian	
______________________	______________________
Date	***Date***

0 – 3 Months Financial and Grants Management Introduction

You will be very busy with financial and grants management tasks your first three months of operations. For example, you and your staff will enter new AmeriCorps members into eGrants/Member Portal; receive, verify, and properly file all eligibility documentation for AmeriCorps members; complete necessary reports; and ensure that your program is meeting its cash match requirement. Use this section as a guide for these and other important first steps in the life of your program.

0 – 3 Months Success Checklist

✓	***Financial and Grants Management***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Review grant match requirements.		
	Review financial reporting requirements.		
	Implement a member attendance record.		
	Complete the PMS 272 for the Payment Management System.		

MONTHLY BUDGET REVIEW

What is the monthly budget review?
This is a review of the status of your actual expenditures against the funds available (i.e., how much money you have spent as compared to how much funding you have available). It is done on a monthly basis to make sure that there are sufficient funds available to meet stated goals and objectives. It is also a check on the match portion of the budget to make sure you are on track with fulfilling your match obligation

Why do you have to review the budget?
There are several reasons you want to periodically review the budget. First, you want to make sure that there are funds available before your organization incurs expenditures. Second, review expenditures to ensure that the correct expenses are charged to the account. Third, knowing where funds are spent can assist the executive director or program director to determine whether a budget modification is needed. Finally, the Office of Management and Budget Circulars require that an organization review the budget to actual expenditures.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Implement a system within your organization to obtain financial information on a regular basis.
	✓ Establish a detailed general ledger that accounts for individual expenditures by line item. Monitor expenditures monthly.
	✓ Establish appropriate account numbers so that both AmeriCorps federal funds and matching funds are reported separately in the accounting system.
	✓ Enter financial information into eGrants. Complete required financial reports in eGrants.
	✓ Mandate a financial reports schedule to receive financial information consistently each month.
	✓ Have a list of the budget amendment regulations from the grant provisions available when you are reviewing the actual expenses.
	✓ If you are a parent organization, you should establish a written budget amendment policy for your subgrantees. Ensure that subgrantees review their budgets and seek amendments when necessary.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
When do I need to submit a budget amendment? How do I do it? *If there is a budget variance greater than 10% of the total budget, you may require an amendment. The specific requirements are detailed in the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions.*

Are there specific budget amendment rules that I should know? *There are a few budget changes that require special approval from CNCS. Consult the grant provisions and federal regulations for specific guidance, and discuss any potential needs for budget amendments with your CNCS Program Officer. Grant amendments are also required for programmatic changes including: change in scope or goals and objectives, substantial changes in member supervision, and subgrants or contracts not included in the approved budget.*

MEETING GRANT MATCH REQUIREMENTS

What is a match requirement?
There are minimum cash or in-kind match requirements established by law and policy as a condition of receiving the AmeriCorps grant. In addition, the grant provisions require that the grantee provide and account for matching funds as agreed upon in the approved application and budget. The match must be documented and verified in the financial records. If you do not believe that you will reach required match level, work with your CNCS Grants Officer.

What form can the match be in?
The match can be either cash or in-kind contribution to your program. In-kind match is a non-cash donation of a good or service. In-kind donations have the same documentation requirements as other expenditures. Documentation must be kept to support the value placed on the items.

How do we do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Report the in-kind contribution in the financial system so it is included in financial reports.
	✓ Use the financial system to track match by creating expense and revenue accounts in the general ledger.
	✓ Maintain supporting documentation when placing a monetary value on in-kind donations. The donor provides this supporting documentation.
	✓ Grantees should check subgrantees financial reports to ensure that they are meeting match.

FINANCIAL REPORTING

What are the financial reporting requirements for my grant?
Grantees must submit Federal Financial Reports (FFRs) in eGrants as directed in the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions.

Why are these reports important?
The FFR provides the formal documentation of your expenditures of federal funds and your required match. If these reports are not accurate and completed on time, you will not be able to draw down funds until CNCS has received the information.

How do we do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Establish an appropriate chart of accounts that provides detailed information on both federal CNCS and grantee match expenditures.
	✓ Perform a monthly reconciliation of the account to ensure that the information is accurate and correct (this will save considerable time when the reports are due).
	✓ Mark the calendar a few weeks before the report is due as a reminder.
	✓ Reviewing financial information monthly to detect incorrect information, so reports can be submitted on time.
	✓ Establish a system to receive consistent information from your subgrantees (if applicable for your organization).
	✓ If you have subgrantees, give them an FFR due date that is at least a week before your aggregate report is due to ensure you have all the information you need.
	✓ Review your current year grant provisions for specific information on each financial report that is due.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
My subgrantee is not submitting its FFR information on time, and they say it is not ready. What do I do?
Organizations should take the best information available from their accounting system at the time the report is due to CNCS so they can meet the required submission deadline (i.e., don't turn your FFR in late just because a subgrantee is late). Small variances can be reported in subsequent periods.

MEMBER ENROLLMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

What are member enrollment responsibilities?
While program staff are busy recruiting, interviewing, and selecting prospective AmeriCorps members, your Human Resources Department and Fiscal Departments need to be prepared for the significant paperwork generated as individuals are brought on as members. It is essential to obtain accurate and complete documentation for prospective AmeriCorps members to ensure their eligibility to serve.

Why are member enrollment processes important?
Along with ensuring great people are recruited to serve, your organization must also ensure each member's information is accurate, documented, and entered into eGrants/Portal within the required timeframe. This is a compliance issue required by the grant; member enrollment requirements are included in the grant provisions. The formal enrollment process initiates the process by which an individual will be able to access the education award, upon successful completion of the term of service.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Review the member enrollment section of the grant provisions.
	✓ When prospective members are interviewed, inform them of the documentation necessary for eligibility.
	✓ Prepare a list of documents needed on a prospective member's first day of service.
	✓ Create a Member File Checklist for each folder so that all information is collected appropriately.
	✓ Identify the staff member(s) responsible for reviewing and obtaining missing documents, entering member information in eGrants, and maintaining member records.
	✓ Locate a secure location where confidential member records will be maintained.
	✓ Make sure to gather documentation for all members that demonstrates they meet eligibility requirements including: • Citizen of the U.S., U.S. National, or lawful permanent resident alien. • At least 17 years old at the beginning of service or out of school and enrolled in a program that meets specific requirements. • Has a high school diploma or will enroll in GED classes during service.
	✓ Member enrollment information must be reported to CNCS within 30 days through eGrants.
	✓ Perform site visits to subgrantees and review member files to ensure they are collecting the proper documentation.
	✓ Ensure all member files are complete prior to the distribution of the first living allowance payment.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
How is bringing an AmeriCorps member into your organization different from hiring regular staff? *Usually organizations have a standard hiring practice where all employees must complete an I-9 form prior to receiving their first paycheck. A completed I-9 form does not necessarily meet the eligibility requirements for an AmeriCorps member. The documentation required for an I-9 form does not always demonstrate that an individual is a U.S. Citizen, U.S. National, or*

lawful permanent resident alien.

MEMBER ATTENDANCE RECORDS

What are member attendance records?
Programs are responsible for keeping track of each member's service hours. There must be a timesheet or attendance log that is completed and signed by **both** the member and the supervisor. Even if an electronic timekeeping system is used to track member service hours, supporting documents must be retained in the member's file.

