

2015 AmeriCorps State and National Symposium – Tips for First Time Attendees

Audio Transcript

Thank you all for standing by, and welcome to today's conference call. At this time, your lines have been placed on listen only for today's conference, until the question and answer portion of our call. At which time you will be prompted to press star (*), one (1) on your touch tone phone. Please ensure that your lines are unmuted and please record your name when prompted so that I may introduce you to ask your question. Our conference is also being recorded and if you have objections you may disconnect at this time. I will now turn your conference over to your host Barbara Reynolds. Ma'am you may proceed.

Great, Jill thank you so much. Good afternoon everybody thank you for making time to call in for today's orientation to the AmeriCorps State and National and nation Symposium as you just heard my name is Barbara Reynolds I am the training specialist in AmeriCorps State and National, the state and national department at the Corporation for National and Community Service. I am also the Symposium manager and so I wanted to just take a little bit of time today to introduce myself to give you some tips and some tidbit about the Symposium and then take any questions that you may have on today's call. Today's is meant to be an orientation for first time Symposium attendees and so if you are on this call and you're planning to come to the Symposium in a couple weeks at the Hyatt Regency in Arlington Virginia then I want to say welcome to the land of Symposium and I want to walk through a few logistical items for you just to hopefully help you make the most of the event and take any questions you have it very important for me in my role for AmeriCorps State and National I really want you to have a positive experience at the Symposium and that's also a personal goal I was director was director for State Commission several years ago and I had the privilege of attending several symposia before I joined the Corporation staff and I remember vividly my first year at the Commission I started my job very very close to the time of the Symposium and I didn't have a clue about the event it appeared on the my calendar as if by magic and I was just completed taken aback and I don't think I had a very successful first conference so with that in mind I want help you get some the most out of it so for today's call we are looking at about 28.5 minutes, 30 minutes total for our call as you heard from Jill at the top of the call we are recording this and then I will post the reply or post the recording on our Knowledge Network. That posting could take a few days so that posting could go up within a week in case you want to listen to this again if you have to ring off early or if you want to share with information with any of your colleagues just good to know information. I think if it's useful now if you've called in and you have access to your computer if you open up the Symposium website. I am hoping if you've made it today's call that you are familiar with the Symposium website but just in case you aren't you can access in a couple way I think the quickest way if you don't already have it bookmarked is to just google or search the words 2015 AmeriCorps Symposium and that should pull up the event website in the search results. Alternatively you can access it via the Corporation website that nationalservice.gov if you just open that website you'll see a link to the National Service Knowledge Network once you go there on the left side of that page at the top of the left list of content you'll see AmeriCorps if you click on the AmeriCorps you'll get to Featured Resources if a few clicks into the Corporation to get the Symposium information so that's how you do it and again I highly recommend the search as your quicker access. Hopefully you were with me and you

can see a welcome message and link to registration, again if you haven't registered for the event it closes this week. The hotel information is there, purpose of the event, etc. just want to make sure you see that the website exists and that you have access to it. You'll also see a link to the agenda for the 2015 Symposium at this point it just an agenda at a glance and so if you open that tab you'll see the timing for the different sessions that I'll describe in just a minute and the names, the titles, we haven't filled it in with more detail yet I will tell you that there will be more detail provided including the locations of these sessions, the presenters, the presenter bios etc. we will be filling in all of that information on this website before the actual Symposium. we really want to make sure you see this website and bookmark it because one of my tips is that I recommend that you come back to this when the full information is available and take a look at it before you arrive at the Hyatt so in addition to those item the general information, the registration and the agenda at a glance you'll also see at the year Symposium website a link to last year's event and so just sometime folks are curious and you'll have a layover at an airport and you want to just a little more detail on the Symposium you can link from that current last years presentations, the presenter materials, you can see videos from last year so really just want to draw your attention to that if that's something of interest to you or your colleague to get a flavor of what happened last year you can expect similar things will be happening this year. At this point for first timers you may be wondering whose coming to the Symposium who are the participants and the speakers for the speakers it good to know that most of our leaders for the different sessions are going to be Corporation staff. I'll be there, I'll meet you hopefully when your register I'll be in that registration area and overwhelming in that registration area throughout the event but then you'll also see the leadership all of the leadership at the Corporation will be presenting and attending at different times throughout the Symposium your program officer will be there all of program officers will be there and your grants officer as well at some point they will be joining us at the event so I think that's just good to know that the Symposium is kind of prime time for seeing in person and talking and meeting in person with folks you have only corresponded with via email or only heard them on conference calls or whatever so good to know. In terms of attendees the folks as you know the Symposium is a required meeting for all of the grantees in the 2015-2016 year and that's all of the prime grantees and what I mean by are the for the Corporation the prime grantees are the individuals the organizations that receive funding from us directly they in turn may sub grant those funds out so the prime grantees are the state service commission the network of them there are also our tribal grantees and they programs that are called national or multi-state programs so that most of those prime grantees will include two attendees so two representatives from those organizations will join the Symposium in some cases they bring more and in a few cases it's just one person but typically folks try to have two or more so that they can spread out and go to different sessions in all there will be about 350 grants individuals representing those prime grantees organizations about 350 participants and somewhere in the neighborhood of 50 to 80 Corporation staff at any given time I think out maximum the number of actual CNCS participants from last year was 83 people but that is a numbers that entire four day event it's not at any one time so good to know as I said there is a large group of Corporation staff who'll be presenting and or attending the event with you. So wanted to share a couple tips of things to do before you arrive as I noted you had the agenda at a glance at your fingertips now and you'll have more detail on that agenda I would encourage you if you haven't already to take a look at the list of the prime grantees the folks that received the 2015 competitive grants from the Corporation there's a list of all of those grantees on our Corporation

