

## **Chapter 6**

# **What Every Member Must Know**

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### What Every Member Must Know

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*I'm not naive. I know my nine months of service won't solve all the problems we face. But with thousands of others working at the same time to get things done, you'd better believe we'll make a difference.*

-- Laurie Goldstein, AmeriCorps member

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#### SCOPE

This chapter discusses how to incorporate into your pre-service training information on AmeriCorps nationally and on your AmeriCorps program. It suggests creative ways to present administrative information such as AmeriCorps requirements and prohibited activities and to acquaint members with any forms they must use. In addition, this chapter includes an activity discussing member expectations for use early in your PST.

#### IMPORTANCE

All members must understand what AmeriCorps is. Do not assume that since they applied for the program, they must be familiar with AmeriCorps. Some members may indeed know a lot about AmeriCorps while others simply applied because a friend was applying, or because of familiarity with a specific local project.

Even those who are somewhat familiar with AmeriCorps may not understand the full scope of this far-reaching program.

Pre-service training provides a forum to make sure that all members fully understand the missions of both AmeriCorps nationally and your program. Now is also the time to talk about procedures that must be followed, groundrules, and prohibited activities.

This chapter is important because the more members know about AmeriCorps and their role within AmeriCorps, the more meaningful the experience will be for them, for you and your agency, and for the community and population you serve.

### **CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE COMMON ETHIC**

The centerpiece of AmeriCorps' ethic is getting things done -- improving communities by helping solve problems in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, and other human needs. The other key aspects of the ethic are strengthening communities and developing members' opportunities and civic responsibility. Your application included objectives in each of these areas, but it is important to reinforce this framework through orientation and training sessions, service-learning, and special activities.

Source: Corporation for National Service, *1997-98 Program Director's Handbook*. Washington, D.C.: September 1997.

In addition, having a clear understanding of what is expected of them and what they can and cannot do will help members stay on track and avoid unnecessary problems.

#### **TARGETED USERS**

This chapter should be reviewed by all AmeriCorps program staff responsible for training. Training designers and trainers will find suggestions for creative ways to transmit this information. If you are hiring training consultants, you will have to decide who will provide this part of the training.

#### **EXPECTED LEARNING**

This chapter helps AmeriCorps program training personnel prepare activities to provide an introduction to AmeriCorps nationally and explain administrative issues. The focus is on providing alternatives to lectures for presenting this information.

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Hint: While *Activity #1: Expectations* should take place early in the PST, you do not have to start with administrative details. Begin with an activity that will grab the members' attention or pique their interest, such as program-focused information, how the demand for services led to the creation of your program, etc. Administrative forms can be discussed later; for example, "Now that you and your site supervisor have drafted a plan for your community service project, let's talk about administrative issues such as when you get your stipend and what forms you must fill out."

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#### **RELATED CHAPTERS**

This chapter is closely related to *Chapter 7: AmeriCorps Affiliation and Teambuilding*, page 283. Members should have the *AmeriCorps Member Handbook* (available on the Corporation's website, <http://www.cns.gov>) on hand for these activities.

#### **OTHER THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW**

Remember that AmeriCorps is a new, developing program. Talk to your program officer at Corporation for National Service to obtain any updated or new materials to give members. Program officers are often available to attend your pre-service training and may be willing to conduct a training unit on AmeriCorps and its administrative requirements.



## Activity #1: Expectations

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### Trainer's Notes

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<b>Trainer Skills Needed:</b>	Knowledge of the scope of the PST and, preferably, knowledge of any in-service training plans Facilitation
<b>Time Required:</b>	1 1/2 hours
<b>Materials Needed:</b>	Easel pad, markers, and masking tape -- so each small group can have several pieces of newsprint and several colored markers <i>Member Instructions</i> Agenda for your PST Cooperative Learning Roles Chart posted on newsprint
<b>Learning Objectives:</b>	<p>At the end of this activity, members should be able:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● To explore and state their expectations</li><li>● To understand which of their expectations are likely to be met in PST, which will be addressed through other AmeriCorps member development, and which are beyond the scope of the program</li><li>● To become familiar with the desired outcomes and agenda for the PST</li></ul> <hr/> <p>Hint: This activity is also important for trainers. It will ensure that you know the types of training members want. This can help in any last-minute revisions of the PST and in designing in-service training</p> <hr/>
<b>Skills Development:</b>	Communication and public speaking Teambuilding Group problem solving and analyzing
<b>Directions:</b>	Divide members into cooperative learning groups of 3-5 members. Give each group three pieces of newsprint and a set of colored markers. Go over the <i>Member Instructions</i> after they are seated in their groups. Explain that members are to introduce themselves,

giving their name, where they are from, and how they heard about this AmeriCorps program.

Then members are to explore their expectations for this pre-service training session. What do they hope to learn? What skills do they hope to acquire? What other results are they hoping for? Explain the use of a "round robin" approach to share their expectations. Ask that expectations be put on newsprint during the round robin and that the newsprint be shared with the full group.

Give the groups 30 minutes to work together, 10 minutes for introductions and 20 for expectations. While members are working in their groups, pay attention to the interactions in each group. Identify shy and outgoing members. Notice how well groups are interacting. Are there groups that are not interacting well, and may need special attention?