Why are member attendance records important?
These are official, certified documents that verify the number of service hours completed by an AmeriCorps member. This information is necessary for members to receive their educational award.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	
	✓ Create a system to track members' time that has the capability to track service hours and training hours. At least 80% of AmeriCorps members' hours must be direct service and no more than 20% of AmeriCorps members' hours can be spent on training.
	✓ Ensure AmeriCorps members have opportunities to make up service hours for sick time or holiday time.
	✓ Only count time served – do not include vacations or holiday time.
	✓ Make sure timesheets are signed by the members' supervisor.
	✓ Keep accurate records on members' hours served, and be sure to double check math on time reported. Provide members with a monthly update on their progress of hours towards successful completion of the term of service.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
If I enter my members' service hours into an electronic timekeeping program, do I still have to keep their timesheets on file? *Definitely. You must retain member timesheets in the member's file. Without these records, the members cannot receive their educational award.*

Do members need to complete the same timesheet as staff? *No. Members do not have to complete the same timesheet as staff. You will need to create a different timesheet for them. Make sure that you are tracking total member hours and training and service hours separately so you can ensure compliance with the 20% rule.*

How do I account for holidays and sick time? *Members only accumulate hours for time that they are providing service, preparing for service, or training for service. They do not accumulate sick time or get credit for holidays.*

MEMBER LIVING ALLOWANCE

What is the member living allowance?
In many programs, AmeriCorps members receive a financial stipend or living allowance for their service and participation in the AmeriCorps program. An important point is that the member living allowance is not based on an hourly rate or annual salary. Members "serve" they do not "work." They are part of an AmeriCorps program, not hired for a job. They receive a living allowance to support their service, not an hourly wage.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	
	✓ Ensure that a section of the member contract states the total amount of the living allowance, term of service, and amount to be distributed per pay period.
	✓ Set and discuss policies concerning the number of hours members are required to serve.
	✓ Check to see that the living allowance is within the required range.
	✓ Correctly calculate member living allowances to be evenly distributed over the term of service.
	✓ Make sure that the living allowance is not paid based on hours worked in a pay period.
	✓ Have members complete a W-4 form.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
How much is the member living allowance? *The living allowance range is established by the AmeriCorps program's budget.*

How do I calculate the member living allowance? *First, ensure that the living allowance is within the allowable range, per the annual grant guidance and provisions. To determine the living allowance, divide the number of weeks, months, or pay periods by the program cycle. This will enable you to ensure that the living allowance is consistently distributed and not based on hours served in a pay period. This amount should be paid equally over the member's term of service. This ensures that the member earns the entire living allowance if she successfully completes the program.*

What about withholding and other tax liability issues that may affect the payment of AmeriCorps benefits? *Living allowances are subject to FICA and state and federal tax withholdings. Members should complete an annual W-4 form. There are also states where the living allowance is subject to unemployment insurance. Check with your State Service Commission or State Labor Department to determine if unemployment tax must also be paid.*

If a member only serves 10 hours in one week (when 40 are required), do they still receive their entire stipend? *Yes. The member living allowance is not based on an hourly rate or the number of hours spent in service each work. A member who misses a significant number of hours must meet the requirements of the contract in order to successfully complete the service term.*

MEMBER BENEFITS

What benefits are AmeriCorps members eligible for?
Full-time AmeriCorps members may be eligible for health care, child care, and worker's compensation (or Death & Dismemberment) insurance while they are engaged in on- and off-site activities. Benefits vary depending on the type of member slot that you have in your program. Consult your annual grant guidance and provisions for specific details on member benefits.

How do we do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Check your current grant year provisions for information on the CNCS child care provider.
	✓ If you have full-time AmeriCorps members, you will need to secure a health insurance provider yourself. Check with other AmeriCorps programs in your state for recommendations on health insurance providers.
	✓ Explain to AmeriCorps members what the benefits are in the plan and how to access coverage.
	✓ Be clear about member benefits in the member contract.
	✓ During your member orientation, include a section to describe member benefits and how to access them.
	✓ Create a handout for members that describes their benefits and provides contact numbers.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
I have a benefits plan for current employees. Are members eligible for the same benefits? *Full-time members are eligible for health insurance. There are certain requirements for benefit plans, as well as, allowable cost limitations to the grant. Be sure to review the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions for specific information.*

How are member benefits different from staff benefits? *There are specific health insurance requirements and restrictions discussed above. Other employee benefits such as dental, life insurance, and retirement are not eligible costs for members on the AmeriCorps grant.*

Are all AmeriCorps members eligible for benefits? *No. Only full-time members are eligible for benefits. The costs of benefits for any members serving less than full time are not allowable expenses. The only exception is for part-time members serving in a full-time capacity. Check the grant provisions for more details.*

Does CNCS recommend any particular health insurance plan/s? *There are a few insurance plans that are commonly used by AmeriCorps programs because they are cost effective and meet the requirements. However, determining the exact insurance provider is up to the grantee. Make sure to check the current grant year provisions for the specific plan requirements and cost limitations as these may vary from year to year.*

4 – 6 Months Program Development and Management Introduction

Now that you have reached this point…take a deep breath, relax a little, then do some reflecting. How did my recruitment and enrollment go? Are my partnerships in place and working? Are my administrative details being met? Did my orientation work? Is the training calendar appropriate? The 4-6 month program phase gives you an opportunity to examine your work and your program through the lens of continuous improvement. You will conduct site visits and AmeriCorps member evaluations, but more importantly you will apply meaning to them. What does this examination imply about the need to improve our program? What does it say about how well we are meeting our program's performance measures?

At this point in your program year, you get to look forward and backward at the same time. What has my recent experience told me that I should apply to the next time I do this particular task? For example, what should I put in place for next recruiting season? How should I modify my site agreements?

4 – 6 Months Success Checklist

✓	*PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT*	Scheduled	Completed
	Ensure corps member hours and financial information is entered on a monthly basis.		
	Complete and submit the Grantee Progress Report (GPR).		
	Collect program data on a monthly basis. Use data to evaluate progress toward performance measures.		
	Review and refine the program calendar if needed.		
	Conduct a staff retreat.		

AMERICORPS GRANTEE PROGRESS REPORT

What is the AmeriCorps Grantee Progress Report (GPR)?

The GPR is the report on the progress of your AmeriCorps program. It includes demographic data on members and volunteers, performance measurement data, and narratives descriptions of program successes and challenges. It is submitted in eGrants, and GPR instructions are provided by your CNCS Program Officer.

Why do you need to submit an AmeriCorps Progress Report?

As with the Federal Financial Report (FFR), submission of the GPR is a requirement of your AmeriCorps grant. This information must be accurate and submitted on time so that aggregate data from all AmeriCorps activities may be provided to the Office of Management and Budget, Congress, and the general public on a regular basis.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ See the Pre-award Program Development and Management section for more information.
	✓ Complete eGrants training online or through your state commission.
	✓ Complete the initial set-up in eGrants.
	✓ Check your grant provisions for deadlines and content requirements of the GPR.

SUGGESTED	✓ Ensure there are systems established to record and capture required data. This includes establishing data collection systems with your service sites.
	✓ Establish submission deadlines for your members and sites with enough lead time for you to completely review the data submitted and verify it fully before submitting your GPR to CNCS.
	✓ Maintain an ongoing file of information so that you have it ready when you need it for the APR.

<u>Additional Questions</u>

When do we submit a GPR? *Consult with the reporting policies established by your state commission, national direct parent organization, or CNCS to determine when the GPR is submitted. Direct grantees of CNCS will find submission deadlines in the annual grant provisions. Commissions and parent organizations may submit different submission deadlines for their subgrantees or sites.*

ASSESS PROGRESS ON PERFORMANCE MEASURES

What does it mean to assess and report progress on performance measures?
Once your program is in full swing, it is time to begin assessing program accomplishments. The idea is to chart progress toward goal accomplishment, determine the success of partnerships, and determine what is working and what needs improvement. Once you have done the assessment, you will need to report progress to all stakeholders.

Why should you assess and report progress on performance measures?
You want to ensure that everyone is doing what they said they would do in the original AmeriCorps grant and service agreements, members are experiencing a productive and successful service experience, communities being served see value in the service the members are providing, and to ensure everything is on target for the accomplishment of your program goals.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Identify staff person(s) responsible for collecting and analyzing data.
	✓ Work with your host sites and other partners to identify a method for disseminating and collecting the performance measurement tools (surveys, interview protocols, etc.).
	✓ Establish a system that collects program data on a monthly basis.
	✓ Review any performance measurement data gathered from an external evaluator.
	✓ Invite your host site partners, community partners, AmeriCorps members, and community members to participate in completing your customer satisfaction survey.
	✓ If a site visit has been conducted, use that data to assess performance measures.
	✓ Implement a variety of performance measurement tools and use the data to evaluate program achievement and identify challenges.
	✓ Revisit program goals with partners. Identify next steps and set targets.
	✓ Report relevant information on the Grantee Progress Report (GPR).

REFINE ANNUAL CALENDAR

What does it mean to refine your annual calendar?

At this point in the program cycle, you may have a better picture of the activities and events that impact program planning and operations. It's a perfect time to review and make adjustments to the calendar based on what you are learning and seeing.

Why should you refine your annual calendar?

