2022-2023 AmeriCorps Program Director Manual

MISSOURI COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMISSION
SHOWMESERVICE.ORG

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1. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

This AmeriCorps Program Director Manual is designed by the Missouri Community Service Commission (MCSC) to assist both new program staff as well as veteran staff in operating an AmeriCorps program and navigating the many rules and regulations that come with that operation. It is MCSC's hope that all staff with direct contact to your AmeriCorps program reviews this manual regularly.

Please note that the information contained in this manual does not include all federal and state requirements for operating an AmeriCorps grant. It does not constitute AmeriCorps or MCSC's official interpretation of factual or legal questions. Program directors or individuals with particular questions should consult the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12501 et seq.), the regulations issued under the Act (45 C.F.R. § 2500.1 et seq.), the current year AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions, and relevant state and local law and regulations. If there is a conflict between the content of this manual and the documents listed above, the documents listed take precedence.

This manual will be continually updated. When an updated is made, MCSC staff will inform each program director and post the latest version to www.ShowMeService.org.

If you find any errors, or have any suggestions on how to make this manual better, please email them to MCSC@ded.mo.gov.

FEDERAL LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The following documents provide the legal basis for the AmeriCorps grant:

Laws

- Domestic and Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (as amended by the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009)
- National and Community Service Act of 1990 (as amended by the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009)

Regulations

- 45 CFR Chapter XII
- 45 CFR Chapter XXV

Terms and Conditions

- [2022 Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants](#)

STATE STATUTE AND COMMISSION BY-LAWS

MCSC was established in 1994 as a direct response to the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 through the [Missouri Community Service Act – RSMo 620.580-592](#).

MCSC operates under a board of Commissioners appointed by the Governor. Those Commissioners utilize the MCSC [By-laws](#) to operate.

To learn more about MCSC and its Commissioners, visit [www.ShowMeService.org](#).

GRANT AGREEMENT

Successful applicants for AmeriCorps funding through MCSC will receive a grant agreement each year in June or July. Even though AmeriCorps usually operates on a three year grant cycle, each program year requires a continuation application and a new grant agreement.

No program operations may commence until both your program and MCSC have fully signed and executed copies of the current year's grant agreement.

Failure to operate an AmeriCorps program under the requirements of the grant agreement, or failure to completely execute the grant agreement, may be grounds for termination of your grant.

2. NATIONAL SERVICES AND MISSOURI COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMISSION

A HISTORY OF NATIONAL SERVICE

In 1993, Congress enacted the National and Community Service Act, merging several previous service programs into the Corporation for National and Community Services. President Clinton signed the legislation soon after, and AmeriCorps was launched the following year. Now, there are around 75,000 Members serving in AmeriCorps Annually, and there are over 1,000,000 AmeriCorps Alums.

Since revolution, our national has relied on an active citizenry to grow and improve our communities. AmeriCorps and your programs is a continuation of that service to America. The following is a brief history of national service:

1835

In his seminal *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville notes:

> In the United States, as soon as several inhabitants have taken an opinion or an idea they wish to promote in society, they seek each other out and unite together once they have made contact. From that moment, they are no longer isolated but have become a power seen from afar whose activities serve as an example and whose words are heeded.

1910

American philosopher William James envisions non-military national service in his essay, "The Moral Equivalent of War."

> …instead of military conscription, a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years as a part of the army enlisted against Nature, the injustice would tend to be evened out and numerous other goods of the commonwealth would follow."

1933-1942

Through the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), created by Franklin D. Roosevelt, millions of young people serve terms of 6 to 18 months to help restore the nations' parks, revitalize the economy, and support their families and themselves. The GI Bill links service and education, offering Americans educational opportunity in return for service to their country.

1944

The GI Bill, officially known as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, is created, linking service and education and offering Americans educational opportunity in return for service to their country.

1960s

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program (which today comprise AmeriCorps Seniors (formerly known as Senior Corps)) are developed to engage older Americans in the work of improving the nations.

1961

President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps, with authorizing legislation approved by Congress on September 22, 1961. President Kennedy says, "The wisdom of this idea is that someday we'll bring it home to America."

1964

As part of the "War on Poverty," President Lyndon B. Johnson creates VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), a National Teacher Corps, the Job Corps, and University Year of Action. VISTA (now AmeriCorps*VISTA) provides opportunities for Americans to serve full-time to help thousands of low-income communities.

1970

The Youth Conservation Corps engages 38,000 people ages 14 to 18 in summer environmental programs.

1976

California Governor Jerry Brown established the California Conservation Corps, the first nonfederal youth corps at the state level. The Young Adult Conservation Corps creates small conservation corps in the state with 22,500 participants ages 16 to 23.

1980s

National service efforts are launched at the grassroots level, including the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (1984) and Campus Compact (1985), which help mobilize service programs in higher education; the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (1985), which helps replicate youth corps in states and cities; and Youth Service America (1985), through which many young people are given a chance to serve.

1989-1990

President George H.W. Bush creates the Office of National Service in the White House and the Points of Light Foundation to foster volunteering.

1990

Congress passes, and President Bush signs, the National and Community Service Act of 1990. The legislation authorizes grants to schools to support service-learning (Serve America, now known as Learn and Serve America (this program is not currently funded)) and demonstration grants for national service programs to youth corps, nonprofits, and colleges and universities.

September 1993

President Bill Clinton signs the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, creating AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to expand opportunities for Americans to serve their communities. VISTA becomes part of AmeriCorps.

1994

Congress passes the King Holiday and Service Act of 1994, charging CNCS with taking the lead in organizing Martin Luther King Day as a day of service.

Missouri creates the Missouri Community Service Commission in order to operate the new AmeriCorps program.

September 1994

The first class of AmeriCorps Members (20,000 strong) begins serving in more than 1,000 communities. In swearing in the Americans, President Clinton says,

> Service is a spark to rekindle the spirit of democracy in an age of uncertainty…when it is all said and done, it comes down to three simple questions: What is right? What is wrong? And what are we going to do about it? Today you are doing what is right-- turning your words into deeds.

