

Laying the Foundation



This section is relevant to organizations that carefully assessed whether AmeriCorps is an effective program structure to serve your community's needs. After your organization determined that it is prepared to meet the requirements of an AmeriCorps grant and has submitted the AmeriCorps Grant Application, there are a number of organizational systems and structures that need to be in place, pending grant award notification.

The next few months of preparation will begin building the foundation for your AmeriCorps program. Laying the Foundation section is designed to help your organization prepare itself by implementing the vision for your AmeriCorps program and developing the necessary systems to ensure your program is successful. The work will be significant. Let's begin laying the foundation for a high quality program. Put your hard hats on and dig in!

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

- Create a program design that meets the community's needs.
- Develop effective performance measures for your program.
- Develop and implement systems and mechanisms to ensure the program's mission is carried out effectively. These include an annual calendar, staff development plan, and staff position descriptions.
- Evaluate your organization's risk and implement strategies to decrease risk.
- Apply knowledge of federal, state rules and regulations, grant provisions, as well as organizational policies to establish policies and procedures for the management of your AmeriCorps program.
- Access and use a variety of tools and electronic resources to complete all activities in the Tools for Success section.



This section includes information on reviewing the Human Resource systems within your organization. Whether are a new or an existing organization, implementing a strong human resource system is important to the overall function and sustainability of your program. In addition to reviewing your human resource systems to ensure a strong and functional staff, a section on assessing and managing your organization's risk tolerance is included. Elements of this section can also be important to include in the overall design of your program.

The Corporation expects that all organizations applying to become an AmeriCorps program will adhere and abide by the Corporation's June 6, 1994 Civil Rights Statement which reads

“Recognizing that the fabric of our society is strengthened by the diversity of its citizens, the policy of the Corporation for National and Community Service is to ensure a mutual respect for all difference among us. Participation in the Corporation and its programs and projects will be based on merit and equal opportunity for all, with out regard to factors such as race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, political affiliation, marital or parental status, military service, or religious, community of social affiliations.”

As you review your human resource systems and strengthen your overall program capacity the intention of this statement must be applied to all facets of the work you do within your organization and community.

Caution: Applying for this federal grant is quite comprehensive. Although there is some technical assistance available, we suggest you thoroughly review the requirements of the AmeriCorps Grant application. While your organization may have had federal awards in the past, AmeriCorps has some specific infrastructure requirements that many other federal grants may not have.

Costs incurred prior to receipt of a grant award are to be covered by the organization and cannot be charged to the grant unless circumstances are deemed appropriate, in writing, for the Corporation to approve pre-award expenses.



Designing the Program

What is program design?

AmeriCorps program designing is the thoughtful process of creating a performance driven project that addresses the identified needs of a community through service. The design process includes determining the host agency, program budget, staffing, service sites, number of members, member positions, service activities, program type, supervision, and oversight and other issues.

Why is program design important?

The program design drives the operation and success of a project. If the design does not adequately support the proposed activities and the need being addressed, the project may not be successful.

How do you do it?

✓	Research the need and best practices to address the need.
✓	Assess the resources in your community.
✓	Consider needs, resources and accessibility of stakeholders.
✓	Consider the unique demographics of your community (i.e. rural, urban transportation availability, hours of operation, accessibility, etc.).
✓	Be creative.
✓	Let the community need drive the design of the program.
✓	Review and incorporate the AmeriCorps program requirements into the design of the program.
✓	Incorporate evaluation and reflection into the design of the program.
✓	Outline a “big picture” of what the program will look like once it is operational.
✓	Use the Blueprint for Designing an AmeriCorps Program to guide the development of your program design. Review the checklist for steps you will need to take.

Frequently Asked Questions

If all of the requirements of the AmeriCorps program are covered, haven't I automatically designed the program? *No. Designing a program incorporates program requirements, but it is a process that goes to the next level. Once requirements are understood, they must be included in the crafting of a service program. A program should be designed to address a community need while meeting the program requirements, not the other way around.*

Will the program design remain the same? *Probably not. That is why reflection and performance measurement should be incorporated into its structure. Successes and failures will determine what components of the program design will remain, be improved upon, or changed.*

Who should be involved in designing the program? *Experienced service and issue area practitioners, program managers, community members, and those who will be tasked with operating the program should drive the program concept.*



Performance Measurement

What are Performance Measures? Performance measures are indicators that allow you to track both the amount of work done by your program and the impact of this work on your program beneficiaries. Performance measurement is a useful tool for managing your program. It allows you to track the progress of your program towards larger goals, to identify program strengths, and possible areas for improvement.

Why do you need Performance Measures? Performance measurement allows you to: Clarify the purpose of your program and the way specific services contribute to achieving desired results; document the actual results of program activities; and improve program performance by identifying program successes and areas for improvement.

How do you do it?

Review the Corporation's Guidelines and application instructions in order to understand the performance measurement requirements. While there will be specific information about the number of performance measures, the types of results, and suggested methodology, your performance measures will fall into three categories of program activities:

Three Categories of AmeriCorps Performance Measures		
<i>Needs and Service Activities</i>	<i>Participant Development</i>	<i>Strengthening Communities</i>
This performance measure addresses the impact of your program activities on community needs. (What do we accomplish?)	These performance measures address the impact of your program on the personal and professional development of your AmeriCorps members. (How does your staff assist the member's personal and professional development?)	This performance measures should relate to increasing and sustaining resources in the communities you serve. (How will you improve your community?)

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a resource I should use to develop my performance measures? *Yes. Use the Performance Measurement Toolkit at www.nationalservice.org/resources. It is strongly recommended that you use this resource.*

Can I get support in writing my performance measures? *Yes. The Corporation has training and technical assistance providers to assist applicants in developing performance measures. If your program is approved for funding, check the website above to identify providers who can assist you in revising your performance measures, if necessary.*

What other supports are available to me? *Other AmeriCorps programs can be great help in sharing their experiences. Take advantage of the experience of local programs.*



Develop Annual Calendar

What is an annual calendar?

It is a program-based calendar that identifies the major program activities and events for the next 12-months.

Why do you need an annual calendar?

The calendar helps the organization effectively plan its program cycle and allows every member of your organization to view important events and activities. Additionally, it can decrease the likelihood of scheduling conflicts, serve as a record of events and activities, identify Corps member service hour targets, and operate as an organizational communication tool.