By revisiting and updating the program calendar, you are taking into account the lessons learned during the first few months of the program. The result will be a stronger, more on-target program.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Pull together and review any performance measurement data you have about the program.
	✓ Review performance measure targets and progress to date.
	✓ Bring together relevant staff members to participate in the review and revision of the program calendar.
	✓ Make sure that stakeholders who have activities that could impact the revised program calendar are invited to participate.
	✓ Bring together your service site partners to review and revise the program calendar.
	✓ Notify the Corporation for National and Community Service if the revision process alters or appears to alter the performance measures or outcomes in any way.
	✓ Share the revised program calendar with all members of the organization.

Staff Retreat

What is a staff retreat?
Take a breather, reconnect, re-evaluate, chart the next six months—that's what a staff retreat is all about. Sometimes it may serve the dual purpose of a retreat and training workshop. It is primarily an occasion for all the staff to come together, usually away from the office, to review past activities and chart the goals and targets for the future.

Why should you conduct a staff retreat?
The process of launching an AmeriCorps program takes an incredible amount of energy. A mid-year staff retreat gives everyone a chance to step back and gain perspective on what has happened in the program. It's also a time to celebrate the successes and make adjustments where needed.

How do you do it?

SUGGESTED	✓ Conduct a needs assessment using interview and/or surveys to determine staff training needs and to identify key programmatic and management issues that need attention.
	✓ Design the retreat using information gathered from the needs assessment.
	✓ Work with senior management and a steering committee that represents a cross-section of staff to create the agenda. Ensure the retreat schedule doesn't compete with other organizational priorities.
	✓ Develop and communicate clear goals and objectives of the retreat. See Conducting an Effective Staff Retreat.
	✓ Prioritize the issues you want the retreat to address.
	✓ Include team-building and socializing activities so the staff can develop stronger linkages between each other.
	✓ Ensure your budget can support the staff retreat.
	✓ Identify an off-site space to conduct the retreat. The staff needs to be away from the office to really focus.
	✓ Invite outside presenters/trainers to bring new learning to the organization. If you use an outside consultant, clearly communicate what you want to achieve.
	✓ Follow through on the suggestions or recommendations that arise in the retreat.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
What benefit is gained from holding a retreat off-site? *The biggest benefit is focus. Without the distraction of the everyday work pressures, AmeriCorps program staff members are able to focus and fully participate in the workshop.*

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: CONDUCTING AN EFFECTIVE STAFF RETREAT

Retreats are a valuable resource, but much of their potential can be wasted if they are planned ineffectively. Retreats should always be a forum for learning and working together that supports program activities in the field.

Consider the following when implementing a retreat:

- Define the desired outcome of the retreat.
- Determine who needs to attend in order to accomplish the desired outcome.
- Decide whether you will use a facilitator to help plan the agenda and manage the retreat.
- If you use a facilitator, decide whether s/he should be from outside the organization or inside the organization.
- Once you know how many people to invite, the type of space you need, etc., identify a facility that can accommodate your requirements.
- Visit the facility if you are not familiar with it to verify the accommodations.
- Develop an agenda for the meeting and determine whether you want the attendees to do any work prior to the retreat.
- Schedule some fun or downtime for attendees to reflect and just enjoy being together.
- Hold retreats that last longer than a day at the beginning of the week. Participants will be much more focused if they have had the weekend to relax.
- Reconfirm details with the facility a few days before the retreat.
- Arrive early the day of the retreat to set up the room.
- Ask everyone to complete a retreat feedback form at the end of the retreat.

Outcome or impact achieved:
Properly implemented retreats can create a setting that encourages communication and strengthens bonds as well as give you a better understanding of your program/staff needs.

4 – 6 Months Community and Site Partnerships Introduction

Much of the success of your AmeriCorps program relies on the strength of your relationships with Service Sites and other community partners. Your role in these partnerships includes several elements. First, you want to ensure that your AmeriCorps members are engaged in productive service. Second, you want to determine whether on-site member development activities are taking place along with appropriate supervision and support. Third, you want to identify whether the Service Site is maintaining appropriate and accurate records. Finally, you want to determine what training or supports are needed by community partners to sustain the relationship. This section will prepare you to fulfill your role.

✓	***COMMUNITY AND SITE PARTNERSHIPS***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Send site monitoring visit tools and site desk audit tools to all service and host sites in preparation for site monitoring visit.		
	Conduct a site monitoring visit of all service and host sites.		

SITE MONITORING VISIT

What is a site monitoring visit?
Site monitoring visits are an effective way to observe first-hand the work, the challenges, the successes, and the big picture of your service site partners (who often may be some distance from the parent organization).

Why should you conduct a site monitoring visit?
There are three key reasons to conduct site visits. First, you want to ensure that AmeriCorps members are receiving and providing the services the service site partner has agreed to provide. Second, a visit can provide needed support and guidance to sites that are struggling and need timely support. Third, as mentioned above, an in-person visit helps you get a feel for the experiences of a particular site, the members, and the community they serve.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Review the Four Types of Site Visits. Consider which type of site visit you want to complete.
	✓ Send or provide service site partners with a copy of the site visit schedule. Review and implement site visit tools.
	✓ Provide a copy of the site monitoring form well in advance of the visit.
	✓ Use the Desk Audit of Member Files tool as a checklist of what is supposed to be in the member files.
	✓ Physically look at each piece of paper in the member files. Check it off your list.
	✓ Site visits are not punitive. Be open and transparent about the process. Conduct visits regularly.
	✓ Review your completed Site Monitoring Form with the service site partner staff.
	✓ Clarify and monitor follow-up actions (compliance issues, staff skill enhancement, etc.) to be taken on the part of the service site.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
How many times should I visit a site during the program year? *Every site merits in-person attention. If your budget or staffing levels permit, quarterly visits are recommended. Some sites may need more visits and more technical assistance from you than other sites. In cases where sites need a great deal of support, consider providing it through desk audits, email, and phone communications in addition to the in-person visits.*

Who, from my organization, should be involved in the site-monitoring visit? *Certainly someone familiar with the compliance and regulatory issues of the grant should make the on-site visits. Additionally, someone skilled in program management, financial management systems, supervision, and community service would be welcomed as a qualified monitor and provider of technical assistance.*

Who, from the service site, should be involved in the site-monitoring visit? *The person(s) responsible for site management, fiscal management, and direct supervision of the AmeriCorps members should be involved. Depending on the purpose and type of site visit, it may be appropriate to hear from AmeriCorps members, senior management, board members,* *community members, or clients.*

Tools for Success

Example: Four Types of Site Visits

The National Readiness and Response Corps employs several types of programmatic site visits: Monitoring (includes fiscal aspects), Informational with limited monitoring (e.g. Pre-service orientation), Follow-up Visit, and Monitoring conducted by Operating Sites with multiple locations. Below is an explanation of each type.

1. Monitoring Visits

The NRRC program staff will conduct a one or two day programmatic site visit at least once every two years. The purpose of this visit is to observe the operations of the site's program and to address any specific compliance or continuous quality improvement issues.

A typical site-monitoring visit consists of the following:

- An interview with the operating site supervisor;
- Interview(s) with the financial department and a review of financial systems in place;
- Interviews with NRRC members;
- Observation of program activities at local service sites;
- At minimum 50% randomly selected sample of member files;
- Meet with key State Commission, CNCS State Offices to discuss past and/or explore future opportunities for program coordination and collaboration;
- Wrap-up with the program coordinator and staff members; and
- Provide any training or technical assistance on programmatic, management, reporting, program development and / or financial issues as needed.

NRRC program staff will schedule site visits at least four weeks in advance of the visit. One week prior to the visit, the host site supervisor will forward an agenda for the visit to the program staff.

Prior to the visit, NRRC program staff will complete a pre-site visit checklist. During the visit the NRRC program staff will review at minimum 50% randomly selected sample of member files.

Immediately after the visit, NRRC program staff will document the visit on the Site Visit Form. Within 15 working days following the visit, NRRC program staff will provide the grantee with a document detailing any compliance issues, quality improvement opportunities and required follow-up actions. Copies will be made available to chapter management and other pertinent staff. The NRRC program staff will continue to use the Site Visit Form to document when the corrective action plan was received and the date(s) the corrective action plan must be implemented.

2. Informational with limited monitoring

This type of site visit may be conducted if an NRRC program staff is in the general area of a local site and is considered to be more informal, but not necessarily less important than a Monitoring Visit. These visits are generally less than one day. During these visits, NRRC program staff will:

- Meet and talk with local site manager;
- Meet and talk with other appropriate staff (as available);
- Meet and talk with NRRC members (as available);
- Discuss concerns from the national level with site staff; and
- Provide training or technical assistance as needed.