1995

A study commissioned by the IBM Foundation, the Charles A. Dana foundation, and the James Irvine foundation finds that every federal dollar invested in AmeriCorps results in $1.60 to $2.60 or more in direct, measurable benefits to AmeriCorps Members and the communities they serve.

April 1997

The Presidents' summit for America's Future, chaired by General Colin Powell, brings together President Clinton, former Presidents Bush, Ford, and Carter, and Mrs. Reagan to recognize and expand the role of AmeriCorps and other service programs in meeting the needs of America's youth.

1997

AmeriCorps expands by introducing the Education Awards Program, which allows more organizations to join the service network--nonprofits, faith-based organizations, colleges and universities, welfare-to-work programs, and other groups. President Clinton and former President George Bush announced the resumption of the Daily Points of Light Award.

September 1998

The fifth class of AmeriCorps Members is sworn in, bringing in the total number of current and former Members to more than 100,000.

October 1999

AmeriCorps celebrates five years and 150,000 Members. General Colin Powell, Utah's Governor Mike Leavitt, Coretta Scott King, and Sergeant Shriver join President Clinton at the White House honoring the winners of the first All*AmeriCorps awards.

June 2000

The Foster Grandparent Program recognizes its 35th anniversary. As the Senior Companion Program enters its 26th year of service, and RSVP look ahead to its 30th birthday, the three National Senior Service Corps programs engage more than 500,000 adults age fifty-five and older in sharing their time and talents to help meet local community needs.

October 2000

AmeriCorps*VISTA commemorates 35 years of fighting poverty in America. Since 1965, more than 130,000 VISTA Members have used a hands-on, grassroots approach to empower individuals and communities throughout the country. With this year's AmeriCorps class, funded with 2000 appropriations, more than 200,000 individuals will have served in AmeriCorps since 1994.

January 2002

In response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., President George W. Bush creates the USA Freedom Corps. During his State of the Union address, he calls upon every American to commit to least two years of their lives—the equivalent of 4,000 hours—to the service of others. Through the USA Freedom Corps, President Bush wants to help every American to answer the call to service by strengthening and expanding service opportunities for them to protect our homeland, to support our communities and to extend American compassion around the world. The USA Freedom Corps includes AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Senior Corps, Learn and Serve America, Citizen Corps, and nationwide local volunteer opportunities.

July 2002

CNCS awards first Homeland Security grants to engage citizens in public health, public safety, and disaster relief and preparedness.

2003

President Bush creates the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation to find ways to recognize the valuable contributions volunteers are making in our Nation. The Council creates the President's Volunteer Service Award program as a way to thank and honor Americans who, by their demonstrated commitment and example, inspire others to engage in volunteer service.

December 2003

The Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reports that both the number of volunteers and the volunteer rate rose over the year ended in September 2003. About 63.8 million people did volunteer work at some point from September 2002 to September 2003, up from 59.8 million for the similar period ended in September 2002.

2004

AmeriCorps receives record funding increase to allow programs to grow to 75,000 Members.

AmeriCorps*NCCC recognizes 10,000 alumni, 15.3 million service hours, 4,500 projects and 10 years of service during Legacy Weekends at all five campuses.

In recognition of its 40th anniversary, AmeriCorps*VISTA commences a study of its alumni and the impact national service had on their lives.

More than 330,000 individuals have served through AmeriCorps.

During the past decade, more than 1 billion volunteer service hours have been generated by Senior Corps volunteers.

Senior Companion Program celebrates its 30th anniversary.

More than 1.8 billion high school students participate annually in service-learning initiatives funded by Learn and Serve America

2006

President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll launched to honor the nation's top college and universities for their commitment to community service, civic engagement, and service-learning.

2007

AmeriCorps celebrates its 500,000 Member. First annual AmeriCorps Week launched.

2009

President Barack Obama signs the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act. The Serve America Act reauthorizes and expands national service programs administered by CNCS.

CNCS engages four million Americans in result-driven service each year, including 75,000 AmeriCorps Members, 492,000 Senior Corps volunteers, 1.1 million Learn and Serve America students, and 2.2 million additional community volunteers mobilized and managed through the agency's programs.

2010

CNCS launches the Social Innovation Fund. SIF ensures that high-impact nonprofits are able to attract the resources they need to grow and improve the economic, education and health prospects of low-income communities.

2011

Missouri reauthorizes MCSC with the "Missouri Community Service Act." MCSC is now housed in the Department of Economic Development and charged with renewing "the ethic of civic responsibility in Missouri and to involve and enroll citizens in service opportunities that benefit Missouri while offering citizens skills that can be used to further their own plans for education, for a career, or for continuing community services."

September 11th officially made a "National Day of Service and Remembrance."

2012

CNCS and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) launch FEMA Corps. FEMA Corps is an innovative new AmeriCorps partnership designed to strengthen the nation's ability to respond to and recover from disasters while expanding career opportunities for young people.

2013

CNCS and the U.S. Department of Education creates the School Turnaround AmeriCorps program that is charged with enhancing and accelerating school improvement efforts.

2014

The National Service Alliance is formed from the Franklin Project, National Conference on Citizenship, ServiceNation, and Voices for National Service. The charge of the alliance is to drive a coordinated effort to make national service a "cultural expectation, a common opportunity, and a civic rite of passage for all Americans."

20th Anniversary of AmeriCorps celebrated nationwide with simultaneous swearing in of all Members on September 12, 2014.

2015

AmeriCorps*VISTA and Foster Grandparents Program celebrate 50 years of service.

2016

The 1 millionth AmeriCorps Member is sworn in.

2020

National service programs across the country respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. AmeriCorps Members provide contract tracing, shelter, food, and testing support. Along with responding to the pandemic, AmeriCorps Members continue to serve their communities either face-to-face or virtually.

Senator Coons introduces the Cultivating Opportunity and Response to the Pandemic through Service Act (CORPS Act). The Corps Act calls for the largest increase ($16 billion over three years) to national service in history. It would double the current education award, significantly increase the AmeriCorps living stipend, and increase AmeriCorps slots from 75,000 to 250,000 in three years.

