

# INTRODUCTION I

## Becoming a Better Supervisor:

### How This Guide Will Help

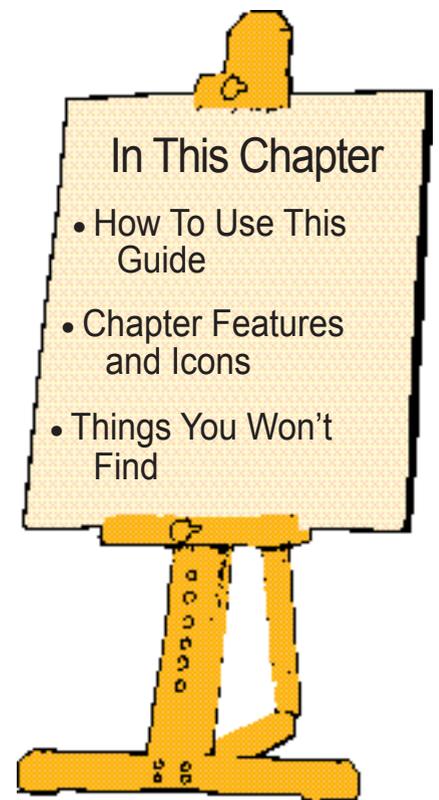
*There are three kinds of people: those who make things happen; those who wait for things to happen; and those who wonder what happened.*

Anonymous

**I**f you are a National Service supervisor, you are most likely the kind of person who makes things happen. You are a leader to your members/volunteers and a catalyst for your project. You work in an exciting but demanding position and form a critical communication link between and among members/volunteers, program directors, agency sponsors, and the community. As you've probably already learned, your major job is to *get things done* and to *develop members/volunteers*.

Balancing these two responsibilities will be a continual challenge. To be truly effective, you need to learn to get things done through the members/volunteers you supervise.

Being a National Service supervisor presents a unique set of challenges



and opportunities to make a difference. Just step back for a moment and look at your assignment:

- You work with members/volunteers ages 17 to 79 who have had a variety of life and work experiences.

- You are charged with instilling an ethic of service in your diverse team.  
You counsel and motivate members/volunteers who may be working on a “real” job for the first time in their lives.
- Your work force isn’t paid, nor are members “volunteers” in the strict sense of the term—they receive a modest stipend and job security for only one or two years.
- In the larger community, you coordinate multiple interests and expectations from agency.
- Finally, you do your work under intense local and national public attention. sponsors and partnering organizations.

Supervising members/volunteers is clearly more than a job. It is also a commitment to developing one’s own capacity and that of others to initiate changes that will result in stronger communities. Building human capacity requires some solid skills on your part—skills in planning, communicating, leading, and problem solving to name just a few. Regardless of whether you are a full-

time or part-time supervisor, you are in a key position to make a difference in the lives of both your members and those who benefit from your project.

*Help* is a key word. You must offer it and ask for it. As a supervisor, you can’t do everything required by your organization or program. In large part, you must learn to do your job by getting your members/volunteers and agency partners to do the work. You are not expected to know all the answers, but you should learn where in your team, organization, or community you can go to find them. This resource guide is designed to help you with practical ideas, suggestions, and many effective supervisory techniques. These ideas and tools were developed through the National Crime Prevention Council’s extensive work with a wide range of National Service, and other, supervisors who have identified key skill areas for effective supervision. As you settle into your supervisory position, remember that other supervisors are out there going through exactly what you are—you are not alone. Don’t be afraid to ask others for assistance. And you might want to keep this resource guide on an easy-to-reach shelf.

## Outline of Supervisory Roles and Skills

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Supervisory Role</u>	<u>Skills You Learn</u>
1	Communicator	Active listening; providing feedback; conflict management
2	Advisor	Problem solving; coaching members/volunteers
3	Team Builder	Building a collaborative team environment; guiding the team through stages of group development; making decisions in groups
4	Planner/Manager	Planning work; setting priorities/delegating tasks; managing time; managing meetings
5	Community Partnership Builder/National Service Representative	Assessing community needs; building and sustaining collaboration; public relations

## How to Use This Resource Guide

The greater part of this resource guide is devoted to helping you build your supervisory skills and learn how to apply them successfully in your particular situation. The chapters take you through the five major supervisory roles, and the different skills they require.

If you are a very new supervisor, we recommend you read through the whole guide to get the “big picture” of what your job entails. If you already have some supervisory experience, you may want to read the guide as a refresher or go straight to specific chapters that address skills areas where you need more development.