If issues of concern or compliance do arise during the visit, the NRRC program staff will review them with the site manager at the time. Immediately after the visit, the NRRC program staff will document the visit on the Site Visit Form. Within 10 working days following the visit, the NRRC program staff will provide the grantee with a document dealing any compliance issues, quality improvement opportunities and required follow-up actions. Copies will be provided to the chapter management. NRRC program staff will continue to use the Site Visit Form to document when the corrective action plan was received and the date(s) the corrective action plan must be implemented.

3. Follow-up Visit

These visits are only used in cases where the NRRC program staff determines it is necessary, based on previously documented issues and/or as requested by CNCS. These visits will follow the same guidelines as indicated by a Monitoring Visit and will specifically focus on compliance issues. They will occur within two month of of a prior site visit.

Reasons for a Follow-up Visit, but are not limited to: non-compliance by the site; inadequate supervision or support of members; staff transition at the site; and program's pattern of problems or compliance issues.

4. Other

These visits may occur in conjunction with a training event. Please refer to the second type of site visit description. Also, this would include any site visits that are conducted by CNCS State Offices. NRRC and the local site are notified in advance of these visits and will work together to ensure a successful visit.

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

EXAMPLE: SITE VISIT PROCEDURES

Timeline: Site visits should be conducted 2-4 months after start of program year.

One month prior to visit:	Contact the program by phone to arrange mutually convenient date for the visit.
2-3 weeks prior to visit:	--Send written confirmation of site visit date and requirements to the Program Director. Confirmation should include a reminder about the length of time the visit will take, a brief agenda for the visit, and specific requests for time with staff members and corps members. --A copy should be sent to the commission members who have adopted the program.
2-5 days prior to visit:	--Review eGrants reports, rosters, member forms, and time logs, etc. Check service hours to identify that all information is entered and is up-to-date, review any reports that have been completed. --Review all recent site visit reports and follow-up. Note what the concerns were (if any) and the agreed upon improvements or corrective actions. --Survey commission staff to determine if there are any other outstanding issues other than those identified above.
Day of the visit:	--Arrive promptly at the agreed upon time. --Wear AmeriCorps identification (pin, button, sticker, shirt, etc.). --Follow the agenda. Make every attempt to stay on schedule. --Document the site visit. Make notes on all key comments, questions answered, etc.
Following the visit:	--Within 2 working days, write a brief thank you note to all of those who participated in the visit. --Within 2 weeks, complete the formal written site visit report. --Send the site visit report along with a cover letter to the Program Director. The cover letter should indicate whether you require a response to the findings or concerns noted in the report. Usually such responses must be provided within 30 days of receipt of the letter. Identify if the program has requested T/TA. --Send a copy of the site visit report to the commission members who have adopted the program.
Follow-up:	--If a written response is not received on the date requested (and an extension not granted), resend the site visit report to the next level of authority within the organization. The cover letter should indicated the overdue response and allow for an additional 2 weeks to provide the requested information. --If a written response is not received after the second request, notice should be sent to the certifying official (who signed the grant application) that reimbursements are being held pending receipt of the requested response.

Adapted from the Missouri Service Commission

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: CHECKLIST FOR AN IDEAL SITE VISIT

Advance Arrangements Timeline:
- Confirm dates with program coordinator and send checklist (four weeks prior)
- Reserve plane ticket and rental car, if flying (four weeks prior)
- Develop itinerary with program coordinator (three weeks prior)
- Make appointments to meet with Lead Agency and/or State Service Commission, if possible (two weeks prior)
- Make hotel reservations (two weeks prior)
- Draw up itemized budget and file Request for Official Travel form (two weeks prior)
- Confirm itinerary with coordinator and email to members and supervisors (one week prior)

Do Not Forget To Bring:
- Team meeting agenda
- Assessment and interview forms (member, supervisor, training, etc.)
- Operating site performance measures
- Most recent member progress reports
- Analysis of operating site's pre- and post-training questionnaires
- Site in-kind reports and schedule of missing months
- Status of non-federal match payments
- Addresses and phone numbers of field offices, State Service Commission, and Lead Agency
- Uniform order form (or other items of interest for members)
- AmeriCorps buttons/stickers
- Camera, lodging itinerary, and maps
- Policy and Procedure Manual
- {ORGANIZATION MATERIALS} (brochures, pins, etc.)

While on the Site Visit:
- Meet with program coordinator and complete Reporting Review and Supervisor Interview Forms
- Meet with each member and complete Member Interview Form
- Meet with each site supervisor and complete Supervisor Interview Form
- Meet with each field office team to go over progress toward completing performance measures
- Observe pesticide safety training and complete Training Assessment Form for each member
- Complete Site Performance Measurement Form for each field office and for site as a whole
- Meet with Lead Agency and State Service Commission

Upon Returning to LOCAL ORGANIZATION:
- Write thank you letter to Program Coordinator and attach Site Performance Measurement Form
- Write thank you letters to site supervisors and attach Site Performance Measurement Forms
- Write thank you letters to members and attach Training Performance Measurement Forms with personalized notes
- Follow up on any action items revealed during the visit
- Write thank you letters to Lead Agency and State Service Commissions, if necessary

Tools for Success]

EXAMPLE: DESK AUDIT TOOL

SECTION A: DOCUMENTATION

Below is a list of items designed to verify for LOCAL ORGANIZATION your site's compliance with key programmatic and operational requirements. Please send these to __________________ by [insert deadline.]

- Copies of Program Coordinator and Site Supervisor Position Descriptions
- Copy of site's liability insurance policy
- Evidence that your site is a drug-free work place
- Evidence your site has a non-discrimination policy that includes providing reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities
- Sample of travel reimbursement form used to pay for member or staff mileage
- Sample of log used by member to track ______________________
- Sample of member personal development plan

SECTION B: STATUS OF COMMITMENTS TO LOCAL ORGANIZATION

LOCAL ORGANIZATION has indicated the status of key commitments to the program. Please respond as necessary.

1. Payment of Participation Fee (e.g., cash match)

    ____ Yes, paid in full. Thanks!
    ____ Past Due

    If past due, indicate reason and expected date of transmission to LOCAL ORGANIZATION. Name who in the organization is responsible for the transmission if someone other than the Program Coordinator.

2. Completion of quarterly in-kind reports

    ___ Up-to-date. Next deadline is [Insert upcoming report schedule]
    ___ Past Due

    If past due, indicate reason and expected date of transmission to LOCAL ORGANIZATION. Name who in the organization is responsible for the transmission if someone other than the Program Coordinator.

3. List of any ***PAST DUE*** member enrollment or evaluation materials.

PLEASE NOTE THESE ITEMS ARE DUE AT THE TIME THE DESK AUDIT IS RETURNED.

____ Enrollment Paperwork
____ Pre-service Community Interviews
____ Member Mid-term Evaluations
____ *Add needed information*

PLEASE REMEMBER, THE NEXT PROGRESS REPORT IS DUE ON ______________________

SECTION C: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

1. What State Service Commission events have you and your members attended or will attend this year?

2. Member Enrollment Commitment [Insert #]
   Member Enrollment to-date [Insert #]

   Please describe your plans to develop and retain currently enrolled members. What recruitment methods will you use beginning this fall for program year _______?

3. Have your members been or will they be involved in any local or national service activities in cooperation with other national service sites (e.g., AmeriCorps, VISTA, RSVP)? If yes, which and how? If no, why not?

3. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being "excellent," 5 being "mediocre," and 0 being "awful," rate the following:

   _____ Training and technical assistance provided by LOCAL ORGANIZATION

   _____ Success at recruiting and retaining quality AmeriCorps members

   _____ Member achievement of service goals

   _____ Value of AmeriCorps program to your operations

   _____ Value of AmeriCorps program to your members

   _____ Value of AmeriCorps program to your community

   _____ Overall level of satisfaction with the AmeriCorps program

4. Please list any areas not covered above that you would like to discuss with LOCAL ORGANIZATION directly:

{Program Director} will call to arrange a phone appointment to discuss these areas with you. Thank you for your time and effort.

