

4 ~ 6 Months

Member Development & Support



Member support and development is a process that lasts as long as each member's term of service. It begins in the 0 – 3 months program phase with the recruitment process, selection and support of Service Sites, and the AmeriCorps member training and orientation program.

At this stage in your program year, you should continue supporting and developing members through several important activities: a mid-term member evaluation, a staff and member retreat, and a continued focus on Life After AmeriCorps.

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

- Find out how to build a service ethic and increase your member's knowledge of national service.
- Identify additional ways to support your members including building the esprit de corps of your teams.
- Conduct mid-term evaluations for your AmeriCorps members.
- Design and implement your Life After AmeriCorps curriculum for each member.
- Access and use a variety of tools and electronic resources to complete all activities in the Tools for Success section.

4 ~ 6 Months

Member Development & Support



Building Service Ethic and National Service Knowledge

What is service ethic and national service knowledge?

National service refers to any of the service programs affiliated with the Corporation for National Service. National service knowledge can include understanding the history, language, legislation and basic program information about the various service initiatives funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, which includes AmeriCorps. Each of these programs promotes service as an American value (service ethic), an example of an active and educated citizenry.

Why should you build service ethic and national service knowledge?

Program directors and supervisors should be able to articulate the service ethic and the history of national service to their members and partners so that they, in turn, will understand their role in a national legacy of service. If you underscore and model the service ethic in your organization, you help members understand the magnitude of their commitment, develop a sense of pride in their membership and community and recruit others to get involved. Emphasizing the service ethic and history also helps to properly frame the member's term as a service experience, not a work experience.

How do you do it?

	✓ Implement opportunities for members to learn and apply concepts about national service covered during the Pre-service Orientation.
	✓ Create a National Service game to reinforce concepts and history.
	✓ Engage Corps members in reflective conversations and exercises to build understanding of the service ethic concept and its application in everyday society.

Frequently Asked Questions

How does one instill an ethic of service in another person? *You can't. Despite all of the activities, reflection and information you give, you will not be able to create an ethic of service in your members. They have to do it themselves, but the environment that a program creates fosters that development. Program directors should look for indicators of a service ethic when recruiting/screening members. Asking about one's previous volunteer experience is one way to assess whether an individual values service.*

Resources

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Next Steps: Life After AmeriCorps	This handbook helps members reflect on their experiences with AmeriCorps, their future plans and other opportunities to serve in effort to develop a lifelong service ethic.	Corporation for National and Community Service
Getting Started: A Guide for AmeriCorps Members	Formerly known as the AmeriCorps Member Handbook.	Corporation for National and Community Service

4 ~ 6 Months

Member Development & Support



Member Support

What is Member Support?

Member support refers to the combination of supervision, training and benefits provided to members during their term of service. Together, these components should provide a safe and structured environment in which members can grow and serve. Unlike a typical 'boss-employee' relationship, the Program Supervisor plays many different roles, including mentor, disciplinarian, teacher, guidance counselor, and 'people manager'. Individuals who enter the AmeriCorps program come from different cultural, educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. It is important for the Program Supervisor to recognize value and encourage the diversity present in an AmeriCorps team and engage members in appreciating and positively supporting one another. Policies, procedures, training and benefits can be used to support this effort.

Why should you be concerned with Member Support?

The success of a program is dependent on the activity of members. Member support helps to sustain members during their service term. Member support efforts reinforce retention, quality services and program compliance. Programs are required to provide member support to include GED training opportunities for members who do not have a high school diploma. If your program utilizes multiple site supervisors or team leaders it is important that they also receive training on and fully understand the expectations of their responsibilities as it relates to member support.

How do you do it?

✓	Continuously improve the quality of your program. You may find opportunities throughout the year to remind members about program expectations (always write these times down for future knowledge).
✓	Continue activities related to the Life After AmeriCorps component of your program and service skill development training.
✓	Implement a Corps member evaluation (required mid-year and end-of-year) process. Use the information gathered to provide additional training or support to members. Also use the data to inform program improvements.
✓	Complete a site visit to ensure AmeriCorps members have appropriate supervision and are participating in approved activities.
✓	Ensure members are receiving their benefits.
✓	Conduct team meetings on a consistent basis.
✓	Relay importance of member support components and role of site supervisors during site supervisor orientation and training.

4 ~ 6 Months

Member Development & Support



Resource

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Stages of Group Development for AmeriCorps and Other National Service Programs	Check out this resource for information and support on guiding the progression of your Corps members.	www.nationalserviceresources.org/

4 ~ 6 Months

Member Development & Support



Building Esprit de Corps

What is *Esprit de Corps*?

Esprit de corps literally means group spirit. It is a feeling that develops over time when people learn to work effectively as a team toward a common goal. *Esprit de Corps* is an integral part of the AmeriCorps experience.

Why should you build *Esprit de Corps*?

Esprit de Corps fosters team success which in turn promotes member retention and development.

How do you do it?

