

<<Program
Name>>



Site Handbook
<<Program Year>>

Welcome!

Thank you for deciding to be a part of our AmeriCorps program! This handbook provides our partner sites with critical information about AmeriCorps members, policies and program requirements. It is intended to help you guide your new AmeriCorps members toward meaningful service.

If you should ever have a question, please do not hesitate to contact me or <<other key contact person>>.

Partners in service,

<<Name>>

AmeriCorps Coordinator

<<Phone number>>

<<E-mail address>>

Table of Contents

1. Overview of <<Program name>>	.....
2. Expectations of Host Sites	.....
3. Member Intake and Orientation	.....
4. AmeriCorps Program Requirements	.....
5. Legal Issues for AmeriCorps Members	.....
6. Attendance Policy	.....
7. Dress Code	.....
8. Timesheets and Reports	.....
9. Discipline Policy	.....
10. Travel Policy	.....
11. AmeriCorps Member Benefits	.....
12. Performance Reviews for Members.....	.....
13. Coaching Members	.....

1. Overview of <<Program name>>

The following information will help host sites better understand <<Program name>>'s goals. It also will help site supervisors answer questions AmeriCorps members and other site staff may have about << Program name >> and our members.

GOALS

Our goals in << Program name >> are:

- <<Goal 1>>
- <<Goal 2>>
- <<Goal 3>>

ROLE OF AMERICORPS MEMBERS

- Each member will <<describe main activity/activities>>.
- Each member will <<required training or meetings with AmeriCorps program – attach calendar as appendix if available>>.
- <<Insert other roles, duties, etc.>>

ANSWERS TO BASIC QUESTIONS

Who are AmeriCorps members?

AmeriCorps members serve through the <<Program name>>. These members have committed to a term of service <<____ to ____>> hours). In return for their service, they will receive an education award and a small living allowance.

What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is a national service program that is similar to the Peace Corps. Citizens agree to serve a term of service and, after successfully completing service, they receive an educational award. There are AmeriCorps programs across the country meeting all kinds of community needs, ranging from tutoring children to refurbishing houses for the needy to doing environmental work. Besides GETTING THINGS DONE (the AmeriCorps motto), members also try to encourage citizens to give something back in their own community.

What is <<PROGRAM NAME>>?

<<Program name>> is ... <<Describe organization, goals, partners, etc.>>

Do AmeriCorps members get paid?

Not technically. AmeriCorps members receive a living allowance intended to help sustain them while they are committed to community service. This monthly stipend is not considered a paycheck because members are not considered employees.

2. Expectations of Host Sites

WHAT WE EXPECT OF HOST SITES

<<Use this section to discuss program expectations for host sites>>

- Roles and responsibilities of host site
- Expected benefits for host sites
- Site visits and evaluations
- Required meetings
- Required reports and communications
- Policies and procedures not covered elsewhere in this manual (e.g., process for addressing site questions and other concerns or issues, etc.)
- Other program or AmeriCorps requirements

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

<<Use this section to discuss what host sites can expect of your program>>

- Roles and responsibilities of program
- Contact information
- Other information

3. Intake and Orientation

<<Provide an overview of your application, matching and orientation process, including if orientation is mandatory. An example follows.>>

All new members will take part in an orientation and training process that includes teambuilding exercises, workplace/site expectations, and an introduction to the AmeriCorps Program and <<Program name>> policies and procedures. During orientation all necessary enrollment and personnel forms will be filled out. The required identification forms (DL, social security card, birth certificate, etc) must be provided or shown to be in process during this week. To participate in the program, enrollees must be at least 18 years old (unless 17, and must receive parental permission) and must be a legal resident of the United States.

AmeriCorps members are not compensated for attending the orientation or training.

After orientation is complete, those participants that are selected into the program begin a “probationary period” for the first 30 days. During this period, AmeriCorps members will attend pre-service training for their positions. The member’s attendance, performance, attitude,

initiative and willingness to learn will be assessed during this period and will determine if he/she will become a full AmeriCorps member.

If during orientation and training, it is determined that the match between member and site/program is not effective, members may be discontinued from the program without compensation. Otherwise, members will begin earning their monthly stipends or living allowances after training.

4. Program Requirements

<<Program name>> AmeriCorps members who serve <<__>> hours must complete their service hour commitment by <<date>>. Members serving <<__>> hours must complete their service hour commitment by <<date>>. This means an average of <<hours>> per week for all members.

We expect and understand that in some months members will serve more hours than in other months. However, members must demonstrate satisfactory progress toward their commitment to remain in the program. Each AmeriCorps member is required to meet monthly target hours; these target hours include service projects and team meetings outside of members' site schedule.