The resource guide is formatted to give you quick and easy access to information. Each of the chapters contains a narrative that provides a basic understanding of the specific

supervisory roles and skills; vignettes that illustrate the application of those skills in real-life situations; and a tool kit section that includes readings, assessment tools, checklists, and other support materials related to the chapter’s theme.

## A Helpful Key to the Chapter Features and Icons

### Chapter Introduction

A brief introduction to the supervisory role, specific skills areas, and tools presented in the chapter. The skills are always listed on the chart/easel on the first page. A Tool Kit list is always provided on the second page of the chapter.

## Chapter Narrative

A discussion of the chapter skills areas. For each skill, we tell you two things:

## Why You Do It

The reason for using the skill.

## How You Do It

Concepts and methods for performing the skill.



## Tool Kit

The tool kit is a compilation of support materials—e.g., descriptions of concepts or methodologies, checklists, and self-tests—that amplifies the information presented in the chapter text. Located at the end of each chapter, the tools are coded for easy retrieval and may be used in a variety of ways: 1) as lecturette/discussion



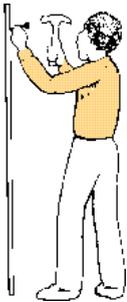
notes; 2) as handouts for use during orientation sessions or meetings; 3) as models for overhead transparencies or other types of visual aids; or 4) however you see fit. You may also want to use the Jamal and Betty stories as tools. With little or no adaptation, they make interesting case studies and role-playing tools to use with your members, volunteers, colleagues, and agency partners.

The first tool in the resource guide—the supervisor’s self-assessment is attached at the end of this chapter. The self-assessment is an extensive (but not exhaustive) inventory of the skills you need to perform your job effectively. It consists of four sections that correspond to the major National Service goals:

- Getting things done,
- Strengthening communities,

## “Busy Betty” and “Juggling Jamal” Stories

Each chapter includes stories that describe the challenges and rewards of two hypothetical AmeriCorps supervisors. We call them Busy Betty and Juggling Jamal. Betty works in an AmeriCorps program based on individual placement; Jamal supervises a crew-based program. You see what happens in their lives as supervisors and how they use the ideas and skills presented in the guide to improve their job performance.



- Encouraging responsibility in members/volunteers, and
- Expanding members'/volunteers' opportunities.

The self-assessment tool will help you identify areas where you may already be strong and those you may need to develop further. Use it as a yardstick to measure your progress and accomplishments through the service year.

## Appendices

At the end of the Resource Guide, we include the following useful information as Appendices:

- A** A bibliography, suggested reading list, and NCPC resources: publications and other reference materials related to the concepts and skills of supervision
- B** Organizations contracted by the Corporation for and Community National Service to provide specialty services (e.g., training, consultation, technical information, and handbooks) to National Service programs. A list of questions people frequently ask about National Service training and technical assistance.

## A Few Things You Won't Find in This Resource Guide ...

- You won't find answers to all of your questions. Since National Service supervisors work in such diverse programs and organizational cultures, it would be nearly impossible to produce a guide that addresses all the needs you may have over the course of your assignment. We strongly encourage you to use this guide along with other relevant materials from your professional and public libraries.
- You won't find the "only" or "right" way to deal with people and situations. Although the information in this guide is based on sound management theory and practice, other models and approaches may serve you better at a given point. Talk to other supervisors and managers; consult with your affiliate organizations, training staff, or personnel office; and check out some of the resources listed in the bibliography. Learn what the options are.
- National Service training and T/TA providers have developed practical guides and other materials in a variety of subject areas such as leadership development, appreciating and building on diversity, service learning, pre-service training, and technical project design. You won't find extensive coverage of these themes in this guide. Rather than duplicate or borrow heavily from these materials, we simply show where and how the themes or concepts relate to supervision.

- Finally, you won't find National Service-specific policies, rules, and regulations that govern certain supervisory decisions. These administrative guidelines are established and disseminated by the Corporation for National and Community Service, your State Commission, and/or your local agency.

What you will find in this guide is a wealth of information to broaden your understanding of supervision and develop your skills in leading others.

Good luck!

*“Man’s mind, stretched to a new idea, never goes back to its original form.”*

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

# Self-Assessment



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## Introduction

The following self-assessment tool provides you with an opportunity to survey your skills as a National Service supervisor and to identify areas you may already be strong in and those you may need to work on further. Naturally, everyone's self-assessment will be different. No one will excel in all areas, so it's not necessary for you to assess yourself highly in everything.

