

Volunteer Tennessee AmeriCorps State Program Staff Handbook



www.volunteertennessee.net

(Revised on 6/7/2022)

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Volunteer Tennessee



AmeriCorps
Tennessee

Dear AmeriCorps Program Staff:

Welcome to Team Tennessee!

The mission of Volunteer Tennessee, the Governor's Commission on National and Community Service, is to encourage volunteerism and community service. The AmeriCorps program is a critical component in fulfilling that mission, and Volunteer Tennessee is excited to see AmeriCorps programs like yours meeting local human needs.

As a new program staff member, you have an exciting and challenging year ahead. There will be much to learn and roadblocks to overcome; however, the payoff of a successful AmeriCorps program will far outweigh any difficulties you will face. Tennessee has a strong history of developing outstanding leadership within AmeriCorps programs, and Volunteer Tennessee is committed to providing you with the training and technical assistance needed to be successful. As a first step in that process, this Program Director's Manual is designed to serve as a ready reference for some of the most common questions and challenges you may face. We hope that you will refer often to the sample forms, program management materials and best practices information we have collected.

If you have any questions about AmeriCorps program management or the material in this manual, please contact your Volunteer Tennessee AmeriCorps program manager or training officer. Please also feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely yours,

Jim Snell
Executive Director

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THE MISSION OF VOLUNTEER TENNESSEE IS TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

THE STATE OF TENNESSEE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, EQUAL ACCESS, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER • RECYCLED PAPER

PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

The Volunteer Tennessee AmeriCorps Program Handbook has been specifically designed as a guide for those who administer AmeriCorps State programs in Tennessee.

The Handbook has been developed to help Team Tennessee AmeriCorps program staff gain a general understanding of the management functions for overseeing AmeriCorps programs and sites and to work collaboratively with Volunteer Tennessee to make AmeriCorps State programs in Tennessee more successful.

While detailed, this document does not contain all required information for an AmeriCorps State program and should be used in conjunction with all AmeriCorps (formerly Corporation for National and Community Service) rules and regulations, Volunteer Tennessee's specific application and grant conditions, and other AmeriCorps State specific guidance. Please also note that the information contained in this handbook does not include all the legal requirements of an AmeriCorps grant. Program staff with particular questions should consult the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 12501 et seq.), the federal regulations issued under the Act (45 C.F.R. § 2500.1 et seq.), the AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants, the AmeriCorps General Grant Terms and Conditions, AmeriCorps State and National Policy FAQs, Volunteer Tennessee's grant Terms and Conditions, and relevant state law.

It is important that sub-grantees become familiar with all the information contained in this handbook. The program handbook will be revised as needed. Revisions will be posted to Volunteer Tennessee's website and announced to AmeriCorps program staff. However, it is the responsibility of each Program Director to stay up-to-date and abide by all changes to policies and procedures. Volunteer Tennessee recommends that the program pull the most recent version of the handbook from the website each time it must be referenced.

For questions, comments, or concerns regarding this document, contact your assigned AmeriCorps Program Manager at Volunteer Tennessee.

1. NATIONAL SERVICE



Bring Out the Best of America



270,000

members and volunteers



40,000

locations across the country



1.1 million+

AmeriCorps alumni

AmeriCorps is the only federal agency tasked with elevating service and volunteerism in America. We provide opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to give their time and talent to strengthen communities across our country.

SERVE

Join a network of more than one million strong. Enrich your life and the lives of others while learning valuable skills and earning benefits for your service. No matter where you're from or what you're passionate about, AmeriCorps is your chance to bring out the best of America.

PARTNER

Join over 2,000 nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations dedicated to strengthening communities. Each year, AmeriCorps provides organizations with the people power and resources to meet their communities' most pressing challenges.

A Cornerstone of Our National Culture

By bringing people together to serve communities, AmeriCorps is making service to others an indispensable part of the American experience.

We offer individuals and organizations flexible ways to make a local impact through our programs: State and National, VISTA, NCCC, Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, RSVP, and Volunteer Generation Fund, along with initiatives including 9/11 and MLK Day of Service.



AmeriCorps Seniors

AmeriCorps Seniors highlights the service opportunities available to Americans 55 and older who want to make giving back their second act.





Introduction to AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps, a federal agency, brings people together to tackle the country's most pressing challenges, through national service and volunteering. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities. AmeriCorps helps make service to others a cornerstone of our national culture.

In 2020, the federal agency responsible for AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs, the Corporation for National and Community Service officially became 'AmeriCorps' in the first major update to the agency's identity in a quarter century. As part of this rebranding initiative, all national service programs are united under a unified AmeriCorps identity and promoted under the AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps Seniors banner.

Every year, more than 270,000 AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve with organizations working in more than 40,000 locations nationwide to tackle the nation's most pressing challenges. Last year in Tennessee, more than 5,000 Americans of all ages and backgrounds united to meet local needs, strengthen communities, and expand opportunity through national service in Tennessee. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve at locations across Tennessee, including schools, food banks, homeless shelters, health clinics, youth centers, veteran facilities, and other nonprofit and faith-based organizations

Members help communities tackle pressing problems while mobilizing millions of volunteers for the organizations they serve. They gain valuable professional, educational, and life benefits, and the experience has a lasting impact on the members and communities they serve.

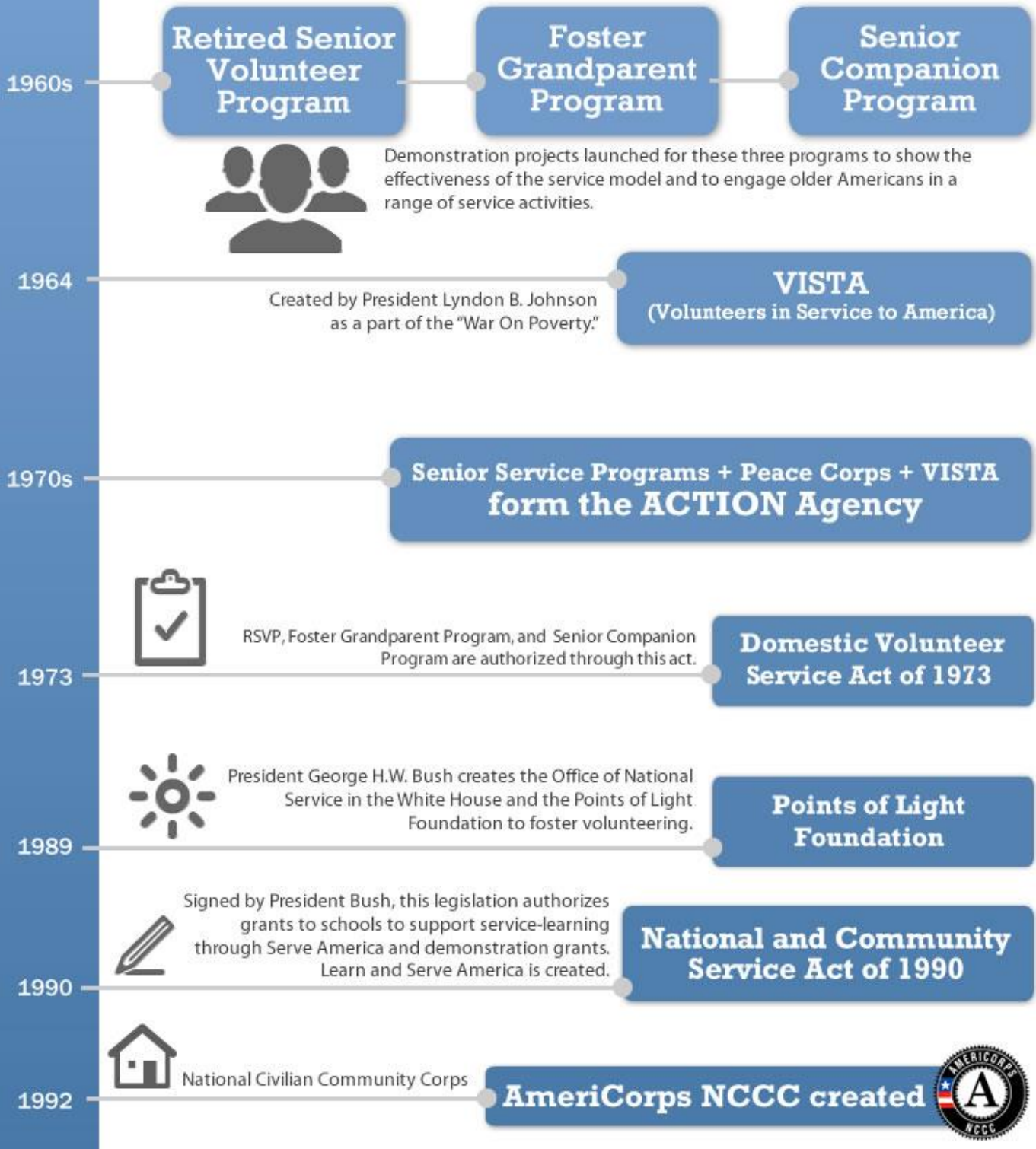
AmeriCorps' core programs include: AmeriCorps State and National, whose members serve with national and local nonprofit and community groups; AmeriCorps VISTA, through which members serve full time fighting poverty; AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), a team-based residential program for young adults 18-24 who carry out projects in public safety, the environment, youth development, and disaster relief and preparedness; and the AmeriCorps Seniors programs, which taps the skills, talents, and experience of Americans aged 55 and older to meet a wide range of community challenges through three programs: RSVP, the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program.

The bipartisan Edward M. Kennedy *Serve America Act* focused AmeriCorps' efforts in six key areas: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families. To strengthen accountability, AmeriCorps programs are required to demonstrate their impact using standard performance measures.

AmeriCorps is also responsible for administering grants and service through the Volunteer Generation Fund, Martin Luther King (MLK) Day of Service, and the 9/11 Day of Service.

For more information about the history of National Service and AmeriCorps, please visit [AmeriCorps.gov](https://www.americorps.gov).

History of National Service



1993

Corporation for National and Community Service created

Corporation for
NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE 

AmeriCorps created; Senior Corps incorporates the three senior-focused programs: RSVP, Foster Grandparents, and Senior Companions.



AmeriCorps incorporates VISTA and NCCC

AmeriCorps created



1994

King Holiday and Service Act of 1994

Congress establishes MLK Day as a day of service.



2002



After 9/11, President George W. Bush asks all Americans to devote **two years or 4,000 hours to volunteer service** during their lifetimes.

2002 State of the Union Address

2006



Launched by CNCS to honor the nation's top colleges and universities for their commitment to community service, civic engagement, and service-learning.

President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll

2007



Officially launched in May 2007

First AmeriCorps Week

2009



April 21, 2009: President Obama signs bipartisan law to expand and strengthen national service programs.

Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act signed

First September 11th Day of Service and Remembrance held



2010



Ensures that high-impact nonprofits are able to attract the resources they need to grow and improve the economic, education and health prospects of low-income communities.

Social Innovation Fund launched

2011



The plan details the specific objectives, strategies, and performance measures that determine how CNCS will evaluate success during the next five years.

5-Year Strategic Plan

2012

An innovative new partnership designed to strengthen the nation's ability to respond to and recover from disasters while expanding career opportunities for young people.

FEMA Corps launched



2014

CNCS held a nationwide swearing-in ceremony on September 14th to commemorate 20 years of AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps 20th Anniversary



2016

AmeriCorps passed the 1 million member milestone.

1 Million AmeriCorps Members

2019

AmeriCorps 25th Anniversary



CNCS becomes AmeriCorps, Senior Corps becomes AmeriCorps Seniors and there is a new logo.

2020

AmeriCorps launches new logo and branding



2020

AmeriCorps partners with the CDC to award \$80 million support the recruitment, training, and development of a new generation of public health leaders.

AmeriCorps steps up to support communities impacted by COVID-19

2022

Public Health AmeriCorps grants awarded



AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps Pledge to Get Things Done

I will get things done for America – to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier.

I will bring Americans together to strengthen our communities.

Faced with apathy, I will take action.

Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground.

Faced with adversity, I will persevere.

I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond.

I am an AmeriCorps member, and I will get things done.



Volunteer Tennessee

encouraging volunteerism and community service

Volunteer Tennessee is a 25-member, bi-partisan commission appointed by the Governor. Its mission is to encourage volunteerism and community service. The agency manages over \$5 million in grants and training services to support AmeriCorps programs and volunteer centers across the state. Since 1994, Volunteer Tennessee and its programs have leveraged \$89 million in federal funds with \$87 million in local match, and 13,000 Tennessee AmeriCorps members have served over 26 million hours meeting critical needs for tens of thousands of Tennesseans.

Volunteer Statistics

* Tennessee's **1.65 million** volunteers gave **137.7 million hours of service** last year, contributing the equivalent of **\$3.3 billion** to Tennessee's economy.

* The 2018 *Volunteering in America* report ranked Tennessee 31st in the nation for the percentage of residents who volunteer in their communities. Volunteer Tennessee would like to see us do better.

* In Tennessee, over **5,000 people** participate in national service each year through **700 local service sites**. AmeriCorps committed more than **\$22 million** in 2021 to support Tennessee communities.



Disaster Response

Volunteer Tennessee is the lead state agency for volunteers and donations under the Tennessee Emergency Management Plan. Volunteer Tennessee staff partners with Tennessee Emergency Management Association to create and manage volunteer reception centers in times of disaster. Volunteer Tennessee's support includes, but is not limited to.

- December 2021 – Middle Tennessee Severe Weather
- August 2021 – Severe Weather and Flooding affecting Middle Tennessee
- December 2020 – Nashville Explosion Recovery
- March 2020 – Middle Tennessee Tornadoes
- March 2020 – Covid-19 Relief (ongoing)
- December 2016 – Sevier County Wildfire relief

Emergency preparedness information and recovery resources can also be found on our website.



Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards

The Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards recognizes exemplary youth and adult volunteers across the State. Last year's event was a great success with **115 volunteers** recognized from **70 counties** and over 350 people in attendance.

Volunteer Tennessee organizes and implements the program in consultation with county mayors and local coordinators. The 2022 event is scheduled for April 2, 2023 in Franklin, TN.



AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is a strong network of local programs connecting over 70,000 Americans in intensive service to meet critical, community-identified needs in disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families.

During the 2021-22 program year, Volunteer Tennessee administered more than **\$6 million in AmeriCorps grants** to local non-profit agencies. Throughout the state, **approximately 1,000 AmeriCorps members** accomplished the following:

- * provide classroom academic performance improvement for **24,112 students** in low-performing schools.
- * provide vision screening to **13,000 pre-school children**.
- * facilitate environmental education to **3,750 individuals** to increase their environmental stewardship awareness.
- * provide access to appropriate housing and improved work-readiness for **6,750 economically disadvantaged individuals**.
- * assist **200 frail senior citizens** to increase vitality and live independently at home;
- * improve school readiness for **324 Head Start children**.



TN Conference on Volunteerism & Service-Learning

In 2010, Volunteer Tennessee, with its partners Tennessee Campus Compact, State Farm and the Corporation for National and Community Service Tennessee State Office, convened the first-ever statewide conference on volunteerism and service-learning. Since then, the Tennessee Conference on Volunteerism and Service-Learning has continued to bring together the best civic leaders across the state to share innovative ways to encourage volunteerism and provide a solid infrastructure for people to serve. The Conference aims to increase service and volunteerism across Tennessee as a means of problem-solving throughout all stages of life.



Service-Learning

Service-learning is a teaching methodology that combines hands-on learning with community service. For example, a science class learning about water quality can apply classroom instruction to cleaning up a local stream.

- * Volunteer Tennessee works in partnership with Metro Nashville Public Schools to provide service-learning training to teachers in Davidson County.
- * Research shows that service-learning is especially effective in improving grades, attendance and behavior among at-risk youth. Service-learning is a great, low-cost strategy to keep students focused and in school.
- * Our 25 expert State Farm service-learning trainers can deliver quality service-learning trainings across Tennessee. This diverse group of trainers has experience in K-12 schools, community-based agencies and higher education institutions. The goal of this cohort of trainers is to build the capacity for service-learning as a strategy in Tennessee.