How do you do it?

✓	Identify the staff person responsible for updating and maintaining the annual calendar.
✓	Establish criteria to use for adding items to the annual calendar.
✓	Determine when the annual calendar process should start and end.
✓	During staff and AmeriCorps member retreats, review, discuss, and approve the calendar.
✓	Use a standard calendar making software to create your annual calendar.
✓	Provide copies to all staff and AmeriCorps members.

Frequently Asked Questions

What kinds and numbers of events should be noted on an annual calendar? *Consider limiting entries to activities/events that impact the AmeriCorps program. Some of these events could include State Commission or Corporation reporting deadlines, Corps member service hour targets, national service days, Staff and Corps member orientation and training activities, service partner holidays, breaks, or special events that impact the AmeriCorps program, community service projects, and retreats and staff or Corps member development activities. One caution: if you include too much detail, people may have trouble “reading” the calendar.*

Resources

Resource	Description	Contact
Calendars Net	A free interactive web calendar hosting service, where you and anyone you choose can post events visible and printable by whomever you choose, or everyone.	www.calsnet.net
Annual Calendar	A sample of an AmeriCorps program Annual Calendar.	<i>AmeriCorps Program Start-up Guide</i>



Develop Organizational Chart

What is an Organizational Chart? An organizational chart is a visual representation of lines of supervision for all staff. If you have an existing program and are incorporating an AmeriCorps program into your current structure or you are starting a brand new AmeriCorps program, you will need the organizational chart to reflect new lines of supervision.

Why do you need an Organizational Chart? A well-conceived and articulated organizational reporting structure will go a long way toward strengthening lines of communication, supervision, accountability, and responsibility. Staff members need to understand their roles and responsibilities particularly with the addition of the AmeriCorps program.

How do you do it?

✓	Determine if existing staff will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the AmeriCorps program or if new staff must be hired as allowed by the terms of your grant.
✓	Consult with your community partners to determine how staffing structures might need to be adjusted if you have AmeriCorps members placed at their sites.
✓	Revise your organizational chart to reflect the inclusion of the AmeriCorps program. See sample Organizational Chart .
✓	Revise or create <u>staff position descriptions</u> to reflect <u>added duties and responsibilities</u> .
✓	Communicate with existing staff the proposed changes to the organizational chart and how the changes affect them.
✓	Ensure that the percentage of time staff members work with the AmeriCorps program matches the grant information.
✓	Establish timesheets to track hours separately for activities paid for by the AmeriCorps grant.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I hire new staff and bill it to the AmeriCorps grant? *Yes, so long as your budget and grantee agreement support a new hire. You cannot bill for the position if a staff member is not doing work for the AmeriCorps program. The creation of time sheets with clear explanations of what work was done with which AmeriCorps program is crucial to preventing any inappropriate billing and match figures.*

Should our organizational chart also show staff members whose services are not billed to the grant? *Yes. It shows a complete picture of all the staff in your organization dedicated to your AmeriCorps program.*

Can I charge a position to the AmeriCorps grant if that person is not working on the AmeriCorps program? *No. When time sheets are created be sure there is clear explanation of what work was done with what program. This is crucial to prevent any inappropriate billing and match figures.*



How can I “safely” add AmeriCorps management responsibilities to existing staff members’ work assignments? *Make sure that new position responsibilities are compatible with the staff member’s capabilities. Not all staff members are ready to tackle the responsibilities of managing AmeriCorps members or handling the administrative reporting necessary. Also, ensure that the roles and lines of responsibility are clear.*

Resources

Resource	Description	Contact
Microsoft PowerPoint	Microsoft Office PowerPoint software includes an organizational chart creation tool	<i>Microsoft Office software</i>



Create Staff Development Plan

What is a Staff Development Plan?

A staffing plan is a strategy for ensuring that your organization has adequate staff appropriately trained to administer and support your AmeriCorps program. A staffing plan should address what positions are needed, the number of staff needed, a timeline for recruiting and hiring staff, and how staff will be oriented and trained.

Why do you need a Staff Development Plan?

Retaining staff can sometimes be challenging. The multiple tasks, long hours, or shifting goals often leads to frustration and burnout. Investing in staff is smart business. A retention program recognizes, formally acknowledges, and celebrates the contributions and efforts of your whole staff.

How do you do it?

✓	Develop a comprehensive timeline that addresses all staffing-related actions through the end of the program year. Indicate who is responsible and the resources needed.
✓	Determine criteria for selecting staff. How will the application and interview be evaluated?
✓	Determine the positions needed to adequately staff your AmeriCorps program and develop position descriptions. A position description identifies the responsibilities, tasks, functions, and reporting structure for a position. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What positions need to be filled? How will they be filled? Do we have resumes or applications on file that we can review?
✓	Consult with your service site partners to determine their staffing needs for AmeriCorps members placed at their sites.
✓	Determine criteria for the selection committee. Identify members of the selection committee.
✓	Review your interviewing skills .
✓	Determine staff orientation and training needs. How do we prepare great staff to accomplish our mission?
✓	Review the Staff Recruitment Plan .

Frequently Asked Questions

Is it permissible for AmeriCorps staff to perform other organizational duties? *Yes, as long as the time spent on these duties is not charged to the grant. Be sure that staff timesheets allow for the recording of time spent on different activities.*

Can our AmeriCorps members be involved in staff recruitment? *No. AmeriCorps members' duties are restricted to activities specified in approved grant application.*

Program Development & Management



What can I do if I do not have an HR department in our organization? *You have several options. You might identify local corporations that could “loan” your organization an HR professional to craft your policies and procedures. You also might try a “job share” with another nonprofit organization. Also consider using retirees with relevant experience who could volunteer in your HR department.*

Can I hire new staff and claim it on my AmeriCorps grant? *Yes, so long as your budget and grantee agreement support a new hire. You cannot claim costs for a position if the staff member is not doing work for the AmeriCorps program. The creation of time sheets with clear explanations of what work was done with which AmeriCorps program is crucial to preventing any inappropriate federal charges and match figures.*

How can I “safely” add AmeriCorps management responsibilities to existing staff members’ work assignments? *Make sure that new position responsibilities are compatible with the staff member’s capabilities. Not all staff members are ready to tackle the responsibilities of managing AmeriCorps members or handling the administrative reporting necessary. Most important, establish time sheets to track actual time spent on AmeriCorps activities by each staff member.*

Resources

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Staff Screening Tool Kit: Building a Strong Foundation Through Careful Staffing	The toolkit was developed by the Nonprofit Risk Management Center for the Corporation for National Service. Staff screening consists of the steps you take before selecting an individual to serve in your organization.	www.nationalservicerresources.org/resources/online_pubs/program_management/staff_screening_toolkit.php



Develop Staff Position Descriptions

What is a Position Description?