CNCS announces that it will be rebranded as AmeriCorps, and the Senior Corps programs are rebranded as AmeriCorps Seniors.

2021 -2022

In Missouri, nearly 175,000 residents are vaccinated from COVID-19 with the help of AmeriCorps.

The Senate and the House reintroduce the CORPS Act. Now calling for $8 billion dollars in funding to expand national service.

Today

Today as in the past, providers of National Service continue to believe that every American has skills and talents to give and share. Through this service those involved are exposed to a culture of citizenship, service and responsibility and the communities served are provided a catalyst for solutions to their problems.

As a result, more than five million individuals are engaged in service each year that involves over 75,000 community-based and faith-based organizations solving problems and strengthening communities while building the capacity of the nonprofit sector.

AMERICORPS AGENCY (FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE)

In 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service was established. It was rebranded AmeriCorps in 2020. Through the remainder of this manual, we will refer to it as CNCS.

CNCS was created to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation. It merged the work and staffs of two predecessor agencies, ACTION and the Commission on National and Community Service. CNCS empowers and supports Americans to tackle persistent challenges such as helping youth succeed in school, securing safe affordable housing for economically disadvantaged families, or helping communities respond to disasters. Through this work, CNCS achieves its mission of improving lives, strengthening communities and fortifying the civic health of our nation.

CNCS' Strategic Plan leverages the strength of grantees, participants, programs, state service commissions and the American public to build a network of programs that offer effective solutions in the six priority areas:

- Disaster Services
- Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Futures
- Veterans and Military Families

For more information visit www.AmeriCorps.gov.

NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

CNCS programing is divided in to AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors (formerly Senior Corps). These programs are then divided into the following smaller programs:

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps*State and National
These AmeriCorps Members serve anywhere between 100 to 1,700 hours in a year. They are placed at one or more community host sites and provide direct service. At the successful completion of their term of service, they are eligible to receive an education award.

A program operating in one state is administered by that state's service commission (AmeriCorps*State), and a program operating in multiple states is administered by CNCS (AmeriCorps*National or National Direct). This is the program that this manual relates to.

AmeriCorps*VISTA
AmeriCorps*VISTA Members serve a full year (365 days) in a community. There is no minimum or maximum hour requirement. These Members are specifically charged with the elimination of poverty, and unlike their State and National counterparts, they do not provide direct service. Instead, they provide capacity building activities. At the successful completion of their service, they are eligible to receive an education award or cash stipend.

AmeriCorps*NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps)
AmeriCorps*NCCC Members serve for ten months and operate out of one of four regional bases located in California, Colorado, Iowa, and Mississippi. These Members are sent throughout the country for four to six week service projects or spikes. At the successful completion of their service, they are eligible to receive and education award.

AmeriCorps Seniors (Formerly Senior Corps)

RSVP
The largest of the Seniors program, RSVP links those over 55 with a volunteer opportunities in their community.

Senior Companion Program (SCP)
The SCP links volunteer seniors with other seniors who are at-risk. The goal of the program is to keep seniors living independently.

Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)
The FGP links volunteer seniors with youth. This mainly happens in a classroom setting for the FGP volunteer serves as a mentor and a friend. They are commonly referred to as grandmothers and grandfathers by the children they serve.

MISSOURI COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMISSION

MCSC's mission is to strengthen Missouri communities through volunteerism and service. Its vision is a Missouri were all residents, regardless of ability or background, volunteer in their communities. MCSC is charged with administrating and supporting the AmeriCorps*State program in Missouri. The Commission does this through promotion of funding opportunities, continual monitoring of currently funded programs, and ongoing training and technical assistance to program staff and Members.

3. PROGRAM RESPONSBILITIES

REQUIRED STAFF TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Required Training

MCSC provides several training opportunities throughout the year.

The current Program Director or their designee(s) should have completed all grant required trainings. Once completed, the results of these trainings should be reported to your Program Officer. These include, but are not limited to:

- Monthly program staff calls – second Wednesday of each month at 11am (required participation)
- Annual Program Director Training – June(required participation)
- Annual Financial Training – Fall, virtual (required participation)
- On3Learn
    - AmeriCorps 101
    - Governing Documents and Regulations
    - AmeriCorps Prohibited, Unallowable, Allowable Activities Course for Staff
    - Developing and Integrating AmeriCorps Member Position Descriptions
    - AmeriCorps Member Eligibility
    - Member Interview and Selection
    - AmeriCorps Member Enrollment and Exit
    - AmeriCorps Member Files
- National Service Opening Day – October, Jefferson City (required participation)
- America's Service Commissions (ASC) Regional Training – Spring (participation strongly encouraged)

Along with these scheduled trainings, MCSC reserves the right to require additional training as it deems necessary.

CNCS also provides trainings through its Litmos platform. To register for an account follow these instructions.

The CNCS National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) eCourse and Key Concepts of Financial Management (for AmeriCorps Grantees) eCourse in Litmos are required.

Technical Assistance

In the event an unexpected issue arises or you need ANY assistance, please contact your assigned program officer. They are your primary point of contact with our office. They will engage our whole team at the appropriate junctures to assure you the best and most timely service.

As a MCSC program, you also have membership in America's Service Commissions (ASC). ASC is an association of state commissions and partners. They provide AmeriCorps specific training, a service jobs board, and a listing a consults that provide national service/AmeriCorps specific services.

As a MCSC program, you also have membership in States for Service. States for Service is a public policy coalition that uses non-federal funds to advocate for policies that improve and expand national service programming. States for Service also provides training around educating community leaders and advocating for policy. [1]

As a MCSC program, you also have membership in The Corps Network, which offers an AmeriCorps specific healthcare plan. Use of this plan is not required.

AMERICORPS BRANDING

Branding Guidelines

In order to use the AmeriCorps logo, you must follow CNCS's AmeriCorps Brand Guidelines. Logo files and the guidelines can be found at https://americorps.gov/newsroom/communication-resources.

