

*Due to the rapidly evolving nature of disaster response and recovery, the guidance provided in this document is subject to revision as conditions change. We will be updating this document as more information becomes available.*

**SAFETY is our top priority. Programs, especially those in southeastern coastal cities, should exercise restraint and caution and may decline to engage in any activity that they believe places members' lives or livelihoods at risk.**

**A. What requirements does OneStar have of AmeriCorps Texas programs for disaster response?**

The requirements for Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery can be found under Section XIV of the [2017 OneStar Terms & Conditions](#) of your grant. This section requires the availability of AmeriCorps Texas members to support disaster response and/or recovery efforts as needed by the State of Texas.

**B. How likely is it that our program will be activated in response to Hurricane Harvey?**

It is highly likely that programs with members serving in the Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, and Austin areas will be asked to make members available for disaster response. There is currently an urgent need for reliable, long-term emergency shelter operation support in these cities to manage the large influx of Hurricane Harvey evacuees. If you do not have members serving in these four metropolitan areas, it is not likely that your members will be required to deploy for disaster response at this time.

**C. When will OneStar begin activating the disaster requirement, and how long will members be serving on disaster response efforts?**

Members in Dallas may be activated as early as September 1, 2017, while members in Houston, San Antonio, and Austin should expect to activate as early as the week of September 4, 2017. OneStar currently does not know the exact start dates or how long member support from the AmeriCorps Texas portfolio will be needed. OneStar is working with disaster response entities to determine a duration of activation that is effective and reasonable, and your OneStar Program Officer will update you as soon as we have more information. According to the 2017 OneStar Terms & Conditions, "OneStar may require AmeriCorps members to temporarily deploy to an affected area to participate in response or recovery operations for up to 60 days" and "members will spend no more than 120 days on disaster-related activities in a given member year." OneStar will not ask members to deploy or activate for more than 60 consecutive days, but if another disaster were to occur during a term of service a member may be asked to deploy or activate again, with the total days not to exceed 120 days. At this time, OneStar does not anticipate needing members for that full duration, and will be coordinating activation needs on a week by week basis.

**D. Due to the extended nature of this recovery effort, could we extend the service beyond 60 days but have members serve fewer hours per week?**

This is an option we are willing to explore, but it will depend on the nature of the disaster recovery needs.

**E. How many AmeriCorps members will our program need to make available for disaster response efforts?**

Currently, OneStar is anticipating programs that operate in Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and Austin will be required to make 20% of their members serving in each of these four metropolitan areas available for disaster response. If you are able to send *more* than the requested 20% to help meet the enormous demand, please notify your OneStar Program Officer immediately of your members' availability.

**F. How are the AmeriCorps members selected to support disaster response?**

OneStar asks programs to identify and select members who would be most appropriate for the anticipated tasks based on their abilities, interests, and availability.

**G. (NEW!) If our program has members serving in several of the four major metropolitan areas, can we modify the ratio of members serving in each city?**

OneStar anticipates being able to accommodate these requests, but it will ultimately depend on the needs in each city.

**H. (NEW!) Can we have our members serve on a rotating schedule and distribute the obligations of the disaster requirements across more members? We can have members split time between disaster recovery work and their normal service duties in order to minimize impact on programming and to allow members to stay connected with their service sites.**

OneStar anticipates being able to accommodate this request and will do our best to make a rotation possible for programs. Our primary concern would be ensuring that all members are trained together at the outset instead of hosting multiple staggered trainings.

**I. In what types activities can AmeriCorps members expect to engage for disaster response?**

Immediate needs evolve rapidly over the course of the disaster response and recovery effort, so the activities requested of members may change drastically with little notice. At the current time, OneStar expects that most of the activated members will be participating in emergency shelter operations. Many shelters have requested support in engaging children in enrichment activities, which aligns skills and interests of many AmeriCorps Texas members. Other potential activities may include manning a volunteer reception center and managing the collection, sorting, and distribution of community donations. OneStar will NOT have members participating in disaster rescue operations.

**J. Our program's AmeriCorps members have not yet started their term of service, or they have started only very recently. Could they still be activated for the disaster requirement?**

Yes. Once your members are active and serving in one of the four targeted metropolitan areas, then it is possible that they may be activated for disaster response. OneStar is aware programs with late August/early September start dates will be limited in their capacity to activate quickly, and OneStar Program Officers will work with you to determine a reasonable arrangement. Meanwhile, please make an intentional effort to emphasize the disaster requirement to applicants and new incoming members, so they are fully aware of the expectation to serve in an alternative capacity in response to Hurricane Harvey.

**K. (NEW!) Our members have not completed their National Service Criminal History Checks. Could they still be activated for the disaster requirement?**

Yes. If members have cleared the NSOPW component and the FBI fingerprint-based component, those would likely be the two critical checks required for service at most emergency services sites.

**L. What training will be provided to members?**

If member support is requested, OneStar will ensure that members are provided with task-specific training and supervision by the governmental or nongovernmental entity that has requested support.

**M. (NEW!) How will members be supervised? Is presence of our program staff required for the duration of member shifts on disaster response?**

OneStar does not expect program staff to provide member supervision during disaster response activities. Member supervision will be provided in some form, but the supervisory structure may vary based on the member tasks and assignments. You will receive more specific details once we know where your members are being activated. Program staff may choose to join members on disaster response activities and provide supervision as permitted by the entity where members are assigned to serve.

**N. How will we know if the disaster requirement has been activated for our program, and what will the activation process look like?**

Your OneStar Program Officer will contact you directly to inform you that OneStar is activating the disaster requirement for your program and will provide details on the anticipated tasks and expectations and the number of members you are required to provide. You will then reach out to your corps and select the members to activate on the disaster response. Once the members have been identified, OneStar will refer you to the field contact at the entity that has requested support. The field contact will work with your program to coordinate trainings and set up a schedule for the activated members.