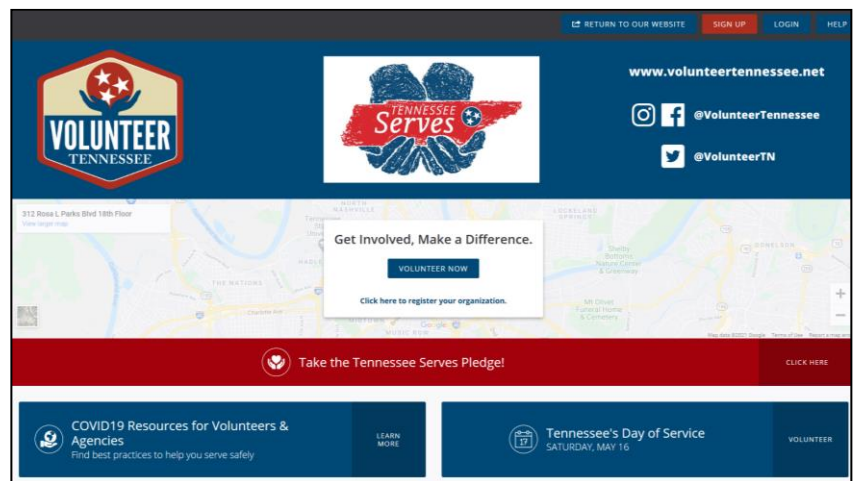
A rigorous scientific evaluation involving 1,100 TN students revealed the following benefits of service-learning:

1. Students reduced school absences by 52 percent.
2. Students improved academically by as much as one letter grade.
3. Students reported positive lifestyle changes as a result of service-learning.
4. Students reported lower alcohol consumption after participating in service-learning.
5. Students increased their attitudes about being a leader and making a difference at school and in their communities.

Tennessee Serves Network

The Tennessee Serves Network is a statewide collaboration of volunteer centers dedicated to bringing people and community together through an online volunteer portal. In partnership with the Office of the First Lady Maria Lee, the Tennessee Serves Network Portal was launched on May 20, 2021.

Potential volunteers can search and find volunteer needs in their local communities. Community agencies can post their most current volunteer opportunities and request volunteer assistance based on skills and interests.



Volunteer Tennessee

William R. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue, 18th Floor Tennessee Tower
www.volunteertennessee.net
www.americorps.gov

The mission of Volunteer Tennessee is to encourage volunteerism and community service.



Affiliation with AmeriCorps and Branding Compliance

As an AmeriCorps sub-grantee, you are required to display the AmeriCorps logo and make sure your website, media materials, and other relevant items reflect your association with AmeriCorps. To help ensure programs are branding compliant, a Branding Compliance and Checklist guide is included in the handbook.

Additional Branding Resources include:

- [Volunteer Tennessee' Branding Guide](#)-Volunteer Tennessee has created a guide to help programs with meeting branding requirements and all other aspects of communicating what your program and members are getting done.
- [Communication resources | AmeriCorps](#)- Here you will find downloadable logos, Guidelines, a link to order gear and additional resources. In 2020, AmeriCorps launched a new logo and branding guidelines.
- All programs should review these [AmeriCorps Branding Guidelines](#) to ensure they are following the most current branding protocol, using the logo correctly, and for guidance on member uniforms.

Program Branding Compliance

Strong National Service branding raises the visibility of your organization and your organization's connection to National Service. Raising awareness of the work your program does is beneficial for recruitment, funding, and organizational sustainability.

AmeriCorps branding is also a requirement that AmeriCorps State programs must adhere to upon accepting AmeriCorps funds from AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee.

Quick Guide to AmeriCorps Branding Requirements

Here is a compilation of branding requirements included in various documents. Make sure your program and service sites are aware of these.

From the Tennessee AmeriCorps State 2022 NOFO:

- **Note that all funded programs will be required to prominently display the Volunteer Tennessee and AmeriCorps logos on printed and electronic materials related to the grant.**

- **E. Supplies**

AmeriCorps members must wear an AmeriCorps logo on a daily basis – preferably clothing with the AmeriCorps logo. The item with the AmeriCorps logo is a required budget expense. Please include the cost of the item with the AmeriCorps logo in your budget or explain how your program will be providing the item to AmeriCorps members without using grant funds. Grantees may add the AmeriCorps logo to their own local program uniform items using federal funds. Please note that your program will be using the AmeriCorps logo in the budget description.

Include the amount of funds to purchase consumable supplies and materials, including member service gear and equipment that does not fit the definition above. You must individually list any single item costing \$1,000 or more. Except for safety equipment, grantees may only charge the cost of member service gear to the federal share if it

includes the AmeriCorps logo. All safety gear may be charged to the federal share, regardless of whether it includes the AmeriCorps logo. All other service gear must be purchased with non-AmeriCorps funds.

Below is a branding checklist, and we've also put together a quick guide to the various branding requirements. Please note that these are minimum branding requirements, and keep in mind that national service branding can be beneficial in so many ways.

The beginning of the program year (or grant cycle) is a great time to inventory your properties and materials to ensure that they appropriately reflect your national service affiliation. Please use the checklist below and make sure your organization's communications team, your AmeriCorps members and your service sites are aware of the requirements.

Program Branding Checklist

Web/Digital Documents

- AmeriCorps logo prominently displayed on the front page of the organization's website.
- AmeriCorps standard language on website pages.
- Volunteer Tennessee logo on website pages and printed materials related to the grant.
- AmeriCorps logo on newsletter and other digital communications.
- AmeriCorps logo on print materials and other collateral.
- AmeriCorps logo visible in recruitment brochures, on-line position postings or other recruitment materials, and photos and videos used for outreach and recruitment.
- AmeriCorps language included in press releases and public documents.
- Hashtag and handle (@AmeriCorps, @volunteertennessee) used when posting to social media.

Sites and Members

- AmeriCorps logo on all service gear (clothing, badges, buttons, etc.).
- Members wear clearly recognizable gear while performing service and at official AmeriCorps events.
- AmeriCorps logo prominently displayed on signage at events.
- "AmeriCorps Serving Here" signs or banners at service sites.
- AmeriCorps members and staff prepped with both elevator speech and impact story for meetings, public events, service projects, etc.

From the Grant Contract Between the Volunteer Tennessee and Subgrantees:

D.13. Public Notice. All notices, informational pamphlets, press releases, research reports, signs, and similar public notices prepared and released by the Grantee in relation to this Grant Contract shall include the statement, "This project is funded under a Grant Contract with the State of Tennessee, Volunteer Tennessee." All notices by the Grantee in relation to this Grant Contract shall be approved by the State.



From 2022 Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants:

III. AFFILIATION WITH THE AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE NETWORK

A. Identification as an AmeriCorps Program or Member. Recipients and subrecipients shall identify their programs or projects as AmeriCorps programs. All agreements with subrecipients, operating sites, or service locations, related to the AmeriCorps program must explicitly state that the program is an AmeriCorps program. Similarly, recipients and subrecipients shall identify all national service members serving in their programs AmeriCorps members.

B. The [FY 2021 GENERAL GRANT AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT TERMS \(americorps.gov\)](https://www.americorps.gov) contain all requirements for recognition of AmeriCorps Support.

From 2022 GENERAL GRANT AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

III.H. RECOGNITION OF AMERICORPS SUPPORT

- 1. General Statement.** Recipients and subrecipients of federal agency AmeriCorps assistance or resources shall identify their programs, projects or initiatives as AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps Seniors programs or projects accordingly. All agreements with subrecipients, operating sites, or service locations, related to AmeriCorps programs and initiatives must explicitly state that the program is an AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps Seniors program. Similarly, recipients and subrecipients shall identify all national service members or volunteers serving at their programs, projects or initiatives as either AmeriCorps members, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, Day of Service volunteers or where appropriate for Volunteer Generation Fund simply “volunteers.”
- 2. Visual Representations and Prominent Display.** Recipients shall identify their programs, projects, or initiatives, and their members or volunteers, through the use of visual representations, including: logos; insignias; written acknowledgements, publications and other written materials; websites and social media platforms; and service gear such as clothing. All visual representations must follow current AmeriCorps branding guidelines, which include proper logo use and cobranding requirements. To provide recipients technical assistance in ensuring compliance with proper logo use and cobranding requirements, AmeriCorps provides brand guidelines, to which recipients and subrecipients should refer and follow. The brand guidelines are available at www.americorps.gov/brand-resources.

All recipient and subrecipient websites and social media communications shall clearly state, as appropriate, that they are an AmeriCorps recipient or funded by a grant from AmeriCorps, and shall prominently display the AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps Seniors logo. Recipients and subrecipients shall prominently display the AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps Seniors, or appropriate AmeriCorps Day of Service name and logo on all service gear and public materials, in accordance with AmeriCorps’ requirements. Public materials are defined in the branding toolkit.

- 3. Acknowledgement and Disclaimer on Published Materials.** The appropriate AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps Seniors logo shall be included on publications related to an award of AmeriCorps assistance or resources. An

acknowledgement and disclaimer shall be displayed on all reports and other published materials based upon work supported by the award. The acknowledgement and disclaimer may contain language the same as or similar to:

This material is based upon work supported by AmeriCorps under Grant No(s) []. Opinions or points of view expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of, or a position that is endorsed by, AmeriCorps.

- 4. Brand Identification Through Publicity.** Recipients shall provide information or training to their AmeriCorps members, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, Day of Service volunteers, or Volunteer Generation Fund volunteers about how their programs, projects or initiatives are part of AmeriCorps. Recipients are strongly encouraged to place signs that include the AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps Seniors name and logo, or the appropriate AmeriCorps version of the Day of Service logo at all their service sites and may use the slogan “AmeriCorps Serving Here” or “AmeriCorps Seniors Serving Here,” as appropriate. When AmeriCorps members and programs or AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers and programs are publicized – including but not limited to public speaking opportunities, press releases, news stories, blog posts, websites, social media posts, online videos, public service announcements, paid advertising, brochures and other communications channels – individuals must be identified as AmeriCorps members or AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, while programs should be identified as AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps Seniors programs or projects and, where possible, appropriate logos must be displayed.
- 5. Alteration of Brand Identities Prohibited Without AmeriCorps Written Permission.** Recipients may not alter the AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps Seniors logos or other AmeriCorps branding and must obtain written permission from AmeriCorps before using the AmeriCorps name or logo, or the AmeriCorps Seniors name or logo on materials that will be sold. Recipients must also obtain written permission from AmeriCorps before permitting donors to use the AmeriCorps name or logo, or the AmeriCorps Seniors name or logo in promotional materials.
- 6. Prohibited Use or Display of Names and Logos for Certain Activities.** The recipient or subrecipient may not use or display the AmeriCorps name or logo, or the AmeriCorps Seniors name or logo in connection with any activity prohibited by statute or regulation, including any political activities.

III.N. IDENTIFICATION OF FUNDING

When issuing statements, press releases, requests for proposals, bid solicitations and other documents describing projects or programs funded in whole or in part with Federal money, all grantees receiving AmeriCorps funds included, shall clearly state— (1) the percentage of the total costs of the program or project which will be financed with Federal money; (2) the dollar amount of Federal funds for the project or program; and (3) the percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the project or program that will be financed by non-governmental sources.

III.O. AWARD PRODUCTS

- 1. Sharing Award Products.** To the extent practicable, the recipient agrees to make products produced under the award available at the cost of reproduction to others in the field.
- 2. Acknowledgment of Support.** Publications created by members, volunteers or award-funded staff must be consistent with the purposes of the award. The appropriate program AmeriCorps logo shall be included on such documents. The recipient is responsible for assuring that the following acknowledgment and disclaimer appears in any external report or publication of material based upon work supported by this award:

“This material is based upon work supported by AmeriCorps, the operating name of the Corporation for National and Community Service, under Grant No. _____. Opinions or points of view expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of, or a position that is endorsed by, or [the relevant AMERICORPS Program].”

From AmeriCorps State and National Policy Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

D. 1. What is the policy regarding the purchase of member service gear?

Grantees are encouraged to provide the basic AmeriCorps service gear package for each member (t-shirt, sweatshirt, hat, lapel pin). The grantee should direct members to wear their service gear at officially designated AmeriCorps events and may allow members to wear their service gear at other times consistent with Corporation guidelines. All member service gear purchased with federal funds is required to include the AmeriCorps logo.

From the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR):

45 CFR §2520.65 - What activities are prohibited in AmeriCorps subtitle C programs?

(b) Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-Corporation funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.

45 CFR §2522.100 - What are the minimum requirements that every AmeriCorps program, regardless of type, must meet?

(n) Agree to identify the program, through the use of logos, common application materials, and other means (to be specified by the Corporation), as part of a larger national effort and to participate in other activities such as common opening ceremonies (including the administration of a national oath or affirmation), service days, and conferences designed to promote a national identity for all AmeriCorps programs and participants, including those participants not receiving AmeriCorps educational awards. This provision does not preclude an AmeriCorps program from continuing to use its own name as the primary identification, or from using its name, logo, or other identifying materials on uniforms or other items.

45 CFR §2540.500 What definition applies to this subpart?

National Service Insignia. For this subpart, *national service insignia* means the former and current seal, logos, names, or symbols of the Corporation's programs, products, or services, including those for AmeriCorps, VISTA, Learn and Serve America, Senior Corps, Foster Grandparents, the Senior Companion Program, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, the National Civilian Community Corps, and any other program or project that the Corporation administers. This consolidated document is a reference to facilitate searching for particular topics. While efforts are made to keep information current, please consult the primary sources for the most up-to-date information and for confirmation.

45 CFR §2540.510 What are the restrictions on using national service insignia?

The national service insignia are owned by the Corporation and only may be used as authorized. The national service insignia may not be used by non-federal entities for fundraising purposes or in a manner that suggests Corporation endorsement.

45 CFR §2540.520 What are the consequences for unauthorized use of the Corporation's national service insignia?

Any person who uses the national service insignia without authorization may be subject to legal action for trademark infringement, enjoined from continued use, and, for certain types of unauthorized uses, other civil or criminal penalties may apply.

45 CFR §2540.530 Are there instances where an insignia may be used without getting the approval of the Corporation?

All uses of the national service insignia require the written approval of the Corporation.

45 CFR §2540.540 Who has authority to approve use of national service insignia?

Approval for limited uses may be provided through the terms of a written grant or other agreement. All other uses must be approved in writing by the director of the Corporation's Office of Public Affairs, or his or her designee.

45 CFR §2540.550 Is there an expiration date on approvals for use of national service insignia?

The approval to use a national service insignia will expire as determined in writing by the director of the Office of Public Affairs, or his or her designee. However, the authority to use an insignia may be revoked at any time if the Corporation

determines that the use involved is injurious to the image of the Corporation or if there is a failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the authorization.

45 CFR §2540.560 How do I renew authority to use a national service insignia?

Requests for renewed authority to use an insignia must follow the procedures for initial approval as set out in §2540.540.

Crafting an Elevator Speech

Minnesota Literacy Council AmeriCorps*VISTA

Definition: An elevator speech/pitch is a brief summary that succinctly defines a product, service, or organization and its value. The name comes from the idea that this summary should be delivered in the time span of a typical elevator ride – approximately 30 seconds to 3 minutes.

Components & Tips: Elevator speeches can vary a lot depending on the goal, audience, and circumstances but they should all contain the following elements.

- Pertinent Facts – The five W’s: Who, What, Where, Why, How
- Sparkle – What makes your organization/service/product compelling or unique
- Impact – Statistics and stories that show results
- Simplicity – Jargon-free language that anyone can understand
- Passion – Show that you care about what you’re pitching
- Flexibility – Use a framework but adjust your speech to your audience
- Preparation – Practice your speech and ask for feedback

Crafting the Pitch: Answering the following questions will help you craft your own speech.

1. What are you trying to achieve? (i.e. recruit volunteers/clients, build new partnerships, inform others about your organization)
2. Who is your audience? (i.e. potential volunteers/clients, area schools/businesses, community members)
3. What is your position and your organization?
4. Why does your organization do what it does? (i.e. what need does it fill and why is this important to your audience?)
5. Where is your organization located? What population does it serve?