A position description identifies the responsibilities, tasks, functions, and reporting structure for a position.

Why do you need Position Descriptions?

A position description helps to focus an organization's work by making explicit the responsibilities of each staff person. Staff uses the position descriptions to guide their day-to-day tasks and duties. Supervisors use position descriptions to evaluate staff performance.

How do you do it?

Writing a position description requires three basic steps:

1. **Conduct a job analysis.** Examine the tasks and sequences of tasks necessary to perform the job. The analysis looks at the areas of knowledge and skills needed by the job. (**What activities or functions does this job entail? What special skills are needed to complete the activities or functions? How can staff performance be appraised?**)
2. **Establish a job title and salary.** The title and salary should correspond to the level of responsibility. See Resources below for additional links. (**Does the title reflect the responsibilities? Is the position adequately compensated?**)
3. **Write the position description.** Position descriptions should be written in brief and clear sentences.

✓	Determine the percentage of time each staff member will be working with the AmeriCorps program. You will use this information in your grant application.
✓	Complete the job analysis for each position required to operate the AmeriCorps program.
✓	Write or update all position descriptions to reflect new responsibilities associated with the AmeriCorps program or changes in existing responsibilities.
✓	Communicate with existing staff the proposed changes to the organizational chart and how the changes might affect them.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to have a position description for every staff member? *Yes, at least as it relates to the AmeriCorps program. It is an effective practice to have position descriptions for every staff member of your organization to ensure responsibilities are clear.*

Are there special considerations in selecting and assigning staff members to supervise AmeriCorps members? *Yes. Members are not traditional volunteers nor are they regular professional staff. AmeriCorps supervisors must focus on the tasks of the project and the task of developing the program members in their charge. To the extent possible, select staff members with prior supervisory experience and who enjoy dealing with "the unexpected". Build flexibility into the supervisory position description.*



Can I divide staff time with other organizational duties? *Yes. Be sure to clearly define where staff time is spent and make sure timesheets reflect the reality of the time and funds allocation. Time spent on duties other than AmeriCorps cannot be charged to the grant.*

Resources

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Writing Effective Job Descriptions	Provides recommendations for structuring a position description.	http://www.onlinewbc.gov/Docs/manage/descriptions.html
Employee Staffing: Specifying Jobs, Roles and Competencies	Provides information on determining the staffing needs and other issues related to employee staffing.	http://www.managementhelp.org/ http://www.mapnp.org/library/staffing/specify/job_desc/job_desc.htm



Human Resource System

What is a Human Resource System?

A Human Resource (HR) system is a critical set of structures that help build and sustain an organization. This system guides everything from how the staff is evaluated to the expected length of the workday to the provision of health benefits, to procedures for how staff are hired, trained, and retained. Here are the four basic components of an HR system. Each component is explained in detail in the pages to follow.

1. **Staff Compensation and Benefits** – Are our salaries competitive? Do we offer other benefits that make working in our organization appealing? Are the staff compensation and benefits aligned with the grant application guidelines?
2. **Staff Recruitment** – What positions need to be filled? How will they be filled? Do we have resumes or applications on file that we can review?
3. **Staff Orientation and Training** – Now that we have a great staff, how do we prepare them great staff to accomplish our mission?
4. **Staff Retention** – Do we have a performance and recognition system for our staff? Is the work environment conducive to retaining staff?

Why do you need a Human Resource System? An HR system ensures the consistent application of policy, procedure, and regulation necessary for a strong, healthy organization. In addition, it enables senior management to identify and respond to staff performance issues, compensation and benefits, and training needs.

How do you do it?

Whether you are working with an existing or an emerging HR system, you must integrate AmeriCorps policies and procedures.

✓	Review the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions. Identify those AmeriCorps specific issues that need to be addressed within your organization.
✓	Review your organization's existing Employee Handbook to ensure AmeriCorps grant and program requirements are included.
✓	Review current HR protocols to ensure your organization is proactive in managing risks.



Staff Compensation and Benefits

What are Staff Compensation and Benefits?

Compensation is the salary staff is paid. Benefits typically refer to retirement plans, health insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, and vacation.

Why do you need Staff Compensation and Benefits?

A solid package of compensation and benefits attracts and keeps an outstanding staff. They can foster high morale and keep up with the competition. Benefits and compensation packages are great ways to motivate employees to take on additional responsibilities within the organization.

How do I do it?

✓	Research comparable organizations in your network to determine a competitive salary range.
✓	Consult with HR professionals to link position responsibilities with competitive compensation.
✓	Create a booklet or document that outlines/details, at a minimum, your health and dental plan; leave and vacation policies; and professional development opportunities. Policies should be formalized to maintain consistency across all staff and avoid any confusion.
✓	Update the Employee Handbook to reflect the AmeriCorps specific requirements that affect staff.

Frequently Asked Questions

What can I do if I do not have an HR department in our organization? *You have several options. You might identify local corporations that could “loan” your organization an HR professional to craft your policies and procedures. You also might try a “job share” with another nonprofit organization. Also consider using retirees with relevant experience who could volunteer in your HR department.*

Am I permitted to pay staff out of more than one source of money? *Yes. Make sure that staff timesheets reflect percentages of time on AmeriCorps related activities. Ensure that any time charged to the grant adheres to boundaries of the grant.*

What is the average salary and benefits of AmeriCorps program staff? *It depends on many things: the size and geographic location of your organization, age of the organization, just to name a few. To gather this information, check with AmeriCorps programs in your network or contact your State Commission or the Corporation for recommendations on finding salary and benefit information.*



Resources

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Management Assistance Program to Nonprofits	Broad benefits information	http://www.managementhelp.org/pay_ben/benefits/benefits.htm
	Nonprofit benefits information	http://www.managementhelp.org/hr_mgmt/np_spcf.htm
BenefitsLink	Everything about current benefit issues	http://www.benefitslink.com/topics.shtml



Staff Recruitment Plan

What is a Staff Recruitment Plan?