When the time is up, signal all groups to stop their discussions. Have the groups **report** to the full group. Have each group put its newsprint with expectations on the wall with masking tape, and have each reporter introduce his/her group. After all groups have introduced their members, ask each group to present their expectations. Listen carefully to each group's presentation. Notice which expectations correspond to specific sessions on the agenda for your PST and which expectations are outside the scope of the PST. Thank and praise each reporter after s/he presents.

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Hint: Take note of how members heard about your AmeriCorps program. It may give you an indication of which recruitment strategies were most successful.

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Once all groups have finished their presentations, try to summarize a set of shared expectations. Then ask members to turn to the PST agenda in their training notebooks. For each different expectation, indicate which specific session should address it. If it will not be covered during the PST, try to indicate whether future training on the topic is planned, whether members are expected to learn about the topic while working at their community service assignment, or whether they must look outside the AmeriCorps program for ways to address that expectation.

Now that everyone is focused on the agenda, go over the rest of the training topics scheduled and introduce the overall training objectives. Give a quick preview of the rest of the PST, including other trainers or presenters, evening or special activities, community service projects, and people who will be joining the members for particular training sessions, such as site supervisors or representatives of the service population. If you have not already done so, talk about logistical issues such as where the rest rooms are located, who to talk to if you have a medical problem, etc.

Then **process** the exercise. Have each observer report on his/her group's interaction. Ask if the group became more comfortable with each other after the introductions and throughout the activity. Have them **generalize**. What did they learn from this activity? Did they find it helpful to discuss their expectations? How could this **apply** to their service assignment? Would using this process of clarifying expectations be helpful when they start their service assignments?

Ask if anyone has any more questions or comments about the expectations and the agenda. Close the activity by thanking all the groups for their hard work and thoughtful comments.





**Assignment:**

To identify and discuss member expectations for the pre-service training (PST) session.

**Directions:**

Once in cooperative learning groups, decide on the roles for group members, choosing from the cooperative learning roles list posted in the training room.

Take 10 minutes to introduce yourselves, saying your name, where you are from, and how you heard about this AmeriCorps program. The reporter should be prepared to introduce all the members of your group to the whole group.

Take 5 minutes to think silently about your expectations for this pre-service training session. What do you hope to learn? What skills do you hope to acquire? What other results are you hoping for? Write down your expectations.

For the next 5 minutes, using a round robin approach have everyone share their expectations. One person in the group starts by saying only one of his/her expectations, then the next person says one expectation, then the next person, until all have reported their expectations. Members should each state his/her expectations in his/her own words, even if they seem to duplicate someone else's expectations. No one is to make any comments about other members' expectations until the everyone has stated all his/her expectations. The recorder should write each expectation on newsprint in that group member's own words.

Once all expectations have been stated, take 10 minutes to review and discuss the list. Does everyone have the same expectations? Do all members of the group understand all the expectations on the list? If not, have the person who stated the expectation explain its meaning. Draw lines of different colors to connect similar expectations. Prepare a new summary on newsprint if desired.

When the trainer brings the groups back to the full group, your reporter will have 3 minutes to introduce the members of the group and 2 minutes to present your expectations.



## Activity #2: What is AmeriCorps?

### Trainer's Notes

<b>Trainer Skills Needed:</b>	Familiarity with AmeriCorps mission and ethic, the Corporation for National Service and its programs, history of national service, and AmeriCorps member rights and responsibilities Facilitation Coaching
<b>Time Required:</b>	2 1/2 hours
<b>Materials Needed:</b>	Easel pad, markers, and masking tape -- so each small group can have several pieces of newsprint and several colored markers <i>Member Instructions</i> <i>AmeriCorps Member Handbook</i> Handouts describing your AmeriCorps program
<b>Learning Objectives:</b>	At the end of this activity, members should be able: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● To explain the AmeriCorps mission and the four components of the AmeriCorps ethic</li><li>● To describe the history of national service</li><li>● To list the CNS programs, including AmeriCorps*State, National, and Tribes and Territories, AmeriCorps*VISTA, AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps; Learn and Serve America programs including K-12 and Higher Education; and the National Senior Service Corps programs including Foster Grandparents, Senior Companion, and Retired and Senior Volunteer Program.</li><li>● To explain their rights and responsibilities as members</li><li>● To describe their educational awards</li><li>● To understand any material you have included about your own program</li></ul>
<b>Skills Development:</b>	Communication and public speaking Teambuilding Group problem solving and reaching consensus

**Directions:**

Divide members into cooperative learning groups of 3-5 members. Give each group three pieces of newsprint and a set of colored

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Hint: Because of the limited amount of time available for pre-service training, many programs choose to provide this information to members through lecture. This activity offers an alternative to lecture. You may not want to take the time for transmitting all administrative information through cooperative learning; use it for the information that you most want members to internalize.

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markers. Included in the *Supporting Information*, page 275, at the end of this chapter are excerpts on CNS programs and the history of service from the *Program Director's Manual for AmeriCorps\*State and AmeriCorps\*National* issued in August, and revised in November 1995.

