

# 0 ~ 3 Months

## Community & Site Partnerships



While developing your Community and Site Partnerships, during the Framing the Program phase, you worked to identify and link with local community organizations. Your goal was to develop relationships with organizations that could serve as service sites or complement your AmeriCorps program in other ways. By now you should be well on your way to solidifying partnerships and finalizing the Memorandum of Understanding.

In this section, you will be focused on creating and implementing Site Supervisor orientations for all your Service and Host Site Partners. Most likely you will have more than one partner, so you will also learn about managing multiple sites to achieve maximum effectiveness.

### ***At the end of this section, you will be able to***

- Design and implement a Host/Service Site staff orientation.
- Identify ways to effectively manage multi-site partnerships.
- Access and use a variety of tools and electronic resources to complete all activities in the Tools for Success section.

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### Host/Service Site and Staff Orientation

#### What is a Site Supervisor Orientation?

A Site Supervisor Orientation is a way to familiarize supervisors with AmeriCorps. It can be conducted in a variety of ways, such as one-on-one training, a workbook, or through a group workshop. The Orientation accomplishes several essential tasks. First, it introduces supervisors to the philosophy and universe of national service. Second, the orientation familiarizes participants with AmeriCorps' terms and conditions. Third, it establishes shared administrative priorities. Finally, the supervisor orientation clarifies roles and responsibilities. The orientation is a huge step toward building a strong program, establishing close relationships among supervisors, sharing effective supervisory practices, and helping site supervisors feel invested in the AmeriCorps program.

#### Why do you need a Site Supervisor Orientation?

Site supervisors are responsible for guiding and developing AmeriCorps members, ensuring the day-to-day service activities are executed, and satisfying administrative requirements. It is impossible to do this effectively without an orientation—an overview and understanding of the AmeriCorps service landscape plus the tools they need to operate the program successfully.

#### How do you do it?

✓	Assess whether the new site supervisors need basic supervisory or leadership skills training in addition to an AmeriCorps-specific overview and information.
✓	Create an interactive and effective orientation based on the above assessment and on requirements of the AmeriCorps program. Use the <a href="#">Orientation Outline for AmeriCorps Site Supervisors</a> to guide the development of your orientation. Prepare well. Don't skimp on information.
✓	Hold the orientation prior to the start of the program year so site supervisors can help prepare their organization to put into place needed systems and structures.
✓	Take advantage of the expertise of the site supervisors. Capitalize on the skills and resources they possess and consider using experienced site supervisors to facilitate aspects of the orientation.
✓	Establish a plan for on-going support, including requirements, regular meetings, deadlines, and responsibilities that site supervisors need to respond to. Present and discuss the support plan during the orientation. The <a href="#">Site Supervisor Ongoing Support</a> tool can give you ideas of things to include.

#### Frequently Asked Questions

**Where should we conduct a site supervisor orientation?** *The least costly option is to have the orientation on-site at your organization or at one of the partnering organization's offices. If you have a large number of site supervisors, you might want to hold the orientation at an off-site location such as a retreat center or civic hall. If you decide to do the orientation off-site, make sure you have funds in your budget to cover the facility and materials costs.*

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**What happens after the site supervisor orientation?** *Definitely make sure there is an on-going support initiative. As the AmeriCorps program is implemented, your service site partners and on-site supervisors will have many questions and challenges. They will need opportunities for collaborative problem solving and other types of assistance.*

### Resources

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Contact</b>
<b>AmeriCorps Grant Provisions; Program Policy and Procedures</b>	Includes some references and/or information to include in an orientation.	<a href="http://www.americorps.org">www.americorps.org</a>
<b>AmeriCorps Front-line Supervisors' Workshop: Participants' Notebook</b>	Manual used in front-line supervisor's workshops. Includes roles and styles of supervision, communication skills, building a cohesive team, prioritizing work, and action planning.	<a href="http://www.nationalservicerresources.org">www.nationalservicerresources.org</a>
<b>Becoming a Better Supervisor</b>	Provides information on effective practices in supervising people.	<a href="http://www.nationalservicerresources.org/">www.nationalservicerresources.org/</a>

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### Managing Multi-Site Partnerships

#### What is a Multi-site Partnership?

Simply put, when your organization is working with one or more partner organizations where Corps members are placed, you have multi-site partnerships. Multi-site partnerships can be difficult if organizations are geographically distant from one another or if there are a large number of partnering organizations in a local area.

#### Why do you need know about managing Multi-site Partnerships?

When you have multi-site partnerships, you are working in a programming situation that is relatively complex in terms of oversight, shared supervision, communication and accountability. There are many places for breakdowns in both systems and support mechanisms and too many breakdowns will jeopardize the program's effectiveness. To create a strong partnership network, you need tailored site supervisor orientation, policy training, national or regional Corps member trainings, consistent and frequent communication, and regular site visits. Together, these components underpin the program and foster success.

#### How do you do it?

✓	Implement a strong <a href="#">Memorandum of Understanding</a> outlining partnership roles and responsibilities.
✓	Conduct a strong Site Supervisor Orientation program.
✓	Develop an ongoing evaluation/continuous improvement instrument to determine the usefulness of field-generated effective practices.
✓	Implement strategies and protocols for consistent communication and stick to them.
✓	Implement strategies for <a href="#">Working Effectively with Multiple Sites</a> .
✓	Determine ways all personnel can meet at a single location for beginning, mid-year and end-of-year activities. Make sure you put/have funding for these meetings in your budget.
✓	Conduct at least one formal site visit and informal site visits as needed.
✓	Conduct periodic training and team building activities for site supervisors.