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: DESK AUDIT OF MEMBER FILES

National Readiness & Response Corps
Desk Audit of Member Files

The goal of the desk audit is to determine if the local site is compliant with their documentation of member files. In addition, to verify hard copies for accuracy with information found in eGrants.

Local sites will be asked to forward a minimum of seven files throughout the year (random selection to be determined by NRRC program staff). NRRC program staff may ask for files from prior program years. In accordance with the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions, sites should maintain all member files for up to three years after the close of the grant.

*NRRC Operating Site Location:*____

Program Year:____

Site Manager: ____

NRRC Member: ____

Are the following items in the member's file?	Yes	No	Comments/Files missing
Member application			
AmeriCorps enrollment form • Is it signed and dated by the member? (Will be approved by site supervisor via electronic system) • Was the form entered in eGrants within 30 days of enrollment? • Were hard copies of the forms sent to the program headquarters by the date specified?			
Member Agreement / Contract Is the site utilizing the NRRC Member Agreement of Participation? • Is it signed and dated by the member? • Is it signed and dated by the site manager? • If the member did not begin service on the start date, are the dates on the agreement adjusted?			
Member Activity Summary Sheets (MASS)/Service Hour Logs • Do both the member and the site supervisor sign logs? • Are they up to date? • Do the hour logs segregate/track separately hours for service vs. hours for training? • Is the site supervisor's in-kind time indicated? • Did the member complete the service reflection section? • Do the electronic reports match what is on the hard copy version? • Were the electronic reports uploaded by the appropriate date for the parent organization to review?			
Documentation of citizenship/naturalization/resident alien status Primary documentation of status as a US citizen or national. *One of the following forms of documentation is acceptable and should be attached:* Documents to verify a member's status as a citizen or national include; • A birth certificate stating that they were born in one of the 50 states, DC, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, or the Northern Mariana islands; • A U.S. passport, current and current • A report of birth abroad of a U.S. Citizen (FS-240 issued by the State Department); • A certificate of birth-foreign service (FS-545 issued by the State Department); • A certification of report of birth (DS-1350 issued by the State Department); and • A certificate of naturalization (From N-560 or N-561 issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service); Documentation to verify a member's status as a lawful permanent resident alien of the U.S. include: • Permanent Resident Card (INS Form I-551); • Alien Registration Receipt Card (INS Form I-551); and • A Departure Record (INS Form I-94) indicating that the INS has approved it as a temporary evidence of lawful admission for permanent residence			

Are the following items in the member's file?	Yes	No	Comments/Files missing
High school diploma/GED • Has member certified on the enrollment form that they have a high school diploma/GED? • Does the operating site have the <u>date</u> of when the member received her/his high school diploma or GED?			
Documentation of Health Care Enrollment (if member is eligible) • If the member has exited, is there a termination letter on file stating when their AmeriCorps health care benefits ended? • Was the NRRC program headquarters notified within two weeks of member's exit so that the SRC roster is updated? • If there are any questions on health care coverage, please contact the program headquarters.			
Disaster Services Human Resources Enrollment • Has the member been enrolled in the DSHR system on file? • Is there a copy of the member's DSHR enrollment form on file? • Is there a copy of the member's DSHR acceptance letter on file? • Is there a copy of the member's disaster assignment WPE on file?			
Documentation of Child Care Enrollment (if member is eligible) ***A member will be <u>only</u> be considered eligible for child care benefits if*** 1. *they are a full-time stipended member* 2. *the member is the parent or legal guardian (or acting in loco parentis) for a child under the age of 13 who resides with the member;* 3. *the member has a family income that does not exceed the state's income eligibility guidelines for a family of the same size; at a maximum, family income can be no more than 75% of the state's median income; and* 4. *at the time of acceptance into the program, the member is not receiving child care from another available source.* • If there are any questions on child care coverage, please contact the program headquarters.			
Tax documents • Is there a W-4 form to document tax withholdings? • If the program year is over, is there a W-2 form?			

Are the following items in the member's file?	Yes	No	Comments/Files missing
Member discipline documentation • Was the member disciplined in accordance with the guidelines as indicated in their member agreement and program handbook?			
Mid-term performance evaluation • Was the mid-term Service Performance Review completed on time?			
End-of-term performance evaluation • Was a final Service Performance Review completed prior to member's out-processing? • Is there a copy in the member's file?			
Member End of Term/Exit Form (if member has exited) • Is it signed and dated by the member in the two places indicated? • Is the supervisor signature concurrent with or after the member's? • Is the form approved by the site supervisor? • Was the form submitted within 30 days in eGrants?			
Documentation of Compelling Personal Circumstances (if applicable) • If the member received a pro-rated ed-award (check the exit form), is there documentation of compelling personal circumstances that falls within the parameters identified in the AmeriCorps Provisions for the relevant program year?			
Change of Status Form (if applicable) • Do enrollment form and exit form for each individual reflect the same term of service? • If not, is there an approved change of status form in the file that reflects the appropriate conversion? • Was the conversion made within the first three months of the member's term? If not, is there evidence of grantee and CNCS approval? • Was the form submitted to the CNCS within 30 days? *(Needs to be verified at CNCS)*			

4 – 6 Months Member Development and Support Introduction

Member support and development is a process that lasts as long as the member's term of service. It begins in the 0 – 3 months program phase with the recruitment process, selection and support of Service Sites, and the AmeriCorps member training and orientation program.

At this stage in your program year, you will continue supporting and developing members through several important activities: a mid-term member evaluation, a staff and member retreat, and a continued focus on Life after AmeriCorps.

4 – 6 Months Success Checklist

✓	***Member Development and Support***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Develop a member contract.		
	Implement a member interview and selection process.		
	Work with Human Resources to enroll new corps members.		
	Work with Human Resources to identify member benefits.		
	Implement a member file checklist.		

MEMBER SUPPORT

What is member support?
Member support can also be referred as member supervision. Unlike an employer-employee relationship, the Program Supervisor plays many different roles, including mentor, disciplinarian, teacher, and guidance counselor. Individuals who enter the AmeriCorps program come from different cultural, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds. It is important for the Program Supervisor to recognize the diversity present in an AmeriCorps team and engage members in appreciating and positively supporting one another.

Why should you be concerned with member support?
Setting the norms and the expectations for the team early in the service year will help to define the way the service year will unfold. It is your job to provide the AmeriCorps members with the expectations and the rules of the program and service sites at the Pre-service Orientation. If your program utilizes multiple site supervisors or team leaders it is important that they also receive training on and fully understand the expectations of the program.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Continuously improve the quality of your program. You may find opportunities throughout the year to remind members about program expectations (always write these times down for future program development opportunities).
	✓ Continue activities related to the Life after AmeriCorps component of your program.
	✓ Implement a corps member evaluation (mid-year and end-of-year) process. Use the information gathered to provide additional training or support to members. Also use the data to inform program improvements.
	✓ Complete a site visit to ensure AmeriCorps members have appropriate supervision and activities.
	✓ Ensure members are receiving their benefits.
	✓ Conduct team meetings on a consistent basis.

BUILDING ESPRIT DE CORPS

What is *esprit de corps*?
Esprit de corps literally means group spirit. It is a feeling that develops over time when people learn to work effectively as a team toward a common goal. *Esprit de corps* is an integral part of the AmeriCorps experience.

Why should you build *esprit de corps*?
Esprit de corps fosters team success which in turn promotes member retention and development.

How do you do it?

SUGGESTED	✓ Learn to recognize the stages of team development (forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning); understand the role that supervisors may play in helping the team move through the stages toward eventually becoming a high performing team.
	✓ Incorporate icebreakers in trainings and meetings to increase member interactions.
	✓ Implement experiential activities as a way to begin to develop teams in a controlled environment. Experiential activities are fun, educational, and challenging activities that affect people on several levels of learning (cognitive, physical, emotional, social, and even spiritual).
	✓ Structure social events that will further promote team growth.
	✓ Make sure that if teamwork is an important part of the program, it is reflected in member recruitment, training, performance evaluations, site supervisor development, etc.
	✓ Celebrate small successes along the way. Include recognition of individual and team accomplishments. Reward the entire team for team accomplishments.
	✓ Focus on the goals not the obstacles.
	✓ Establish regular effective team meetings. Rotate AmeriCorps members' responsibility for facilitating meetings.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
How can I ensure our team-building activities involve more than just fun and games? *When leading experiential team-building activities, it is essential to reflect on and discuss the facts/activities of the experience as well as the meaning of them to the individuals and the team as a whole. It is very easy to get caught up in the fun, physical, and/or competitive aspects of team building exercises. Immediately after the exercises, ask participants to talk about the experience, how they felt about it, and discuss how it is similar to real life. Help them draw out and apply the lessons learned to their community service or their lives after AmeriCorps. Manage the process and the energy, but don't over-control the exercise. In order for team-building to be effective, you must let the natural course of emotions and behavior flow. It is also very important to have a trained and skilled facilitator for these types of activities.*

BUILDING SERVICE ETHIC AND NATIONAL SERVICE KNOWLEDGE

What is service ethic and national service knowledge?

