



Training and Retaining AmeriCorps Members

Webinar for Tribal AmeriCorps Grantees

Facilitator: Don Pratt, JBS International | March 8, 2016 | 3:00 to 4:00 PM Eastern



Reminders



- We are recording. Telephones will be temporarily muted.
- Bad phone connection? Hang up and dial in again.
- Follow along with PDF file if you're having trouble with WebEx.
- Please jot down your questions for the Question & Answer segment at the end. You can also “chat” questions to me.
- Today's session is an introduction and overview of member training and retention.
- There are resources online that you can explore.



Introductions



- Facilitator:
 - Don Pratt, JBS International
- Guest Presenters:
 - Gail Boe (AmeriCorps Program Director, Osage Nation)
 - Brian King (JBS consultant, Blackfeet Nation)
- Other participants introduce themselves

Agenda



- Member training
 - Why train?
 - Member orientation and training
- Member retention
 - What you told us about member training and retention
 - Supporting and retaining members
- Additional resources
- Discussion, Question & Answer

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Why Train Members?



- Purpose of training:
 - Equip members for service
 - Promote members' personal growth
- These purposes often overlap!
- Make sure members understand training is important for both these reasons
- Make training meaningful for members
- Training supports member retention



Overview of Orientation and Training

- What to cover:
 - Orientation to AmeriCorps
 - Policies and procedures (timesheets, prohibited activities, etc.)
 - Orientation to organization and program
- Position or site-specific training
 - Specific skills (tutoring, mentoring, using specialized tools, etc.)
- Alternatives to the “classroom”
 - Attending staff meetings
 - Job shadowing



Member Orientation



- Familiarize new members with
 - National Service and AmeriCorps
 - Difference between service and a job
 - Your program, organization, and community needs
 - Member roles and expectations
 - AmeriCorps rules and regulations
 - Benefits and living allowance



Keys to Effective Orientation & Training

- Develop a training calendar
- Identify whose responsible for training
- Incorporate adult learning principles into training
- Use reflection activities to deepen learning
- Use warm-ups, ice breakers, games, and group exercises to enhance learning and promote teamwork

*Share your
training
calendar
with us!*

Warm-ups and Ice Breakers

- Use warm-ups and ice breakers to engage new members and get them ready to learn
 - Helps members get to know each other and feel part of a team
 - May involve:
 - Sharing information about oneself with the group
 - Sharing how they feel about upcoming service
 - Dividing into teams to solve hands-on problem as a group
 - Use warm-ups and ice breakers each time members get together for training

Training is a year-round activity

- Training at beginning of program year
 - Cover “the basics” (national service, policies and procedures, etc.)
 - What members need to get started
- Spreading training over the year avoid “overload”
 - Creates opportunities to bring everyone together
 - Creates opportunities for team building
 - Welcome break from weekly routine
- Training members who come onboard during the year
 - May be needed if you do “off-cycle” recruitment



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Effective Member Training & Retention

Gail Boe

**Communities of Excellence
Director at Osage Nation**

<https://www.osagenation-nsn.gov/what-we-do/communities-excellence/americorps>

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What you told us about training and retaining members

- Methods you've used to engage and support AmeriCorps members:
 - Most frequent responses
 - Reminding members why their service matters
 - Giving members a voice in deciding service activities and projects
 - Other responses some of you chose
 - Organizing no-pressure social gatherings for members
 - Conducting member recognition events
 - Featuring members or projects in publications about your program
 - Encouraging members to engage in personal or group reflection about their service

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What you told us about training and retaining members

- Methods you've thought of using to engage and support your members:
 - Most frequent responses
 - Encouraging members to engage in personal or group reflection about their service
 - Giving members a voice in deciding service activities and projects
 - Other responses some of you chose
 - Reminding members why their service matters
 - Organizing no-pressure social gatherings for members
 - Conducting member recognition events
 - Featuring members or projects in publications about your program

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Effective Member Retention



Brian King (guest speaker)

**Former AmeriCorps Program Director,
Blackfeet Nation**

<http://www.montana.edu/coop/staff.html>

Supporting and Retaining Members

- Match skill sets to service
 - Skills members bring to service, skills they develop through service
- Identify existing skills to hone, new skills to learn
- Soft skills and hard skills
- Are supervisors trained to support members?

Supporting and Retaining Members

- Member diversity translates into knowledge, skills, talents, experience
 - Male and female, native and non-native, younger and older, military veterans, etc.
- Get members outside their comfort zone
- Periodically review member placements and make adjustments
 - Discuss with member so they feel included
 - Detect dissatisfaction before members vote with their feet



Supporting and Retaining Members

- Give members a sense of program ownership
 - Create system of self-governance for members
 - Voting for a team leader or representative
 - Having a say in activities
 - Involving members in project planning
- Promote members' presentation skills
 - Sharing stories of service and impact with other members and program staff
 - Conducting outreach to the community



Supporting and Retaining Members

- Be responsive to ongoing training needs
 - Diversity, conflict management, time management, facilitation, leadership, citizenship, career development
 - Talk with members to identify additional training needs
- Promote personal reflection
 - Helps members get more out of service
 - Helps staff understand what members are thinking and doing
 - Can be done through personal journals and talking circles
- Include history, language, arts and crafts in member activities



Supporting and Retaining Members

- Spotlight members in tribal newspaper
- Thanks members for their service
- Make service meaningful and offer variety
 - Remind members about the impact of their service
 - Rotate members into different positions and service settings
- Celebrate accomplishment and milestones
 - Create a space for members to celebrate accomplishments and share thoughts and feelings about the work
 - Distribute small prizes or certificates of achievement to mark the occasion

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Supporting and Retaining Members

- Offer ongoing support and be proactive in addressing members' needs and problems
 - Identify individuals with problems quickly and offer support
 - Let members know there are consequences for missing even one day of service
 - Enforce policies consistently
 - Identify individuals in the program and the community who can mentor members

Your questions



Additional resources



- Training and Development Topics,
<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/member-and-volunteer-development/encorps/training-and-development-topics>
- Member Orientation
Orientation: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/member-and-volunteer-development/encorps/member-orientation>

Checklists: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/member-and-volunteer-development/encorps/orientation-checklists>

Ice breakers: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/member-and-volunteer-development/encorps/warm-activities-ice-breakers>
- Reflection Resources,
Reflection by Design,
<http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/resource/reflectionbydesign.pdf>
Service Reflection Toolkit,
<http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/resource/reflectiontoolkit.pdf>