6. What does your organization do?

7. What makes your organization unique? What benefit do you deliver?

8. How does your organization do what it does?

9. Why are you passionate about what you do and what your organization does?

10. What is your “ask”? (i.e. How can people get involved or what could you do with additional support?)

3-30-3 Exercise: We can usually find plenty of things to say about what we do or who we work for. The hard part can be editing down our speeches, which is where the 3-30-3 exercise comes in. This exercise asks you to craft a three minute speech, a thirty second speech, and a three second speech. Give it a try!

Say it in three minutes: (Provides a more thorough explanation and includes impact stories)

Example: My name is Krista, and I am an AmeriCorps*VISTA volunteer coordinator for the East Side Learning Center, a children’s literacy nonprofit in St. Paul. 75% of kids who don’t read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade continue to struggle in school and beyond. An estimated 6,000 children in St. Paul need extra reading support but many families can’t afford private tutors. The ESLC provides free one-on-one tutoring in reading for low-income Kindergarten to 4th grade children who don’t read at grade level. Each child in our program receives personalized lesson plans written for them by licensed teachers and tutoring three to four days per week with a trained volunteer or professional tutor. With the help of 220 volunteers we served 214 children at three school sites last year, providing over 12,000 hours of tutoring! I love seeing the kids in our program discover a passion for reading. One boy in our program really struggled with reading, but last spring, thanks to the support of his tutors, he is now reading beyond grade level and enjoys bringing books home! The ESLC has expanded to five schools this year but in order to continue changing children’s lives, we are looking for more volunteers. Have you ever considered tutoring?

Say it in thirty seconds: (Provides a succinct overview with a hook to spur further conversation)

Example: I'm an AmeriCorps*VISTA volunteer coordinator for a children's literacy nonprofit in St. Paul. An estimated 6,000 children in St. Paul need extra reading support but many families can't afford private tutors. The East Side Learning Center provides free one-on-one tutoring in reading for low-income Kindergarten to 4th grade children who don't read at grade level. Each child in our program receives personalized lesson plans written for them by licensed teachers and tutoring three to four days per week with a trained volunteer or professional tutor. Last year we provided over 12,000 hours of tutoring to 214 children at three school sites with the help of 220 volunteers! Here's my card. If you'd like to see what we do, check out our website.

Say it in three seconds: (An interesting phrase or short sentence that captures what you do)

Example: The East Side Learning Center changes children's lives one book at a time.

Resources:

- <http://www.nonprofitcms.org/building-a-good-elevator-pitch-for-your-nonprofit/>
- <http://pj.news.chass.ncsu.edu/?p=26718>
- <http://www.bloomberg.com/bw/stories/2007-06-18/the-perfect-elevator-pitchbusinessweek-business-news-stock-market-and-financial-advice>
- <http://www.buzzuka.com>.

2. PROGRAM AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT



MANAGING AN AMERICORPS PROGRAM: A Program Director's Role

AmeriCorps Program Directors provide the management and leadership of local AmeriCorps programs. The Program Director is generally responsible for everything from recruiting AmeriCorps members to developing community partnerships. You should be prepared to play various roles and utilize a variety of skills to accomplish the tasks needed to operate a successful AmeriCorps program.

As an AmeriCorps Program Director, you should make sure you have the following skills and experience:

- ✓ Ability to multi-task and meet various deadlines
- ✓ Comfort speaking in public
- ✓ Ability to work alongside and manage diverse personalities, abilities (including persons with disabilities), backgrounds and work styles
- ✓ Leadership skills
- ✓ Time management
- ✓ Basic AmeriCorps financial management
- ✓ Conflict resolution
- ✓ Report writing
- ✓ Stress management

GET THINGS DONE

- Achieve outcomes
- Make a difference in community
- Generate volunteers

SUPPORT TEAM TENNESSEE

- Participate in conferences and events
- Take statewide leadership role
- Don't consistently challenge Volunteer Tennessee

STRONG ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS

- Strong timekeeping system
- Complete member files
- Accurate data collection on performance measures
- Timely member forms in eGrants
- High quality reporting
- Meet deadlines
- Website info updated

GREAT LEADERSHIP

- Program Director invested in program
- Program Director knows and understands Grant Terms and Conditions
- Adequate program staffing and good member supervision
- Contact Volunteer Tennessee with problems or questions
- Respond to Volunteer Tennessee requests
- Positive motivation (no burnout)
- Professional development

TRAIN MEMBERS WELL

- Pre-service orientation and ongoing member training
- Members know goals and objectives
- Members competent in service area
- Citizenship/civic engagement training
- Member identity
- Ethic of service

STRONG PROGRAM DESIGN

- Meet compelling need
- Incorporate community feedback
- Incorporate member suggestions for improvement
- Adapt to changing community needs
- Diverse corps

STRONG FISCAL SYSTEMS

- No audit findings
- Few compliance issues identified
- Strong grant application budget

KEEP MEMBERS HAPPY

- Quality member experience
- *Esprit de corps*
- Low member attrition
- Member morale/motivation
- Member recognition
- Few member complaints and grievances

STRONG EXTERNAL SUPPORT

- Supportive host agency
- Strong Board
- Adequate match
- Good partners
- Presence appreciated in community
- Collaboration with other AmeriCorps programs
- Sustainability

Prohibited Activities by AmeriCorps Members

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or, staff and members may not engage in the following activities (see 45 CFR § 2520.65):

1. Attempting to influence legislation;
2. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
3. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
4. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
5. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
6. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
7. 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, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization.
8. Providing a direct benefit to—
 - a. A business organized for profit;
 - b. A labor union;
 - c. A partisan political organization;
 - d. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
 - e. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph C. 7. above, unless AmeriCorps assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
9. Conducting a voter registration drive or using AmeriCorps funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
10. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
11. Such other activities as AmeriCorps may prohibit.

In addition to the above activities, the below activities are additionally prohibited:

Census Activities. AmeriCorps members and volunteers associated with AmeriCorps grants may not engage in census activities during service hours. Being a census taker during service hours is categorically prohibited. Census-related activities (e.g., promotion of the Census, education about the

importance of the Census) do not align with AmeriCorps State and National objectives. What members and volunteers do on their own time is up to them, consistent with program policies about outside employment and activities.

Election and Polling Activities. AmeriCorps member may not provide services for election or polling locations or in support of such activities.

AmeriCorps members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non- AmeriCorps funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing engaging in any of the above activities on their personal time.

All locations where members serve should post a list of the prohibited activities, when possible.

Taken from 2022 Terms and Conditions for AMERICORPS STATE and NATIONAL GRANTS, pp. 6-7.
<https://www.americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/2022ASNProgram508TC.pdf>.



Documents That Guide Our Work

Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants

These AmeriCorps Grant Program Specific Terms and Conditions and the General Terms and Conditions, are binding on the recipient.

Users will find their Terms and Conditions for a particular grant using this link and examining the list of Program Types and the associated Grant Award Federal Fiscal Year.

<https://www.americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/directs-territories-tribes>

Uniform Guidance Relevant to AmeriCorps

Grants under this program are subject to the applicable [Cost Principles](#), [Administrative Requirements](#), and [Audit Requirements](#) required under the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

Code of Federal Regulations for AmeriCorps

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is a codification (arrangement of) the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government.

www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?ID=9e5466ae66b0b60241f448502b41433b&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title45/45chapterXXV.tpl

Serve America Act

On April 21, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act. The Serve America Act reauthorized and expanded national service programs administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps) by amending the National and Community Service Act of 1990 and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973.

<https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/statutes-regulations>

Notices of Funding Availability

The AmeriCorps provides grants to national and local nonprofits, schools, government agencies, faith-based and community organizations, and other groups committed to strengthening their communities through volunteering.

Current and Archived AmeriCorps funding opportunities can be found at:

<https://americorps.gov/partner/funding-opportunities>

Volunteer Tennessee AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunities can be found at:
<https://www.tn.gov/volunteer-tennessee/vt-funds/vt-funding-opportunities.html>



Volunteer Tennessee



AmeriCorps
Tennessee

TO: AmeriCorps Program Directors
 DATE: June 14, 2022
 FROM: Volunteer Tennessee
 RE: Reporting Requirements for 2022-2023 Program Year

Below are the reporting deadlines for the 2022-2023 program year. Please review these dates carefully.

All Financial Status Reports (FSR), Progress Reports, and Performance Data Elements Report must be submitted via email to the AmeriCorps Program Managers. If at any time you find that you cannot submit a report by the deadline, you may submit a written request for an extension. Extension requests must be received **BEFORE** the due date.

The following charts outline FSR, progress reporting, and performance data elements report requirements. If you have any questions about expectations for 2021-2022 reporting, please contact your program officer.

Financial Status Reports: Due via email by 3:00 p.m. Central Time.

Due Date	Period Covered
October 14, 2022	August 1, 2022 – September 30, 2022
January 13, 2023	October 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022
April 14, 2023	January 1, 2023 – March 31, 2023
July 14, 2023	April 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023
October 13, 2023*	July 1, 2023 – September 30, 2023
January 31, 2024	October 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

*Current programs with August/September start dates should submit two FSRs for July 1 – September 30, 2023: one for the 2022-2023 program year and one for the 2023-2024 program year.

Progress Reports: Due via e-mail by 3:00 p.m. Central Time.

Due Date	Period Covered
July 7, 2023	August 1, 2022 – May 31, 2023
November 15, 2023	June 1, 2023 – October 31, 2023
January 31, 2024	November 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023**

**All programs must submit a Final Progress Report within 30 days of their program’s end date if the September 30, 2023 progress report is not marked “final.”

Performance Data Elements Report: Due via e-mail by 3:00 p.m. Central Time.

Due Date	Period Covered
October 13, 2023	October 1, 2022 – September 31, 2023

WILLIAM R. SNODGRASS TENNESSEE TOWER · 312 ROSA L. PARKS AVENUE, 18TH FLOOR · NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-1102
PHONE: VOICE (615) 253-8585 · FAX (615) 741-1789

WWW.VOLUNTEERTENNESSEE.NET

THE MISSION OF VOLUNTEER TENNESSEE IS TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNITY SERVICE



PROGRESS REPORTING TIPS

- ✓ Ensure that host site/service location data is submitted to you in sufficient time to report to Volunteer Tennessee by the established due date.
- ✓ Ensure that all submission information is completed in the Demographics section.
- ✓ Indicate whether or not the report is your final report for the year. Marking the report as final means that all members have completed their service requirements, all program activities have been completed, and final data is included for all performance measures.
- ✓ For each Performance Measure, indicate the *actual* number of MSY and the number of slots who spent time on the activity.
 - Keep in mind that the total number of MSY should be equal to the number of MSY enrolled in your program during the reporting period.
 - If the number of MSY or members who spent time on the activity varies from the number projected in your application, include an explanation in the “progress toward target” narrative box for the measure.
- ✓ For each Performance Measure, report the actual number of output or outcome units completed to date and indicate whether the target has been met, is ongoing, or has not been met.
 - If the actual output or outcome exceeds the target, include an explanation in the “progress toward target” narrative box.
 - If a measure is not on track to be met at the time of the mid-year report, describe the reasons in the “progress toward target” narrative box for the measure and include any corrective actions being implemented in the effort to meet the target.
 - If a measure is unexpectedly not met by the end of the program year, describe the reasons (including why it was not foreseeable at the time of the mid-year report) and any corrective actions being implemented to ensure that targets are met in future years in the “progress toward target” narrative box.
- ✓ Please respond to each question in the Narratives section of the report. Keep in mind that this information is extremely helpful as Volunteer Tennessee works to support programs, share your successes with stakeholders, and represent the challenges of programs in communication with funders.
- ✓ Save your report using the following naming convention: “[Agency Initials]_[Program year] Progress Report_[Dates Covered].” (for example, VT_2022-2023 Progress Report_August 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023)
- ✓ Review your report for completeness and accuracy prior to submitting to Volunteer Tennessee.
- ✓ Submit your report as an attachment sent to your Program Manager, with the other Program Manager cc’d.



AmeriCorps Performance Measure Revision Process

Revisions to your program performance measures require approval by Volunteer Tennessee and, in some cases, the AmeriCorps Agency.

When should a request for a revision be submitted? Any time you need to change any part of a performance measure. Your request will be submitted directly to your Program Manger via email. Volunteer Tennessee may also request a revision at any time.

Why do revisions need approval? So that Volunteer Tennessee can monitor the approved performance measures and ensure proper stewardship of federal funds. Revising performance measures will trigger a change to your contract.

Who should request revisions? The Program Director should initiate the performance measure revision process in consultation with the host agency. Please follow established processes at your host agency for reviewing grant changes.

Performance measure revisions:

1. Send an email to your Volunteer Tennessee Program Manager with a **strong** justification for the change and a clear and complete explanation of exactly what the changes will be (e.g. change the tool from a sign-in sheet to a survey to better track results; decrease beneficiaries from 200 to 175 because service process has increased in intensity; change standard from 80% will show improvement to 85% will show improvement because initial results indicate a higher success rate; etc.). Note that merely not being on track to meet targets is not a sufficient justification for a performance measure change.
2. The Program Manager will approve, require additional information, or deny with explanation, the requested changes.
3. If the revisions are approved, changes will be made in eGrants as follows:
 - I. Your Program Manager will inform you when the grant is ready to initiate an amendment for a performance measure revision.
 - II. Make changes to the approved performance measures **only**.
 - III. Save your changes and submit back to prime for review.
4. Notify the Program Manager that changes are awaiting approval in eGrants.
5. The Program Manager will review the revised measures and approve or request additional revisions via e-mail.
6. Keep a copy of this final approval email and a printout/electronic copy of your revised performance measures with your contract as documentation of the revision by letter to your contract.
7. A contract amendment may be generated and will need to be signed by your authorized signatory.



FINANCIAL REPORTING TIPS

- ✓ Save your report using the following naming convention: “[Agency Initials] [Program Year] FSR [Dates Covered]” (for example, VT 2022-2023 FSR 8-1-2022 - 9-30-2022).
- ✓ Review your report for completeness and accuracy prior to submitting to Volunteer Tennessee.
- ✓ Submit your report as an attachment sent to your Program Manager, with the other Program Manager cc’d.
- ✓ Periodic Expense Reports (PERs or invoices) may be submitted no more than once per month and must be submitted at least once per quarter.
- ✓ Ensure that no negative values are noted in the AmeriCorps share balance of the PER.
- ✓ Be mindful of how your year-to-date match compares to your required and pledged match levels.
- ✓ Ensure that PERs have been completed for each month in the reporting quarter prior to submitting the FSR.
- ✓ Indicate whether the FSR is final in box 6. A final FSR indicates that all grant activities have been completed and no additional expenses or grantee match need to be claimed.
- ✓ All items in box 10 of the FSR will be automatically populated from the PER. Do not attempt to make changes in the section of the FSR.
- ✓ Indicated whether any Federal funds are used as match in box 11.
- ✓ If Federal funds are used as match, provide the additional information requested in box 11.
- ✓ Indicate the name of the person submitting the FSR and approval date in box 14.
- ✓ If your actual match level is less than the proposed level, describe the program’s plan for ensuring that match is met by the end of the year in the “challenges/corrective actions” narrative box for feedback topic 2.
- ✓ If your actual match level is less than the required level on the final FSR, contact your Program Officer for guidance.
- ✓ If the program’s enrollment or retention rate is less than 100%, provide an explanation in the “challenges/correction actions” narrative box for feedback topic 4. Note that you may run an Enrollment or Retention Rate Report in the eGrants Portal to assess your compliance with this expectation.
- ✓ If any member enrollment or exit forms were submitted in the eGrants Portal outside the required 30 day window, provide an explanation in the “challenges/corrective actions” narrative box for feedback topic 5. You may run an Enrollment or Exit Timeliness report in the eGrants Portal to assess your compliance with this requirement.
- ✓ Ensure that you have provided Volunteer Tennessee a copy of your most recent audit report. If you have not previously provided a copy of the report for your most recently completed fiscal year, indicate when you expect to receive it in the “challenges/corrective actions” narrative box for feedback topic 6.
- ✓ Following the resolution of the Q1 FSR, please be sure to use the version of the PER/FSR workbook that includes the Program Manager’s feedback (and your responses, if any) for submitting PERs and FSRs for the remainder of the program year.



AmeriCorps
Tennessee

AmeriCorps Budget Revision Instructions

Revisions to your budget require approval by Volunteer Tennessee, and in some cases the AmeriCorps Agency.