website under our press room and just I want to point this out to you if it's not something you've seen before or maybe you haven't looked at it since June. It's a press release that came out on June 19 again it is located if you go to nationalservice.gov to the Corporation's main website at the bottom of that page you'll see a menu with a lot of different links, one of them is the newsroom for the Corporation that our press office and there's a link to press releases and when you click on that you'll see the list of a variety of releases that have come specifically the June 19 AmeriCorps competitive funding announcement I really encourage you to take a look at that announcement to get a sense of who you'll see and who'll be attending the Symposium with you, you may see folks that are in your area that you don't know yet or haven't met before folks that you want to connect with either before the Symposium or while you are at the event so just a top on something a little advance work to do. There is also a mobile app that will be available for the Symposium you'll see we are just finalizing it and testing it this week and so the link to the mobile app should be posted on the event website that 2015 website I encourage you to there is a feature on the mobile app that will allow you to connect with participants that maybe a feature you want to access again thinking along the lines of looking at the list of grantees ahead of time and doing some networking so just want to put that on your radar as something you want to do before you arrive. In addition just to draw your attention it's highlighted on the agenda at a glance but Thursday, September 17 is AmeriCorps gear day and what we ask for folks to do I want, of course totally optional, is for you to bring and wear something that reflects your AmeriCorps program or your AmeriCorps experiences if you are an alum you may have an AmeriCorps alums t-shirt you want to wear, or a sweat shirt, just some piece of gear that reflects AmeriCorps we all do that it's a nice visual I think you can certainly wear your gear the entire time at the Symposium that's awesome but I think it's really fun to see everyone on the Thursday including staff will have different stuff on. My final tip is to again look at the agenda and the event website as we get closer to the event just to get more of a sense of what exactly is happening and when and what you might want to go and it may be because you are a first time attendee at the Symposium you're not quite sure which of the workshops you should go to or how it could work best for you so take a look at that information and reach out to me if you want to you can certainly contact me because I can give you more detail on the workshops that are planned on you can reach out to your program officer at the Corporation ahead of time again to plan and make the most out of your attendance. These are just a few tidbits before you arrive and then once you arrive at the Symposium on the 14th or the 15th whenever you are coming in just want to make sure that you register for the Symposium itself at the ballroom level that's a couple levels down when you enter the Hyatt Regency you will see plenty of signs directing you but just go to our registration desk to pick up your packet and when you get that packet you'll have a few things in it that I think you'll want to look and have at your fingertips as you move through the event of course first all you will have printed materials like the full agenda you'll have the printed bios of the presenters you'll have organizational summaries of the folks who are at the Symposium who give them to us we ask for the summaries at registration and take whatever people submit compile them for you so you'll see that information in your registration packet there will be standard fare like a map of the hotel, local restaurants, etc. and then the one that is really useful to keep at your finger tips and to take home with you is the flash drive and you'll receive a little flash drive or thumb drive to take back with you and on that flash drive you'll have the PPT and the PDF version you'll have handouts or exercises that presenters