A staff recruitment plan is a timeline that outlines and guides the process of creating or updating position descriptions, recruiting and hiring outstanding staff, and orienting and training all staff for new responsibilities.

Why do you need a Staff Recruitment Plan?

It ensures that staffing vacancies are filled in a timely manner following a standard set of criteria.

How do you do it?

✓	Determine the positions responsible for the day-to-day operations of your AmeriCorps program responsibilities.
✓	Consult with your service site partners to determine how staffing structures adjustments for AmeriCorps members placed at their sites.
✓	Determine criteria for the selection committee. Identify members of the selection committee.
✓	Allow adequate time to advertise, review applications, set up and conduct interviews evaluate candidates, and to make a selection and offer.
✓	Determine criteria for selecting staff. How will the application and interview be evaluated?
✓	Review the Basic Interviewing Strategies and Staff Recruitment Strategies .

Frequently Asked Questions

Where do I search to find a diverse pool of candidates? *Recruit in nontraditional places. Consider diversity of culture, age, persons with disabilities, and sexual orientation. The Internet can be a powerful tool to bring in qualified candidates. Also don't forget nontraditional media sources like the Native American, African American, and Latino/Hispanic press. Local businesses, religious institutions, and community centers are other examples of nontraditional recruitment avenues. Consider the community your program serves. Talk to other organizations that seem to be attracting a diverse audience.*

Do staff members need to have criminal background checks? *Yes. Programs with members or employees who have substantial direct contact with children (as defined by state law) or who perform service in the homes of children or individuals considered vulnerable by the program, shall, to the extent permitted by state and local law, conduct criminal record checks on these members or employees as part of the screening process. This documentation must be maintained consistent with state law.*

Program Development & Management



Should I maintain a record of how we recruited candidates? *Yes! Document, in writing, the process used in selection of the new staff member(s) and retain in a file the resume/application and interview sheets of all candidates considered. Include signatures of interviewers or testers or panelists who judged or scored the candidates. Retain these records for a period of time determined by the HR department, the organization, the State Commission, or Parent Organization.*

Can our AmeriCorps members be involved in staff recruitment? *No. AmeriCorps members' duties are restricted to activities specified by the activities in the approved grant application.*

Resources

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Staff Screening Tool Kit: Building a Strong Foundation Through Careful Staffing	The toolkit was developed by the Nonprofit Risk Management Center for the Corporation for National Service. Staff screening consists of the steps you take before selecting an individual to serve in your organization.	www.nationalserviceresources.org/resources/online_pubs/program_management/staff_screening_toolkit.php
Management Assistance Program to Nonprofits	Contains information on basic interviewing strategies.	http://www.managementhelp.org/staffing/screening/intrvwng/basics.htm
National Service Entities	Call your State Office, Commission, or Parent Organization to see if they have information or links related to recruiting staff.	http://www.nationalservice.org/resources/



Staff Orientation and Training Plan

What is a Staff Orientation and Training Plan?

A staff orientation and training plan is a comprehensive annual professional development strategy. It begins the moment a staff member is hired. It seems obvious, but this proactive contributor to employee success, morale, and participation is often overlooked.

Why do you need a Staff Orientation and Training Plan?

Creating a plan for staff orientation and training ensures you have a systematic, consistent, and measurable way to develop your staff. The benefits of a comprehensive orientation and training plan are significant. Consider this: your staff members enjoy increased knowledge of position and organization; increased job satisfaction and morale; increased staff motivation; increased efficiencies in processes which result in better services to the community; increased capacity to adopt new technologies and methods; reduction of risk, e.g., training about sexual harassment, diversity training; and reduced employee turnover.

How do you do it?

✓	Review Building an Outstanding Orientation Program and the AmeriCorps Program Staff Training Topics for ideas to incorporate into your orientation and training plan.
✓	Develop an orientation plan complete with staff roles, goals, tasks, information to be conveyed, performance measurements, and an implementation timeline.
✓	Review your AmeriCorps Performance Measures, organizational goals, or long-term plans and decide what skills your staff needs to run the AmeriCorps program.
✓	Create a budget to accomplish annual orientation and training goals.
✓	Consult, communicate, and include organization's staff and stakeholders in developing orientation and training plans.
✓	Consider a form of recognition or award for staff that receive high orientation performance measurement marks.
✓	Consider utilizing outside trainers to execute your training needs. Review the Corporation's T/TA providers, State Commission, and internal or local resources for potential trainers.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does staff orientation and training accomplish? *When done right, it can accomplish several key things. First, a great welcome and orientation leaves a new employee feeling valued and prepared. Second, continuous professional development can increase staff competence and contributions. Finally, on-going training can improve supervision and leadership techniques, thus increasing and sustaining high morale.*

Should I hire an external trainer for my orientations and training? *No and yes. It is best to have an orientation done by an internal staff member, but if you do not have in-house expertise to address all of the training needs, then bring in a specialist to help you provide professional skill development (for example, supervisory skill development).*

Program Development & Management



What resources does the Corporation make available to program staff? *The Corporation recently piloted an assessment tool called “My Resources”. This tool contains a series of descriptions that represent characteristics or indicators of an effective program that uses national service participants and/or volunteers. Once the assessment is completed it will provide a listing of and links to specific resources that are available. These resources are targeted to assist in developing and enhancing skills and knowledge that address the areas that have been identified as being in need of improvement. A description of the vast array of training and technical assistance resources available through the Corporation may be found at <http://www.nationalservice.org/resources>.*

Resources

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Management Assistance Program to Nonprofits	Broad overview of Training and Development issues and practical suggestions.	http://www.managementhelp.org/trng_dev/trng_dev.htm
	Find ways to strengthen your training and development plan.	http://www.managementhelp.org/trng_dev/gdlns.htm
	Basic information on adult learning.	http://www.managementhelp.org/trng_dev/basics/adlt_lrn.htm
Becoming a Better Supervisor	A resource guide for front-line supervisors in all kinds of service programs.	http://www.nationalservice.org/resources/



Staff Retention Program

What is a Staff Retention Program?