Service Gear

All AmeriCorps Members MUST wear service gear that includes the AmeriCorps logo at all times that they are logging hours. This gear can include, but is not limited to:

- Shirts
- Hats
- Lanyards

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[1] Programs and Members are encouraged to educate officials on what their program does in their communities. Programs and Members **MAY NOT** advocate/lobby for policy and appropriation changes while logging federal or match grant time or while wearing AmeriCorps gear. Staff and Members are free to advocate on their own time when they are not officially representing AmeriCorps.

- Lapel Pins
- Jackets

AmeriCorps Members should be referred to as AmeriCorps Members regardless of the program they serve in. They may have additional titles such as "coaches", but they should be referred to first as AmeriCorps Members. AmeriCorps Members are not employees.

Members should be reminded that service gear should not be worn on personal time when it would appear they are conducting prohibited activities. This would include, but not be limited to adult establishments, political rallies, or protests.

Service Site Signage

All locations where Members serve should note that service with signage. This could include banners, window clings, lawn signs, etc. MCSC recognizes that some service sites may not allow signage, but every effort should be made to note that AmeriCorps Members are serving at the location.

Website Branding

The program's forward facing websites and social media platforms must include both the MCSC and AmeriCorps logos, and the program must note that is funded in part by the Missouri Community Service Commission and AmeriCorps.

Media Releases and Marketing Materials

Any media releases or marketing materials should note that the program is funded in part by the Missouri Community Service Commission and AmeriCorps, and should include, if possible, the MCSC and AmeriCorps logos. All materials should be sent to your Program Officer for their records and to assist MCSC in amplifying your marketing messages.

Cost of Branding Materials

Grant funds may be used to purchase service gear and signage. Members should be provided with enough gear to meet the requirements above.

Vendors

National Service Gear is the official provider of AmeriCorps gear and signage, however the program may use any vendor that they find reasonable and cost effective.

RECRUITMENT AND DIVERSITY

Successful recruitment strategy is the foundation for a thriving AmeriCorps program. The individuals you select and place within the community represent your program every day; their interactions either enhance or detract from your organization's reputation.

Programs are expected to recruit for and fill 100% of the Member slots they are awarded. Failure to meet this requirement may impact future AmeriCorps grant decisions and current grant reimbursement.

Community and National Recruitment
AmeriCorps Programs must actively seek to recruit Members from the community in which the project is conducted.

All applicants must apply through MyAmeriCorps Portal system. All position descriptions should be posted in the Portal through the eGrants system.

The program MUST also submit any AmeriCorps position to MCSC's online volunteer portal at www.ShowMeService.org.

MCSC recommends that programs utilize other recruitment methods (online, print, etc.) in addition to the My AmeriCorps Portal.

Once an applicant applies through the portal, you will be able to see their application in eGrants.

Diversity of Corps

Membership should be diverse in terms of race and ethnicity, socioeconomic backgrounds, education levels, gender identities, sexual orientation, and abilities, unless and to the extent that the approved program design requires emphasizing the recruitment of staff and Members who share a specific characteristic or background. However, in no case may you violate the nondiscrimination and non-displacement rules governing participant selection.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

CNCS has set standards for both Member recruitment and Member retention percentages. MCSC will review both regularly to ensure compliance. If a program fails to meet either requirement, it may result in reduced funding or termination of the grant.

Enrollment/Recruitment Rate

Programs should reach 100% enrollment/recruitment by the end of each grant year. The rate is calculated as:

- Total slots filled/total slots awarded

Retention Rate

The program should meet at least an 85% retention rate by the end of each grant year. The rate is calculated as:

- Total Members exiting with an Education Award/total slots filled

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Service assignments must be meaningful to the AmeriCorps Member and the community in which the service is performed. The goals of each position must be achievable. Members must be connected with people in the local community so ownership of the experience will be shared, ultimately assumed by the local community, and consequently, long lasting. It is the mission of AmeriCorps that all members have ownership of the projects in which they serve. Goals should be developed utilizing the SMART goals framework that directly support your program's missions.

The SMART in SMART goals stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. Defining these parameters as they pertain to your goal helps ensure that your objectives are attainable within a certain time frame.

Position descriptions should include all professional elements necessary to define the service assignment and the qualifications necessary to achieve it. Typically, position descriptions are too short, non-existent, unfamiliar to the AmeriCorps Member, or filed away and never used once a project is begun. These documents should be revisited regularly to encourage Member feedback, measure success and find areas which need enhancement. They should be modified to reflect changing needs as they develop and are useful in evaluating Members' performance.

AmeriCorps Members **ARE NOT** employees. The position description should be able to distinguish between the Member's position and an employee position description at the organization to ensure non-displacement procedures are abided by.

Position descriptions should note that the position is open to individuals off all background and abilities.

SCREENING AND INTERVIEWING

After receiving applications, screening and placement of Members is the next most critical step an AmeriCorps supervisor or director faces. After screening out clearly unqualified applicants, it is important to involve host agencies who will work directly with new Members. This allows for a "second look" at the applications by an involved party, creates buy-in with the host agency staff, and adds another level of assessment for specific talents or skills that a director or supervisor may not be looking for during the initial screening.

It's against the law for interviewers to ask certain personal questions. Questions asked in an interview should focus on your qualifications for the service position. Human resources staff is usually aware of what is legal and illegal. However, if you are unclear on these issues, please consult with your HR department or contact your Program Officer for assistance.

Once the potential candidates are agreed upon, the next step is to decide how to conduct the interviews. Generate a list of potential questions to ask each candidate, agree on which ones to use, and then commit them to writing so that each applicant is asked the same questions. This ensures all prospective Members are treated equally and fairly, allowing for an "apples to apples" comparison when evaluating multiple candidates after the interviews. It is worth considering including host agency staff in the interview process; this creates buy-in from the host agency and adds another level of insight for those candidates with similar qualifications.

During the interviews good note-taking is crucial, especially if you interview many candidates. Don't rely on your memory to supply the details.

During the interview, ensure the Member is aware of what AmeriCorps is and what their service requires. They need to understand that they are not interviewing to be an employee of the program.