Go over the *Member Instructions* with the full group. Assign each group one of the topics listed in the *Member Instructions*, and let the members know they must give a 5-10 minute presentation on the assigned materials. Let them know they will have a total of 50 minutes to work to put together and practice the presentation. Have members take 10 minutes to read the materials their group was assigned. Then, for the next 40 minutes, each group should discuss the material and decide how to teach it to the full group. Instruct them to leave the last 10 minutes for practicing and revising their presentations.

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Hint: Let the members explain AmeriCorps in their own words, then introduce the AmeriCorps language.

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While members are working in their groups, pay attention to the interactions in each group. Identify members that work well in groups and cooperate easily and those that take control, need to dominate, or do not participate. Notice how well the groups are interacting and how they handle conflict. This will help you to address group process needs later in the training.

When the time is up, signal all teams to stop their discussions. Ask each group to **report**, giving their 5-10 minute presentations. Listen carefully to each group's presentation. After each group's presentation, lead the full group in applause. Give other members a chance to ask questions and request clarifications of the presenting group. Allow about 5 minutes of discussion after each presentation.

Once all groups have presented, have the full group **process** the activity. Discuss how the groups interacted. How did you divide up the work? What ways of presenting the information were suggested? Was it easy to agree on how to present the information? Did conflicts or differences of opinion arise? How did you resolve the conflicts? How did you come to agreement on which method of presentation to use? What might have been done to improve group interactions?

**Generalize:** Ask if there are any more questions on the materials presented. Ask what members learned from the presentations -- including both content and methods of presentation. Point out the diversity in presentation styles, and stress that no one method is right.

Have them **apply** what they have learned from the presentations. Ask members to discuss the importance of this information to them as AmeriCorps members.

### Warnings:

Hold group presentations to the 5-10 minute limit and allow only 5 minutes after each presentation for discussion or you will need to allocate additional time for this activity.

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Hint: The content of this activity is similar to *Activity #5: Articulating AmeriCorps*, page 287. Do not use them back-to-back or on the same day. Since they use different approaches, you might use this activity at the beginning of your PST to introduce information on AmeriCorps and *Activity #5* as a review and to see how well they can apply what they learned.

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**Variations:**

*For more than five groups,* assign more than one group to each topic and encourage the groups to be creative in their presentation styles. Then be sure to highlight how two (or more) different groups using the same information can come up with such different presentations.

*For less than five groups,* combine topics or drop a topic or two. If you drop a topic, be sure to present this material to the group yourself.

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## **Activity #2: What is AmeriCorps?**

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### **Member Instructions**

#### **Assignment:**

To learn about AmeriCorps programs at the national, state, and individual program levels, and about other national service programs.

#### **Directions:**

Once in cooperative learning groups, decide on the roles for group members, choosing from the cooperative learning roles list posted in the training room.

Your group will be assigned one of the following topics. Materials on these topics can be found in your *AmeriCorps Member Handbook* or in your training notebooks.

1. The AmeriCorps Mission and the key elements of the AmeriCorps ethic.
2. The History of National Service and the information on the Corporation for National Service and the programs administered by the Corporation, including AmeriCorps.
3. The AmeriCorps national needs or priority areas.
4. AmeriCorps members' rights and responsibilities and the information on Educational Awards.
5. Your AmeriCorps program. [Trainers will need to include materials in the training notebooks or as handouts]

Take 10 minutes to review the assigned materials. You then have 20 minutes to discuss the materials and prepare a presentation to teach the material your group was assigned. You may choose any method of presentation -- you may create a "rap" or short skit, you can have one person from your group present the information or you can involve the entire group in the presentation. Use newsprint or prepare drawings to illustrate your points. Be creative!!

Take 10 minutes to practice your presentation within your group. Have the timekeeper keep track of how long the presentation takes. If it takes more than five minutes, try to think of a way to shorten the presentation. See if any members of the group have suggestions as to how to improve the presentation. (Caution: these suggestions must be limited and easy to implement -- you do not have time to redesign your entire presentation.)





## Activity #3: Administrative Issues

### Trainer's Notes

#### Trainer Skills Needed:

Familiarity with AmeriCorps administrative forms  
Familiarity with administrative forms of your program  
Facilitation

Hint: If you are not familiar with the forms and requirements used in the activity, ask one or more persons who are familiar with these forms to function as resource persons at the session.

#### Time Required:

1-2 hours, depending on the number of members in the training and the number of forms to learn. This is a good activity to start right after lunch since it keeps members moving and alert.

#### Materials Needed:

At least 4 sample completed administrative forms, including both national and local forms that all members will need to use  
Color construction paper (9" x 12") to make forms into flashcards; you will need a different color paper for each type of form  
"File dots" (solid color round labels) the same colors as the construction paper  
Blank name tags for all members, on which you will put the "file dots"  
Copies of completed administrative forms  
*Member Instructions*  
*AmeriCorps Member Handbook*  
A timer or a watch with a second hand  
A whistle, bell, or timer with a chime

#### Learning Objectives:

At the end of this activity, members should be able:

- To recognize and use administrative forms required by AmeriCorps and by your program
- To know whom to contact if they have a problem with any forms

**Skills Development:**

Communication  
Teambuilding  
Group problem solving

**Directions:****Before the Training**

This takes some preparation, but it makes learning the forms active and fun, and greatly increases retention of administrative information.