A retention program recognizes, formally acknowledges, and celebrates the contributions and efforts of your whole staff. Retaining staff in the nonprofit community can sometimes be challenging. The multiple tasks, long hours, or shifting goals often leads to frustration and burnout. Investing in staff is smart business practice.

Why do you need a Staff Retention Program?

Simple. You want to keep quality staff members who contribute to the success of the organization.

How do you do it?

A Staff Retention program can have three components.

Support	Assess	Recognize
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put staff in positions that are right for their skills. • Give staff the resources they need to do a good job. • Implement formal coaching, support, and professional development opportunities. • Create a work environment that is compatible with and reflects the organization's mission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use clear performance goals to help you and the staff member measure successes and identify deficiencies. • Have regular "performance dialogues" to let staff know if they are on track and meeting expectations. Generally, employees want concrete feedback on how they are doing. • Provide on-going support mechanisms to address skill deficiencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward employees with small tokens and with work they enjoy. Employees want to feel they are needed and wanted. • Create opportunities for formal recognition celebrations.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is responsible for a retention program? *Your HR department should be in close communication with the managers and supervisors of your organization to identify and acknowledge high performing staff and support underachieving staff toward improvement. If you do not have an HR department, ensure that you identify a staff member who would be responsible for managing a staff recognition program.*

Resources

Resource	Description	Contact
Becoming a Better Supervisor	A Resource Guide for National and Community Service Supervisors	www.nationalservice.org/resources/



Risk Management

What is Risk Management?

Risk management is the strategic process of assessing your organization's vulnerabilities and putting remedies in place. Generally, this process involves reviewing the operations of the organization, identifying potential threats to the organization and the likelihood of their occurrence, and then taking appropriate actions to address the possible threats.

Why do you need to address Risk Management issues?

It can protect your organization from catastrophic loss or damage. With the recent increase in rules and regulations and employee-related lawsuits, risk management is becoming a management practice that is every bit as important as financial or facilities management.

How do you do it?

- ✓ Review the checklists for Assessing Risk Management. Complete an [Organization Evaluation Checklist](#) in the following areas:
 - Professional management culture and practices. Review the [Checklist of Human Resource Management Indicators](#).
 - Personnel policies up-to-date and reflective of AmeriCorps rules and regulations.
 - Insurance and liability coverage.
 - Legal protection.
 - Sound financial management systems and procedures.
 - Volunteer management policies.
 - Fundraising procedures and policies.
 - Resource Management (people, computers, records and facilities).
 - Use the [Checklist to Evaluate a Nonprofit Board of Directors](#) to review the practices of the organization's board or advisory group.

Also consider these issues.

- ✓ Staff could complete an anonymous survey to determine any issues related to risk that senior management are unaware of. Identify organization's blind spots. Take concrete steps to address an organization's blind spots.
- ✓ If you are a Parent Organization, make sure your sub-grantees are in compliance with all relevant grantee regulations and organizational policy.
- ✓ Conduct formal and informal site monitoring visits. Use a Risk Management checklist to determine vulnerable areas.
- ✓ Ensure you have a sexual harassment policy and or non-discrimination policy in place and use them actively if/when issues are identified.
- ✓ Don't ignore challenges. This will only make them bigger and can lead to legal action or loss of valuable staff.
- ✓ Consider Corps member and staff activities that might expose your organization to risk (private use of cars, transporting children, etc.).

Program Development & Management



Frequently Asked Questions

Which systems should I review first for potential liabilities? *A thorough review of your Employee Handbook, Organizational Policy & Procedures, and sub-grantee policies and procedures should be an important first step in assessing potential areas of liability to ensure the operation of the organization is in compliance with stated policies and procedures.*

What local resources could I draw on for assistance in conducting a risk management assessment? *Find out if you have board members with legal backgrounds who can review organizational policies. Additionally, consider local colleges and universities that might have a department that works on identifying risk management issues and would review your organization on a pro bono basis. Also see the Tools for Success below for on-line resources.*

What Corporation-specific entities can help us identify or address risk management issues? *The Program Officer can provide guidance or directive to clarify potential problems.*

Resources

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Nonprofit Risk Management Center	A comprehensive website that includes information directed at nonprofit organizations. Topics include myths about risk, risk management basics, insurance options, legal issues, etc.	http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/
Management Assistance Program to Nonprofits	Broad issues related to Risk Management.	http://www.managementhelp.org/legal/rskmgmnt.htm
	Self-evaluation checklist for the Board of Directors.	http://www.managementhelp.org/boards/brd_eval.htm
	Excellent checklist for organizational planning, readiness, and risk reduction.	http://www.managementhelp.org/org_eval/uw_plng.htm
	Excellent checklist of Human Resource and Volunteer Management Issues.	http://www.managementhelp.org/org_eval/uw_hr.htm
	Major Topics and Issues in Employee Law.	http://www.managementhelp.org/legal/emp_law/emp_law.htm



Policy, Procedure, and Regulation Compliance

What does it mean to comply with policy, procedures, and regulations?

Basically, your organization must abide by a set of requirements and policies once you accept federal money. These procedures, regulations, or policies flow from federal, state, or local grant-making regulation entities.

Why do you need to comply with policy, procedures, and regulations?

Compliance is not optional! You must comply with all regulations to maintain good standing with the Corporation and to continue receiving the support and funding provided for in your grant. Consequences for noncompliance may include reductions or loss of funding, repayment to the U.S. Government of funds that may have been improperly spent, lawsuits, and jail time.

How do you do it?