used for all of the workshops so I think that I just want you to know that that's coming because I think it's really really helpful as you are looking at the agenda and trying to decide between session it's really helpful for you to know that you are going to receive all of the materials physically from each of the workshops at the Symposium so even if you are physically in the room at the time something is presented you'll have the PowerPoints and you'll have the handouts so you'll get the stuff when you arrive on the first day and your flash drive and we also publish that information on the website after the event. Ok so I just wanted to give a heads up about the way the agenda is organized kind of things that are happening when and why they are happen and they also share a couple final tid bits with you before I open it up for questions. So looking at the agenda I think again is a fairly standard conference approach we have several plenaries a kickoff and wrap-up plenary two CNS leadership plenaries that will be super useful and particularly interesting for first time goers at the Symposium we have four workshops tracks and then a sprinkling of extra workshops that are standalone workshop so you'll see if you are looking at the agenda at a glance that the tracks are financial management, criminal history check, AmeriCorps program management, and research and evaluation, and so within those different tracks are a variety of workshops of specific sessions related to those broad categories something I think is really good to know is that none of the workshops are being repeated they are all only going to be presented the one time so again as you are planning your making your decision that's good to know. Also good to know that we don't have pre-registration for the workshops that the particular room...comments are made we announcement all of that to everyone at the same time and Symposium participants go to the session that they choose in the moment that they chose to go there so seating is limited of course by the particular room assigned to a workshop therefore it may be possible there's something you maybe wanted to go to that by the time you get to the room its full so FYI expect that before and when you get to the Symposium. Good tip that if it's something that's particularly interested to you make sure you make a note to get there early into the meeting to really stake out your seat as I said as reminder you'll certainly have all of the materials from the workshop so if something does fill up you'll be able to get know what was presented. I mentioned there are several plenaries, there is a happy hour, and informal optional social time scheduled for Tuesday September 15 from 5:30 to 6:30 that will be at Hyatt at the hotel for the where the Symposium is happening on the main level on the lobby level and its optional it's a cash bar if you are there and want to hang out please do so and we have an awards luncheon that should be really fun on September 17 and that is part of our official programming so you see in the official agenda you'll receive more detail on the luncheon including the names of the award recipients which should be very fun. There are also a few busyness meetings for particular groups of people or types of grantees. There's the required meeting for he school turnaround grantees on the morning of sept 16 and then there are other optional meetings for groups like the Disaster Services Commission workgroup then folks that receive disability engagement MSY through the Corporation you should know looking at the agenda which of those meetings might apply to you if you fall into a particular category and therefore choose to attend the ones that are right for your not.

If you have any questions about that please feel free to reach out to me or your program officer and we can help you make sure you are clear on which of if any of the special business meetings are relevant for you. I will note that if you are on the call and you are tribal program grantee there is a special meeting that's going to occur Tuesday morning September 15 and that meeting is going to occur offsite and it will not be at the Hyatt for your purposes I really want to draw your attention to that since it will mean getting your registration materials early from us from the Corruption staff and then transporting yourself to the tribal grantee meeting and that is the meeting that is happening back in the District so it's a bit of transport time wise. Ok I just want to say by way of starting to have final comments I think it's good to know that Corporation expects that you the prime grantee then individuals attending the Symposium that you are doing couple things while you are there that you are obviously receiving the information and engaging with the presenters and colleague in real time to learn yourself and to use this information to have the strongest program and have the strongest commission administration possible and we also expect that you are going to turn this around you going to take this information back to home and share it share it with you staff, collegiate, service site location, members if you have members that report to you if you have subgrantees really all of the folks within your Network we expect that you are conveying, you are transmitting this information that receive at the Symposium to those folks so to that end that really why we provide you with the flash drive when you arrive its why we post all of the material and really try hard as can to make sure that you have as much information as humanely possible. Ok, a couple final tidbits before we open it up for questions. Again I want you to know what we have limited food and beverage that we provide at the Corporation as an attendee you'll need to provide most of your stuff your good and your beverage yourself. We will have coffee and tea in the mornings Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, we will have a lunch buffet for you on Wednesday because as I said that lunch and that awards there a panel presentation and an awards ceremony that's all part of our agenda but then nothing else you'll be on your own and just as a highlight DC that hotel we're we are staying is shockingly expensive it's amazing to me I think at the hotel convenient store I bottle of lemonade and it was \$5 and it was 12 oz. and let me tell you it was good lemonade but that's a lot of money so I just want you to know all of that and kind of be prepared for your own food beverage needs. Finally my only other tips is to just make sure that your planning some face time with your CNCS program officer if you haven't already make sure that you know that you'll meet that person right away when you arrive or if you'll meet your program officer in person if you haven't already. I know that a number of folks have been having site visits and different things so that may not be relevant for you but definitely if you are a new program staff person or commission staff person again if this is your first time coming to the Symposium I just want to put that on your radar and again get that in your thinking and planning before the event. So those are the tidbits I wanted to share with you with the hope that it will prepare you to have a really successful and manageable and hopefully fun Symposium so what questions do you have for me at this time.

Barbara Reynolds opens the lines for questions (operator provides instructions for callers that want to ask a questions):

Ok so it sounds like from hearing no questions it sounds like hopefully the information I shared was useful and clear if for some reason you think of a question after we hang up, you want to reach out to me please feel free to do that again my name is Barbara Reynold and my email is breynolds@cns.gov and I'm more than happy to follow up with you on any of the note that I shared this afternoon on the orientation call or if there are any questions that come up for you between now and September 15 where I will hopefully get to see you all in person so with that I am going to sign off today call again than you again for making time to call in and I will see you in a couple weeks at the Symposium. Thank you.