Some programs perform group interviews in order to get a better idea of how candidates may interact with other Members.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC) is a baseline screening requirement established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service.

NSCHC is required under the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act (SAA). The statutory requirement at 42 U.S.C. § 12645g is supplemented by regulatory requirements at 45 CFR §2540.200 through §2540.207 as well as the terms and conditions of AmeriCorps grants.

All AmeriCorps Members **and** all staff listed in Section 1 of the program's budget (regardless of grant or match share) must have all of the following checks completed **before** service/employment begins unless they are under 18 on the first day of work or service.[2] Staff charged solely to Section 3 (fixed/indirect costs) or whom are not listed in the budget at all do not require a background check.

Who may not serve?

Any candidate who has been convicted of a homicide or sexual offense may not serve in AmeriCorps or be a staff person charged to the grant in Section 1 of the budget.

Programs may add additional background situations that would make a candidate ineligible to serve, as long as the criteria is consistent with state and federal civil rights and nondiscrimination laws.

Required Checks

All of the following checks must be completed prior to the first day of service/employment:

- A nationwide check of the National Sex Offender Public website through NSOPW.gov
  - The check must include all states and territories and must be dated prior to the service start. If a state/territory database is unavailable at time of check, the check must be reran when that database becomes available, and the check is not considered complete until all databases have been checked.
  - MCSC recommends that this check be ran **prior** to interviews.
- A Missouri name-based check of the Missouri Automated Criminal History System (MACHS)
- A fingerprint-based check of the FBI criminal history record database
- A name-based check of the candidates state of residency if they are from a state other than Missouri
  - Candidates who are full-time students at a Missouri college or university are considered residents of Missouri and do not require this check
  - Even if the candidate currently lives in Missouri, if their ID lists another state, it is recommended that you conduct a check via that state

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[2] If the program is unable to have checks done of a staff person due to host site restrictions, then that staff person should not be charged to the grant via Section 1 of the budget.

Running the Checks

Prior to the beginning of service/work, the program and the candidate must complete the National Service Criminal History Checks Authorization and Results Form. This form should then be put in the Member/staff person's file.

The program must verify the identification of the person using a form of photo ID in order to ensure the person applying is the person who is being checked.

Programs may use a vendor of their choice to run the checks listed above. For state and FBI checks, CNCS has selected Truescreen (state) and Fieldprint (FBI) as their preferred vendors. To learn how to access those vendors, visit CNCS' NSCHC site.

Cost of Checks

The program is responsible for the cost of the checks. These costs may be included in the grant budget.

Adjudication of Checks

If any check is returns with a result, the program must review the results and determine if the person is still eligible to serve/work. The program must document this adjudication and determination in the Member/staff persons file.

In the case of results on the National Sex Offender check, the program must note on each result why the candidate is not the person in the result (i.e. different person in the picture, incorrect age, etc.).

Gap in Service

If a Member or staff person leaves the program and then returns, they do not require new checks unless the gap in service/work was more than 180 days. Therefore, Members returning for a subsequent term will more than likely not require another round of checks.

Failure to Perform and Adjudicate Checks

If a program fails to complete the required checks for a Member or staff person, it may result in a disallowance of hours served, disallowance of grant dollars, and/or the termination of the AmeriCorps grant.

NONDISCRIMINATION LAWS

All programs must comply with all applicable provisions of state and federal laws and Regulations pertaining to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment, and equal employment opportunity including, but not limited to, the following law and regulations and all the subsequent amendments thereto:

- Missouri Human Rights Act (RSMo 123)
- The United States Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000a-2000h-6) (as amended)
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794)
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C 12101 et seq.)
- Executive Orders 11246 and 11375 (Equal Employment Opportunity)

MEMBER/STAFF FILES

The program must maintain records, including:

- The Member's position description, sufficient to establish that each Member was eligible to participate and that the Member successfully completed all program requirements.
- A Member File Checklist or Non-Member File Checklist should be completed with each file.

A program may store Member files electronically and use electronic signatures if the program can ensure the validity and integrity of the record and signature is maintained. The program's electronic storage procedures and system must provide for the safekeeping and security of the records, including:

1. Sufficient prevention of unauthorized alterations or erasures of records;
2. Effective security measures to ensure that only authorized persons have access to records;
3. Adequate measures designed to prevent physical damage to records; and
4. A system providing for back-up and recovery of records; and

The electronic storage procedures and system provide for the easy retrieval of records in a timely fashion, including:

1. Storage of the records in a physically accessible location;
2. Clear and accurate labeling of all records; and
3. Storage of the records in a usable, readable format.

Whenever possible, the files should be sorted in the same order as listed in MCSC Monitoring Tool in order to streamline any desk-based or on-site monitorings.

CNCS, Office of Inspector General (OIG), and MCSC staff must be allowed access to all Member documentation, including background checks, when requested.

STAFF TIMESHEETS

All staff salaries and wages charged to the CNCS grant or match must be supported by signed time and attendance records, or time and effort reports, and well-documented to ensure accountability of those funds.

The timekeeping system for program staff must be compliant with 2 CFR §200.430. The mishandling of funds may result in disallowed hours, disallowed costs, and legal liability. Therefore, it is extremely important that you have a solid system in place to track staff time worked on the activity directly and indirectly related to the AmeriCorps grant. It is also imperative that timesheets/time and effort reports are maintained so that personnel costs remain visible for easier adjustments, supervisors find it less complicated to keep track of who worked what project and the hours spent, and that the program remains in compliance.

Allocating CNCS funds and match requirements must be allowable, reasonable, and allocable for salaries, wages, and fringe benefits. Unallowable activities include all listed in the "Prohibited Activities" section. Staff may conduct other activities when the time is not charged to the AmeriCorps grant or match.

Whether direct or indirect costs, they must be ordinary and necessary for the operation of the grant. These costs must also be incurred specifically for the grant and treated consistently with other costs. This includes not shifting other federal funds to overcome the deficiency of the costs.