✓	Become intimately knowledgeable with the AmeriCorps grant provisions, OMB Circulars, and related regulations.
✓	Ensure all staff, but especially your senior management, understands new and existing regulations.
✓	Your HR representative or someone functioning in that capacity must ensure that new regulations are included in Employee Handbooks and that all staff are trained on relevant regulations.
✓	Provide focused training on regulation and compliance issues to your staff. Make sure they understand what is needed as part of the AmeriCorps grant.
✓	Find out if there are State regulations that you need to consider.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can accepting the AmeriCorps program grant impact our current operations? *The new policies might require that you make significant changes in the climate and culture of your organization. If a problem arises in the realm of compliance, questions will be asked as to whether the climate of the organization sustained a particular environment of noncompliance.*

What happens if the program is not in compliance with the grant provisions? *The consequences of noncompliance will vary according to the nature and severity of the noncompliance. For example, late or deficient reporting may result in a loss of funding. Failure to document costs may result in having to repay the government.*



Resources

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Management Assistance Program to Nonprofits	General information on Employee Handbooks.	http://www.managementhelp.org/policies/handbook/handbook.htm
	Guidance on writing employee handbooks, suggested policies and procedures.	http://www.managementhelp.org/policies/handbook/handbook.htm
AmeriCorps Grant Provisions	The specific information related to the AmeriCorps grant.	http://www.americorps.org/resources/manuals.html
Organizational Policies and Procedures Handbook Employee Handbook	Your organization's policy and procedure manuals.	



Senior Management Board Presentation

What is a Senior Management Board Presentation?

A board presentation to senior management is an opportunity to share information and receive input on the AmeriCorps program. Almost every organization has an advisory board, board of directors, or group of senior managers with oversight responsibility for the AmeriCorps program. In your organization, this group might be actively involved in the day-to-day activities or only meet quarterly for organizational updates.

Why do you need to conduct Senior Management Board Presentations?

A board presentation keeps everyone in the organization in proactive posture. No surprises! Keep this group updated on the development and implementation of the program, any challenges or snags encountered, or support you might need. Often the group is significantly involved in guiding an organization's activities including long-term planning, programming, community relations, and financial matters. Your AmeriCorps program will also be included in that.

How do you do it?

✓	Discuss the timing, structure, and content of a presentation with your organization's Executive Director.
✓	Create simple, clear handouts that illustrate the important points you want to make.
✓	Make sure you have accurate information from key stakeholders, including other staff members.
✓	Update the group on budget changes or other impending financial issues.

Frequently Asked Questions

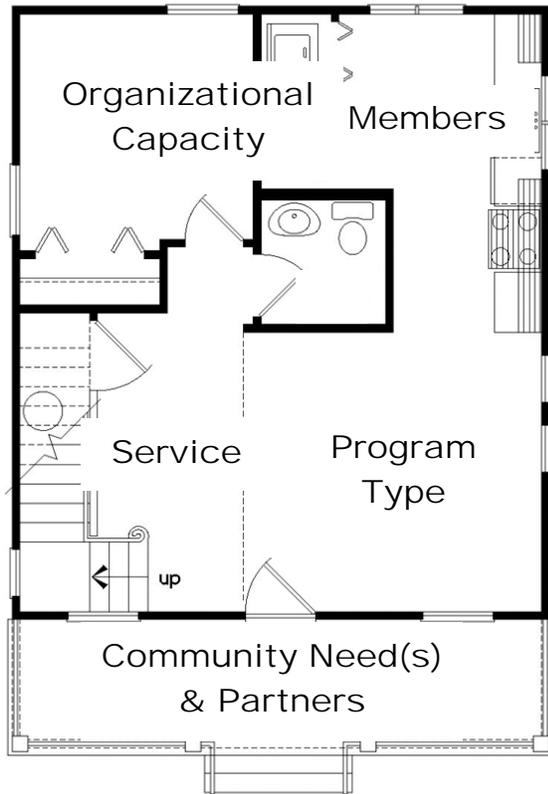
What are some simple strategies for a high impact presentation? *Anticipate questions that group members might have about program implementation and management issues. Create a briefing book that includes clear handouts, budget sheets, performance measures, stakeholder profiles, and any other relevant documents.*

TOOLS
for
SUCCESS



Blueprint for Designing an AmeriCorps Program

Blueprint [n] something intended as a guide for making something else – Kaplan Dictionary



Use this Blueprint form to layout the design of your program. Use the guidance provided in the Laying the Foundation sections to inform your responses to these questions. The Blueprint will serve as the basis for your AmeriCorps program and application. This should provide a snapshot of your program and serve as the logic for the rest of your planning and future implementation.

Ensure that your program design adequately responds to the needs of your community, uses service, as defined by CNCS, as a qualified means of addressing the problems and adheres to prescribed instructions.



Community Needs

- What need or needs my program will address? Describe need with data collected from community input, research and supporting examples.



Service

- What best practices and or approaches are being used to address the identified need? Use professional knowledge and research.
- How can a service program be used to adequately address this need? Specifically, identify activities that program participants will be involved in.
- Develop preliminary service position descriptions. List essential duties for identified services.



Community Partners

- What other community organizations and people need to be involved to ensure the success of this project? List specific names and contact information.



Organizational Capacity

- Why is the your organization the right organization to host this effort? Describe experience, management systems, resources, etc.



Program Type

- What Corporation program type are you developing, AmeriCorps*State or National? How does your organization meet the appropriate criteria for this program type.
- Will this be an Education Award Only program? If so, why is this the best option for your program. What is the value added by AmeriCorps to your existing volunteer program?
- What type of program will this be (single site, multi-site, or intermediary)? Explain logic behind selecting this type of program given the needs, partners and organizational capacity.