Prepare large mounted "flashcards" -- color-coded and numbered -- of the administrative forms to be learned. You will need one form mounted on construction paper for every member. Mount correctly completed copies of each form. Either complete the forms based on a mythical member, or -- if the information is not confidential or sensitive -- use completed forms from the previous year but insert mythical names.

Choose one number and one color of construction paper for each type of form, and staple or tape each form to a piece of paper (use a staple if the form is two-sided or has multiple pages). The number should be large enough to be visible to those members who are colorblind. Prepare an approximately equal number of copies of each form. (For example, if you have 30 members and 5 forms to learn, make 6 copies of each form; if you have 32 members and 5 forms to learn, make 7 copies of 2 of the forms and 6 copies of the other 3 forms. If you have an odd number of members, make 1 extra flashcard.)

Prepare the following information about each form on a single sheet of paper, and fasten it to the back of the construction paper on which the form is mounted:

- The purpose of the form
- Why the form is important
- Who needs to fill out the form
- Who receives the completed form
- How often members will have to complete the form
- Whom to ask if they have questions about the form

Also make up name tags with one "file dot" of each color on each name tag. (You can let the members write their own names on the tags.) File dots will correspond to the colors and numbers of the

flashcards. Each member will give away one file dot when s/he has learned the corresponding form, so members will end the activity with no file dots on their name tags; all the file dots will be on the flashcards.

### **During the Training**

If you have an odd number of participants, ask another trainer or staff person to join the members in this exercise, since members will be working in pairs, with partners changing every few minutes.

Identify one trainer/facilitator or resource person knowledgeable about each form to serve as a small-group leader and "teacher" for that form. Give each facilitator the form for his/her group.

Count off the members to form one group for each type of form -- if there are 5 forms, have the members count off 1-2-3-4-5 and form 5 groups based on their numbers. Then have the facilitator of each group provide each member with a flashcard copy of the appropriate form, and spend 10 minutes explaining that form -- working with the members to cover the information on the back of each flashcard and ensuring that all members understand how to use that form and whom to ask if they have questions about the form during the year. Be sure the members know that they will be teaching others how to use this form, so they must pay close attention.

Hand out the *Member Instructions*, and while the members remain seated in the small groups, and go over all the instructions with them.

Once the initial training is done and the instructions have been reviewed, have each member take a flashcard and join a double line in which members face each other, and each member is facing a member with a different color flashcard. Explain that all the members are expected to take five minutes to teach the person across from them about the form they are holding and jointly come up with ideas for how to remember the information. Tell the members that when the five minutes are up, you will sound the bell or blow the whistle. Then tell the members who have been learning to remove the corresponding file dots from their name tags and put them on the flashcards of their partner, demonstrating that they

have already learned that form. Then they should switch roles -- the members who were learning should now teach the other member how to use their form. After five more minutes have passed, sound the whistle again, and have the member who has learned the form put the appropriate file dot onto the flashcard. The members should then exchange flashcards, so each member is now ready to teach the form s/he has just learned.

Then members should look for someone who still needs to learn the flashcard they are holding -- look for someone who still has the appropriately colored file dot on his/her name tag. After five minutes, blow the whistle. Members should give their partner the file dot for the form just learned, and then switch roles. Or, if the member's partner has already learned his/her form, they should change forms again, and each look for someone else to teach and/or to learn from. After each switch, the focus for each member should be on finding someone with a flashcard that matches the color of a file dot on his/her own name tag, or at least someone who needs to learn his/her flashcard form. Each time a pair of members breaks up, they should switch flashcards.

Blow the whistle every five minutes. Each time a member learns a new form, s/he removes the file dot of that color from his/her name tag and puts it on the flashcard, then exchanges flashcards to teach someone else the newly learned form.

Members will need to move and switch roles as many times as it takes to have all members learn each form and get rid of all their "file dots." If there are 5 forms, that means 5 10-minute intervals (5 minutes to teach and 5 to learn), which means a total of 50 minutes if everyone is to learn 5 forms. The number of 10-minute segments does not increase with the number of members, but the amount of moving necessary to find a partner with the right color flashcard may be greater in large groups. The smaller the number of forms to be learned, the less time this activity will take. You may also choose to have each member learn only some of the forms, on the assumption that someone in each site is likely to have learned each of the forms.

When all the members have removed all their file dots, have the members sit down and discuss the experience as a group. Have them **report** their observations and reactions to the activity, and

share what they learned. Lead them in a group discussion to **process** the exercise -- find themes or patterns in the forms. Help them to **generalize** what they learned, and indicate how they can **apply** that knowledge to complete administrative requirements throughout the year. Be sure to answer any remaining questions about the forms and their use.

### **CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

During orientation, discuss administrative information with your members. This includes information contained in the *Member Handbook* (e.g., prohibited activities and making up missed service hours, etc.), program operating policies (e.g., benefits, living allowance, timesheet, etc.), staff and member roles, understanding the objectives of the program and how to collect data, encouraging members to register to vote, and background information about the community or natural environment. Orientation is also the time to complete enrollment and other forms, such as those for the National Service Trust, health care, child care, loan forbearance, and for documenting status (e.g., U.S. citizenship, national, or lawful permanent resident).