WORKER'S COMPENSATION

Missouri law requires programs to provide workers' compensation coverage for their AmeriCorps Members. Most programs buy commercial worker's compensation insurance. Other programs obtain the state's approval to self-insure. No part of the workers' compensation insurance premium or benefit can be charged to the Member. Grant funds may be used to purchase this insurance.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

In 1995, the Department of Labor ruled that AmeriCorps Members were not entitled to unemployment compensation under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act, as there was no employer-employee relationship between AmeriCorps grantees and Members.

The Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations has ruled that Members are not qualified to receive unemployment compensation since a living allowance is not a wage but is a stipend, and Members are not considered employees.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or AmeriCorps, staff and Members may not engage in the following activities (see 45 CFR § 2520.65):

1. Attempting to influence legislation;
2. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
3. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
4. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
5. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
6. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
7. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
8. Providing a direct benefit to—
   a. A business organized for profit;
   b. A labor union;
   c. A partisan political organization;
   d. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and

e. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph 7 above, unless AmeriCorps assistance is not used to support those religious activities;

9. Conducting a voter registration drive or using AmeriCorps funds to conduct a voter registration drive;

10. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and

11. Such other activities as AmeriCorps may prohibit.

In addition to the above activities, the below activities are additionally prohibited:

Census Activities: AmeriCorps Members and volunteers associated with AmeriCorps grants may not engage in census activities during service hours. Being a census taker during service hours is categorically prohibited. Census-related activities (e.g., promotion of the Census, education about the importance of the Census) do not align with AmeriCorps State and National objectives. What Members and volunteers do on their own time is up to them, consistent with program policies about outside employment and activities.

Election and Polling Activities: AmeriCorps Member may not provide services for election or polling locations or in support of such activities.

AmeriCorps Members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non- AmeriCorps funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing engaging in any of the above activities on their personal time.

All locations where Members serve should post a list of the prohibited activities, when possible. Please utilize the handout provided by your Program Officer as a quick guide for requirements and prohibitions.

NON-DUPLICATION AND NON-DISPLACEMENT

Non-Duplication

MCSC/AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program. And, unless non-displacement requirements are met, MCSC/AmeriCorps assistance will not be provided to a private nonprofit entity to conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities provided by a State or local government agency in which such entity resides.

Non-Displacement

An employer may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the use by such employer of a participant in a program receiving MCSC/AmeriCorps assistance.

An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving MCSC/AmeriCorps assistance.

A service opportunity will not be created under this chapter that will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual.

A participant in a program receiving CNCS assistance may not perform any services or duties or engage in activities that would otherwise be performed by an employee as part of the assigned duties of such employee.

A participant in any program receiving assistance under may not perform any services or duties, or engage in activities, that –

- Will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or
- Are services, duties, or activities with respect to which an individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures.

A participant in any program receiving assistance under this chapter may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any –

- Presently employed worker;
- Employee who recently resigned or was discharged;
- Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures;
- Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick); or
- Employee who is on strike or who is being locked out.

TUTORING REQUIREMENTS

Some programs may fall under additional federal requirements based on their use of Members as tutors.

A tutor is defined as someone whose primary goal is to increase academic achievement in reading or other core subjects through planned, consistent, one-to-one or small-group sessions and activities that build on the academic strengths of students in kindergarten through 12th

grade, and target their academic needs. A tutor does not include someone engaged in other academic support activities, such as mentoring and after-school program support, whose primary goal is something other than increasing academic achievement. For example, providing a safe place for children is not tutoring, even if some of the program activities focus on homework help.

This tutoring requirement does not include Members who are performing K-12 student tutoring in a school or after school program as part of a structured school-managed cross-grade tutoring program.

Additional requirements

A program in which Members engage in tutoring of children must as defined above:

- Articulate appropriate criteria for selecting and qualifying tutors
- Identify the strategies or tools it will use to assess student progress and measure student outcomes
- Certify that the tutoring curriculum and pre-service and in-service training content are high quality and research based, consistent with the instructional program of the local educational agency or with Missouri academic content standards
- Include appropriate Member supervision by individuals with expertise in tutoring
- Provide specialized high-quality and research-based, Member pre-service and in-service training consistent with the activities the Member will perform
- Curriculum must be consistent with both Missouri academic standards and the instruction program of the local educational agency
- Certify that Members serving as tutors possess a minimum of a high school diploma.

NATIONAL DAYS OF SERVICE

There are several nationally recognized days of service where people are challenged to volunteer in their community. For the purposes of this program, AmeriCorps programs are expected to participate in the following three days of service:

- 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance – September 11
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service – January
- AmeriCorps Week –usually March

Participation is defined as at least some of your AmeriCorps Members taking part in service activities on or around the day of service. These activities should be different than their usual service.

Program may decide to have their AmeriCorps Members participate in other days of service throughout the year.

LEVERAGING ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERS

All programs are required to leverage at least five additional non-AmeriCorps volunteers for each MSY recruited. These volunteers should serve alongside the Members in order to increase the impact of the program and build sustainability in the community.

Programs should have systems in place to accurately track the number of volunteers (without duplication) and the number of volunteer hours contributed. The volunteers recruited should reflect the communities being served, and the program should denote if the volunteers are a part of one of the following categories:

- Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964)
- College students
- Disadvantaged children/youth

TRAVEL AND LODGING

Mileage Reimbursement

In order to be reimbursed for mileage expenses, the program must comply with the state mileage reimbursement rate at the time of mileage accrual. If the program will cover mileage from match funds, then the program may use any rate up to the federal maximum rate. The current Missouri reimbursement rate may be found at https://oa.mo.gov/accounting/state-employees/travel-portal-information/mileage.

Meals and Lodging

In order to be reimbursed for lodging and meals, the program must comply with the current per diem and lodging rates established by the State of Missouri at the time of expenditure accrual. If the program will cover meals and lodging from match funds, then the program may use any rate up to the federal maximum rate. The current per diem rates can be found at https://oa.mo.gov/accounting/state-employees/travel-portal-information/meals-per-diem. For current lodging rates visit (lodging only) https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates.