✓	Learn to recognize the stages of team development (forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning); understand the role that supervisors may play in helping the team move through the stages toward eventually becoming a “high performing team”.
✓	Incorporate icebreakers to increase member interactions.
✓	Implement experiential activities as a way to begin to develop teams in a controlled environment. Experiential activities are fun, educational and challenging activities that affect people on several levels of learning (cognitive, physical, emotional, social and even spiritual).
✓	Make sure that if teamwork is an important part of the program, it is reflected in member performance evaluations, site supervisor development, orientation, etc.
✓	Celebrate small successes along the way. Include recognition of individual and team accomplishments. Reward the entire team for team accomplishments.
✓	Focus on the goals not the obstacles.
✓	Establish regular effective team meetings. Rotate AmeriCorps members’ responsibility for facilitating meetings.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I ensure our teambuilding activities involve more than just fun and games? *When leading experiential team building activities it is essential to reflect on and discuss the “experience” be it a game, puzzle, physical challenge or problem to solve. It is very easy to get caught up in the fun, physical, and/or competitive aspects of team building exercises. Immediately after the exercises, ask participants to talk about the experience, how they felt about it, see how it is similar to “real life”. Help them draw out and apply the lessons learned to their community service or their lives after AmeriCorps. Manage the process and the energy, but don’t over-control the exercise; in order for teambuilding to be effective, you must let the natural course of emotions and behavior flow.*

4 ~ 6 Months

Member Development & Support



Resources

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Starting Strong: Training Topics and Activities	AmeriCorps Affiliation and Teambuilding chapter provides instructions and preparation needs for numerous team building activities.	www.nationalservicerresources.org/

4 ~ 6 Months Member Development & Support



Mid-term Member Evaluation

What is a Mid-term Member Evaluation?

Member evaluations are a formal assessment of a member's service performance. It should include a review of the elements of the program that ensure its success. Member evaluations, at a minimum, should focus on whether the member has completed the required number of hours; whether the member has satisfactorily completed assignments; and whether the member has met other performance criteria that were clearly communicated at the beginning of the term of service. Member evaluation provides the Program Coordinator and the member with a report of how the member is developing in the program. This evaluation should be considered a 'formal process' and should be documented and placed in the member's file. There are several different models for evaluation that can be implemented as a whole or in parts that are explained below.

Why should you conduct Mid-term Member Evaluations?

As a condition of the grant, a program must conduct and keep a record of at least a mid-term and end-of-term written evaluation of each member's performance. In addition, member evaluations provide an opportunity for improvement. Program Coordinators can assist AmeriCorps members in reaching their potential through continuous quality improvement, also known as evaluation. An evaluation's goal is not to find out what is 'wrong', but rather what is going well and what can 'be improved'. The evaluation can be beneficial if it is reciprocal—that is, the member should be invited to evaluate **your** performance and/or the performance of their **site supervisor** as it relates to the member's service role.

How do you do it?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out how evaluation is conducted currently in the organization. Once again, the human resources staff may be able to help on this subject.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Remember to ask yourself: "What do I need to know about the member's experience to make the program more effective?" List your needs and then find suitable evaluation models and tools to use. See a sample Member Evaluation tool.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Evaluation works well when it is conducted at several different levels. Consider who is being evaluated and who is completing the evaluation when you design your system, and remember you can always improve the system throughout your experience.

Frequently Asked Questions

When should I conduct member evaluations? *AmeriCorps members must be evaluated at least mid-way through their service term and at the end.*

Resources

Resource	Description	Contact
National Service Resource Center	Search on member evaluation for sample tools.	www.nationalserviceresources.org/

4 ~ 6 Months

Member Development & Support



Life After AmeriCorps

What is Life After AmeriCorps?

Life After AmeriCorps is the phrase used to describe the intentional developmental efforts used to help corps members transition from the AmeriCorps experience to the next steps along their life path. Your job is to guide the members through this transition and help them identify opportunities to incorporate their service experience into their next steps. Life After AmeriCorps development is achieved through training, networking, identifying future education and career opportunities, and counseling.

Why should you be concerned with Life After AmeriCorps?

The Life After AmeriCorps aspects of a program help to develop your corps and therefore improve your program's quality, credibility and benefit to the community. It is a required component of all AmeriCorps programs: Because AmeriCorps members come from diverse cultural, educational and socioeconomic backgrounds they also come with many different aspirations. You may find yourself with a team that has members who want to go back to school for post-baccalaureate degrees, members who want to advance in the local community career setting they are in, members who want to attend the local community college and members who are unsure of what they want to do. Your guidance and linking to resources will assist these individuals to make concrete, informed decisions on what direction they want to move in life and how service can be an integral part of it.

How do you do it?