[Use the Budget Revision Worksheet.](#) The budget revision instructions are below and included on the worksheet.

When should a request for a revision be submitted?

Any time you need to move funds from one line item to another, need to add a budget line item, or reduce your approved match level. Submit the request via e-mail, including a summary of the changes being requested and an explanation for why the changes are needed, as soon as possible after the situation that necessitates the need for revision. Note that reductions in approved match level will only be considered in rare situations with significant extenuating circumstances.

Why do revisions need approval?

So that Volunteer Tennessee can monitor the approved budget and ensure proper stewardship of federal funds. Also, the contract and AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions may require approval of changes.

Who should request revisions?

Either the Financial Director or the Program Director can initiate changes to the budget. However, it is very important that ***both*** the Financial Director and Program Director review the changes before starting the process regardless of who actually initiates the budget revision process. Please follow established processes at your host agency for reviewing grant changes.

Budget revisions:

1. Complete the Budget Revision Worksheet on the next tab. Any yellow shaded cell needs be filled in. Once completed and reviewed send it along with a written justification to your Program Manager via email.
2. Your Program Manager will review the request, make revisions to your PER-FSR Spreadsheet, and notify you via email whether the revision has been approved and attach the new PER-FSR Spreadsheet you should use going forward.* If necessary, the Program Manager will also initiate a contract amendment.
3. Keep a copy of the final approval email and a printout of your approved Budget Revision Worksheet with your contract as documentation of the revision to your contract.

*Revisions that move more than 10% of the total budget between sections may also require approval by the AmeriCorps Agency.



National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC)

Under the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act (SAA), all grant recipients must conduct National Service Criminal History checks on participants and program employees in AmeriCorps, Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, MLK, 9/11, Volunteer Generation Fund and any other programs funded by AmeriCorps under National Service laws.

Programs are required to conduct FBI Fingerprint, NSOPW, and State of Residence/Service checks on all members and all covered staff before they begin work or service. A complete check is one where the program has reviewed and adjudicated the results of the check. Programs must document that adjudication to be compliant with NSCHC requirements.

In May 2021, the AmeriCorps Agency updated National Service Criminal History Checks requirements to streamline certain aspects of the process.

The new regulation:

- o Requires a three-part check for all covered individuals
 1. A nationwide name-based check of the NSOPW;
 2. A statewide criminal history registry check in the candidate's state of residence AND in the state where the person will serve or work; AND
 3. A fingerprint-based FBI check.
- o Requires all NSCHC check components to be complete before the start of work or service
- o Exempts fixed amount grant staff and planning grants from NSCHC requirements
- o Exempts grant staff fully covered by an indirect cost rate from NSCHC requirements
- o Exempts individuals who are not yet 18 at the start of work or service from NSCHC requirements (if an individual turns 18 prior to a consecutive term, NSCHC is required)
- o Extends the time period for which a grant recipient must re-check an individual after a break in service or employment with the same organization from 120-days to 180-days
- o Includes an NSCHC Waiver process, to replace the Alternative Search Process.

The following policy, procedure, and guidance resources are available from AmeriCorps:

NSCHC Regulations

[45 CFR §2540.200 through 45 CFR §2540.207](#)

NSCHC Manual

https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/05_13_21_NSCHCManual_OCRO.pdf

NSCHC Frequently Asked Questions

https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/05_13_21_NSCHCFAQs_OCRO.pdf

Additional introductory information and guidance can be found here:





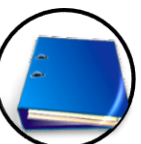







<https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check>



AmeriCorps Program Continuity Planning

Volunteer Tennessee would like to ensure that your program is well prepared to deal with planned and unplanned staff transitions. We encourage all programs to have a plan for the continuity of operations during staff transition. Below is a list of the essential elements to be considered as part of succession planning. Programs Directors should also complete this [Continuity Planning – Self-Assessment](#) to assist with this process.

Ten Elements of Program Continuity Planning

		<p>Manage a calendar that incorporates AmeriCorps, organizational, program, and subgrantee level timelines.</p>
		<p>Keep records of types, amounts, and sources of program funding, as well as grant end dates, spending status and how the budgets are managed at your organization.</p>
		<p>Maintain written policies and procedures on all program management aspects and AmeriCorps requirements. Develop transition materials for potential new staff.</p>
		<p>Develop program management in which operational knowledge is shared by multiple staff, leadership is engaged at multiple levels, and financial and program staff cooperate.</p>
		<p>Prepare information on technology used in program management – how to access and use it and where to go for help.</p>
		<p>Maintain complete and compliant records. Provide new staff with access to program files and educate them about recordkeeping procedures and requirements.</p>



Member Management/Support

Outline **member management processes** – recruitment, enrollment/exit deadlines, service sites, training, timekeeping and payroll, supervision, pending grievances, alumni engagement, etc.



Contacts/Relationships

List and describe contacts and functions of **key stakeholders**, such as board members, partners, funders, subgrantees, site directors/member supervisors, media, etc.



Resources

Outline **external support** available to your organization during transition, such as: AmeriCorps regulations and guidance; AmeriCorps staff; peers; grantee groups; etc.



Performance Measurement/Reporting

Prepare clear guidance on your **performance measurement and data collection** processes and instruments and how they are used for reporting.

3. MEMBER RECRUITMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Recruitment and Placement

Your members are the face of your organization, so it is no wonder that successful programs begin with effective recruitment and placement.

Recruitment is not just about interviewing. The process below will help you find, place, and keep the best qualified applicants for your available positions while also ensuring a rewarding experience for members, staff, clients, and partners.

In each step you'll find strategies and samples that have worked for other organizations. If you are new to AmeriCorps, or want to improve your recruitment process, we advise you to read through these steps in order. Otherwise, go straight to the area of your current interest or need.

- Before you begin: Develop a recruitment plan
- Step 1: Identify your recruitment needs
- Step 2: Advertise and market your position
- Step 3: Screen and place applicants
- Step 4: Prepare for new members

Before You Begin: Developing a Recruitment Plan

Build in time to develop and document the processes you will use to identify the best candidates—before you market your position.

- **Application acceptance process**—Gather the materials required to complete an application and set up processing procedures and deadlines.
- **Interviewing process**—Schedule times for screening applications, conducting interviews, and checking references. Create forms to document these activities to keep in applicants' files.
- **Selection strategy**—Decide the criteria for accepting a candidate, who will make the final decisions, and if there are any other people (staff or project partners) who need to have input on the final decision. Make sure you build in time to check references.

Recruiting is a time-intensive process. It can be difficult to set aside the time needed for recruitment. A timeline can help you establish outreach windows, application deadlines, interview times, and clear targets for staff members.

When creating your timeline, consider these tips:

- Move backward from the date your program starts.
- If other staff or project sponsors are involved, make sure to coordinate schedules.
- Read through the rest of this Recruitment and Placement section to understand all the tasks involved and the amount of time you will need to perform them. Important tasks include:
 - Writing a position description
 - Creating an outreach plan
 - Establishing processes for handling applications, interviewing candidates and selecting and placing new members
 - Developing a welcome letter and program manual
 - Establish processes for conducting required criminal history and background checks
- Allow enough time for successful applicants to give two weeks' notice to their current employer.

- After you have filled all your positions, create a waiting list. Cancellations happen frequently, and a back-up plan is critical.
- Be prepared for unexpected issues and the time it will take to resolve them.

Step 1: Identify Your Recruitment Needs

Understanding what you expect your members to be able to do and what they will get out of the position will help you find and evaluate candidates.

Start by identifying:

- The number of members needed
- The role of each member
- Service dates for each member
- The skills, knowledge, attitudes and aptitudes needed for each position
- The opportunities and benefits a member will get through the assignment

Basic requirements:

As you're planning your recruitment effort, keep in mind these basic member requirements for your program:

- Members must be at least 18 years old. (Some programs allow 17-year-olds to serve, with parental permission, or 16-year-olds if they are out of school and participating in a youth corps program.)
- Members must be U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents. Members must have a high school diploma/GED or be willing to earn one while serving. A high school diploma is required for all members serving as tutors.
- Most AmeriCorps programs require members to serve a minimum number of hours (commonly 1,700 for a full-time member), participate in trainings and service projects, and successfully complete their term to be eligible for an education award.
- For new members, programs must conduct 1. National Sex Offender Registry check, 2. a state criminal records check, and 3. FBI fingerprint check.

Step 2: Advertise and Market Your Position

Once you know who you are looking for, you can target your advertising and marketing efforts to reach the most qualified and diverse applicants. Keep the following tips in mind:

- **Determine target populations.** Identify potential populations for the types of members you want. Along with target populations you identify, note that the Serve America Act calls for expanding service opportunities for veterans, disadvantaged youth, college students, retirees, and individuals over 55 years of age as well as continued service of national service alums.
- **Research communication channels.** There are many ways to communicate your opportunities to potential applicants—choose strategies and media used by your target populations.
- **Use your partners.** Identify individuals, organizations and networks that can reach out to your target populations.
- **Don't limit yourself.** Develop varied recruitment tools and introduce them over time to build momentum.
- **Look for opportunities to increase diversity.** Working with people from different cultural, ethnic, educational, and socio-economic backgrounds is one of the most important aspects of service. Look for ways to increase diversity to make a richer team for everyone.

- **Make retention a recruiting goal.** Understanding the vital connection between how you recruit and the experience your members will have helps you recruit members who embrace service for the duration of the position and beyond.

Step 3: Screen and Place Applicants

You have recruited a crop of candidates for review. Now what?

Screening applicants is the process of first determining which applicants are qualified, and then narrowing the list to the ones who best suit your needs: the ones you want to interview. During this period, you will need to:

- **Follow up with applicants.** Design a strategy to efficiently and thoroughly follow up with candidates.
- **Identify candidates to interview.** If you haven't developed an applicant screening procedure, do it right away!
- **Refer applicants who don't suit your needs.** Have a system in place to refer qualified candidates who may not best fit your program to other opportunities (e.g., AmeriCorps Seniors, NCCC, etc.)
- **Prepare for interviews.** Have an effective interviewing process in place that allows thorough assessment of the candidate's abilities, interests, and commitment and which ensures interview questions and scenarios are legal and appropriate.

Interviewing is just one step in screening an applicant. That said, the interview is probably your best chance to get a true feel for the person, and should count heavily in your decision. It's also a time for you to give applicants a clear picture of the position, so they can make an informed decision.

There are many types of interviews and interview questions. In this section, you will learn more about the essential steps in the interview process, types of interviews, and behavioral interviewing.

Your interview should follow this general process:

- **Introduce yourself, your program, and the position:** Set a comfortable but professional tone for the interview, give the candidate an overview of the interview structure, and state the time limit
- **Gather information:** Ask comprehensive, open-ended questions, beginning with broad questions and moving to more specific ones to draw out the information you need
- **Provide information:** Discuss key elements of the position, including specific duties, expectations, on-the-job training, travel reimbursement, living on the stipend, housing opportunities, and benefits of the position
- **Close the interview:** Let the candidate know where you are in the interviewing process and what the next steps will be

It is important to rank applicants, since many positions have multiple qualified candidates. There are several ways to do this, including ranking them numerically and having multiple people review materials.

As you develop an applicant selection process, consider the following:

1. Determine the criteria for the specific position (be sure to get these directly from the position description). What skills are necessary? What skills can be taught and which ones should the candidate already possess?
2. Consider how the candidate meets the established criteria for the position at each phase of the screening process.
3. When screening applicants, use all available information at your disposal: their application, interview, e-mail, phone and mail communications, and references.
4. Examine evaluation criteria and assign each a value to aid in making a decision.

You'll also want to develop a list of required documents needed from chosen applicants.

Further resources and materials are available here:

<https://americorpsonlinecourses.litmos.com/home/dashboard>

Step 4: Prepare for New Members

Now that you've selected your new members, use the time before they arrive to lay the groundwork for a successful term. Use these resources for:

- **Getting to know your members**—Provide welcome letters and kits that let new members know how glad you are they are coming aboard.
- **Preparing members for their assignments**—Find strategies and tools for helping members succeed in your program before they even arrive.
- **Helping members make ends meet**—Provide tools and trainings to help members save money, develop a budget, and even get out of debt while living on the living allowance.



MEMBER POSITION DESCRIPTION OUTLINE

This outline is a training tool designed to help new AmeriCorps program staff create a strong member position description. It will be most helpful when used alongside the Grant Terms and Conditions, AmeriCorps Regulations, and other AmeriCorps-specific guidance. The outline is for reference only; it does not contain citations for all AmeriCorps grant or program requirements. Additional information on member position descriptions may be found on the National Service Knowledge Network: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources>.

Guidance documents referenced in this outline (available at <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/manage-your-grant>):

- AC = Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants
- 45 CFR = AmeriCorps Regulations
- FAQ = AmeriCorps State and National Policy Frequently Asked Questions

A member position description is a required component of the member service agreement. It should accurately, completely, and specifically describe the activities to be performed by each AmeriCorps member. Each AmeriCorps member enrolled in the Member Portal must have a position description on file before she/he begins service. Member position descriptions must also be available for inspection by AmeriCorps, state commission, tribal or national program staff, and as part of an audit or investigation of the AmeriCorps Office of Inspector General.

SECTION	REQUIREMENTS
AMERICORPS MEMBER NAME	N/A
AMERICORPS MEMBER POSITION TITLE	N/A
PROGRAM	N/A
SITE LOCATION	N/A
PURPOSE	N/A
DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm that the member duties are not prohibited activities as outlined in 45 CFR §2520.65. • Confirm that the AmeriCorps member position description follows the requirements related to supplementation, duplication or displacement of staff as outlined in 45 CFR §2540.100 (e) – (f). • Confirm that the member position description clearly describes recurring access to vulnerable populations as outlined in 45 CFR §2510.20.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm that duties meet the requirements of members as Team Leaders, if relevant for the program design (AmeriCorps FAQ C.56).
QUALIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At a minimum, members must be high school graduates, GED recipients, working toward attaining a high school diploma or GED during their term of service. Members must agree to obtain either a diploma or GED before using an education award. Include the full list of member eligibility requirements in 45 CFR §2522.200(a). Confirm that member agrees to provide information to establish eligibility and to complete a National Criminal History Check as outlined in 45 CFR §2522.202.
TERM OF SERVICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm that the position description follows requirements in AC, IV.E, AC V.A.
TIME REQUIREMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm that member training hours meet the requirements of 45 CFR §2520.50.
ORIENTATION AND TRAINING	N/A
BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award being offered for successful completion of the term of service in which the individual is enrolling (AC V.B.3) Amount of the living allowance the member will earn if applicable (AC VIII.A) Healthcare coverage, if applicable (AC VIII.D) Childcare coverage, if the member qualifies (AC VIII.E and 45 §CFR 2522.250) Student loan forbearance and interest payments, if the member qualifies (FAQ G.7)
EVALUATION AND REPORTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the member performance evaluation requirements in the grant year terms and conditions (AC V.E).
SUPERVISOR NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION	N/A
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS	N/A

Adapted from Member Position Description Outline

https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/2020_02_28_Member_Position_Description_Outline_PDF_ASN.pdf



Member Documentation

You will find the Member Documentation Checklist in the resources section of Basecamp. Member documentation requirements can be found in the following sections of the Federal Code of Regulations and the AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions.

45CFR:

§2520.40
§2520.45
§2520.50
§2520.65
§2522.200-207
§2522.210
§2522.220
§2522.230
§2522.240
§2522.250
§2540.100
§2540.230

AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions:

II.G.4
IV.B, D, F, H
V.A, B, C, E
VI.C
VII
VIII.A, D, F
IX.B, D

Resource:

Member Documentation Checklist:

<https://3.basecamp.com/3624101/buckets/8461775/vaults/1206769521>



Member Enrollment

An individual is presumed to be an AmeriCorps member as of the start date reflected in the My AmeriCorps Portal. AmeriCorps expects member enrollments to be recorded in the My AmeriCorps Portal no later than eight (8) days after the start date of the member. Compliance with this requirement will be assessed through Grantee Progress Reports and other monitoring actions. **Individuals that are not fully enrolled in the My AmeriCorps Portal are not AmeriCorps members.**

System of Record: The system of record for an AmeriCorps member's National Service Trust information is eSPAN. The My AmeriCorps Portal is the mechanism through which programs enter and update member records in eSPAN including enrolling a member and recording an individual's start date. Programs are responsible for ensuring the data values they enter via the My AmeriCorps Portal are accurate and submitted within the required timeframes. AmeriCorps will rely on the information entered by programs via the My AmeriCorps Portal. The member's start of service date indicated on the Member Service Agreement/Contract should agree with the value entered into the My AmeriCorps Portal.