National service refers to any of the service programs affiliated with the Corporation for National Service. National service knowledge can include the history, language, grantee information, and streams of service programs under the CNCS umbrella. The centerpiece of the AmeriCorps service ethic is getting things done – improving communities by helping solve problems through the service of AmeriCorps members. The other key aspects of the ethic are strengthening communities and developing members' opportunities and civic responsibility.

Why should you build service ethic and national service knowledge?

Program directors and supervisors should be able to articulate the service ethic and the history of national service to their members and partners so that they, in turn, will understand their places in a national legacy of service. If you underscore and model the service ethic in your organization, you help members understand the magnitude of their commitment, develop a sense of pride in their membership, and recruit others to get involved. Emphasizing the service ethic and history also helps to properly frame the member's term as a service experience, not a work experience.

How do you do it?

SUGGESTED	✓ Implement opportunities for members to learn and apply concepts about national service during the Pre-service Orientation.
	✓ Create a national service Jeopardy game to reinforce concepts.
	✓ Review the section of the annual grant application instructions and provisions for national service information.
	✓ Engage corps members in reflective conversations and practice to build understanding of the service ethic concept.

Additional Questions

How does one instill an ethic of service in another person? *You can't. Despite all of the activities, reflection opportunities, and information you give, you will not be able to create an ethic of service in your AmeriCorps members. They have to do it themselves, growing from their own service experience. Program Directors should look for indicators of a service ethic when recruiting/screening members. An example of service ethic might be a prospective corps member's volunteer activities or other service experiences.*

MEMBER EVALUATION (MID-TERM)

What is a member evaluation?
Member evaluations provide the AmeriCorps Program Coordinator and the member with a report of how the member is developing in the program. This evaluation should be considered a formal process and include documentation to be placed in the member's file. There are several different models for evaluation that can be implemented as a whole or in parts that are explained below.

Why should you conduct member evaluations?
Program Coordinators can help AmeriCorps members reach their potential through continuous quality improvement, also known as evaluation. An evaluation's goal is not to find out what is wrong, but rather what is going well and what can be improved. The evaluation should also be reciprocal—that is, the member should be invited to evaluate your performance and/or the performance of their site supervisor as it relates to the member's service role.

How do you do it?

SUGGESTED

- ✓ Find out how evaluation is conducted currently in the organization. Once again, the human resources staff may be able to help on this subject.
- ✓ Remember to ask yourself: "What do I need to know about the member's experience to make the program more effective?" List your needs and then find suitable evaluation models and tools to use. See a sample Member Evaluation tool.
- ✓ Evaluation works well when it is conducted at several different levels. Consider who is being evaluated and who is completing the evaluation when you design your system, and remember you can always improve the system throughout your experience.

Who Should Be Evaluated…	…and By Whom
AmeriCorps member	Site Supervisor Program Coordinator
Site Supervisor	AmeriCorps member Program Coordinator
Program Coordinator	AmeriCorps member Site Supervisor

Additional Questions
When should I evaluate? *AmeriCorps members are actually the only individuals that need to be evaluated at least once according to AmeriCorps provisions. The reality is that members and staff who work with AmeriCorps members should be evaluated in the middle of the service year and at the end to truly assess the program's operations and effectiveness.*

LIFE AFTER AMERICORPS

What is Life after AmeriCorps?
Life after AmeriCorps is the intentional development of corps members' options as they transition from the AmeriCorps experience to the next step along their life path. Your job is to guide the members through these next steps and help them identify opportunities to incorporate their service experience into their future lives. Life after AmeriCorps development is achieved through networking, identifying future education and career opportunities, providing skills training and development, and counseling.

Why should you be concerned with Life after AmeriCorps?
AmeriCorps members come from diverse cultural, educational, and socio-economic backgrounds. They also come with many different aspirations. You may find yourself with a team that has members who want to go to college, members who want to advance in the local community career setting they are in, members who want to attend the local community college, and members who are unsure of what they want to do. Your guidance and help linking to resources will assist these individuals to make concrete, informed decisions on what direction they want to move in life.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Guide members in developing resumes and cover letters outlining their AmeriCorps experience and past professional or volunteer experiences.
	✓ Guide members in identifying what they would like to do in the future.
	✓ Provide members with opportunities to design and implement trainings and other skill development activities.
	✓ Create a library of information about colleges, universities, and technical schools. Make sure all members know how to search for information online, access job postings and professional networks, participate in chat rooms relevant to their future job interests, etc.
	✓ Make information about the AmeriCorps Education Award available to members.
	✓ Identify individuals in the organization and the community who you feel may be good mentors or speakers on career and education paths of high interest to members. Create ways for members to connect (more than once) with these valuable resources. Do this early in the program—and throughout it!
	✓ Invite guest speakers to talk about career opportunities.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
When should I start planning and doing Life after AmeriCorps activities? *Ideally, you will incorporate Life after AmeriCorps information and activities from the very beginning and throughout your program.*

My members have many different goals and aspirations; how do I schedule training and/or speakers for such a diverse group without boring some of them or losing their attention?
Unlike normal member training that all members must attend, you may want to offer a variety of Life after AmeriCorps activities and make some of them optional or elective. This way, members

can sign up for the activities that are of greatest interest to them and pass on others. It really isn't fair to expect members to sit through a presentation about a career they have absolutely no interest in pursuing. In addition to providing a series of talks on career opportunities, also explore linking members to outside mentors in career areas that are attractive to them. Arrange for them to spend a half-day shadowing a mentor or interviewing 2-3 people in a particular profession. These sorts of activities will provide members with a realistic (vs. idealistic) understanding of their particular profession or technical area of interest.

Tools for Success

EXAMPLE: MEMBER EVALUATION

Name:____

Date of Evaluation:____

Dates of Service: Start:_________________ Expected Completion:__________________

Operating Site:____

Program Coordinator:____

Please list type(s) of service:____

The criteria listed below reflect an effective and committed service member. These behaviors or characteristics were identified based on experiences and perspectives from members, program coordinators, and community partners. Using the scale provided, please evaluate the performance of the above-named member based on 1) your observations as the program coordinator and 2) feedback from community partners and service recipients with whom service was provided as an AmeriCorps member. Space is provided at the end of the form and should be used for additional comments to highlight specific feedback or clarify a specific rating.

Directions for Using Rating Scale:
Circle the number that best describes the member's performance.

Please rate the service member on the following criteria: *(please circle one for each question)*

Scoring: **1 – Excellent 2 – Good 3 – Fair 4 – Needs Improvement**

A. GENERAL WORK ETHIC				
1. Member can be relied upon to work steadily and effectively during service work.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
2. Member demonstrates a professional demeanor when interacting with others as a service member.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
3. Member maintains an appearance (grooming, attire, behavior) appropriate to the service assignment(s).	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
4. Member demonstrates concern for the quality, accuracy, and completeness of tasks performed as a service member.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
5. Member demonstrates the ability to organize tasks effectively.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
6. Member is able to accept and utilize critical feedback effectively.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
7. Member demonstrates punctuality for work commitments and planned activities (includes meetings and trainings).	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

8. Member demonstrates ability to balance service and personal commitments appropriately.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

B. COMMUNICATION				
9. Member demonstrates ability to communicate plans, needs, and feedback effectively to *community partners*.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
10. Member demonstrates ability to communicate plans, needs, and feedback effectively to other *team members*.				
11. Member demonstrates ability to express and resolve conflicts effectively.				