Source: Adapted from Corporation for National Service, *1997-98 Program Director's Handbook*. Washington, D.C.: September 1997, pp. 22-23.



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### ***Activity #3: Administrative Issues***

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#### ***Member Instructions***

#### **Assignment:**

To become familiar with the administrative forms that AmeriCorps members must fill out during their service assignments.

#### **Directions:**

You have just learned about one administrative form and received a "flashcard" of a form you will use during your service year. You will be teaching another member about the use of this form, using the information on the back of the flashcard. You will also be learning about how to use the other forms.

Once everyone has reviewed these instructions, put the "file dot" for the form you have learned and put it on your flashcard. Now take your flashcard and join a double line in which you are facing another member who is carrying a different color flashcard. You will have five minutes to teach this member about the form on your flashcard, and then the facilitator will ring a bell or sound a whistle to tell you it is time for you to switch roles and learn about the flashcard your partner is carrying.

Each time you learn about a form, remove the corresponding color file dot from your name tag and put it on the flashcard. Then teach your partner about your form. If your partner already knows your form and doesn't have the appropriate file dot on his/her name tag anymore (which may happen once most members have learned most forms), switch flashcards anyway, and look for another partner to teach and to learn from. The whistle will blow every five minutes, so be sure to teach or learn each form in five minutes.

**Your objective is to learn about all the forms so you have no file dots left, and to teach other members about each form, using the flashcard you receive after learning that form.** You should learn each form once and teach each form once.





## Activity #4: Service Comparison

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### Trainer's Notes

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<b>Trainer Skills Needed:</b>	Familiarity with AmeriCorps and service-learning Facilitation Coaching
<b>Time Required:</b>	1 hour
<b>Materials Needed:</b>	Easel pad, markers, and masking tape -- so each small group can have several pieces of newsprint and several colored markers <i>Member Instructions</i> <i>AmeriCorps Member Handbook</i> Cooperative Learning Roles Chart posted on newsprint
<b>Learning Objectives:</b>	At the end of this training activity, members should be able: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● To differentiate their service assignment from a job and from a volunteer position</li><li>● To recognize and use the terminology of a service assignment</li></ul>
<b>Skills Development:</b>	Communication and public speaking Teambuilding Group problem solving
<b>Directions:</b>	<p>Divide members into cooperative learning groups of 3-5 participants. Give each group several pieces of newsprint and a set of colored markers. Go over the <i>Member Instructions</i> with the full group.</p> <p>Assign questions 1 and 3, comparing service to a job, to some groups and 2 and 4, comparing service to volunteer positions, to others. Tell them they will have 30 minutes to discuss the questions. Have them put their ideas up on newsprint so they can share them in the full group.</p> <p>While members are working in their groups, circulate around the room. Listen to how the members talk about their service assignments. Are they using AmeriCorps terminology, or are they referring to their service assignment as a job? Do they think of it more as a volunteer position? Do they seem to understand what a service assignment is? Also watch the groups to see how the members are interacting.</p>

When 5 minutes remain, ask the teams to finish up their discussions and newsprint.

Have the reporter from each group summarize the main points of their discussion. Be sure to thank each group for its thoughtful comments.

**Process** by asking how the assignment went, and what were the most challenging aspects of it. **Generalize** by asking such questions as: Does this change how you think about your AmeriCorps service assignment? If so, how? Do you understand the proper AmeriCorps terminology?

Ask members to consider how they can **apply** this information in their service assignments. For example: How would you explain AmeriCorps to others who might be interested in joining?

### Variations:

Some programs have instituted a "pay-for-your-words" policy to convince members to pay attention to the correct terminology. Each time a member using the wrong terminology during the training, s/he must put 25 cents in a clear jar or piggy bank. At the end of the training, the money is used to help pay for a "graduation" party.

#### **LESSONS LEARNED: STAFF USE OF AMERICORPS TERMS**

Many programs find it hard to convince staff or host site supervisors to use AmeriCorps language and terms. Staff and supervisors often complain that the language is senseless and continue to call members "employees" and refer to their living allowance as "wages." One program director solved the problem by telling them that if they use the terms "employees" and "wages," they should also be prepared to pay unemployment insurance for their members.

## CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE AMERICORPS TERMS

Consistent use of basic terms helps reinforce AmeriCorps common objectives and clarifies AmeriCorps for the public. Here are some frequently used terms related to AmeriCorps:

- "AmeriCorps members" should not be called *volunteers workers, staff, participants, or employees*. The word *member* is lowercase.
- Your program is part of the "AmeriCorps National Service Network."
- "National recruit" refers to individuals who become AmeriCorps members through the national referral system, regardless of where they live.
- "Service-learning" is an educational method that helps members learn through active participation in thoughtfully organized service projects.
- AmeriCorps members earn "*living allowances*" -- not *salaries* or *wages*.
- When possible. "*serve*" and "*service*" should be used rather than *work* when referring to AmeriCorps members

Source: Adapted from Corporation for National Service, *1997-98 Program Director's Handbook*. Washington, D.C.: Septmeber 1997, pp. 9-10.