Programs must verify that individuals are eligible to serve based on the requirements specified in 45 CFR Chapter XXV. The system is set up so that:

1. An individual may not start service until AmeriCorps has automatically or manually verified an individual's Social Security Number and citizenship eligibility.
2. An individual may not start service until the program has conducted and adjudicated the results of the National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHCs) required for that individual and has entered and certified the date of this action in the My AmeriCorps Portal.
3. After the completion of steps 1 and 2, above, programs must enter the members' start date, assignment, and term of service to complete the member enrollment in the National Service Trust through the My AmeriCorps Portal. This action should be taken no more than eight (8) days after the individual starts their term of service.

Member Right to Appeal Ineligibility: Any member deemed ineligible because their Social Security Number or citizenship could not be verified has an absolute right to appeal to AmeriCorps. See Requesting Administrative Review below. Start Date Changes Although changes to an individual's start date after the eight-day enrollment window will negatively impact a program's compliance with the eight-day enrollment requirement, program staff are permitted to make such changes if (1) the revised start date is after the date the required NSCHCs for that individual were completed and adjudicated, and (2) the revised start date is on or after the date the individual's Social Security Number and citizenship were automatically or manually verified. Any changes outside of these parameters require AmeriCorps review and approval through the Administrative Review process.

AmeriCorps will consider changes in member start dates if:

1. The member or program can document a failure of AmeriCorps' technology platform that

prevented timely Social Security Number or citizenship verification; or
2. The member or program can demonstrate other circumstances that prevented timely Social Security Number or citizenship verification, such as a legal name change or natural disaster.

AmeriCorps will not consider changes in member start dates based on failure of a program to complete and adjudicate the required NSCHCs in a compliant and timely fashion. All grantees must comply with the requirement to complete and adjudicate NSCHCs prior to the member start date and are expected to certify this compliance in the My AmeriCorps Portal within eight (8) days of the member start date.

Contact your AmeriCorps Program Manager with Volunteer Tennessee to request an Administrative Review of a Member's Enrollment or to Appeal SSN or Citizenship Ineligibility.

Review [2021.01 ASN MemberEnrollment Updated 2021-04 FINAL.pdf \(americorps.gov\)](#) for documents that provide an overview of the updated Member Enrollment Policy, including summary of changes and the details of the enrollment.



Release from Participation

Recipients may release members from participation for two reasons: (a) for compelling personal circumstances; and (b) for cause. See 45 CFR § 2522.230 for requirements. Whether the reason for the release amounts to circumstances beyond the member's control is determined by the recipient, consistent with the criteria listed in 45 CFR § 2522.230(a). Failure to follow the requirements set forth in regulation (e.g., releasing an individual for a non-compelling personal circumstance, such as when the individual is leaving to go to school) is considered non-compliance with award requirements and may result in disallowed costs and other remedies for non-compliance. The recipient should retain the documentation supporting its determination to release an individual for compelling personal circumstances. In addition to the regulations, the following applies:

No Automatic Disqualification if Released for Cause: A release for cause covers all circumstances in which a member does not successfully complete his/her term of service for reasons other than compelling personal circumstances. Therefore, it is possible for a member to receive a satisfactory performance review and be released for cause. For example, a member who is released for cause from a first term—e.g. the individual has decided to take a job offer—but who otherwise performed well—would, not be disqualified from enrolling for a subsequent term as long as the individual received a satisfactory performance evaluation for the first period of service.

45 CFR §2522.230 Under what circumstances may an AmeriCorps participant be released from completing a term of service, and what are the consequences?

An AmeriCorps program may release a participant from completing a term of service for compelling personal circumstances, as determined by the program, or for cause.

(a) Release for compelling personal circumstances.

(1) An AmeriCorps program may release a participant upon a determination by the program, consistent with the criteria listed in paragraphs (a)(6) and (a)(7) of this section, that the participant is unable to complete the term of service because of compelling personal circumstances, if the participant has otherwise performed satisfactorily and has completed at least fifteen percent of the agreed term of service.

(2) A participant who is released for compelling personal circumstances and who completes at least 15 percent of the required term of service is eligible for a pro-rated education award.

(3) The program must document the basis for any determination that compelling personal circumstances prevent a participant from completing a term of service.

(4) Compelling personal circumstances include:

(i) Those that are beyond the participant's control, such as, but not limited to:

(A) A participant's disability or serious illness;

(B) Disability, serious illness, or death of a participant's family member if this makes completing a term unreasonably difficult or impossible; or

(C) Conditions attributable to the program or otherwise unforeseeable and beyond the participant's control, such as a natural disaster, a strike, relocation of a spouse, or the nonrenewal or premature closing of a project or program, that make completing a term unreasonably difficult or impossible;

(ii) Those that the Corporation, has for public policy reasons, determined as such, including:

(A) Military service obligations;

(B) Acceptance by a participant of an opportunity to make the transition from welfare to work; or

(C) Acceptance of an employment opportunity by a participant serving in a program that includes in its approved objectives the promotion of employment among its participants.

(5) Compelling personal circumstances do not include leaving a program:

(i) To enroll in school;

(ii) To obtain employment, other than in moving from welfare to work or in leaving a program that includes in its approved objectives the promotion of employment among its participants; or

(iii) Because of dissatisfaction with the program.

(6) As an alternative to releasing a participant, an AmeriCorps*State/National program may, after determining that compelling personal circumstances exist, suspend the participant's term of service for up to two years (or longer if approved by the Corporation based on extenuating circumstances) to allow the participant to complete service with the same or similar AmeriCorps program at a later time.

(b) Release for cause.

(1) A release for cause encompasses any circumstances other than compelling personal circumstances that warrant an individual's release from completing a term of service.

(2) AmeriCorps programs must release for cause any participant who is convicted of a felony or the sale or distribution of a controlled substance during a term of service.

(3) A participant who is released for cause may not receive any portion of the AmeriCorps education award or any other payment from the National Service Trust.

(4) An individual who is released for cause must disclose that fact in any subsequent applications to participate in an AmeriCorps program. Failure to do so disqualifies the individual for an education award, regardless of whether the individual completes a term of service.

(5) An AmeriCorps*State/National participant released for cause may contest the program's decision by filing a grievance. Pending the resolution of a grievance procedure filed by an individual to contest a determination by a program to release the individual for cause, the individual's service is considered to be suspended. For this type of grievance, a program may not—while the grievance is pending or as part of its resolution—provide a participant with federally-funded benefits (including payments from the National Service Trust) beyond those attributable to service actually performed, without the program receiving written approval from the Corporation.

(6) An individual's eligibility for a subsequent term of service in AmeriCorps will not be affected by release for cause from a prior term of service so long as the individual received a satisfactory end-of-term performance review as described in §2522.220(c)(2) for the period served in the prior term.

(7) Except as provided in paragraph (e) of this section, a term of service from which an individual is released for cause counts as one of the terms of service described in §2522.235 for which an individual may receive the benefits described in §§2522.240 through 2522.250.

(c) Suspended service. (1) A program must suspend the service of an individual who faces an official charge of a violent felony (e.g., rape, homicide) or sale or distribution of a controlled substance.

(2) A program must suspend the service of an individual who is convicted of possession of a controlled substance.

(3) An individual may not receive a living allowance or other benefits, and may not accrue service hours, during a period of suspension under this provision.

(d) Reinstatement. (1) A program may reinstate an individual whose service was suspended under paragraph (c)(1) of this section if the individual is found not guilty or if the charge is dismissed.

(2) A program may reinstate an individual whose service was suspended under paragraph (c)(2) of this section only if the individual demonstrates the following:

(i) For an individual who has been convicted of a first offense of the possession of a controlled substance, the individual must have enrolled in a drug rehabilitation program;

(ii) For an individual who has been convicted for more than one offense of the possession of a controlled substance, the individual must have successfully completed a drug rehabilitation program.

(e) Release prior to serving 15 percent of a term of service. If a participant is released for reasons other than misconduct prior to completing 15 percent of a term of service, the term will not be considered one of the terms of service described in §2522.220(b) for which an individual may receive the benefits described in §§2522.240 through 2522.250.

[64 FR 37413, July 12, 1999, as amended at 73 FR 53759, Sept. 17, 2008; 74 FR 46506, Sept. 10, 2009; 75 FR 51410, Aug. 20, 2010]

Member Guidance for Exiting Service

Purpose

When nearing the end of service, you will need to complete the Exit Form in the My AmeriCorps Portal in order to access your education award benefits. We ask that you also complete the Member Exit Survey. Members must complete their own Exit Form and Member Exit Survey in the Portal.

Getting Started

Once you receive the notification email, you will be able to access the Exit Form and Member Exit Survey in the My AmeriCorps Portal.

1. Follow the link in the email to login to your My AmeriCorps Portal account and complete the Exit Form and Member Exit Survey. The links for these forms will be under "Close of Service Forms." Click "Exit Form" to begin. If you've forgotten your username and/or password, you can follow the links below the login field on my.americorps.gov to retrieve them.

My AmeriCorps Welcome, A

Close of Service Forms **1**

Form	Status
Exit Form -(The Fishing School 2016-2017)	Incomplete
Member Exit Survey -(The Fishing School 2016-2017)	Incomplete
Completion Certificate -(The Fishing School 2016-2017)	Not Available

My Information

Name: Aycotta Curforva Date of Birth: 03/19/1980
Preferred: [Redacted] Username: TestMember123
NSPID: 1332821 E-mail: seacott@cms.gov
SSN: [Redacted]
SSN Stat: [Redacted]
Citizenship Status: Pending **1**
Veteran/Active Duty/Military Family Status: I am not in the military, a veteran or a family member of someone in the U.S. Armed Forces
Transfer Eligible: N

Current Mailing Address: 200 E St SW, Washington, DC 20004, 3200
Permanent Address: 200 E St SW, Washington, DC 20004, 3200
Pr: [Redacted] Prel: [Redacted]
Other Phone: [Redacted] Other Phone: [Redacted]
Preferred Method of [Redacted] mail
Receive E-mail Notification: Y

[Change Password](#)
[Edit Security Questions](#)
[Edit My Contact Information](#)

Service Terms

Program	Organization	City/State	Service Start	Service End	Certificate
STATE - AmeriCorps State	The Fishing School	Washington, DC	02/08/2016	02/12/2017	

2. You will be required to complete the following information through My AmeriCorps. The information you provide will be protected securely and held confidentially; it will only be reported in summary and without any personal identification attached. The information you provide about education and disability will not be associated with personally identifying information such as your name or social security number when the data are analyzed.
3. Once completed, click 'Submit' to proceed.

Exit Form

This form will end the term of an AmeriCorps member in the National Trust and report on the eligibility of the member for an education award. It will also provide the Corporation with evaluation exit data. [Click here for help.](#)

Name: [Redacted]
NSP ID: [Redacted]

Mailing Address

Please verify that your contact information below is correct. Enter any updates as necessary.

* **Street Address 1:** [Redacted]
Street Address 2: [Redacted]
* **City:** Washington
* **State:** DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
* **Zip code:** [Redacted]

CNCS gathers information about education and disability status to ensure opportunities to serve are provided for people of all conditions. This information will be held confidentially, and will solely be used for data analysis to assist us in ensuring we serve all Americans equally. The information you provide will not be used in any way to determine or affect any federal benefit. Your responses are required in order to successfully certify your service. Under the Rehabilitation Act (Act) information on your disability status can only be used in connection with non-discrimination and affirmative action obligations. The information will be kept confidential in accordance with the Act's provisions and the information will be used only in accordance with the Act.

The next questions address disability and serious health conditions. Your responses will ensure that our outreach and recruitment policies are reaching a wide range of individuals with physical or mental conditions. When answering, consider your condition without the use of medication and aids (except eyeglasses) or the help of another person.

* **Do you have one of the following? Check all boxes that apply to you:**

- Deaf or serious difficulty hearing
- Blind or serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses
- Missing an arm, leg, hand, or foot
- Paralysis, partial or complete (any cause)
- Significant disfigurement, for example, severe disfigurements caused by burns, wounds, accidents, or congenital disorders
- Significant mobility impairment, for example, use of a wheelchair, scooter, walker, or use of a leg brace to walk
- Significant psychiatric disorder, for example, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, PTSD, or major depression
- Intellectual disability (formerly described as mental retardation)
- Developmental disability, for example, cerebral palsy or autism spectrum disorder
- Traumatic brain injury
- Dwarfism
- Epilepsy or other seizure disorder
- Other disability or serious health condition, for example, diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, anxiety disorder, or HIV infection; a learning disability, a speech impairment, or a hearing impairment

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS

- I have a disability or serious health condition but do not wish to specify my condition
- I do not wish to answer questions regarding disability/serious health conditions
- None of the conditions listed above apply to me

* **Do you receive Social Security disability benefits, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)?**

Yes No Prefer Not to Respond

* **What is the highest level of education you have completed?:** College graduate

([Search for Institutions](#))

* **Institution Name:** Virginia Commonwealth University

Type of Degree, Diploma or Certificate: Bachelor's degree

*** Privacy Act Information Release**

Yes, I give the Corporation for National and Community Service permission to release the following information about me to an AmeriCorps Alumni Association (check all that apply):

- Name Address
- Email Telephone Number

No, I do not give the Corporation for National and Community Service permission to release my information to an AmeriCorps Alumni Association.

*** Post Service Opportunities**

The Corporation for National and Community Service would like to provide you with information and resources to help you stay engaged in service and connect with educational, professional, and alumni opportunities. Please check all that apply.

- I am interested in connecting with other AmeriCorps alumni.
- I am interested in learning more about educational opportunities and how to use my education award.
- I am interested in professional development trainings, resume-writing resources, and career opportunities.
- I am interested in information about serving again through AmeriCorps or the Peace Corps
- I am not interested in this information and resources

Certification of Service

Please check the boxes below to agree to the following statements:

- I certify that the time I reported as program service hours is true and correct and did not include any service activities prohibited by law, regulation, or grant provision.
- I agree, by submitting this form, to provide, if asked, documentation to verify the accuracy of the information I have provided in this form.
- I understand that a knowing and willful false statement on this form can be punished by one or more of the following: a fine or imprisonment (or both) under Section 1001 of Title 18, U.S.C.; exclusion from participation in Federal programs; forfeiture of benefits I may receive as a result of participation in this program; or other actions authorized by the Civil Fraud Remedies Act, 31 U.S.C. 3801-3812.

4. After you complete the Exit Form, the Member Exit Survey will automatically begin. You can also access it via a link in the member Portal (see page 1). This survey is of the utmost importance to help AMERICORPS understand and improve the AmeriCorps experience. Please complete the entire survey and submit it when you are finished. The information you provide will be protected securely and held confidentially; it will only be reported in summary and without any personal identification attached. The demographic information you provide will not be associated with personally identifying information such as your name or social security number when the data are analyzed.
5. You will be asked a series of questions in survey format regarding your experience as an AmeriCorps member. Click 'next' at the end of each page to save and proceed.

8. Once your program finishes their portion of the exit form, you will receive the following two (2) emails with details regarding your earned Eli Segal Education Award:

For updated information about members that are required to exit early due to COVID-19, please refer to [2021.02 ASN COVID MemberExit ApplicableProgramYears 2021-09-07 508.pdf \(americorps.gov\)](#)

PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE

Dear _____:

Congratulations! This e-mail is to notify you that you have been enrolled in the National Service Trust. Upon successful completion of your term of service, your Segal AmeriCorps Education Award will be available for you to use.

If you wish to request forbearance on any student loan(s) for the duration of your service, click on the link below to access the My AmeriCorps website. Upon logging into your account, click "Create Forbearance Request" and search for your loan institution.

<http://uatmy.americorps.gov/mp>

Please do not reply to this message. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please submit a help request via [Education Award frequently asked questions | AmeriCorps](#) or contact the help desk at 1-800-942-2677.