C. AMERICORPS PHILOSOPHY				
12. Member demonstrates ability to work cooperatively as a team member.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
13. Member demonstrates an appreciation of and respect for other team members' opinions, abilities, and needs.				
14. Member demonstrates skills in taking initiative in problem-solving and project management.				
15. Member demonstrates an understanding of the AmeriCorps mission and philosophies.				
16. Member demonstrates an understanding of their role as a citizen in the community.				
17. Member demonstrates a sense of commitment to the health of their community.				
18. Member carries through on commitments for service projects.				
19. Member demonstrates leadership skills in team activities.				
20. Member demonstrates ability to work with community partners effectively.				

21. Briefly discuss the special strengths this member has demonstrated.

22. Briefly discuss any area(s) on which this member should focus to improve his or her effectiveness as a service member.

23. Would you recommend this member to another service corps? ______ Yes ______No

Additional Comments: (Use additional space if needed.)

____

____

____

____

____

____

Signature of
Member:____Date:______________________

Signature of
Evaluator:____Date:______________________

If above is a person other than the Program Coordinator, briefly explain relationship to corps member.

____

Member response to this
evaluation:____

____

____

____

____

7 – 9 Months Program Development and Management Introduction

This program phase emphasizes the activities around performance measurement, continuous improvement, and communication with stakeholders. How have we done? What else needs to be done? What can be done better next year? The idea is to continue doing many of the program development and support tasks you started months before, only now you want to reflect on how to do them even better. As you move through these middle months, you will be able to identify your program's good practices and use them to help you shape your ideas for the future.

7 – 9 Months Success Checklist

✓	***Program Development and Management***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Ensure corps member hours and financial information is entered in the electronic record-keeping system.		
	Review and implement continuous improvement strategies.		
	Collect program data on a monthly basis. Use data to evaluate progress toward performance measures.		
	Begin planning for long-range program sustainability.		
	Implement a staff evaluation process. Identify staff training needs.		
	Conduct a staff retreat based on evaluation data.		

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

What does continuous improvement mean?

Continuous improvement is about finding better ways to do things. You will essentially scrutinize all components of the program in search of opportunities for improvement. This process will ultimately lead to more satisfied customers and better results.

Why is continuous improvement important?

If you create an organizational culture focused on continuous improvement, this will greatly improve the long-term sustainability of your program. Continuous improvement involves understanding stakeholders' expectations and meeting those with a well-run program. It also means taking real action to improve upon gaps in practices or functions. The health of an organization and its staff really depends on a culture of making things better.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Where possible, involve stakeholders as key resources to help improve every aspect of the AmeriCorps program and member experience.
	✓ Create a climate within the organization that values constructive criticism and approaches problems as opportunities to grow and learn.
	✓ Engage staff in identifying ways to improve practices.
	✓ Use data collection tools discussed earlier to substantively improve your program functions.

MID-YEAR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

What are the mid-year program activities?
There are several activities that take place during this time of the program cycle. Instead of recapping information, you will be directed to review information provided earlier in the AmeriCorps Program Start-up Guide.

Staff Retreat	Evaluate and Report on Program Performance Measures
Review the Program Development and Management 4 – 6 Months Section. Evaluate staff to determine some of the topics to incorporate in the training design of the staff retreat.	Review the Program Development and Management 4 – 6 Months Section. Using the appropriate program data collection forms, gather/analyze/report on data relevant to the 7 – 9 Months program cycles. Report all necessary information in eGrants and as directed by your CNCS Program Officer.

An important aspect of a strong program is the proactive process of improvement. Several continuous improvement activities are suggested below.

SUGGESTED	
	✓ Maintain a process of continuous improvement systems at parent organization and at service sites.
	✓ Analyze and evaluate progress toward performance measures.
	✓ Develop a system to identify needs and develop recommendations for technical assistance for service sites.
	✓ Establish a system to identify needs and develop recommendations for technical assistance for the parent organization.
	✓ Analyze and assess parent organization performance candidly and accurately.

PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

What does program sustainability mean?
Sustainability means that a program is able to remain viable for an extended period of time. Sustainability relates directly to the organization's ability to develop funding resources it needs to maintain the current services and operations, cultivate and maintain effective staff, and plan for the future. It usually also includes efforts to increase the public's awareness of your activities and services.

Why is program sustainability so important?
If your organization and AmeriCorps program are serving the community well, then the community probably wants you around for many more years to come. However, sustainability can be a difficult status to achieve. Many nonprofit organizations need to be mindful of fluctuations in the general economy, the additional resources (personnel, space, equipment, etc.) required for program expansion, the degree of public awareness about the program, the ratio of paid staff to volunteers, the potential for safely expanding, and other issues. There are many factors that can positively or negatively impact program sustainability.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Commit to ongoing evaluation mechanisms for staff, service site partners, AmeriCorps members, community members, and other key stakeholders.
	✓ Use performance measurement data to identify gaps that might detract from your program's potential to be sustainable over time. Work to close those gaps.
	✓ Identify the impact on the community and stakeholders if your program were removed. Use this to inform planning and strategic partnership building.
	✓ Look at the long-range plans for your organization. Identify possible budgetary and/or staffing shortfalls in the areas of fundraising, public awareness, performance measures, cross-sector partnerships, and volunteers or interns.
	✓ Continue collaborating with service site partners and others to enhance the impact of the AmeriCorps program services.
	✓ Engage board members in identifying and cultivating resources to sustain the program over the long-term.

EXAMPLE: PRINCIPLES OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

1. Our customers and communities are the reasons we exist. We must stay attuned to their needs and strive always to exceed their expectations.
2. Volunteers, participants and staff are customers too. They must be motivated, trained, and satisfied if they are to serve our customers well.
3. It is not enough to talk about customer satisfaction. We must set measurable goals, communicate them throughout our organization, regularly and systematically gauge our progress against these goals, and take action to continuously improve their performance.
4. Anytime we learn we are falling short, we have an opportunity to improve. Anytime we learn we are meeting or exceeding targets, we have an opportunity to set higher targets.
5. Continuous improvement is the responsibility of everyone in our organization.
6. Effective communication within our organization is essential to continuous improvement. To help improve the organization, staff must understand what customers' value and how well customers' think the program is doing.
7. Constructive criticism is a positive step toward a solution, not a negative spotlight on a mistake. We learn from our failures as well as from our successes.
8. Creating energized, empowered teams is the best catalyst for improving an organization. Motivated teams can produce extraordinary results—results that exceed those achieved by individuals or less cohesive groups.

7 – 9 Months Program Activities Introduction

The three program areas—Community and Site Partnerships, Member Development and Support, and Financial and Grants Management—discussed throughout the AmeriCorps Program Start-up Guide have a limited set of activities during this time phase. In each area, you will focus your time and effort on implementing and following through on activities started at the beginning of your program. Therefore, this section of the Guide is intentionally short.

Use the 7 – 9 Months Program Activities Success Checklist to ensure you are on target with completing the necessary tasks during this period. Information to support these activities is provided in earlier sections of this Guide.

7 – 9 Months Program Activities Success Checklist

✓	***Community and Site Partnerships***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Begin evaluating strengths and weaknesses of service and host sites. Look ahead to coming program year.		

✓	***Member Development and Support***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Continue Life after AmeriCorps activities.		
	Continue ongoing member support activities.		

✓	***Financial and Grants Management***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Review progress toward meeting grant match requirements.		
	Complete the Federal Financial Report in eGrants.		

10 – 12 Months Program Development and Member Management Introduction

The close of your first program year is approaching. Congratulations!

Much of the work you will engage in between now and the conclusion of your program year will be a combination of continuing current activities, completing year-end evaluations and reporting requirements, celebrating and thanking partners and participants, and helping AmeriCorps members with their transition from AmeriCorps to whatever comes next for them.

10 – 12 Months Success Checklist

✓	**PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT**	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Ensure Corps member hours and financial information is entered into the electronic record-keeping system regularly.		
	Complete final Grantee Progress Report (GPR) in eGrants.		
	Exit members from the eGrants/Member Portal, provided members have completed program requirements and service hours required.		

✓	**MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT**	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Finalize Life after AmeriCorps activities.		
	Conduct end-of-year member evaluation.		

FINAL GRANTEE PROGRESS REPORT

What is the final Grantee Progress Report (GPR)?
The final GPR is the last report detailing the accomplishments, outcomes, great stories, and progress to your state commission or CNCS Program Officer. It is submitted electronically through eGrants, and your commission or CNCS Program Officer will provide details on the required format and deadline for submission.