The assessment is an extensive but not exhaustive inventory of skills you may need, in varying degrees, in your position as a supervisor. Skill attainment is a lifelong process. The following assessment will give you a snapshot of where you are today.

# Self-Assessment—Implementing the National Service Mission

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## Getting Things Done

*National Service helps communities meet their educational, public safety, human, or environmental needs through service.*

How would you rate your skills in the following areas?

I can ...	<u>With Ease</u>	<u>Fairly Well</u>	<u>With Some Difficulty</u>	<u>With Great Difficulty</u>
Plan a project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set measurable project goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implement a project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate project development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modify a project based on changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can ...				
Understand project cycles (beginning/middle/end tasks)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adjust work according to project cycle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organize tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prioritize tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can ...				
Communicate tasks to members/volunteers orally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motivate members/volunteers to accomplish tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delegate tasks appropriately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitor and support members/volunteers in the performance of delegated tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate members/volunteers performance on assigned projects/partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicate tasks to members/volunteers in writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write progress reports/memos	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete paperwork effectively and efficiently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Self-Assessment—Implementing the National Service Mission

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## Strengthening Communities

*National Service unites individuals from different backgrounds and institutions of different kinds in the common effort to improve our communities.*

How would you rate your skills in the following areas?

I can ...	<u>With Ease</u>	<u>Fairly Well</u>	<u>With Some Difficulty</u>	<u>With Great Difficulty</u>
Educate communities and potential partners about National Services' mission	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educate communities and potential partners about my program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can ...				
Conduct a needs assessment to determine community/partner needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop a collaborative strategy to accomplish goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop and manage a work plan with a team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can...				
Build trust/confidence between community residents and members/volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize similar missions and see potential for partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Build coalitions among different groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respect diversity in working with partners to meet community needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organize a group to accomplish a common goal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can ...				
Make presentations at community meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work with committees and boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organize and facilitate meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organize and facilitate training sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare meeting agendas and minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Self-Assessment—Implementing the National Service Mission

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## Encouraging Responsibility

*National Service encourages members/volunteers to explore and exercise their responsibilities to their communities, their families, and themselves—in their service experience and throughout their lives.*

How would you rate your skills in the following areas?

I can ...	<u>With Ease</u>	<u>Fairly Well</u>	<u>With Some Difficulty</u>	<u>With Great Difficulty</u>
I can ...				
Convey the “big picture” of National Service and connect it with the work members/volunteers are doing in the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage members’/volunteers’ participation in service or volunteer efforts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promote the value of service and/or volunteering as an on-going life-style	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilitate debriefing and reflection activities with members/volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can ...				
Build trust between myself and my members/volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assist members/volunteers in recognizing and using their skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delegate based on ability and skill development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide opportunities to encourage members/volunteers to assume leadership roles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motivate members/volunteers to recognize and take on their responsibility as agents of change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can ...				
Listen to members/volunteers and identify the crux of an issue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help members/volunteers move from a negative frame of reference toward a positive solution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Self-Assessment—Implementing the National Service Mission

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I can ...	<u>With Ease</u>	<u>Fairly Well</u>	<u>With Some Difficulty</u>	<u>With Great Difficulty</u>
Facilitate problem solving one-on-one with members/volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assist members/volunteers in personal difficulties and stress management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refer members/volunteers in crisis to other appropriate support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilitate team problem solving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can ...				
Give developmental feedback to members/volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Give performance evaluation feedback to members/volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can ...				
Establish and maintain the accountability of members/volunteers for their own actions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain professional boundaries in a personable way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Model professional behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Self-Assessment—Implementing the National Service Mission

CONTINUED 6 OF 6

## Expanding Opportunities

*National Service helps those who help America. Members/volunteers receive awards to further their education or pay back their student loans, as well as invaluable job experience, specialized training, and life skills.*

How would you rate your skills in the following areas?

I can ...	<u>With Ease</u>	<u>Fairly Well</u>	<u>With Some Difficulty</u>	<u>With Great Difficulty</u>
Assist with questions about the use of educational awards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can ...				
Assist in developing résumés	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assist in interviewing skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assist in job research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assist in developing personal goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can ...				
Use ongoing reflection on service to help members/volunteers discover their interests and skills and meaningful career options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counsel on career development goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify resources for job and educational opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refer appropriate members/volunteers to job and educational opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support/share professional networking with members/volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>