Dear _____:

Congratulations on successfully completing your term of service in AmeriCorps. This e-mail is to notify you that your Education Award is now available for you to use. To request your benefits online or view your account summary, click on the link below to access the AmeriCorps Online Payment System.

<http://uatmy.americorps.gov/mp>

Below are some details on how to use your Education Award. More details and answers to Frequently Asked Questions can be found by clicking on "help" from anywhere within the site. You can access the system from the AmeriCorps.gov website.

Your Education Award can be used for the following purposes: 1) to repay a qualified student loan, or 2) to pay the current cost of attending a qualified institution of higher education or VA Approved program.

A qualified student loan is one which is guaranteed by the federal government (except for Parental PLUS loans). Qualified student loans may also include loans made directly to you by a state agency, such as state institutions of higher education. If you do not know what kind of loan you have, you should ask your loan holder.

You can also use your Education Award to pay for current educational expenses at qualified institutions of higher education. A "qualified institution" is one that participates in the US Dept of Education's student aid programs (often referred to as Title IV schools) or one approved by the Dept of Veterans Affairs. Your Award can be used to pay the portion of the Cost of Attendance not covered by other sources of financial aid, such as scholarships, loans, grants, and tuition or fee waivers. "Current" education expenses are costs that were incurred during or after your AmeriCorps service, not prior to your term of service, and can include costs such as tuition, fees, books, room and board, transportation, and other such expenses. Please note that the school determines the cost of attendance for its students, based on Dept of Education guidelines. It is not an amount determined by the student or by the National Service Trust.

You can use the award, in full or in part, for up to seven years after your term of service ends and it can be divided up and used as you choose, as long as it is for authorized current educational expenses and on qualified student loans. Once you authorize the payment the request will be sent online to your loan holder or school, which must complete the rest of the information before forwarding the payment request to the National Service Trust for payment. For education expense payments exceeding ten dollars payment is made in two equal installments at the beginning and middle of the enrollment period unless that period is in the past or within ten days of the scheduled payment date. Loan and interest payments are not split. Note that payments are made directly to the Financial or Education Institution, not to an individual.

If you had a qualified student loan that was in forbearance or other form of postponement while you were an AmeriCorps member, the Trust will pay all or a part of the interest that accrued during your service period. These payments are made in addition to the Education Award, and are not deducted from your Award balance. To request your Interest Accrual benefit, click on the link above and select the link from the left-hand navigation bar.

The IRS has ruled that Education Award payments and interest payments made on your behalf are taxable income in the calendar year in which they were issued. The Trust reports this total to the IRS. In January we will send you an IRS Form 1099 indicating the total payments from the previous year if the total is \$600 or more.

If you have any questions about your AmeriCorps Education award or need further assistance, please contact us by clicking Contact Us within the system.

Sincerely,
The National Service Trust

**For technical assistance, please contact the eGrants Help Desk at 1-800-942-2677*

4. Member Development



AmeriCorps Member Training and Education Requirements

Members are required to receive certain trainings and support services during their AmeriCorps term. Since all members are required to receive training, members with zero training hours listed will raise concerns in member monitoring. No more than 20 percent of the aggregate of all AmeriCorps member service hours in your program, as reflected in the member enrollments in the National Service Trust, may be spent in education and training activities.

Please see these sources for reference:

- [45 CFR 2520.50](#)
- [45 CFR 2522.100](#) - (g)(2); (i); (j); (k)(1-2)
- [AmeriCorps State and National Grants Terms and Conditions section V](#)
- Terms and Conditions in your AmeriCorps State Contract

Tutoring

If members are engaged in tutoring, please ensure the requirements in [45 CFR 2522.900-950](#) are met.

AmeriCorps Member Training and Benefits Checklist

Required Training for Pre – Service

- Training relevant to field of service
- Background info on community served
- Orientation that enhances member security and sensitivity to the community
- Details outlined in the Member Service Agreement including:
 - Member rights and responsibilities
 - Standards of Conduct
 - Prohibited Activities (including those specified in regulation)
 - Requirements under the Drug Free Workplace Act
 - Suspension and termination from service
 - Grievance procedures
 - Sexual Harassment
 - Other non-discrimination issues
 - Other topics as necessary (i.e. HR/Organizational/Program Trainings)

Recommended Member Training for Pre-Service

- AmeriCorps 101:
 - History of Service in America
 - The AmeriCorps Network
 - Ethic of service
- Performance measures and how to collect data
- Program operating policies
 - Living allowance
 - Benefits (see below)
 - Timesheets (signed by member AND supervisor)
 - Making up missed service hours
 - Safety protocol
 - Travel Policies
 - Expense reimbursement
- Staff and member roles (Volunteer-Member-Staff Exercise: Training Handbook)
- Recruiting and supervising volunteers
- Diversity and cross-cultural sensitivity
- Teambuilding (do throughout program year)
- CPR/First Aid (and other Disaster Preparedness and Response)
- Volunteer TN Statewide Events info

AmeriCorps Member Training and Benefits Checklist

Required Member In-Service Training

- Structured opportunities for reflection on service activities
- Encouragement for Eligible Participants to register to vote prior to completing their term
- Support services to participants who are completing a term of service and making the transition to other educational and career opportunities
- Support for participants who are school dropouts in order to assist them in earning the equivalent of a high school diploma

Recommended Member In-Service Training

- Citizenship training (see resource sheet)
- Conflict Resolution
- Financial Management
- Life After AmeriCorps
 - Goal setting
 - Resume Writing
 - Job searching/interview skills (etc.)
- Effective Communication
- Accommodation of Persons with disabilities
- Stages of Group Dynamics
- Personality Styles/work Styles
- Member Recognition

AmeriCorps Member Training and Benefits Checklist

Required Member Benefits – In-Service

- Living allowance— (Required for full-time only) (T&C VIII)
 - Paid in regular increments only during period of service
- Health care coverage— (full-time only and half-time serving in full-time capacity) (T&C VIII)
- Childcare—(full-time only, income requirements) (T&C VIII)
- Occupational accidental death and dismemberment insurance— (not Worker’s Comp) (T&C VIII)
- Family and Medical Leave* VIII.E – if your agency meets those standards
- Temporary Leave (T&C VIII)
- Member service gear *encouraged)
- Time to Vote *encouraged
- Credit for jury duty— (credit for normal service hours only) –(T&C V)
- Credit for armed forces reserves two-week activity duty— (Credit for normal service hours only and only if can’t be scheduled when it won’t disrupt AmeriCorps service. No credit for once-a-month weekend service.) (T&C VIII)
- Reasonable accommodation—(member must disclose disability and request accommodation) (T&C IV.F) (VT Program Handbook)

Required Member Benefits – Post-Service

- Segal AmeriCorps Education Award— (Pending on successful completion of the program)

Other Available Benefits – In-Service

- Food stamps (income dependent)
- Student loan forbearance for qualified loans (member must request forbearance)
- <https://www.americorps.gov/members-volunteers/segal-ameri-corps-education-award/find-out-more>

Other Available Benefits – Post-Service

- Education award info, including matching of education award at certain colleges and universities —
- <https://www.americorps.gov/members-volunteers/segal-ameri-corps-education-award/find-out-more> Student loan interest accrual payment
- <https://www.americorps.gov/members-volunteers/segal-ameri-corps-education-award/find-out-more>
- Alumni network (www.americorpsalums.org)

Tennessee AmeriCorps Program Member Training Plan



Training Goals

- AmeriCorps members will have the skills necessary to fulfill the duties outlined in their service position descriptions.
- Members will gain a larger awareness of issues in our community and learn ways to alleviate these problems.
- Members will enhance their commitment to civic engagement.

Training Objectives

Through monthly/weekly trainings, optional professional development workshops, completion of individual personal growth plans and required member training, *The Tennessee AmeriCorps Programs'* AmeriCorps members will:

- Learn the skills necessary to serve the youth in our community
- Learn how to serve within an effective team
- Develop leadership skills by facilitating meetings/ trainings
- Be able to recruit 10 volunteers each into their service projects
- Learn how to gather the resources needed for their service
- Become a greater advocate for disadvantaged youth

Developed from <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/member-and-volunteer-development/encorps/designing-effective-training>

Training Calendar

DATE

#Hours

Training type

September

September 4	7 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcome/Icebreaker ● AmeriCorps 101 ● Program Mission and History ● Service Description ● Teambuilder ● Orientation that enhances member security and sensitivity to the community ● Member contract: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Member rights and responsibilities ○ Standards of Conduct ○ Prohibited Activities ○ Requirements under the Drug Free Workplace Act ○ Suspension and termination from service ○ Grievance procedures ○ Sexual Harassment ○ Other non-discrimination issues
September 6	7 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcome/Icebreaker ● Prohibited and Allowable Activities Exercise ● Community Tour ● Teambuilder ● Training relevant to field of service ● Background info on community served
September 7	7 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Icebreaker ● Understanding cultural dynamics that impact the community ● Mentoring training ● Timesheets ● Lessons from the Returnees ● Leadership styles

September 7	7 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Icebreaker ● Reporting ● Teambuilder ● Statewide Service Days ● Member Accountability
September 8	7 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Icebreaker ● Service site tours ● Individual service training ● Member/Staff roles (worksheet) ● Team meeting ● Review (Team Jeopardy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allowable and prohibited activities - Timesheet race - Paperwork
Month Total	35 hrs	

October

October 6	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team meeting ● Service Reflection
October 13	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Volunteer Recruitment
October 20	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Member goal/development plan
October: TBD	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual member development training: TBD
Month Total	16 hrs	

Training Calendar

DATE	<i># Hours</i>	Training type
November		
November 3	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPR
November 10	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aid
November 17	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Asset Mapping Exercise
November: TBD	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual member development training: TBD • Optional Trainings: Disaster Preparedness and Response (Red Cross) Resume Writing (Career Center)
Month Total	16 hrs	
December		
December 1	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Reflection
December 7	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Project Planning (from Community Asset mapping Exercise)
December 8	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation of Person with Disabilities
December: TBD	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual member development training: TBD • Optional Training: Visioning/Goal Setting
Month Total	16 hrs	
January		
January 5	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stages of Group Dynamics
January 12	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Communication
January 19	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with youth (Mentoring Team) • Volunteer Recruitment Part 2 (Community Partnership Team)

January: TBD	4 hrs	• Individual member development training: TBD
Month Total	16 hrs	

February

February 2	4 hrs	• Community Service Project Planning
February 9	4 hrs	• Team Retreat Planning
February 16	8 hrs	• Team Retreat
February: TBD	4 hrs	• Individual member development training: TBD
Month Total	20 hrs	

March

March 2	4 hrs	• All Corps Service Project
March 9	4 hrs	• Check-in Member Development Plans: Life After AmeriCorps goals
March 10	4 hrs	• Cultural Awareness (The IT Institute)
March TBD	4 hrs	• Individual member development training: TBD - Mid-Year Performance Reviews/Individual Check-ins
Month Total	16 hrs	

April

April 6	4 hrs	• Team Meeting: Reflection Journals
April 13	4 hrs	• Citizenship Service Project
April 20	4 hrs	• Leadership 101
April: TBD	4 hrs	• Life After AmeriCorps: Progress towards Goals
Month Total	16 hrs	

Training Calendar

DATE	<i># Hours</i>	Training type
May		
May 4	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life After AmeriCorps: Career Center Visitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resume Help - Mock Interviews - Job searches
May 11	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Meeting: Reflection of Accomplishments
May 18	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life After AmeriCorps: How will I continue to serve?
May: TBD	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional: GED Practice Test, GRE Preparation course
Month Total	16 hrs	

June		
June 1	4 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Journaling
June 8	2 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection: These are a few of my favorites things (with friends and family)
June 15	8 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of Term Reflection/ Celebration • End of Term Reviews
Month Total	14 hrs	

Total Member Training Hours	181 X 15 Members = <u>2,715</u>
Total Member Service Hours	1700X 15 <u>25,500</u>
% 20 of Service Hours	<u>5,100</u>



Life After AmeriCorps Resources for Members

AmeriCorps has an Alumni webpage that allows alumni to effectively access information and resources that are a high priority for both recent and not-so-recent alumni, such as using the Segal Education Award, finding a job, continuing civic engagement, and staying involved with AmeriCorps. Visit <https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/alumni>.

Segal AmeriCorps Education Award Resources:

- Use Your Education Award:
<https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/segal-ameri-corps-education-award>
- Find a list of institutions that match the Education Award here:
<https://americorps.gov/partner/partnerships/schools-national-service-search>

Career Resources:

- **Employers of National Service**- Initiative to connect AmeriCorps and Peace Corps alumni with employers from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. More than 600 employers are part of the program
<https://www.americorps.gov/partner/partnerships/employers-national-service>
- **AmeriCorps Alums Professional Development Program**-National network to connect the one million plus alumni of all AmeriCorps programs that have served since 1994. *(Now part of Service Year Alliance)*
www.americorpsalums.org

Members should also search out local chapters of AmeriCorps Alums

- **Service Year Alums**-Registering as an alum on ServiceYear.org provides access to tools, discounts, and benefits
<https://serviceyear.org/alums/>
- **Make It Local** – Check with your local Nonprofit Alliance or Management Association as well as your local Chamber of Commerce for employment opportunities.



Civil Rights / Equal Opportunity Requirements

As described in application Assurances, AmeriCorps programs are required to comply with all federal statutes relating to non-discrimination. These include, but are not limited to, [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) and [Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended](#). Program staff should review AmeriCorps' [Grant Program Civil Rights Policy](#). A copy can also be found in Appendix D of this handbook.

To learn more about your responsibilities relating to non-discrimination, please review the Assurances in your AmeriCorps grant contract and visit AmeriCorps' website: <https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/civil-rights>



ACCESS AmeriCorps Resources

Volunteer Tennessee and AmeriCorps have created guidance and resources to promote national service as an option for all Americans, including those with disabilities. Volunteer Tennessee's Disability Inclusion Policy is included in this handbook and here is a list of other resources for inclusion.

- [Team Tennessee AmeriCorps Disability Disclosure Sample Form](#)-A resource for AmeriCorps Program Directors to provide so members with disabilities, who require accommodations or whose medical condition may affect their service, can identify these needs for the program.
- [25 Tips for Facilitating Disability Inclusion in Your Program](#)
- AmeriCorps Disability Inclusion Resources- <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/disability-inclusion>
- Job Accommodation Network- <https://askjan.org/a-to-z.cfm>

Disability Inclusion Policy

Mission

Volunteer Tennessee encourages individuals with physical or intellectual disabilities to participate as AmeriCorps members through AmeriCorps programs operating in the state. We encourage a diverse membership that includes people with disabilities to participate as national and community service members through our many programs.

Definition of Disability

According to the Americans With Disabilities Act, the term "disability" means, with respect to an individual, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the individual's major life activities, a record of having such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. "Major life activities" means functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, etc. Additionally, a "qualified individual with a disability" is an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodations, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by the program.

Policy

Under Federal law, any program that receives federal funds is required to comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. In compliance with the Federal law, all AmeriCorps programs prohibit any form of discrimination against persons with disabilities in recruitment, as well as in service. No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the program, services, or activities of the program, or be subjected to discrimination by the program. Nor shall the program exclude or otherwise deny equal services, programs, or activities to an individual because of the known disability.

Reasonable Accommodation

A reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a program site that will enable a qualified applicant or AmeriCorps member with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential service functions.

Reasonable accommodation also includes adjustments to assure that a qualified individual with a disability has rights and privileges in service equal to those of individuals without disabilities.

All AmeriCorps programs shall make reasonable accommodations in practices and/or procedures when the accommodations are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability. Accommodations are "reasonable" when they are practical or feasible. The program does not have to provide reasonable accommodations that would impose undue hardship on the operation of the program.

According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), an undue hardship must be based on an individualized assessment of current circumstances that show that a specific reasonable accommodation would cause significant difficulty or expense.

Procedure for Requesting Reasonable Accommodation Funds

Reasonable accommodation reimbursement grants were first made available to AmeriCorps State and National grantees in 2014 to make it easier for members with disabilities to fully participate in all aspects of national service. In the first reasonable accommodation reimbursement grant application period, AMERICORPS reimbursed organizations for accommodations for American Sign Language interpreting for members who are deaf to attend orientation, training, and conduct meetings. AMERICORPS also reimbursed grantees for the cost of products such as modified office equipment for members with physical disabilities requiring adaptive office products.