Meals will be reimbursable at the per diem rate when travel status is at least 12 hours in length and when a meal is not otherwise provided as follows:

- Breakfast: On the day of departure if travel status begins no later than 7:00 a.m. plus any other day until return
- Lunch: On the day of departure if travel status begins no later than 10:00 a.m. plus any other day where travel status continues past 2:00 p.m. until return
- Dinner: On the day of departure if travel status begins no later than 5:00 p.m. plus any other day where travel status continues past 7:00 p.m. until return.

Program staff and Members required to attend a business meeting or required training over a meal period and are not in travel status for more than 12 hours may claim reimbursement for the expense provided the proper documentation is provided. Documentation includes itemized receipts, a meeting/training agenda, and a sign-in sheet to verify attendance. Only the actual cost of the meal can be reimbursed with CNCS funds unless your program has a written policy that states meals are reimbursed by per diem. If the actual cost of the meal exceeds the State of Missouri's per diem outlined in this policy, the additional costs can be reimbursed from the Grantee share.

Incidentals

Incidental expenses are limited to $5 per day and include luggage handling (not to exceed $1 per bag/box) and maid service (at no more than $1 per night for stays longer than one night).

PROGRAM EVALUATION

In the first three years of funding, programs are required to utilize a data collection plan and in the second three years they are required to produce an evaluation plan that will be submitted with their second recompete application (the application for the third three years of funding).

After the first two grant cycles (six years), programs are required to conduct a program evaluation once each grant cycle. The concluded evaluation must be submitted with the next recompete application.

If you are unsure what cycle your program is in, please contact your MCSC program officer.

Evaluation

The evaluation requirements differ depending on the amount of the grant, as described in 45 CFR2522.700-710:

- If the program's average annual CNCS program grant is $500,000 or more, it must arrange for an external impact evaluation of the program, and it must submit the

evaluation with any subsequent recompete application to MCSC as required in 45 CFR 2522.730.

- If the program's average annual CNCS program grant is less than $500,000, or an Education Award Program Grantee, it must conduct an internal or an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application recompete application to MCSC for competitive funds as required in 45 CFR 2522.730.

Whether internal or external, evaluations should be rigorous, comprehensive, and include notes for programmatic improvement. Simply reviewing performance measures and discussing the results is not an adequate evaluation of the program.

MCSC and CNCS will give more weight to programs that provide rigorous and comprehensive evaluations.

Below is a timeline for evaluation planning:

Program grant cycle application	Evaluation Required
Years 1 – 3	Data collection plan
Years 4 – 6	Evaluation Plan
Years 7 – 9 and subsequent cycles	Completed external or internal evaluation

4. MEMBER MANAGEMENT

MEMBER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

All programs must have a Member Policies and Procedures Manual separate from their organizational policies and procedures manual that includes all items listed in this manual that pertain to Members. The manual should be distributed to every Member, and it should be readily available to the Members throughout the year. The manual will be reviewed during monitoring visits for completeness and accuracy.

MEMBER SUPERVISION

Programs must provide Members with adequate supervision throughout their service year. The groundwork for this supervision is laid out during orientation training and when going through and completing the Member Service Agreement.

Programs are encouraged to routinely and regularly communicate with Members and sites. This communication provides opportunity to get to know Members and sites so that relationships are developed.

Communication can happen in a number of different ways:

- Distance through phone or webinars.
- In-person at the site or at another location.
- In a groups or one on one.
- It can be a part of training or regularly scheduled meetings.

Communication is critical in getting important messages out to your Members, encouraging responsibility, and expanding their opportunities for growth.

Members should readily have available a day-to-day supervisor at their service site. This person should be knowledgeable about AmeriCorps and the program and should be available to the Member throughout their service.

No AmeriCorps Member may directly supervise another Member or interview a potential AmeriCorps candidate. AmeriCorps Members should only be supervised by program staff or designees. Programs may have "team leaders" that our more experienced Members, but they may not be designated as the direct supervisor of other Members.

MEMBER SERVICE AGREEMENT

Each Member is required to have a completed and signed and dated Member Service Agreement prior to the start of their service. The Member Service Agreement template will be provided to the program by MCSC prior to the start of each year. This template must be used.

The program may add addendums to the agreement, but they must be approved by your MCSC Program Officer prior to their inclusion in the Member Service Agreement.

Any changes to the Members' service during their term must be noted on the Member Service Agreement through amendment. If the agreement is amended after original signing, the program and the Member must note they have agreed to the amendment with their signatures/initials and the date.

REASONABLE ACCOMODATIONS

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C. 12101, et seq.), programs must provide reasonable accommodations to the known mental or physical disabilities of Members, and all selections and project assignments must be made without regard to the need to provide reasonable accommodations. However, the law does not require that you provide reasonable accommodations for any participant who would pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others even if accommodated.

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a good resource for finding innovative accommodations for many potential needs.

There is federal funding available to support reasonable accommodations. To access those funds, or to get support in making a reasonable accommodations, contact your MCSC Program Officer.

MEMBER SLOTS

The allowable slot types and associated FTEs or Member Service Years (MSYs) are listed in the table below.

Member Slot Type	Minimum # of Hours Required	MSY Calculation
Full-time	1,700	1.000
Three-Quarter Time	1,200	0.700
Half-time	900	0.500
Reduced Half-time	675	0.3809524
Quarter-time	450	0.26455027
Minimum-time	300	0.21164022
Abbreviated-time	100	0.0705474

Member slot conversions and corrections

Members may not have their slot type changed after the start of service unless that change is part of a reasonable accommodation.

If a slot was filled in error, contact your MCSC Program Officer immediately.

Unfilled slot conversions

Any unfilled slot may be converted into smaller slot types based on the MSY calculation. Unfilled slots may also be combined in order to make fewer larger slots based on the MSY calculation. Conversions may not increase the total MSY awarded to the program. Conversions are subject to approve on a case-by-case basis and are subject to education award funding availability.

In order to conduct a slot conversion, the program must first submit a Slot Conversion Request Form to their MCSC Program Officer. Once approved, the Program Officer will conduct the conversion.