Why do you need to submit the final APR Report?
Submitting a final program progress report is a requirement of your AmeriCorps grant. As with all other grant reports, CNCS will use aggregate data from the entire national service network to compile reports for the Office of Management and Budget, Congress, and the general public.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Submit the GPR as instructed.
	✓ Maintain a file of quarterly reports and ongoing program information to draw from to complete the final GPR. Reports will be submitted (and saved) in eGrants; it is also important for you to save a copy of all of your data and reports in your own system/records. Do not rely on access to information you submitted in eGrants.

YEAR-END BOARD PRESENTATION

What is a year-end board presentation?
Most likely your board has been actively involved and briefed on the progress of the AmeriCorps program. As the program year comes to a close, this is an excellent time to bring board members together to share the successes and challenges of the first year of program implementation.

Why do you need to conduct a year-end board presentation?
At the conclusion of the program year, it is imperative to formally address the board and communicate the lessons learned over the course of the program year. Board members need to know where they can be helpful and where they might need to intervene on behalf of the organization. If additional resources are needed to sustain the program, enlist board members to identify and cultivate those resources. If your program needs to strengthen its visibility in the larger community, your board members need to be apprised of how they can assist.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Make sure you have accurate information from key stakeholders, including staff members.
	✓ Identify the appropriate persons to address the board.
	✓ Create an agenda to guide your presentation.
	✓ Update the board on budget changes or impending issues.
	✓ Create simple, clear handouts that illustrate the important points you want to make.
	✓ Anticipate questions the members might have about the implementation and management of the project.

EXIT MEMBERS IN THE MEMBER PORTAL

What does it mean to exit members in the Member Portal?
At the beginning of your program, you entered into the Member Portal (accessed from eGrants) the required data about your new AmeriCorps program and corps members serving in your program. Within 30 days of the end of corps members' term of service, you must update the Portal again. For each eligible member, you must complete an End of Term form in the Portal. This form contains a statement about the member's total service hours. Once the National Service Trust approves the form, the member is eligible to receive the educational award.

Why do you need to exit members in the Member Portal?
First, all requested program information must be entered into eGrants and the Member Portal as appropriate. This is a mandatory requirement of your AmeriCorps grant. If a member's data is not entered into eGrants/Member Portal showing that she/he completed the required hours, the member will not be eligible to receive the educational award. Failure to appropriately exit members and account for grant funds can adversely affect the administrative and financial status of your organization.

How do you do it?

REQUIRED	✓ Ensure that all member information for your program is complete and accurate.
	✓ Ensure that local record-keeping of AmeriCorps members' hours is accurate.
	✓ Exit all members within the 30 days of the end of the AmeriCorps members' term of service.

10 – 12 Months Community and Site Partnerships Introduction

Most AmeriCorps programs cannot be successful without the support and participation of the Service Site/s and community partners. To sustain these partnerships, you will need to perform several key tasks: conduct a final site visit, formally recognize the partners' contributions, and renew site agreements with those community partners who wish to continue their relationship with your program.

10 – 12 Months Success Checklist

✓	***COMMUNITY AND SITE PARTNERSHIPS***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Send site monitoring visit tools and site desk audit tools to all service and host sites in preparation for site monitoring visit.		
	Conduct a final site monitoring visit of all service and host sites.		
	Formally recognize the work of partnering sites and service and host sites.		
	Begin updating, revising, and renewing site agreements with partnering sites, and service and host sites.		

FINAL SITE VISIT

What is a site monitoring visit?
The final site visit provides you with a picture of the site's overall functioning. This visit can also guide future conversations related to partnering for the following program year.

Why should I be concerned with conducting a final site visit?
The final site visit allows each organization to reflect on the overall relationship, challenges or areas of conflict can be discussed, and you can determine whether previous site visit findings were resolved satisfactorily. The final site visit not only provides time and space to see how the organization is functioning, but also whether the AmeriCorps program fits well with the mission of the partnering organization.

How do I do it?
The general purpose of site visits may include one or more of the following:

SUGGESTED	✓ Assess administrative, financial, management and organizational capabilities and systems.
	✓ Identify or clarify problems, issues, or concerns.
	✓ Resolve or follow up on problems, issues, or concerns.
	✓ Monitor systems, policies, practices, or procedures.
	✓ Monitor and review compliance with grant award.
	✓ Identify technical assistance and training needs.
	✓ Provide technical assistance.
	✓ Establish a continuous improvement system for financial management and grants compliance.
	✓ Review the 4 – 6 Months Community and Site Partnership section.

SITE RECOGNITION

What is site recognition?
Celebration, acknowledgement, and thanks! It takes a lot of work to make change in a community. It is equally challenging to build an outstanding partnership. At the end of a year of service, take the opportunity to highlight and celebrate the successes of your site partners.

Why should you implement a site recognition program?
Recognition is a crucial element in maintaining a great partnership. Partners invest significant human and financial resources to build the relationships, serve the community, and support the AmeriCorps members. Show your appreciation for their effort and commitment.

How do you do it?

SUGGESTED	✓ Develop a mechanism to collect great contributions.
	✓ Budget for a year-end celebration.
	✓ Publish a newsletter to highlight great achievements.
	✓ Create an organizational award to acknowledge publicly a strong partnership.
	✓ Use the media to get the word out about your sites.
	✓ Be creative! Recognition can come in many forms.
	✓ Make it someone's job to maintain relevant information about your site partners.
	✓ Consider a recognition program as an investment in organizational and community loyalty.

10 – 12 Months Financial and Grants Management Introduction

After you have supported and celebrated your AmeriCorps members, community and site partners, volunteers, and staff throughout the year, in this final phase of your program, one of your most important set of tasks relates to the successful financial closeout of your AmeriCorps grant award. Please check your grant award, provisions, and guidance from your CNCS Program and Grants Officers closely to ensure you complete all required steps in the final phase of your program year.

10 – 12 Months Success Checklist

✓	***Financial and Grants Management***	**Scheduled**	**Completed**
	Review progress toward meeting grant match requirements.		
	Complete Federal Financial Report (FFR) and enter it in eGrants.		
	Complete financial closeout activities.		

FINANCIAL CLOSEOUT PROCESS

What is the financial closeout process?
Basically, the financial closeout process involves completing and submitting final program reports, identifying financial adjustments and payments left, inventorying and accounting for equipment and supplies purchased through the AmeriCorps grant, finalizing the financial relationship between you and any subgrantees, and submitting the final Federal Financial Report.

Why is the financial closeout process important?
The CNCS Office of Grants Management requires an annual accounting of the federal funds received. To ensure that future grant opportunities are not adversely impacted, it is imperative for your organization to complete the financial closeout obligations within 90 days from the end of the grant.

How do you do it?
- ✓ Ensure that accurate records are maintained throughout the year to account for your organization's stewardship of the grant.
- ✓ Check the grant year provisions for specific details on closeout submission requirements and deadlines.

<u>Additional Questions</u>
Who is responsible for the closeout of subgrants and what is the applicable procedure*? Each grantee is responsible for the closeout of all its subgrants. The grantee completes and signs a certification form when subgrantee closeout is completed. Only one certification is required for all subgrants that a grantee has to close. It is submitted to CNCS along with the other documents required for closeout. The procedures applicable to the closeout of a primary grant are also applicable to the closeout of a subgrant.*

To whom should a grantee send the final FFR? *The grantee should submit the final FFR in eGrants.*

What happens if a grantee is unable to meet the required match at the end of the project period? *Failure to meet the minimum percentage of local match could result in a lower adjustment of the federal award and the grantee having to refund a portion of the award to CNCS. The requirement can be waived upon request of the grantee if there is sufficient justification.*

How long does it take to complete grant closeout? *Closeout can take a few days or weeks depending on the completeness of the documents on file and the time it takes to resolve any financial or programmatic issues identified during the review.*

How long after closeout must a grantee retain grant records? *Under CNCS regulations, financial records and all other records pertinent to a grant must be retained for a period of three years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report. This requirement is included in the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions. If an audit is initiated prior to the expiration of the three-year retention period, records must be retained until audit findings involving such records have been resolved and final action taken.*

What should a grantee do if a subgrantee was discontinued and there is no one available to closeout? *The grantee is responsible for the closeout of all its subgrants. So if a subgrant is discontinued before the end of the project period, the grantee should secure all pertinent financial and programmatic reports from the subgrantee at that time. Using these reports and its own records, the grantee should be able to account for the discontinued subgrant and complete the closeout process.*