Things to know about the process:

It is important to understand that by applying for reasonable accommodation reimbursement grants, you are requesting to be reimbursed for expenses incurred. AMERICORPS will not make advance payments to cover expenses.

The reasonable accommodation grant funds are available on a noncompetitive basis and requests are processed in the order they are received.

AMERICORPS and Volunteer Tennessee encourage you to determine what each of your service members' accommodation needs are for the service term so you can submit requests for reimbursement. Requests for reimbursement of a single expense can be submitted at any time. If you intend to request reimbursement for multiple expenses throughout the year, your initial request must estimate what your total reimbursable expenses will be.

Grantees must retain and be prepared to provide documentation for each member for whom reasonable accommodation grant funds are requested. The documentation must show that:

- The goods or services needed to provide the reasonable accommodation were procured in conformance with the procurement standard specified in 2 C.F.R. 200.317 – 200.326; and
- Verification by the member that the accommodation was provided.

To submit an application:

Please send an email to [Candace Taylor, Training & Special Projects Manager, at Candace Taylor@tn.gov](mailto:Candace.Taylor@tn.gov) that contains the information listed below. This information must be in a Word document in order to comply with Section 508 requirements:

- Name of Organization (consistent with the name of your organization in eGrants)
- Organization's contact person for request: Name, telephone number, and email address
- Type of disability for which an accommodation has been provided
- Type of accommodation for which reimbursement requested
- A statement of how the accommodation helps the member achieve full participation in their service assignment(s)
- The amount of reimbursement being requested
- A statement of whether this is a one-time request or a quarterly request for multiple reimbursements.



AmeriCorps Member Evaluation Requirements

Programs must conduct and keep a record of at least a midterm and an end-of-term written evaluation of each member's performance for Full-Time members and an end-of-term written evaluation for all less-than-full-time members. The end-of-term evaluation should address, at a minimum, the following factors:

1. Whether the member has completed the required number of hours;
2. Whether the member has satisfactorily completed assignments; and
3. Whether the member has met other performance criteria that were clearly communicated at the beginning of the term of service.

Please see these sources for reference:

- [45 CFR 2522.220 - \(c\)](#)
- [45 CFR 2526.15](#)
- [Terms and Conditions V.G.](#)

5. Monitoring & Site Visits



Explanation of Volunteer Tennessee Monitoring Process

Q. Why is monitoring done?

A. National and state standards require monitoring of sub-grantees to assure that Federal and state funds are used appropriately.

- [2 CFR § 200.501](#) Audit requirements.
- [2 CFR § 200.329](#) Monitoring and reporting program performance.
- [Tennessee Department of General Services Policy 2013 - 007](#), "Grant Management and Subrecipient Monitoring Policies and Procedures," was established effective May 28, 2013.

Q. What are the objectives of monitoring?

A. Our purpose for monitoring is not to surprise you or look for findings but to provide you feedback to help you improve your program.

Monitoring objectives are:

- To obtain reasonable assurance that the agency is a going concern
- To assess the reliability of internal controls
- To verify that program objectives are being met
- To verify that civil rights requirements are being met
- To test the reliability of the financial and programmatic reporting
- To test if costs and service are allowable and eligible
- To verify compliance with the contract and grant requirements and regulations

Q. How are the contracts selected to be monitored each year?

A. Volunteer Tennessee uses a risk-based approach, along with input received from Program Managers to select grantees for monitoring.

Q. How frequently do the agencies get monitored?

In general, all agencies get monitored at least once in every three years. A program that was "high risk" last year and received a monitoring visit does not automatically mean that it will not be high risk the next program year. Programs can get monitored twice during the three year grant cycle.

Q. What is the process of scheduling monitoring visit?

A. The monitoring visit is scheduled at least 30 days in advance. Once the dates are agreed upon, the information/lists of items needed for the monitoring review are emailed to the appropriate personnel.

Q. Can monitoring be rescheduled if unforeseen circumstances arise?

A. Yes, please call the monitor at 615-869-9232 or email her at Neelam.Gupta@tn.gov. The monitor will try her best to accommodate to your schedule and expects the same from programs.

Q. When will the monitoring report be issued?

A. Monitoring report will be issued within 30 business days from the last date of the required information received.

Q. When is the corrective action due and who receives it?

A. A corrective action plan outlining strategies to correct findings is due no later than 15 business days from the date of the monitoring report to Jim Snell, Executive Director.



Most Common Findings Noted During Last Monitoring Cycle

Findings	Possible Consequences	Corrective Action
Exit forms for members were submitted late.	If programs fail to comply with federal grant provisions, they could be subject to a range of consequences including suspension from eligibility for future grant awards.	Develop protocols to ensure that you will be able to meet the requirements to exit members within 30 days of the last day of service.
The program does not submit the required reports within the established timeframes.	If programs fail to comply with federal grant provisions, they could be subject to a range of consequences including suspension from eligibility for future grant awards.	Develop protocols to ensure that all required reports are submitted in a timely manner.
The program uses incorrect education award amount in member service agreements.	If programs fail to comply with federal grant provisions, they could be subject to a range of consequences including suspension from eligibility for future grant awards.	Develop protocols to ensure member service agreements include correct information including education award amounts.
The program does not meet all of its program goals as stated in the contract.	If programs fail to meet its program goals as stated in the contract, they could be subject to a range of consequences including suspension from eligibility for future grant awards.	Develop protocols to ensure that program meets its goals.
<p>Criminal History Checks The program did not conduct the nationwide NSOPW check before member/staff service/work start date.</p>	Auditors question costs based on the Enforcement Guide effective at the time of monitoring.	Establish written monitoring procedures to check files and ensure all related personnel understand the background check requirements and develop written policies/ procedures for conducting background checks. Maintain documentation that a background check was done on all covered positions.
First and last name on government	Auditors question costs based on the	Establish written

<p>issued photo ID does not match check.</p>	<p>Enforcement Guide effective at the time of monitoring.</p>	<p>monitoring procedures to check files and ensure all related personnel understand the background check requirements and develop written policies/ procedures for conducting background checks. Maintain documentation that a background check was done on all covered positions.</p>
<p>The program did not document the members' accompaniment when their checks were pending and/or did not document it contemporaneously.</p>	<p>Auditors question costs based on the Enforcement Guide effective at the time of monitoring.</p>	<p>Establish written monitoring procedures to check files and ensure all related personnel understand the background check requirements and develop written policies/ procedures for conducting background checks. Maintain documentation that a background check was done on all covered positions.</p>
<p>Member timesheets revealed discrepancies and/or were not always signed by both the member and supervisor, and, in some instances, were dated prior to the service dates.</p>	<p>Auditors question the portion of unearned living allowance and the entire education award earned by those members because they did not meet the requirements.</p>	<p>Review timesheets and perform periodic reconciliations of completed timesheets with My AmeriCorps Portal certifications of hours completed.</p>
<p>Staff salaries were charged based on budget estimates and/or did not account for all time worked by the employees whose salaries were charged to the grant and/or to the match</p>	<p>Auditors question total salary costs because they can't determine how much time was actually spent on the different grants.</p>	<p>Ensure staff salaries charged to the grant/match based on actuals. Ensure timesheets record hours by activity or cost center to track the actual time.</p>
<p>Expenses were not supported with sufficient documentation.</p>	<p>Auditors question unsupported/inadequately supported expenses charged to the grant/match.</p>	<p>Ensure expenses charged to the grant/match adequately supported.</p>



Volunteer Tennessee Program Monitoring Response Guide

This guide is intended to help programs prepare responses to several common findings in monitoring reports. Look for the following symbols:

- **Tips for Responding**—These sections provide general guidance about preparing your response.
- ☑ **Appropriate Program Responses**—These are samples of responses that appropriately and fully address the finding.
- ☒ **Inappropriate Program Response**—These are samples of responses that do not address the finding.

If you have any questions as you develop your response, please contact your Program Manager.

Sample Findings

1. The agency did not have the required information in the AmeriCorps members' files. The following discrepancies were noted:
 - a. Members' contracts were not signed by the agency's staff in five (5) out of five (5) members' files reviewed
 - b. Member's contracts were not signed by the member in one (1) out of five (5) members' files reviewed
 - c. Complete member contract in one (1) of five (5) files reviewed
 - d. Written consent forms to release member information in publications in two (2) of five (5) members' files reviewed
 - e. Member enrollment forms in two (2) of five (5) members' files reviewed
 - f. Position Description was not included in three (3) of five (5) member contracts reviewed
 - g. Incorrect participation start and end dates in three (3) of five (5) member contracts reviewed
 - h. No end-of-term performance evaluations in three (3) of five (5) files reviewed
 - i. No mid-term performance evaluation in one (1) of five (5) files reviewed
 - j. Location of service activity was not included in five (5) of five (5) member contracts reviewed
 - k. Requirements under the Drug-Free Workplace Act were not included in five (5) of five (5) member contracts reviewed
 - l. Member Exit form in one (1) of five (5) files reviewed
 - m. No adequate documentation for awarding partial awards to one (1) out of five (5) member files reviewed

Attachment 5 of the contract states that the member files must contain the above information.

➤ **Tips for Responding**

The key to responding to findings about member file documentation is acknowledging that the error will be corrected both in existing files for current members (where possible) and in future member files.

For example, a program might respond to Finding 1.c. as follows: *The program director will review all current member files to ensure that written consent forms are present in all member files and, if forms are missing, will obtain consent forms from any members who are currently serving. The program director will also revise the member file*

documentation checklist to include the written consent form to ensure that forms are on file for all future members.

In responding to Finding 1.k., a program should state that contracts for members who are currently serving will receive attachments to their current contracts including requirements under the Drug-Free Workplace Act, and that the member contract template will be revised to include these requirements.

Appropriate Program Responses

Finding 1.a. and 1.b.—In 2005, the program gave each member a copy of the contract for review and printed an “official” copy of each member’s contract. Unfortunately, both copies were printed identically on white paper. During member orientation, we confused some of these contracts in the member files. This year, we printed the member’s copy of the contract on colored paper to alleviate any confusion. In addition, the 2005 contract had two signature pages and the members were confused about signing the contract. We have changed the format of the signature pages to help with this confusion.

Finding 1.m.—The member’s file contained a memo describing the member’s medical condition. We have also obtained medical records from the member’s doctor and have added those records to the file. Copies of the file memo and the doctor’s statement will be faxed to Volunteer Tennessee as supporting documentation.

2. Members’ contracts did not include all the requirements specified by the AmeriCorps provisions. The following discrepancies were noted:

All “Prohibited Activities” as specified in the grant provisions were not included in five (5) of five (5) members’ contracts reviewed.

Attachment 5 of the contract states that the Grantee must require that members sign contracts that, at a minimum, stipulate the above information.

Appropriate Program Response

Members were given a copy of the list of prohibited activities and these were discussed in member orientation. The prohibited activities were in the contract, but one activity was missing. We have created an addendum for the 2005-06 member contracts. Each member has read and signed this addendum and it has been placed in their files. We have revised the 2006-07 contract so that this information will be included in next year’s member contracts.

3. Member Enrollment and Exit Forms were submitted late. Several instances were noted where the agency did not submit required AmeriCorps documents within the established timeframe. See attachment for more details.

AmeriCorps Special Provision C.1. states that the within 30 calendar days of the member's starting service, the program must complete and approve the enrollment form in the Portal. AmeriCorps Special Provision IV.N.2. states that exit forms must be submitted in Portal no later than 30 days after a member exits the program or finishes his/her term of service.

Inappropriate Program Response

All current members were enrolled and/or exited within 30 days in the Portal. Corresponding documentation has been placed in the member files.

Appropriate Program Response

The program has implemented a new member enrollment and member exit procedure at each of the participating sites. This policy will increase the timeliness of site approval on member placement and member completion of final responsibilities. This will allow the program to enroll and exit members within the required 30 days. [Note: This procedure was not in place for the 2006-07 member enrollment process. Upon implementing the new procedures, all 2006-07 member exit and all 2007-08 member enrollment forms have been submitted within the required 30 days.]

4. One (1) half-time member received the education award without completing the required number of service hours. The reported hours were 907 hours; however, 878 hours were confirmed.

Attachment 5 of the contract states that members must complete the required number of hours to receive awards.

➤ **Tips for Responding**

For any finding that questions an education award, you should first state if you agree or disagree with the finding.

If you state that you disagree with the finding, you must provide documentation that the member did complete the required number of hours. Documentation could include copies of timesheets showing calculation errors or verification of additional service hours. If it has been less than one year since the member's start date, the program may offer the member the opportunity to complete additional service hours.

If you state that you agree with the finding and the member's one-year anniversary has passed, the member has no opportunity to fulfill the additional hours and Volunteer Tennessee considers this to be a compelling personal circumstance. In order for the member to receive a pro-rated education award:

- i. Your program manager will contact our National Service Trust Officer to request authorization to re-open the member's exit form in the Portal.
- ii. The Trust Officer will provide authorization to re-open the exit form and will notify the program manager if the member has accessed his/her education award.
- iii. The program director will provide the Trust Officer's authorization to re-open the exit form to the Portal Help Desk.
- iv. The program director will delete the exit form, correct the total number of hours, create a new exit form, and notify the program manager that the exit form has been saved.
- v. If the member has not used his/her entire education award, the program director will notify the member of the change in the amount of the education award. If the member has used his/her entire education award, the program must reimburse the Trust for the difference between the prorated amount and the amount drawn by the member.

Finally, you should describe systems established to ensure that member hours are reported and calculated accurately.

Inappropriate Program Response

We have created new timesheets that have separate sections for the member's service hours, training hours, and allow space to document time for meals or other breaks.

Appropriate Program Response—Agreeing with Finding

We agree with this finding. Because the member's one-year anniversary has passed, we will begin the process to re-open the exit form so that we can correct the hours.

Appropriate Program Response—Disagreeing with Finding

We disagree with this finding. This member did complete and exceed the required number of service hours. This finding was due to calculation errors on individual timesheets. Attached are all of the member's timesheets highlighting where mathematical errors resulted in 15 hours not being counted. The half-time member was required to serve 900 hours to be eligible for the education award; 907 hours were reported in the Portal, 18 hours were questioned, and 15 hours were served but not counted, so the total confirmed hours for this member are 904 (907-18+15=904).

5. Member hours reported on the Portal did not agree with member timesheets. The reported hours for two (2) out of five (5) members for sampled weeks did not match the hours reported on the Portal. See Attachment for more details.

Attachment 5 of the contract states that members must complete the required number of hours to receive awards.

Inappropriate Program Response

All current member timesheets are checked for accuracy before being entered into the Portal. The members are given a copy of the timesheets to verify recorded time.

Appropriate Program Response

We have developed a new electronic timesheet that automatically calculates time served on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. This new timesheet will help ensure that hours are calculated correctly. We have also instituted a monthly file review process so the program director will compare each member's electronic timesheet to the time entered in the Portal.

6. Members' performance reviews did not focus on all the factors required by the AmeriCorps provisions. These performance reviews did not focus on the factor of whether the member has completed the required number of hours.

AmeriCorps provision 7g. Performance Reviews requires the Grantee to conduct mid-term and end-of-term written evaluation of each member's performance focusing on the above-mentioned factor.

Appropriate Program Response

We have revised the performance review form to include a discussion of whether the member has completed the required number of hours. A copy of the new form is attached.

7. The program did not meet two of the performance measures as outlined in the contract. The following goals were not met:

- a. AmeriCorps members tutored 176 referred students and thirty-seven percent of the children improved their grades instead of 300 referred students as specified in Objective #1 in Attachment 2 of the contract.
- b. AmeriCorps members provided educational mentoring service to 188 students and only 34% of the students had reduction in truancy. Objective #2 specified that all the students who will receive educational mentoring would have a reduction in truancy.

Appropriate Program Response

During the program year monitored, the agency brought on a new partner site. This site was an after-school program rather than a school-based site. Because the objectives had been written several months before the start of the program year with the

expectation that all sites would be school-based, these objectives were not a good fit for the new partner agency's more limited schedule, but we tried to make them work. The agency should have requested a revision to the objectives when we realized that the objectives were not easily attainable with the limitations of an after-school program. We have requested a modification to the objectives for the current year to make the objectives more realistic for the actual program we are administering.

