

Becoming a Better Senior Corps Supervisor

A Resource Guide for Senior Corps Project Directors

Making
Our Mark

Inspiring Senior Leadership In The 21st Century

Becoming a Better **Senior** **Corps** Supervisor

A Resource Guide for Senior Corps Project Directors

Created in 1993, the Corporation for National Service engages more than a million Americans in service designed to solve community problems. The Corporation oversees three main initiatives—the National Senior Service Corps, through which Americans fifty-five and older contribute their skills and experience; AmeriCorps, whose members serve with local and national programs and earn education awards that help pay for college or training; and Learn and Serve America, which helps link service and education for students from kindergarten through college.

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The National Crime Prevention Council's principal mission is to enable people to prevent crime and build safer, more caring communities. NCPC produces a variety of publications; offers training and technical assistance; and acts as secretariat for the Crime Prevention Coalition of America, more than 400 national, federal, and state organizations. NCPC manages the McGruff "Take A Bite Out Of Crime" public service advertising campaign, which is substantially funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

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This document was developed by the National Crime Prevention Council's National Service Training and Technical Assistance Project and is based upon work funded by the Corporation for National Service under Cooperatative Agreement No. CA95-30.

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Printed in the United States of America
October 1996, second printing July 1998, third printing May 2000

PREFACE

The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that works to enable people to reduce crime and build safer, more vital communities. NCPC's relationship with the Corporation for National Service (The Corporation) began in 1993. Working with The Corporation and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, NCPC produced *National Service and Public Safety*, a guide for community service programs on meeting local public safety needs and creating safer, more caring neighborhoods. In 1994, NCPC provided technical assistance to more than 90 Summer of Safety sites working to promote public safety through community service.

Through in-depth work with Summer of Safety sites and other service programs, NCPC sought to identify the essential characteristics that effective community programs share. We found that a significant factor in successful service programs is the presence of a skilled and committed supervisor. During site visits to National Service programs, NCPC responded to requests for assistance with both public safety issues and supervisory concerns such as communication, performance feedback, teambuilding, and time management.

In early 1995, The Corporation recognized NCPC's efforts to develop community service supervision with a grant to design and deliver training and technical assistance to front-line supervisors in all kinds of programs. In the first year of the Supervisory Training and Technical Assistance Project, NCPC conducted a major needs assessment; designed and conducted over 20 supervisory workshops for more than 700 participants around the country; and provided technical assistance to numerous programs. NCPC also developed this guide—in collaboration with supervisors around the country—as a part of supervisory training and technical assistance.

Since 1996, NCPC has conducted trainings for all National Service Programs—AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps*VISTA, AmeriCorps*NCCC, Learn and Serve America, National Senior Service Corps—and other Corporation initiatives throughout the United States. NCPC provides a full range of services for supervisors including advanced skills workshops, specialized training and technical assistance, and publications designed specifically for supervisors of community service programs.

This guide has been designed to support the work and increase the effectiveness of supervisors involved in any kind of community service activities. In addition, this guide has been specifically revised for the National Senior Service Corps.

As a National Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Provider under contract with The Corporation, NCPC may be available to work with your program by telephone consultation or site visits and can offer training for supervisors and staff. For more information about NCPC community service publications and resources, please refer to the Appendix.

How This Resource Guide Was Developed

NCPC drew from three major sources of information in developing this guide:

- a comprehensive needs assessment, including focus group discussions, site visits, and interviews with supervisors of Corporation for National Service funded programs;
- views of National Service supervisors who participated in the Supervisory Skills Workshops; and
- literature of respected specialists in the fields of supervision, management, and community participation.

In response to requests from the field for “hands-on” material, this guide is designed to be practical, skill-based, and grounded in the realities of programs funded by the Corporation for National Service.

Who Should Use This Guide?

Nearly everyone involved in supervising people working in community service will find something useful among the concepts, vignettes, and tools in this guide.

- If you are a new supervisor, you will find the basics you need to understand and perform major supervisory functions. Try reading through the whole guide at least once; then begin using the individual chapters to support your skill development.
- If you are an experienced supervisor but new to National Service, the guide will help you gain a better understanding of the uniqueness of the program and how you might apply your past experiences toward achieving the best possible results.
- If you already have experience with both supervision and Senior Corps, then use this guide as a refresher course and a reality check. You may find some new insights to enrich your techniques.

How Useful Is This Guide for You?

Please give us your comments on the content, style, and user-friendliness of this guide. We welcome your suggestions, and will be pleased to respond to any questions you may have. See the title page of the guide for information on how to contact NCPC.

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