EARLY COMPLETION OF HOURS

Members who complete their hours prior to graduation may re-negotiate their monthly minimums with the AmeriCorps coordinator, provided that the site supervisor has no objections. However, all members are still required to participate in all team functions (team meetings, retreat, service at site, etc.) until the end of the service year.

SERVICE HOUR UPDATES

As members complete timesheets each month, the AmeriCorps coordinator will tally their hours and report back to them with a summary of target hour completion. If a member is behind in hours, he/she is required to make up missed hours within the month. For example, a member missing his service site on <<date>> would have to make up those hours by <<date>>. **Members are responsible for their own hours!**

5. Legal Issues for AmeriCorps Members

EMPLOYEE AND VOLUNTEER DISPLACEMENT

AmeriCorps members are not recognized as federal or state employees or employees of <<Program name or sponsoring organization>>. Because AmeriCorps members are not "paid employees," a member is not permitted to fill in for an absent employee or perform services, duties, or activities assigned to a paid employee at the service site. A member may not do anything at a service site to displace a paid employee or position, to infringe upon a paid employee's promotional opportunities, or displace a current volunteer.

Adapted from material contributed by SEE West Monroe AmeriCorps (West Monroe, LA). An EnCorps resource. Please retain the original program attribution when adapting or using this resource. Rev. July 2008.

TAX WITHHOLDING AND UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

By law, members are “stipend participants” whose living allowances are subject to ordinary state and federal tax laws. Thus, <<Program name>> will withhold applicable state and federal payroll taxes from living allowance checks. Members are not eligible for unemployment compensation since they are not employees.

JOB-RELATED INJURIES

AmeriCorps members in <<state>> are eligible for Worker’s Compensation for job-related injuries. Members must notify their site supervisor immediately of an injury and provide <<Program name>> with a written report with 24 hours.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

These activities are prohibited by the Corporation for National and Community Service and <<Program name >> during a member’s AmeriCorps service. These activities cannot be a part of a member’s service, nor should he/she wear <<Program name >> or AmeriCorps uniforms, identification, buttons, etc., while participating in these activities, or otherwise identify or associate such activities with an AmeriCorps program.

<<Contact your CNCS program officer and check the [CNCS website](#) for the most current content to include in this section.>>

Members should consult AmeriCorps staff if they are unsure about the permissibility of any activity they are asked to perform.

6. Attendance Policy

All AmeriCorps members are required to attend their sites on scheduled days at scheduled times for the scheduled hours. If for any reason they are running late for a scheduled event, they are to notify their site in a timely manner. Members are directed to leave a voicemail if unable to reach supervisory staff.

AmeriCorps team meetings and service projects are mandatory.

We realize that it may not be possible to schedule all doctor’s appointments and flat tires, and there may be times when a member has to miss his/her service. In these instances, members should notify their site supervisor’s well in advance of the absence. Members should always provide written documentation (e.g., doctor’s excuse, receipt from Goodyear, etc.) to the site supervisor. We encourage members to work with their site in all instances to provide accommodation for all parties.

7. Dress Code

AmeriCorps member attire reflects directly upon the AmeriCorps member as well as partnering sites. Members are directed to wear neat, clean clothes that are conducive to their working environment, and to follow the dress code of the partner site. Members are expected to look professional and be able to perform their duties proficiently and safely in their attire. Because we are role models to children and their families, it is important that members present themselves positively.

8. Timesheets and Reports

Timesheets and reports are extremely important. Reports are to be completed following the outline given by the AmeriCorps coordinator. Reports are due the same day as timesheets and are considered as important as timesheets, as they document the service members are completing at their sites.

Timesheets are the binding contract between member and staff and are the sole documentation of completed service. Timesheets are audited by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Reports are used to document members' direct service and the progress toward achieving <<Program name>> objectives.

- Timesheets, timecards, and monthly reports are to be turned in on the first weekday of the to the AmeriCorps coordinator.
- Timesheets must include the dates of the week, member name, member signature, and site supervisor signature. All signatures must contain the same date. Signatures must be on each week. Time-clock printouts must be turned in with timesheets. It is the member's responsibility to turn in signed timesheets to the AmeriCorps Coordinator.
- Timesheets must be filled out in blue or black ink by the member. Timesheets must be signed in ink by the site supervisor. Each entry must include the date. No pencil should ever be used for timesheets.
- Any changes on a timesheet should be noted by a single cross-out line, the necessary correction, and the initials of the AmeriCorps member. **Liquid paper should never used on a timesheet.**
- If time sheets are not submitted on time, the AmeriCorps coordinator will delay issuance of the living allowance for that month and may implement disciplinary action.
- Members are directed to keep their service time up to date on timesheets rather than wait until the date they are due. Completing timesheets and securing the site supervisor's signature should not interfere with daily duties and responsibilities at member's service site.