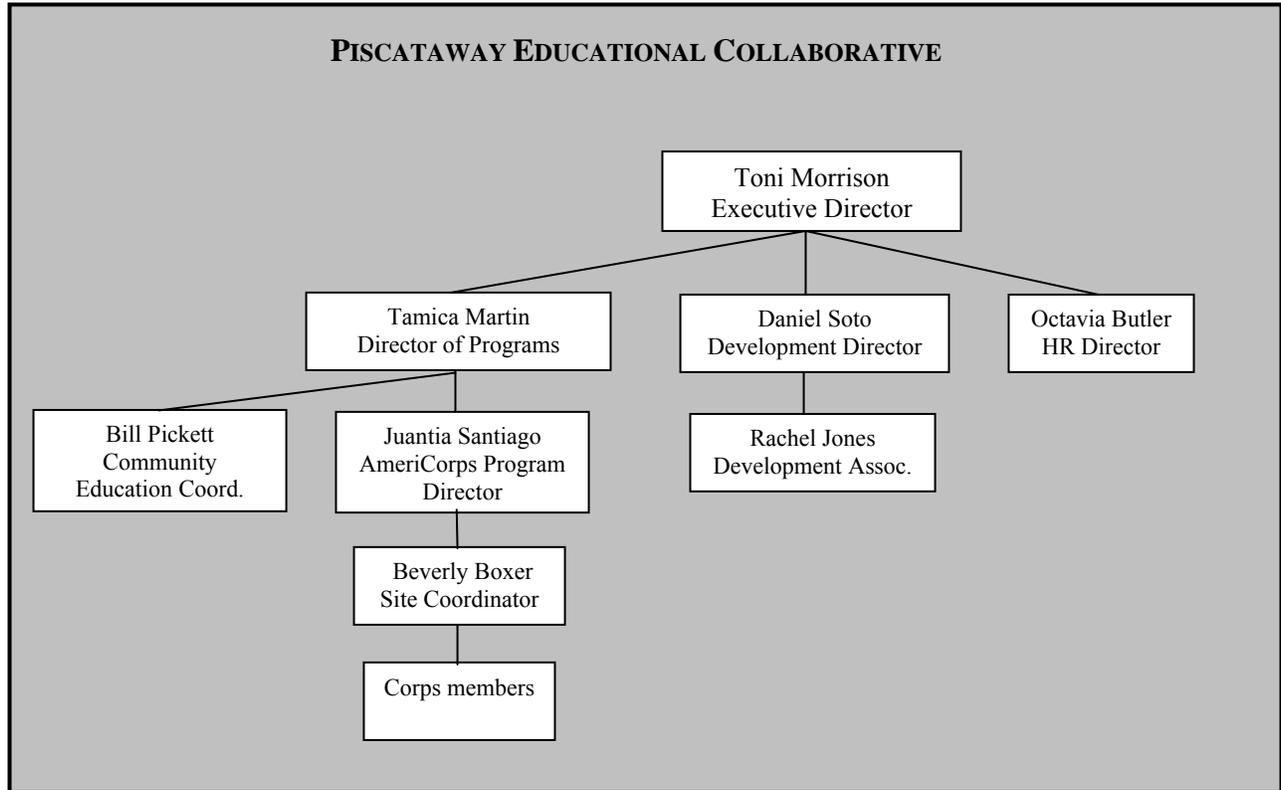
Members

- Who are the members? Describe characteristics needed to provide service.
- Where will the members be recruited?
- What will they be trained in, in order to ensure quality services? List potential training sessions that include required AmeriCorps topics (see CNCS AmeriCorps Guidance).
- Who will supervise members?



You have hit the nail on the head if ... each of the above components and responses are logically linked: The community need determined your service; the program design provides a means to address that community need; members are trained and supported by an organization with the capacity and community partners to successfully administer a strong program that provides service and addresses federal requirements.

Sample Organizational Chart



Staff Recruitment Plan

Action Issue	Point of Contact	Deadline
Staff member identified to be responsible for recruitment process.		
Develop position descriptions.		
Position description approved by HR or Executive Director.		
Position application completed. (If used by your organization.)		
Publicize position description. (<i>Include print, radio, and internet deadlines</i>)		
Last day to accept candidates' resumes and applications.		
Interview committee members identified.		
Interview committee members screen qualified resumes and applications.		
Begin and end 1 st phase of interviews.		
Begin and end 2 nd phase of interviews.		
Begin and end 3 rd phase of interviews.		
Check references and background of top five prospective candidates.		
Select final candidate.		
Date offer of employment is made.		
Date by which offer of employment must be accepted or rejected by final candidate.		
Date by which confirmation letter of employment and other materials are sent to candidate.		
Start date of employee.		

Basic Interviewing Strategies

1. Consider having multiple people at the interview to get a more objective and fair presentation of the candidate. Have all interviewers record and share their impressions of the candidate right after the interview meeting.
2. Ask the candidate about compensation needs and expected or needed benefits.
3. While interviewing candidates, always apply the same questions to all candidates to ensure fairness. All questions should be in regard to performing the duties of the job.
4. Don't ask questions about race, nationality, age, gender, disabilities (current or previous), marital status, spouses, children and their care, criminal records or credit records.
5. Talk for, at most, 25% of the time. For the rest of the time, listen.
6. Consider asking some challenging, open-ended questions, such as what skills do you bring to this job? What concerns do you have about filling this role?, What was your biggest challenge in a past job and how did you meet it? Avoid "yes-no" questions.
7. Be sure to tell candidates of any relevant personnel policy terms, such as probationary periods.
8. Ask if you can get and check any references. Always check references and share them with the interviewers.
9. Find out when she or he can start if offered the job.
10. Explain to the candidate the next steps in the process and when she or he can expect to hear about the status of her or his application.

Staff Recruitment Strategies

1. **Craft** outreach plan –
 - Consider classified ads in traditional and alternative media and publications.
 - Register with state job placement/search system. (In some states it is required if the position is federally funded.)
 - Register the position with free and/or pay Internet job search sites.
 - Register position with non-profit association (if your state or community has one.)
 - Conduct targeted outreach to populations from which you wish to attract candidates. (Use word-of-mouth, ask for “nominations”, print flyers, or newsletter announcements to include in worship bulletins, school, or business/professional publications.
 - Contact placement offices of educational institutions with announcement.
 - Post announcement on list-servs or other appropriate Internet sites.
2. **Plan** how to accept applications and how to schedule interviews. (Accepting applications or resumes by fax, e-mail, or U.S. Mail is typically preferred.)
3. **Assess** resumes and applications in a triage manner. Typically placing resumes or applications in stacks of “A”, “B”, or “C”. If more than one person is assessing the applications or resumes agree beforehand on qualifying criteria that all can live with.
4. **Prepare** interview format (questions and, if desirable, alternative assessments – testing, essay, presentation, etc.) Ask the SAME questions of ALL candidates and have ALL candidates perform the SAME alternative assessments and assess ALL candidates using the same criteria.
5. **Schedule** interviews with adequate time to assess the candidate AND record your impressions.
6. **Check** references of the candidate or candidates. Get the best picture possible of the potential new staff member’s ability to perform the tasks outlined in the position

AmeriCorps Program Staff Training Topics

The six topics below represent some skills and knowledge staff needs to execute the AmeriCorps program. These topics cannot be covered in one day—in fact, they will need several days. Develop an annual training plan complete with goals, tasks, staff retreats, roles, performance measurement, materials, budget, and an implementation timeline

1. **Communications:** Addresses staff, Corps member, and community language and custom diversity.
2. **Computer skills:** Computer skills are a necessity for today's organizations.
3. **Customer service:** Ensure the staff understands and meets the needs with in the AmeriCorps guidelines of stakeholders – members, staff, community partners, and community members.
4. **Diversity:** Diversity training focuses on increasing awareness about how people have different perspectives and views, and includes techniques to value diversity.
5. **Human relations:** The increased stresses of today's workplace can include misunderstandings and conflict. Training can help people to get along in the workplace.
6. **AmeriCorps 101:** History of National Service, Prohibited activities, deadlines, Corps member requirements, AmeriCorps program requirements, forms and reports, new policies and procedures.