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## ***Activity #4: Service Comparison***

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### ***Member Instructions***

#### **Assignment:**

To examine the difference between an AmeriCorps service assignment, a job, and a volunteer position, and to practice using AmeriCorps terminology.

#### **Directions:**

Once in cooperative learning groups, decide on the roles for group members, choosing from the cooperative learning roles list posted in the training room.

Think silently for 5 minutes about the two questions assigned to your group from the following list:

1. How is your AmeriCorps service assignment different from a job? How is it similar?
2. How is your AmeriCorps service assignment different from a volunteer position? How is it similar?
3. What advantages does an AmeriCorps service assignment have over a job? What disadvantages?
4. What advantages does an AmeriCorps service assignment have over a volunteer position? What disadvantages?

Take 25 minutes to discuss the questions your group has been assigned. Put the main points of your discussion on newsprint for your reporter to present to the full group.



## Supporting Information

The following materials come from:

Corporation for National Service, *1997-98 Member Handbook*. Washington, D.C.: September 1997; and organizational charts handed out by the Corporation at the May 18-19, 1998 Training and Technical Providers Meeting.





# AMERICORPS

AmeriCorps is the national service movement that engages Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service to address the most critical problems in our nation's communities in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, and other human needs. In exchange for a year of service, AmeriCorps members earn a living allowance and an education award to pay back student loans or to finance college, graduate school, or vocational training.

Through the AmeriCorps\* State and National programs, members serve in more than 400 national, state, and local nonprofit organizations in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, and other human needs.

Through AmeriCorps\*VISTA, AmeriCorps\*NCCC, and AmeriCorps\*State and National programs, AmeriCorps involves more than 25,000 committed men and women in results-driven community service.

AmeriCorps\* State programs are administered by bipartisan state commissions appointed by governors through grants from, and in partnership with, the Corporation for National Service. Most members serve in local nonprofit organizations or education institutions, others serve in state or local government-sponsored programs.

In the AmeriCorps\*National program, members serve in national or multi-state nonprofits that receive grants directly from the Corporation for National Service.

AmeriCorps\*NCCC (the National Civilian Community Corps) is a 10-month, full-time residential service program for men and women age 18 to 24. While the primary focus is on the environment, AmeriCorps\*NCCC members also work in education, public safety, and other areas of community needs.

AmeriCorps\*NCCC combines the best practices of civilian service with key aspects of military service, including leadership and teambuilding. Campuses are located in Charleston, S.C.; Denver, Colo.; Perry Point, Md.; San Diego, Calif.; and Washington, D.C.

AmeriCorps\*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) serves economically challenged communities. For more than 30 years, AmeriCorps\*VISTA

members have helped increase the capability of people to improve the conditions of their own lives through literacy programs, housing assistance, health education, entrepreneurship, employment training, and neighborhood revitalization. Members of AmeriCorps\*VISTA work full-time and live in the communities they serve, creating programs that will continue after they complete their service.

## THE MISSION OF AMERICORPS

The mission of AmeriCorps is to provide opportunities for Americans of all ages to help improve the nation through service to communities-making our environment cleaner, our children healthier, our schools better, and our streets safer. A special emphasis of AmeriCorps is on the critical problems of children and youth, and the need for all young people to serve, not just be served. A large proportion of AmeriCorps members serve in programs seeking to achieve the goals for America's youth set at the 1996 President's Summit for America's Future. AmeriCorps works on the simple idea that those who take responsibility for their community ought to be rewarded with opportunity.

The four main objectives of AmeriCorps are:

**Getting Things Done.** AmeriCorps members help communities solve problems in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, and other human needs, both through their own direct service and by mobilizing the volunteer service of other Americans.

**Strengthening Communities.** AmeriCorps unites individuals from all different backgrounds -- and organizations of different kinds -- in a common effort to improve our communities.

**Expanding Opportunity.** AmeriCorps helps those who help America. AmeriCorps members receive awards to further their education or to pay back their student loans -- as well as invaluable job experience, specialized training, and life skills.

If you have questions about how your program helps fulfill the overall mission and objectives of AmeriCorps, discuss it with your fellow members or your project director. And if you have suggestions about how AmeriCorps can better serve the nation and the com-

munities in which you work, please discuss them with your project director, the state commission on service in your state, and the staff at the Corporation for National Service.

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## THE HISTORY OF NATIONAL SERVICE

Service is and always has been a vital force in American life. From the American Revolution to the Civil Rights Movement and from the smallest farms to the largest cities, Americans have worked together to improve their communities and their lives.

America's tradition of service has always had strong roots in its communities. The country's vast network of civic and religious organizations; schools, colleges, and universities; and businesses and labor unions has brought people together to meet common goals. Since the nineteenth century, foreign observers have noticed how, through these groups and other citizen action, Americans have shown an unusual commitment to service -- whether starting educational institutions, building new homes, protecting public spaces, or helping those in need.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Congress created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Four million young people joined in response -- restoring the nation's parks, revitalizing the economy, and supporting their families and themselves. Through 11 years of Depression, the CCC provided millions of dollars in services and enabled millions of families to live in dignity.

