

3. NINE STEPS TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Step 1: **Build your “Case for Support.”**

Prospective supporters need to clearly understand what you are doing, why you are doing it, and what results you are seeking to accomplish.

There is no better way to recruit volunteers, raise program awareness, attract funding, build advocates and stakeholders, engage partners, and unite volunteers and staff in a common vision than by putting into writing a clear statement of your “Case for Support” (i.e., why people should pay attention to your program).

There are no shortcuts. Building the “Case for Support” is the opportunity to get everyone debating until they share a common vision that feeds the mission and spawns the reason why people should care. In a nutshell, this is the process:

- Identify and define the problem.
- Determine and explore the root cause of the problem.
- Describe the resulting need.
- Develop a realistic response to meet the need.
- Define and clarify the desired outcome.
- Develop and share a vision.
- Define the support needed to accomplish the vision.
- Develop your case for support

– Ask for and promote that support.

- Step 2:** Have program staff and AmeriCorps members work continually to build and sustain relationships.
- Step 3:** Have AmeriCorps members develop a program advisory committee that has broad contacts in business, philanthropic, and social service communities and includes local, informal, and influential community leaders.
- Step 4:** Draft a sustainability plan - strategies and actions - for:
- Volunteer recruitment and management (including volunteer development) – see Sample Sustainability Plan in Section 4.
 - Partnership building.
 - Outreach and marketing.
 - Resource development.
- Step 5:** Review, revise, and endorse your case statement and sustainability plan.
- You, as a staff leader, and your AmeriCorps member(s) should call your Case for Support Team (volunteers, stakeholders, advocates, etc.) back together to review the draft sustainability plan.
- Push the group to volunteer to oversee the action steps. Hand out calendars, divide the group up into four groups and have each team prepare a timeline for a quarter of the year. Come back together, report back, revise.
- Step 6:** Continue to call your team together on a regular basis to report back, monitor progress, review and revise the plan and strategies accordingly.
- Step 7:** Explain how you will use the results of your program assessment to make better use of your resources.
- Step 8:** Address how you will market your program and its outcomes regularly to reinforce and build your stakeholder base and community reputation.
- Step 9:** Explain how you and your AmeriCorps members plan to use your partnerships to leverage resources for your program.