8. The agency's financial management system does not identify costs by programmatic year. Expenditures attributable to last and present year's AmeriCorps grant and PDAT grant are accounted for in one cost center. Errors can occur in proper accounting of grants when expenditures related to various grants are not separated.

According to Attachment 3 General Provisions 4a.of the contract requires the Grantee to maintain a financial management system capable of distinguishing expenditures attributable to this Grant from expenditures not attributable to this Grant. This system must be able to identify costs by programmatic year and by budget category.

Appropriate Program Response

The accounting system did not identify the AmeriCorps grant with a unique cost center. The system is set up to identify the grants, however each cost center is set up on a fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) basis. This caused one cost center to accumulate expenses for two separate grant periods because the AmeriCorps program is on a calendar year cycle. The fiscal department is manually setting up cost centers for the AmeriCorps contracts to correct this.

9. Public notice requirements were not met. The agency distributed a pamphlet related to the AmeriCorps Program; however, this pamphlet did not contain the language required by the contract.

Section D.10 of the contract requires that all public notice, pamphlets or similar materials released by the Grantee shall include the statement, "This project funded under an agreement with the State of Tennessee," and any such notice shall be approved by the State.

Appropriate Program Response

The agency distributed several pamphlets to service sites with the AmeriCorps logo, but the pamphlets did not contain all of the language in section D.10. of the contract ("This project funded under an agreement with the State of Tennessee."). This statement has been added to all brochures and will be printed on all future publications.

10. Salaries and Wages charged directly to the Grant or charged to matching funds for three staff members were not supported by signed timesheets by employees. These timesheets were also not approved by supervisors.

According to Section 4 c. of Attachment 3 of the contract, "Salaries and Wages charged directly to the Grant or charged to matching funds must be supported by signed time and attendance records for each individual employee regardless of position, and by documented payrolls approved by a responsible official of the Grantee..."

Inappropriate Program Response

All timesheets have now been corrected to show supervisor's signature.

Appropriate Program Response

Previously, timesheets were occasionally forwarded to the finance department without signatures in order to meet payroll deadlines. All timesheets now must be submitted

directly to the employee's supervisor for review and signature before being forwarded to the finance department. Supervisors will not accept timesheets that are not signed by the employee.

11. Time and attendance records did not show the time distribution data for two employees who worked on more than one program or function. Salary expense for Program Director and Administrative Specialist was partially charged to the matching funds and to the Grant.

Attachment 5 of the contract states that salaries and wages charged directly to the Grant or charged to matching funds must be supported by signed time and attendance records for each individual employee regardless of position, and by documented payrolls approved by a responsible official of the Grantee. Also time and attendance records for each individual employee must show appropriate distribution of the individual's time to the different programs or functions.

Appropriate Program Response

The agency's personnel files reflect the amount of time each employee is to spend on each program and these costs are equitably distributed at each pay period. The employee timesheets did not show the distribution because these were automatically calculated based on the personnel/payroll distribution. All employees must now use timesheets to track hours worked, and we will maintain appropriate documentation showing time distribution.

12. Financial Status Report for the quarter ended 6/30/06 was not submitted within the established timeframe. Our testing revealed that the agency did not comply with the submission deadline set by Volunteer Tennessee for the above mentioned financial status report. This report was due on 7/17/06; however, it was submitted to Volunteer Tennessee on 7/21/06.

AmeriCorps Grant Provision N.1. Financial Status and Progress Reports requires the sub grantees to comply with the reporting requirements set by their grantees.

Appropriate Program Response

During the last program year, reporting requirements for different grants and contracts were tracked separately. We have since implemented a combined calendar to track all reporting requirements and assure timely report submissions in the future.

13. AmeriCorps recruitment material and application forms did not include information on civil rights requirements. Also personnel policies and procedures manual included partial statement of Civil Rights requirements.

AmeriCorps General Provision F.3. states that the Grantee must notify the program staff, and the public in recruitment material and application forms that it operates its program subject to nondiscrimination requirements.

Appropriate Program Response

The agency has added a civil rights statement to all recruitment materials and application forms. The agency has also revised the personnel policies and procedures manual to include the full civil rights statement. The text of this statement is noted below.

14. Travel claims were not always mathematically accurate and were not always approved by the supervisor. Our review of sampled travel related transactions revealed the following discrepancies:
 - a. For one (1) member, seven (7) travel claims were not approved by the supervisor.
 - b. For one (1) member, travel claims for the months January through November 2005 were approved in December 2005.
 - c. Two (2) travel claims were mathematically inaccurate. Questioned cost \$87.48. See Detailed Schedule of Questioned costs for more details.
 - d. Expenditures related to PDAT grant were erroneously charged to AmeriCorps grant. Questioned cost \$213.76. See Detailed Schedule of Questioned costs for more details.

Paragraph C.5 of the contract requires that reimbursement to Grantee for travel, meals, or lodging shall be in the amount of actual costs, subject to maximum amounts and limitations specified in the "State Comprehensive Travel Regulations".

As a result of this deficiency, we have questioned total costs of \$301.24.

🔗 Tips for Responding

For any finding that questions costs, you should first state if you agree or disagree with the finding.

If you disagree with the finding, you must provide documentation relating to the cost, such as copies of travel claims showing calculation errors or additional source documentation (e.g., receipts or canceled checks).

If you agree with the finding, you will need to refund the amount questioned and create a new PER and final FSR noting the adjustment.

Finally, you should describe systems established to ensure that travel claims are processed correctly in the future.

Inappropriate Program Response

A system has been devised for processing travel claims. All members must submit their travel reimbursement forms monthly, the expense is calculated based on the 1/3 and 2/3 split by the supervisor before it is submitted for disbursement.

Appropriate Program Response

We agree with this finding. We have established an additional level of financial review to ensure that travel claims are calculated accurately, and travel claims will not be processed without a supervisor's signature. We will refund the questioned costs of \$301.24.

15. The agency reported salary and supply expenditures incurred prior to the commencement of the contract. Our review of this agency's sampled periodic expense reports (PER) revealed the following discrepancies:
 - a. The agency reported \$5,541.22 of personnel expenses and \$3,414.63 of personnel fringe benefits on the PER for the period 08/28/04 through 09/30/04. This amount included the personnel expenses of \$4,580.04, including all related payroll taxes and employee benefits for the month of July 2004. This period was not within the specified period of the contract. (See Schedule of Detailed Questioned Costs)
 - b. Amount totaling \$1,149.15 was reported as supplies on the PER for the period 08/28/04 through 09/30/04. This amount was comprised of \$362.98 of in-kind expenditures and \$786.17 of cash expenditures. Out of \$786.17 of cash expenditures, \$261.13 of expenditures was for the month of July 2004. (See Schedule of Detailed Questioned Costs)

According to Provision B1 Grant Term of the contract, "This Grant shall be effective for the period commencing on August 1, 2004 and ending on December 31, 2005. The State shall have no obligation for services rendered by the Grantee which are not performed within the specified period."

Appropriate Program Response

We agree that these funds should have been charged to the previous year's contract. We request that these funds be charged to the 2003-04 contract period, which had adequate funding remaining to support these costs. Attached is a revised FSR for the 2003-04 contract period. Additionally, the next 2005-05 FSR will be revised to remove the questioned costs.

16. The agency over reported travel expenses for the AmeriCorps grant. The agency reported staff travel costs totaling \$2,259.82 on the periodic expense report for the quarter ended 03/31/05 of which \$1,343.79 was related to the PDAT Grant, and was reported to Volunteer Tennessee on the PDAT invoice.

According to Provision C.3.Payment Methodology of the contract, "The Grantee shall be compensated for actual, reasonable, and necessary costs based upon the Grant Budget..."

As a result, we questioned the expenses of \$1,343.79.

Appropriate Program Response

We agree with this finding. These expenses have already been deducted from the most recent AmeriCorps PER and the records are now accurate. We have since implemented better internal controls for identifying which expenditures should be charged to the AmeriCorps grant and which should be charged to the PDAT grant. We will refund the questioned costs of \$1,343.79.

17. The agency overcharged Volunteer Tennessee for members' health care costs. The Grantee reported a total of \$16,149.40 as Year to Date Expenses for health care costs for members to the Grant and to the match on the periodic expense report for the period 01/01/07 – 03/31/07; however, we verified \$11,181.80 as health care costs for members.

According to C.3 Payment Methodology of the contract, "The Grantee shall be compensated for actual, reasonable, and necessary costs based upon the Grant Budget..."

As a result, we questioned the amount charged to Volunteer Tennessee beyond the actual expenses. (See Detailed Schedule of Questioned Costs).

Appropriate Program Response

We agree with this finding. We have established a new system to reconcile and report health care costs. We will create a new PER and FSR to note the adjustment and will refund the questioned costs of \$4,967.60.

Sample AmeriCorps Program Corrective Action Plan

November 5, 2010

Dear Mr. Snell:

Below is the Sample AmeriCorps Program corrective action plan in response to the monitoring report issued on October 15, 2010. We hope that this will sufficiently resolve the monitoring, but please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Host ED

Observations: Contract# 12345

Observation 1: Our review of sampled members' timesheets revealed that two members did not serve for a long period of time during their service term or served very few hours in several months but completed the required number of service hours during their whole term and received the full living allowance and an education award. Position descriptions included in the member contracts specify approximate number of hours required per week for each type of member; however, the members did not always complete the hours as specified in their position descriptions. If the member misses too many hours for a long period of time, the members should be suspended during the illness or absence. The member would not receive the living allowance or other benefits during the "suspension".

For example, one member completed 1730 service hours in total and served only 10.5 hours during the last two months of her service; this implies that she completed the required service hours two months before her originally agreed upon term; however, she stayed in the program and received living allowance during these two months. The living allowance is designed to help members while serving the community; however, this scenario reflects that this member completed service hours on an abbreviated schedule and provided very little service to the site during the last two months but received the living allowance. This member either should have been in an active service or should have exited the program after completing the required service hours.

Response: The position description specifies the approximate hours required per week for the member to stay on track and complete the required service hours. The actual number of hours per week will vary based on site service activities. Members are required to serve more hours during certain times of the year based on service activities and responsibilities at the site. Members are required to fulfill responsibilities at the site and to provide follow-up in addition to attending program meetings and training sessions. Sites verify the members are "actively" serving based on service responsibilities at the site during that period of time.

Corrective Action: The Sample AmeriCorps program has added "active service verification statements" to the timesheets. These timesheets are signed by the member, the site supervisor, and AmeriCorps program staff.

Findings: Contract# 12345

- 1. Two (2) members received the education award without completing the required number of service hours.**

- The agency reported 1700 hours of service for one full-time member (member A); however, we verified 1680.5 hours of service for this member. This full time member was required to complete 1700 hours of service to be eligible for an education award.
- For another half time member (member B), the agency reported 900 hours of service, we verified 890 hours of service for this member. This half-time member was required to complete 900 hours of service to be eligible for an education award.

Attachment 5 of the contract states that members must complete the required number of hours to receive awards.

Corrective Action:

We have contacted the National Service Trust and corrected the hours for these two members. Member A had not yet accessed the education award, so the education award was adjusted. Member B had already used the entire education award, so we repaid the National Service Trust the \$31 difference between the full award of \$2,775 and the \$2,744 award based on 890 hours.

In the future, member hours will be transferred to an excel spreadsheet at the end of each pay period. Periodic “file checks” will also be completed to identify timesheet and reporting errors.

2. Members’ time and attendance records were not maintained properly. The following summarizes the discrepancies noted during the monitoring review:

- a) For two (3) out of seven (8) sampled members, it was noted that service hours as indicated on their timesheets for sampled periods were mathematically inaccurate.
- b) AmeriCorps members did not follow the lunch policy consistently. Several members served 8 hours plus on several occasions and there was no indication on the timesheet that it was a working lunch.

AmeriCorps Special Provision C 4 states that the grantee is required to ensure that time and attendance recordkeeping is conducted by the individual who supervises the AmeriCorps member. This time and attendance record is used to document member eligibility for in-service and post-service benefits. Time and attendance records must be signed and dated both by the member and by an individual with oversight responsibilities for the member.

Corrective Action: In the future, member hours will be transferred to an Excel spreadsheet at the end of each pay period. Periodic “file checks” will also be completed to identify timesheet and reporting errors. The Sample AmeriCorps program will also increase the amount of time spent on time sheets during member orientation and have periodic reviews of time sheet policies during monthly member meetings.

3. The required AmeriCorps member related forms were not submitted within the established timeframes. We noted late submissions of Member Enrollment Forms, Member Exit forms.

AmeriCorps Special Provision C 1 states that the grantee must notify the Corporation’s National Service Trust within 30 days of a member’s selection for, completion of, suspension from, or release from, a term of service.

Response: Slow site and member submission of enrollment and exit paperwork delayed the approval of enrollments and exits during this program year.

Corrective Action: To ensure compliance with the 30 day time limit for enrollment and exit forms, the Sample AmeriCorps program director will add electronic calendar reminders each time a member is enrolled and exited. The program director will also conduct a policy review session with each site supervisor and stress the importance of timely submission of member forms.

4. **The Sample AmeriCorps program overcharged Volunteer Tennessee for living allowance and FICA costs for members.** As a result of this discrepancy, we questioned cost amounting to \$4,653.28.

Corrective Action: We agree with this finding. Enclosed is a refund check for \$4,653.28. In the future, the Sample AmeriCorps program will closely monitor and compare the total living allowance paid to each member against the budgeted living allowance.

5. **Staff Travel Cost totaling \$500.60 was erroneously reported as Member travel costs on the sampled periodic expense report for the quarter ended 3/31/09.**

Provision C.5a Invoice Requirements of the contract states that each invoice shall clearly and accurately detail the following required information.

Response / Corrective Action:

We agree with this finding. The \$500.60 has been moved to the Staff Travel line. Enclosed is a budget revision request to move unspent supplies funds to the Staff Travel line to cover these unanticipated costs. In the future, the Sample AmeriCorps program's host agency Executive Director will conduct periodic reviews of the actual expenses for the program in comparison to budgeted expenses. The Financial Director will also communicate with the program director when a line item has reached 90% of the budgeted amount. We will initiate future budget revision requests as soon as we determine that unanticipated costs necessitate one.



AmeriCorps Program Review Instrument

Please find a copy of the Site Visit and Monitoring Tool in the Resources Folder in Basecamp. If your AmeriCorps program does not have access to Basecamp, please reach out to your AmeriCorps Program Manager.



VOLUNTEER TENNESSEE BOARD SITE VISITS

Volunteer Tennessee is the 25-member citizen board appointed by the Governor. This board qualifies Tennessee to receive federal funds for AmeriCorps. Board members want to visit your program to check out their investment!

Benefits of Board member site visits to your program:

- ✓ Raise the profile of your program within your agency or institution.
- ✓ Recognize AmeriCorps members.
- ✓ Give members a chance to reflect, celebrate and demonstrate.
- ✓ Get local media attention.
- ✓ Develop an outside champion for your program who may be able to help with advocacy and/or funding.
- ✓ Use the opportunity to invite state and/or federal legislators and other stakeholders to attend the site visit and see your program.
- ✓ Get your good work recognized and appreciated!

Steps for hosting a visit:

- Think about when your AmeriCorps members could best show off what they do. If possible, arrange for the Board member(s) to see your AmeriCorps members in action. Work with members to develop a 10-15 minute presentation that explains your program. How has the community changed as a result of AmeriCorps? How have the members changed? Can you include a visit with a service recipient who has a particularly compelling story about your program's benefits to the community?
- Alert your agency executive director and site supervisors.
- Call your assigned Board member(s) to schedule the visit. **It is your responsibility as the program director to make the first call and to keep calling until the site visit is confirmed with all of the board members assigned to your program.** If you have more than one board member assigned to your program, do your best to find a single date and time that will work for everyone. Make sure the time, location and directions are very clear and confirmed.
- Facilitate an invitation from your agency's board chair or other appropriate official to other VIP's, like your state and federal legislators. Be sure to coordinate this with your assigned Board member(s), because he/she may be the best person issue the invitation to other VIP's.
- Invite your local media, using the attached fill-in-the-blank media template.

- Send your Board member your most recent progress report, current year performance measures, recent media coverage and other descriptive information about your program.
- After the visit, ask the Board members for feedback to you and your members.
- Keep their business cards and call if they can help in the future