With World War II, the GI Bill linked service to education, offering educational opportunity in return for service to the country. Through the GI Bill, millions of veterans improved their own lives by attending college. They also contributed to America's future. With the education they received, they helped to spark the economic boom that gave America the world's leading economy. The principles of the CCC and the GI Bill -- encouraging Americans to serve and rewarding those who do -- inspire AmeriCorps today, including AmeriCorps\*NCCC, which is directly carrying on the heritage of the CCC.

## AMERICORPS: GETTING THINGS DONE

National service changes communities and those who serve. Since AmeriCorps was created, nearly 70,000 Americans have served as AmeriCorps members.

The call to service from President John Kennedy led to the formation of the Peace Corps. In the last 36 years, almost 150,000 Peace Corps volunteers have left the comforts of home and traveled to the poorest corners of the globe, teaching, helping farmers feed the hungry, and taking health care to remote areas. After meeting vital needs overseas, returned Peace Corps volunteers have put to work at home their new knowledge and spirit of citizenship, changing America for the better.

The 1960s also saw the birth of Volunteers in Service to America, or VISTA, which is now part of the AmeriCorps family. Originally authorized in 1964 by the Economic Opportunity Act, VISTA has provided full-time members to thousands of low-income communities across the nation to address a multitude of problems as defined by those communities. By the time VISTA celebrated its 30th anniversary in 1994, nearly 100,000 VISTA volunteers had served in more than 12,000 projects in an effort to build communities and help Americans achieve self-reliance.

Then came the Foster Grandparent Program, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), and the Senior Companion Program. Together, these programs engaged older Americans, using their experience, skills, talents, and interests in a variety of service activities. Today, they constitute the National Senior Service Corps -- AmeriCorps' partner in the Corporation for National Service -- with approximately half a million older Americans in service.

The 1970s also saw the birth of ACTION, a new federal volunteer agency. Transferred from the Office of Economic Opportunity, VISTA joined the Foster Grandparent Program, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, and the Senior Companion Program under the ACTION administration.

In the 1970s and 1980s a variety of programs at the local, state, and national levels expanded to offer young people opportunities to serve. Youth corps, conservation and service corps, and school- and college-based programs energized young people in service to their communities. The movement for service-learning grew in primary and secondary schools and in colleges and universities. In the 1990s Congress gave new impetus to this movement in the national service legislation, establishing the Learn and Serve America grant program -- the vital third part of the Corporation for National Service.

Twenty years later, President George Bush signed the National and Community Service Act of 1990. Building upon this, in 1993, President Bill Clinton proposed legislation to expand opportunities for Americans to serve their communities and to earn awards for their own education in return. Congress enacted the National and Community Service Act, creating the Corporation for National Service. President Clinton signed the legislation on September 21, 1993, and AmeriCorps was launched the following year.

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## THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE

The Corporation for National Service administers AmeriCorps. The program's expenses -- such as the education award and other forms of members support -- are provided through appropriations from Congress and support from local and private sector partners.

The Corporation for National Service offers a range of national and community service opportunities for Americans to serve full-time or part-time. In addition to AmeriCorps, the Corporation also oversees the service-learning programs of Learn and Serve America and the three programs of the National Senior Service Corps.

**Learn and Serve America** engages students from kindergarten through college in community projects that integrate service and learning. Learn and Serve America builds on the grassroots service-learning movement by promoting service as a learning opportunity and providing models and resources to schools, universities, and community groups. Students use academic skills to solve real-world problems and learn the value of service, citizenship, and responsibility.

In Learn and Serve's School-Based Programs, schools plan, implement, and expand service activities for elementary and secondary students. Schools also use Learn and Serve America grants for adult volunteer programs and teacher training.

In Learn and Serve America's Higher Education Programs, colleges and universities help create and strengthen community service and service-learning initiatives. A wide array of students and organizations collaborate to address community needs. Grants also support technical assistance for expanding the field of service-learning.

The **National Senior Service Corps**, or "Senior Corps," engages a half million Americans age 55 and older in results-driven service as Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and volunteers in the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). The Senior Corps taps the vast wealth of experience, skills, and talents of older citizens to meet community challenges.

Through the Foster Grandparent Program, some 24,000 older Americans serve as extended family members to nearly 80,000 children and youth with exceptional needs. Usually working at least 20 hours a week, Foster Grandparents serve in schools, hospitals, correctional institutions, and Head Start and day care centers. They help children who have been abused or neglected, mentor troubled teenagers and young mothers, and care for premature infants or children with physical disabilities.

Senior Companions -- some 12,000 strong -- provide assistance and friendship to seniors who have difficulty with daily living tasks, helping them live independently in their homes instead of moving to more costly institutionalized care. They usually serve two to four clients during their 20 hours of

weekly service. Senior Companions receive monthly training in various medical topics and alert doctors and family members of potential health problems.