#### Resource

Resource	Description	Contact
Strategies for Successful Multi-site Management (NWREL)	This brief article provides additional suggestions in building strong relationships and celebrating accomplishments.	<a href="http://www.nwrel.org/ecc/ameriacorps/newsletter/sum1999/article2.html">http://www.nwrel.org/ecc/ameriacorps/newsletter/sum1999/article2.html</a>
Managing multiple sites and developing esprit de corps	This article is written by practitioners and identifies concrete approaches to address challenges in three areas: Site Supervisors, National Training, and Site Visits. This article is geared for national direct programs.	<a href="http://www.nationalservicerresources.org/epicenter/index.php">www.nationalservicerresources.org/epicenter/index.php</a>

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*SUCCESS*



## ***Site Supervisor Orientation Outline***

*Note: This outline does not include the leadership training aspects of the site supervisor orientation. If your supervisors are new to the task of guiding and managing members, then you will need to provide them with training to develop these skills.*

**Program Overview:** *Present the big picture of National Service and your organization and ensure that each site understands its place in your organizational structure.*

- National service overview: National Service history, AmeriCorps, Corporation for National and Community Service.
- Streams of Service: Show the Corporation for National and Community Service's organizational chart. Explain the different Streams of Service (SOS) and programs under the Corporation's umbrella, with an emphasis on the organizational structure in your state. Explain where SOS paths might cross and the role of the State Commission versus the Corporation state office.
- Describe the history and mission of the sponsor organization and its connection to National Service.

**AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions:** *Review the basic terms and conditions of AmeriCorps service.*

**Administrative Review:** *Review the program and fiscal information needed to run a successful program.*

- Corporation grant project application: Remind site supervisors that the Performance Measurement Worksheets are working documents and should be used to orient and guide new members.
- Financial agreements: Provide clarity on travel and training reimbursement processes and cost-share agreements, if applicable; review the terms, conditions and process for the stipend and education award; provide a schedule for pay periods; and explain who to call with questions on the living allowance.
- Reporting expectations and paperwork.
- Timeline/annual calendar: Explain which training, service projects, and team meetings are required and which are optional.

**Roles/Responsibilities:** *Review the different roles and responsibilities carried out by Corporation staff, program staff, site supervisors and Corps members.*

**Recruitment:** *If you will be coordinating member recruitment and placement, make sure that site supervisors are clear on the process and timeline, including a review of relevant deadlines and enrollment paperwork. If site supervisors have recruitment responsibilities, make sure relevant information is discussed.*

## *Site Supervisor Ongoing Support*

### **Ongoing Management**

- The regular exchange of information should be a hallmark of your working relationship with your site supervisors.
- Both you and the site supervisors will get most of your information about the progress of your AmeriCorps program from the members themselves, through written and informal exchanges.
- While information from members is valuable, you will need more than that to manage your program effectively.

### **Site visits**

- Establish a schedule for regular site visits, the initial one within the first month of the program. Plan to hold at least two others, one at the midpoint of the service year and then a final one near the end of the program.
- During site visits, look for program achievements as well as challenges.

### **One-on-one and group meetings**

- Set aside a regular time each month or quarter to meet with your site supervisors privately to exchange feedback on the status of the program. Use time during your site visit if necessary.
- If you have multiple sites, plan group meetings that bring together all of your site supervisors in order to develop the sense of community and exchange that you established during their orientation.

### **Resources for Site Supervisors**

- It is important to give your site supervisors a sense of being a part of the mission of your AmeriCorps program and the larger National Service network even though they may be working at different agencies and sites.
- In addition to group site supervisor meetings, make sure that site supervisors receive publications and information about AmeriCorps such as newsletters, upcoming trainings and invitations to local or regional AmeriCorps events.

*Adapted from the Catholic Network of Volunteer Service website **Site Supervisor Orientation** [www.cnvs.org/am-tr3e1.htm](http://www.cnvs.org/am-tr3e1.htm)*

## ***Working Effectively with Multiple Sites***

*The following ideas were shared during a workshop on multi-site management during the 2001 National Conference on National Service and Community Volunteering. Details on this article (Working Effectively with Multiple Sites) can be found at [www.nationalservice.org/resources/epicenter/](http://www.nationalservice.org/resources/epicenter/).*

### **Working with site supervisors**

- Provide technical assistance to potential site sponsors prior to them applying to the program so they understand the requirements for being a site.
- Decide which sites to place members based on a pre-determined set of criteria.
- Document the expectations of site supervisors and have each sign an agreement stating they understand what is expected of them.
- Conduct three days of orientation with site supervisors. Produce a site supervisors' manual that includes prohibited activities.
- Focus on a few performance measures for the site and make sure everyone -- site supervisors and members -- knows what the desired outcomes are and that the program is on track to accomplish those.
- To create buy in, get site supervisors directly involved with the program.
- Encourage members to talk with staff at their site about the national service program and its performance measures.
- Encourage communication between and among sites.
- Keep communication clear and direct. Provide information through newsletters, conference calls and the Internet.
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### **Team building and communicating with members**

- More Corps members at fewer sites works best. Place five to eight members at each site so members do not feel too isolated.
- Maintain a separate phone line for AmeriCorps members to contact you.
- Maintain a website for members to access updated information about the program such as meeting dates, reminders, forms, etc.