9. Discipline Policy

It is our policy that all issues be handled with the person closest to the conflict. If members are unhappy with each other, we strongly encourage them to find some quiet time to talk to each other. The same is true of the AmeriCorps coordinator or site supervisors. Members should always take their questions or problems to the person involved, not the team and not other staff.

An AmeriCorps member should always address any staff at his/her site with the professionalism of a representative of <<Program name>>. Members are required to follow all policies set by <<Program name >> and their Service Site. Only the AmeriCorps coordinator, program director, and site supervisors have the authority to give written disciplinary reports. Only the AmeriCorps coordinator and program director will administer members a probation period, suspension, or termination from the program. All written disciplinary reports will be documented in the member's file and copies provided to the member.

A progressive discipline approach is used with members. An outline of this process follows:

- **First Strike: A counseling report** may be issued for minor infractions and excessive failure to adhere to policies and procedures. A meeting will be held with the member's site supervisor to discuss the problem.
- **Second strike: A disciplinary report** will be issued. A meeting will be held with the member's site supervisor and AmeriCorps coordinator to discuss the nature of the problems and to discuss an action plan for the member's continued service.
- **Third strike:** If a member receives a **second disciplinary report**, he or she will meet with the AmeriCorps coordinator and program director to discuss his or her continued service and whether suspension or release from the program is necessary.

CODE OF CONDUCT

A member may receive a written report through direct violation of the code of conduct. Members violate the code of conduct if they:

- Are absent from service without calling
- Are absent from AmeriCorps training, team meetings, or mandatory days of service
- Excessively fail to complete assignments
- Excessively fail to follow program rules, regulations, and policies
- Leave the work site without permission
- Fail to complete make-up hours

10. Travel Policy

Members are responsible for their own transportation to and from the assigned service site. Should members be required to move from one service site to another, <<Program name>> staff will coordinate transportation.

Members are prohibited from using their own transportation to conduct any non-service related business involving their service site, such as errands, bank deposits, etc. If members are asked to travel for their service (for example, to recruit volunteers or visit school), they are instructed to contact the AmeriCorps coordinator. It may be necessary to clear this responsibility through AmeriCorps protocols.

Members are not allowed to transport program participants in their vehicles.

11. AmeriCorps Member Benefits

Your participation as a partner site secures the following benefits for your member:

Reduced Part-Time (<< ___ >> Hour):

- Will receive a monthly living allowance totaling <<\$___ >> (gross)
- Are eligible to receive an educational award of <<\$___ >> if all program requirements are completed
- Are eligible to apply to their student loan provider for loan forbearance on student loans

Part-Time (<< ___ >>Hour):

- Will receive a monthly living allowance totaling <<\$___ >> (gross)
- Are eligible to receive an educational award of <<\$___ >> if complete all program requirements
- Are eligible to apply to their student loan provider for loan forbearance on student loans

The living allowance is provided not as pay for service rendered, but to provide for some of the cost of living while engaged in national service.

Members are to pick up their checks from <<location>>. Checks will not be issued to anyone other than the member.

Living allowances are subject to all federal and state taxes.

12. Performance Reviews

Performance evaluations provide positive as well as constructive feedback through on-on-one meetings with AmeriCorps members. They provide opportunities for member growth, self-improvement, and self-reflection. AmeriCorps members must receive a satisfactory final evaluation to receive an education award.

Performance reviews are e-mailed to site supervisors two weeks prior to the day they are due. Site supervisors are to complete these evaluations on their own, then review them with members one-on-one. AmeriCorps members are directed to complete a self-evaluation and bring it to the one-on-one evaluation meeting with the site supervisor. This allows members to have input in the evaluation process.

The AmeriCorps coordinator will then complete the rest of the evaluation in conference with the AmeriCorps member as well.

Scheduled evaluations:

- 1st Quarter review (<<month – month>>): 1st & 2nd week of <<month>>
- 2nd Quarter review (<<month – month>>): 1st & 2nd week of <<month>>
- 3rd Quarter review (<<month – month>>): 1st & 2nd week of <<month>>
- 4th Quarter review (<<month – month>>): 1st week of <<month>>

13. Coaching Members

An important part of our AmeriCorps program is the emphasis on the quality of the member's experience. We provide members with a variety of service opportunities and trainings, as well as teambuilding sessions. We ask that each partner site also remember to think of these members as adults-in-training, and use appropriate moments to teach, coach, mentor, or inspire. Often, this experience helps shape what these members perceive of volunteering and the professional world. Please remember to mold these members through praise, reinforcement, and modeling.