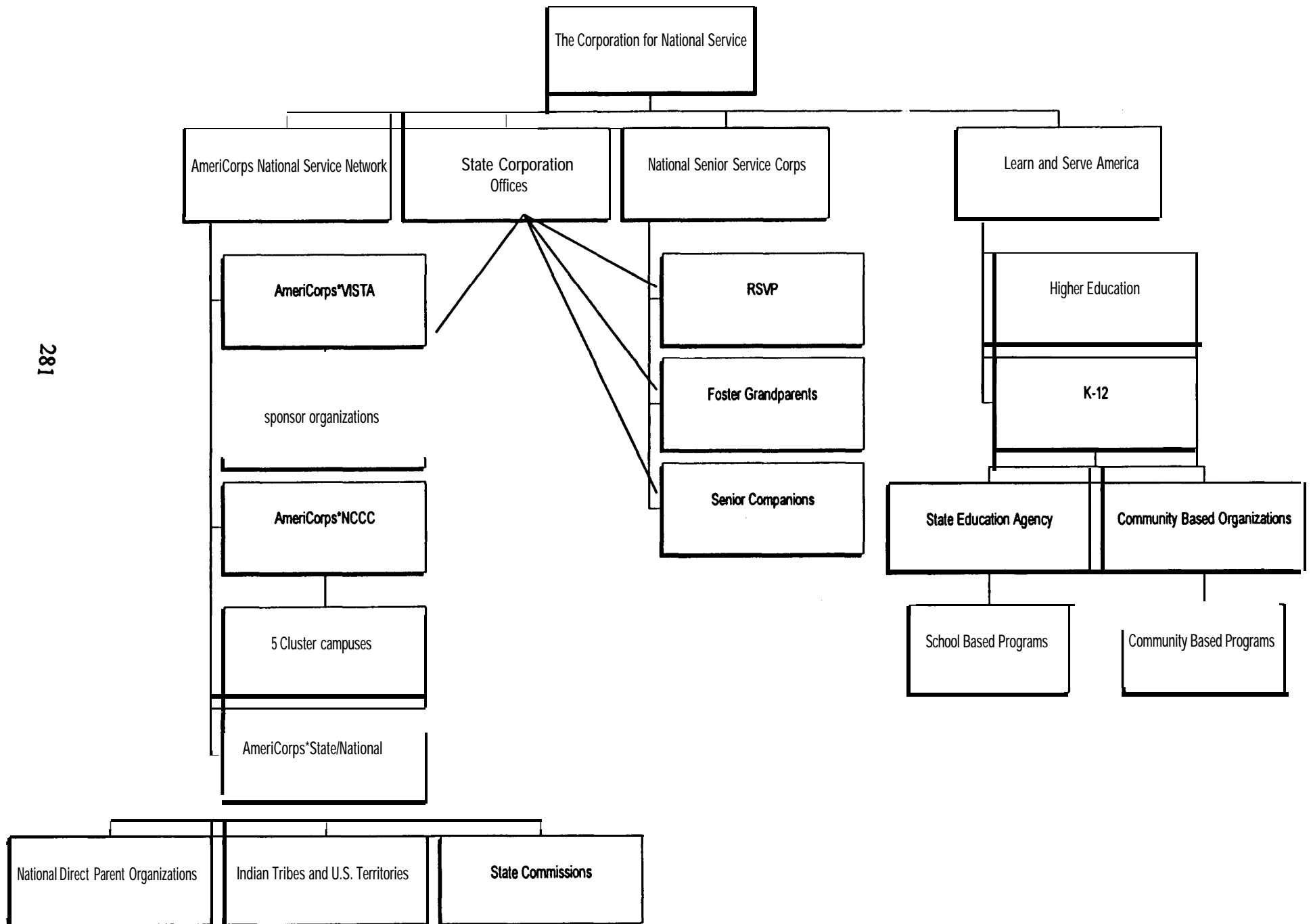
RSVP is one of the largest volunteer efforts in the nation-matching programs that need volunteers with some 450,000 older Americans serving part-time and unpaid. Volunteers organize neighborhood watch programs, tutor teenagers, renovate homes, teach English to immigrants, assist victims of natural disasters, and do whatever else their skills and interests lead them to do.

The Corporation for National Service is structured to keep most of the decisionmaking at the state and local level. The programs in which AmeriCorps members serve work as partners with the Corporation for National Service to “get things done,” build community, and meet common goals. The national office is focused on oversight and evaluation to ensure that all AmeriCorps programs are meeting their goals. State Commissions on National and Community Service or similar entities appointed by the Governor of each state have significant responsibilities for the Corporation’s programs. Most AmeriCorps members serve in local public and

private nonprofit organizations, competitively selected by the State Commissions. With AmeriCorps\*National Direct programs, the Corporation makes the grants through a national competition, but the selection and supervision of members are the responsibility of the national or multi-state nonprofits. AmeriCorps\*NCCC is the only program in which members are recruited, selected, and administered by Corporation staff, on the NCCC campuses. With AmeriCorps\*VISTA, in most cases the assignment of positions to local nonprofits is made by the Corporation’s state offices, but in all cases the supervision of AmeriCorps\*VISTA members is by those local organizations.

The Corporation seeks to ensure that all programs achieve certain goals and that programs have the flexibility to meet those goals. The Corporation for National Service and the programs in which AmeriCorps members serve operate in accordance with the principles of equal opportunity and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or political affiliation.

# Programs of the Corporation for National Service



# **CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE**

## ***STATE LEVEL***