**O. (NEW!) Will members have any say in where they are placed?**

No. OneStar will provide assignments to each program. Depending on your region, your members may be asked to activate across multiple sites, in which case your program can decide internally which members to send to each location. Your OneStar Program Officer will work with you to accommodate any other special requests regarding site accessibility and member availability.

**P. What costs can our program expect to incur if our members are activated on the disaster requirement?**

OneStar does not expect programs to incur costs beyond your normal operating expenses. If you anticipate a significant increase in costs in response to the disaster requirement, please discuss these expenses with your Fiscal Grants Officer, and we will consider these scenarios on a case by case basis. If deployment is required, OneStar will cover the cost of travel and housing for members.

**Q. Will members be able to count their time in disaster response activities toward their service hours?**

Yes. If members are activated at OneStar's request, service hours spent in response to Hurricane Harvey may be counted towards the total required member hours of a given member.

**R. (NEW!) How will members track their service hours while activated on disaster response activities?**

OneStar encourages the program to have members continue to track their service hours on the program's own timekeeping system. If your program uses an electronic timekeeping system, you may want to consider creating a paper timesheet that you can use for disaster response. OneStar expects all member files to contain a complete set of timesheets documenting the member's service hours.A

**S. Can we engage our members to serve on disaster response efforts if OneStar has NOT activated our program?**

OneStar advises programs avoid displacing normal member service activities if possible and to refrain from joining the disaster response efforts until activated. However, if your members are no longer able to perform their usual duties, they may earn service hours for disaster response activities under your Extra Hours or civic engagement policies. Please remind members that they should NOT deploy to help disaster survivors on their own. While the need is great and the urge to help strong, it is imperative that members avoid impacted areas until public officials have indicated that it is safe to do so.

**T. (NEW!) Our program has a partner in the community engaged in disaster recovery, and we would like to activate members to support this partnership. Would this count toward fulfilling the OneStar disaster requirement?**

No. To fulfill the disaster requirement, your members must participate in the disaster response activities specifically assigned by OneStar. Your program is welcome to engage in additional disaster response activities beyond OneStar's disaster requirement, assuming they do not violate any AmeriCorps prohibited activities. Those activities may be counted towards service hours for your members, if doing so is in line with your program's policies and procedures.

**U. (NEW!) Will there be other opportunities for members who were not activated by OneStar to participate in one-time events or projects in addition to their normal service duties?**

It is likely we will have one-time disaster recovery events and projects available for member participation. These opportunities will likely emerge during the recovery phase, which may be many months from now. Members may also choose to serve evenings and weekends outside of their normal service duties, if it aligns with your program's approved AmeriCorps grant.

**V. Can we decline to activate members for the disaster requirement?**

No. Unless your program has requested and received an approved waiver, programs are required to comply with the disaster requirement as one of the terms and conditions of their grant funding. OneStar does give programs the flexibility to choose which members will be activated, and your OneStar Program Officer will work with you to accommodate member obligations (e.g., class schedules).

**W. (NEW!) Can our program engage staff or program alumni to fulfill the disaster requirement?**

No. The spirit of this requirement is to leverage national service resources in disaster response.

**X. (NEW!) Can we delay member activation on disaster response efforts until their pre-service orientation is complete?**

Depends. OneStar understands that you will need time with your members before activation to complete administrative tasks and provide basic training and can likely accommodate up to 1-3 days of orientation. For programs that are currently launching, OneStar encourages you to review your trainings and determine which pieces are critical, should you need to condense your regularly scheduled pre-service orientation. It is essential that all members receive training and sign their Member Service Agreements and initiate all components of their National Service Criminal History Check by their first day of service.

**Y. We will not be able to meet our Performance Measure targets if we activate members for disaster response. Will we be penalized for this?**

No. Your OneStar Program Officer will work with your program to amend or modify existing grant performance measures to reflect the activation, as appropriate and to the extent possible. Any measures that are lowered and/or unmet as a direct result of the disaster requirements will not count against the performance of your program.

**Z. (UPDATED!) Who should I contact if one of my members is adversely impacted by Hurricane Harvey?**

Please keep your OneStar Program Officer informed of members in your program whose service is impacted by Hurricane Harvey. Definitely let OneStar know if members or staff are displaced as a result of the disaster and how members' ability to serve is affected. We are compiling this information at the request of CNCS and will also provide resources and support as needed.

**AA. What should we do if our members are unable to serve due to Hurricane Harvey?**

As required in the Member Service Agreement, programs must suspend the member if the member is not serving, nor accumulating service hours for an extended period of time. If you prefer to not suspend your members, you should identify activities that can be tracked and supervised remotely that your members can perform to earn service hours. Please contact your OneStar Program Officer if you have questions about allowable remote activities.

**BB. (NEW!) Would members affected by Hurricane Harvey be allowed to exit without the required hours due to compelling personal due to them being unable to serve due to the storm?**

Yes, natural disaster would be considered a compelling personal circumstance. As with all exits for compelling personal circumstances, the member must complete at least 15% of their term and perform satisfactorily and must provide documentation in order to receive a partial education award.

**CC. (NEW!) Would members affected by Hurricane Harvey be allowed to exit without the required hours due to compelling personal due to late enrollments caused by the storm?**

OneStar is currently seeking guidance from CNCS on this question, this FAQ will be updated once we have a clear answer.

**DD. What should we do if Hurricane Harvey delayed our member start date?**

The start date listed in the Member Service Agreement, the My AmeriCorps portal, timesheets, and the living allowance schedule should all align with the day when members begin serving and

accruing service hours. If Hurricane Harvey prevented your program from launching on time, please revise all program documents to reflect the actual start date.