Building an Outstanding Orientation Program

*A great orientation reduces turnover.
First impressions are critical!*

1. **Prior Prep:** Orientation begins before the first day. Send a copy of the organization's mission, vision statements, short-term and long-term goals, e-mail address, telephone number, and an organizational chart.
2. **Workspace:** Ensure that new staff member's workspace is prepared and ready. This includes computer, telephone, office supplies, telephone directory, organizational chart, business cards, ID card, telephone and email passwords.
3. **Goals:** Orientations should have targeted goals and meet each of them. No orientation should be boring, rushed, or ineffective. Stay focused on the goals.
4. **Staff:** A senior person should orient new staff. Don't delegate this important task to an intern!
5. **Personal touch:** Consider a personal phone call, visit or letter from the Executive Director (ED) welcoming new staff to the organization.
6. **Staff Buddy:** Make sure there is a new staff "buddy" who has specific responsibilities in showing and the new staff member around.
7. **Success:** Prepare new staff for success! Don't overwhelm them with too much information!
8. **Celebrate:** Make the first day a celebration. A luncheon or welcome party makes new folks feel part of the team. Increase the enthusiasm!

Risk Management

Checklist of Human Resource Management Indicators

General Human Resources

Rating *	Indicator	Met	Needs Work	N/A
Indicators ratings: E=essential; R=recommended; A=additional to strengthen organizational activities				
E	1. The organization has a written personnel handbook/policy that is regularly reviewed and updated: a) to describe the recruitment, hiring, termination and standard work rules for all staff; b) to maintain compliance with government regulations including Fair Labor Standards Act, Equal Employment Opportunity Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Family Leave Act, Affirmative Action Plan (if required), etc.			
R	2. The organization follows nondiscriminatory hiring practices.			
R	3. The organization provides a copy of or access to the written personnel policy to all members of the board, the Executive Director and all staff members. All staff members acknowledge in writing that they have read and have access to the personnel handbook/policies.			
R	4. The organization has job descriptions including qualifications, duties, reporting relationships and key indicators.			
R	5. The organization's Board of Directors conducts an annual review/evaluation of its Executive Director in relationship to a previously determined set of expectations.			
R	6. The Executive Director's salary is set by the Board of Directors in a reasonable process and is in compliance with the organization's compensation plan.			
R	7. The organization requires employee performance appraisals to be conducted and documented at least annually.			
A	8. The organization has a compensation plan, and a periodic review of salary ranges and benefits is conducted.			
A	9. The organization has a timely process for filling vacant positions to prevent an interruption of program services or disruption to organization operations.			
A	10. The organization has a process for reviewing and responding to ideas, suggestions, comments and perceptions from all staff members.			
A	11. The organization provides opportunities for employees' professional development and training with their job skill area and also in such areas as cultural sensitivity and personal development.			
A	12. The organization maintains contemporaneous records documenting staff time in program allocations.			

Source: United Way of Minneapolis Area.

Risk Management

Checklist to Evaluate a Nonprofit Board of Directors

Rating *	Indicator	Met	Needs Work	N/A
Indicators ratings: E=essential; R=recommended; A=additional to strengthen organizational activities				
E	1. The roles of the Board and the Executive Director are defined and respected, with the Executive Director delegated as the manager of the organization's operations and the board focused on policy and planning			
R	2. The Executive Director is recruited, selected, and employed by the Board of Directors. The board provides clearly written expectations and qualifications for the position, as well as reasonable compensation.			
R	3. The Board of Directors acts as governing trustees of the organization on behalf of the community at large and contributors while carrying out the organization's mission and goals. To fully meet this goal, the Board of Directors must actively participate in the planning process as outlined in planning sections of this checklist.			
R	4. The board's nominating process ensures that the board remains appropriately diverse with respect to gender, ethnicity, culture, economic status, disabilities, and skills and/or expertise.			
E	5. The board members receive regular training and information about their responsibilities.			
E	6. New board members are oriented to the organization, including the organization's mission, bylaws, policies, and programs, as well as their roles and responsibilities as board members.			
A	7. Board organization is documented with a description of the board and board committee responsibilities.			
A	8. Each board has a board operations manual.			
E	9. If the organization has any related party transactions between board members or their family, they are disclosed to the board of directors, the Internal Revenue Service and the auditor.			
E	10. The organization has at least the minimum number of members on the Board of Directors as required by their bylaws or state statute.			
R	11. If the organization has adopted bylaws, they conform to state statute and have been reviewed by legal counsel.			
R	12. The bylaws should include: a) how and when notices for board meetings are made; b) how members are elected/appointed by the board; c) what the terms of office are for officers/members; d) how board members are rotated; e) how ineffective board members are removed from the board; f) a stated number of board members to make up a quorum which is required for all policy decisions.			
R	13. The board of directors reviews the bylaws.			
A	14. The board has a process for handling urgent matters between meetings.			
E	15. Board members serve without payment unless the agency has a policy identifying reimbursable out-of-pocket expenses.			
R	16. The organization maintains a conflict-of-interest policy and all board members and executive staff review and/or sign to acknowledge and comply with the policy.			
R	17. The board has an annual calendar of meetings. The board also has an attendance policy such that a quorum of the organization's board meets at least quarterly.			
A	18. Meetings have written agendas and materials relating to significant decisions are given to the board in advance of the meeting.			
A	19. The board has a written policy prohibiting employees and members of employees' immediate families from serving as board chair or treasurer.			