✓	Guide members in developing resumes and cover letters outlining their AmeriCorps experience and past professional or volunteer experiences.
✓	Guide members in identifying what they would like to do in the future.
✓	Provide members opportunities to design and implement trainings and other skill development activities.
✓	Create a library of information about colleges, universities, and technical schools. Make sure all members know how to use the Internet to search for information, access bulletin boards, participate in chat rooms relevant to their future job interests, and so forth.
✓	Make information about the Education Award available to members.
✓	Identify individuals in the organization and the community that you feel may be good mentors or speakers on career and education paths of high interest to members. Create ways for members to connect (more than once) with these valuable resources. Do this early in the program!
✓	Invite guest speakers to talk about career opportunities.
✓	Be aware of the diversity of your Corps and ensure that activities are appropriate for all. The "Life After AmeriCorps" needs of someone without a high school diploma will differ from a college graduate similarly a 22-year old will differ from a 50-year old.

4 ~ 6 Months

Member Development & Support



Frequently Asked Questions

When should I start planning and doing Life After AmeriCorps activities? *Ideally, you should pass out the **Next Steps** book the first day of the Pre-Service Orientation. Encourage members to start looking through the book and thinking about how their community service may relate to and impact on their future lives and livelihoods.*

My members have many different goals and aspirations; how do I schedule training and/or speakers for such a diverse group without boring some of them or losing their attention?

Unlike normal member training that all members must attend, you may want to offer a variety of Life After AmeriCorps activities and make some of them optional or elective. This way, members can sign up for the activities that are of greatest interest to them and pass on others. In addition to providing a series of talks on career opportunities, also explore linking members to outside ‘mentors’ in career areas that are attractive to them. Arrange for them to spend a half-day “shadowing” a mentor or interviewing 2-3 people in a particular profession. These sorts of activities will provide members with a realistic (vs. idealistic) understanding of their particular profession or technical area of interest. You may also attempt to use members in trainings as panelists on topics like the college experience or as facilitators, so that they can take an active role in the development of other corps members.

Resources

Resource	Description	Contact
National Service Resource Center	Contains a number of Life After AmeriCorps resources.	www.nationalservicerresources.org/

TOOLS
for
SUCCESS



Sample Member Evaluation

Name: _____

Date of Evaluation: _____

Dates of Service: Start: _____ Expected Completion: _____

Operating Site: _____

Program Coordinator: _____

Please list type(s) of service: _____

The criteria listed below reflect “an effective and committed service member”. These behaviors or characteristics were identified based on experiences and perspectives from members, program coordinators, and community partners. Using the scale provided, please evaluate the performance of the above-named member based on 1) your observations as the Program Coordinator and 2) feedback from community partners and service recipients with whom service was provided as an AmeriCorps member. Space is provided at the end of the form and should be used for additional comments to highlight specific feedback or clarify a specific rating.

Directions for Using Rating Scale:

Circle the number that best describes the member’s performance.

Please rate the service member on the following criteria: *(please circle one for each question)*

Scoring: 1 – Excellent 2 – Good 3-Fair 4-Needs Improvement

A. GENERAL WORK ETHIC	1	2	3	4
1. Member can be relied upon to work steadily and effectively during service work.	1	2	3	4
2. Member demonstrates a professional demeanor when interacting with others as a service member.	1	2	3	4
3. Member maintains an appearance (grooming, attire, behavior) appropriate to the service assignment(s).	1	2	3	4
4. Member demonstrates concern for the quality, accuracy, and completeness of tasks performed as a service member.	1	2	3	4
5. Member demonstrates the ability to organize tasks effectively.	1	2	3	4
6. Member is able to accept and utilize critical feedback effectively.	1	2	3	4

7. Member demonstrates punctuality for work commitments and planned activities (includes meetings and trainings).	1	2	3	4
8. Member demonstrates ability to balance service and personal commitments appropriately.	1	2	3	4

B. COMMUNICATION				
9. Member demonstrates ability to communicate plans, needs, and feedback effectively to <i>community partners</i> .	1	2	3	4
10. Member demonstrates ability to communicate plans, needs, and feedback effectively to other <i>team members</i> .				
11. Member demonstrates ability to express and resolve conflicts effectively.				

C. AMERICORPS PHILOSOPHIES				
12. Member demonstrates ability to work cooperatively as a team member.	1	2	3	4
13. Member demonstrates an appreciation of and respect for other team members opinions, abilities, and needs.				
14. Member demonstrates skills in taking initiative in problem solving and project management.				
15. Member demonstrates an understanding of the AmeriCorps mission and philosophies.				
16. Member demonstrates an understanding of their role as a citizen in the community.				
17. Member demonstrates a sense of commitment to the health of their community.				
18. Member carries through on commitments for service projects.				
19. Member demonstrates leadership skills in team activities.				
20. Member demonstrates ability to work with community partners effectively.				

21. Briefly discuss the special strengths this member has demonstrated.

22. Briefly discuss any area(s) on which this member should focus to improve his or her effectiveness as a service member.

23. Would you recommend this member to another service corps? ____ Yes ____ No

Additional Comments: (Use additional space if needed.)

Signature of
Member: _____ Date: _____

Signature of
Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

If above is a person other than the Program Coordinator, briefly explain relationship to Corps member.

Member response to this
evaluation: _____