Refill slots

A program that has fully enrolled their awarded Member slots is allowed to replace any Member who exits service before completing 30 percent of their term provided that the Member who exited is not eligible for and does not receive a pro-rated education award.

A program may not refill the same slot more than once.

As a fail-safe mechanism to ensure that resources are available in the national service trust to finance any Member's education award, CNCS may suspend refilling slots if either: the total AmeriCorps enrollment reaches 97 percent of awarded slots or the number of refills reaches five percent of awarded slots. MCSC will notify all programs if this fail-safe is executed.

A Member who is put into a refill slot must complete all hours as if the slot were new regardless of how many hours the previous Member served. They will receive a normal stipend and education award amount. Therefore, the program must ensure they have the funds available to provide the refill Member with the full stipend and benefits.

MEMBER TIME CATEGORIES

Members may perform either service hours, training hours, or fundraising hours in order to complete their terms of service.

Service hours should be the predominant amount of time logged during a term of service.

Training hours may only account for a maximum of 20% of the total corps' time logged for the year. This means that you may have Members that have training account for more than 20% of their individual time, but the total training time spent by all your Members must not exceed 20% of their total time served.

Fundraising hours may only account for a maximum of 10% of the individual Member's time. Fundraising should be limited to specific projects the Member is involved. Members **MAY NOT** fundraise to support the program or to offset the costs of their service.

MEMBER TIMESHEETS

MCSC requires programs to use their web-based electronic timekeeping system (OnCorps); unless the Program is approved to use their own web-based timekeeping system due to reasons that would make it challenging for a Program to use both systems. Requests not to use OnCorps must be submitted in writing to your assigned Program Officer.

All Member timesheets must include:

- Member's original (or digital) signature and date
- Program designee original (or digital) signature and date (this should be someone who has direct knowledge of the Members service such as a host site supervisor)
- A secure connection for the Member to submit timesheets (if digital)
- Guidelines for submitting timesheets noted on the sheet
- Member service activities listed in line with the approved objectives and are not prohibited activities
- Time must be delineated into three sections: service hours, training hours, and fundraising hours
- Timesheets should be free of edits unless those edits are signed/initialed and dated by both a program designee and the Member

Only actual time served may be put on the Member's time sheet. The time should be rounded to the nearest quarter hour.

All timesheets should be made readily available to MCSC upon request. Failure to maintain accurate timesheets may result in disallowed costs, disallowed hours, and legal liability.

MEMBER TERM AND STATUS

Member Invitation

Members must create a My AmeriCorps Portal account in order to complete their application and be invited to join a program.

The process of enrolling new Members in My AmeriCorps begins with inviting a Member to join the Program. This invitation is initiated by the program through eGrants. This will begin the onboarding process and the citizenship verification.

The Member must be invited to the program prior to the start date. The verification process can take several days to a few weeks, and the Member MAY NOT begin service until the social security and citizenship verification is completed.

You will be able to see if the verification is completed by going to the Member's information screen in eGrants. Once verified, a screen shot/printout of the verification should be placed in the Member's file.

Member Enrollment

All Member Enrollment Forms must be completed, signed, entered and approved in My AmeriCorps/eGrants by the Member's first day of service. The enrollment cannot be approved unless all background checks are completed and citizenship and social security verification is confirmed. An enrollment is considered late if it is not completed within eight days after the start of service.

Failure to enroll the Member in a timely manner may result in the Members hours being disallowed and funding being disallowed.

Do not risk your Member's service! Enroll them on time.

After October 31 of the program year, programs must receive Program Officer approval prior to enrolling full-time Members in order to ensure that the Member will successfully complete their term of service. Programs may enroll less-than-fulltime Members throughout the program

year without permission from MCSC as long as the Members can complete their hours within twelve months or by the end of the program budget year, whichever comes first.

Change of Status

Programs must send a completed Change of Status/ Early Exit Form to their MCSC Program Officer for approval prior to completing any change of states.

A change of status is rare. Refer to the AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions for policy guidance.

Program Transfer

A Member may transfer to another AmeriCorps program anywhere in the country if both programs in question approve of the transfer and the new program has an open slot available for the Member. The Member's previously served hours transfer over to the new program. This transfer is done in eGrants by your Program Officer. Contact your MCSC program officer for more information.

Suspension

As an alternative to releasing a Member, a program may, after determining that compelling personal circumstances exist, suspend the Member's term of service for up to two years to allow the Member to complete service with the same or similar AmeriCorps program at a later time.

Suspension is not, necessarily a punitive or disciplinary action. It is simply a tool that can be used for both disciplinary and protective measures.

You should contact your MCSC program officer prior to suspending a Member via the Change of Status/Early Exit Form.

Suspension Due to Legal Action

A program MUST suspend the service of an individual who faces an official charge of a violent felony (e.g., rape, homicide) or sale, distribution, or possession of a controlled substance. A program may reinstate a Member whose service was suspended under this provision if the Member is found not guilty or if the charge(s) is dismissed.

For Members who are suspend due to a first offense of possession of a controlled substance, they may be reinstated if they are enrolled in a drug rehabilitation program. For Members who are suspend due to more than one offense of possession of a controlled substance, the individual must have successfully completed a drug rehabilitation program.

Member Exit

All Member Exit Forms must be completed and approved in eGrants/My AmeriCorps Portal within 30 days of a Member exiting the program.

All Members must complete their term of service within one year (365 days) of their start date. Members who have had their term suspended may increase their service agreement by the number of days suspended.

Members will either be exited after successful completion (earned their full education award), exited without successful completion (did not earn an education award), exited for cause (termination – no education award), or exited for compelling personal circumstances (earned a prorated education award). If a Member is released for cause, they will not be eligible to serve in any AmeriCorps position in the future.

Prior to exiting a Member early, the program must submit a [completed Change of Status/ Early Exit Form](#) to their MCSC program officer for approval. No exits may be completed until that form is approved. Please not all exits must be made with 30 days of the final day of service, so proper time must be allowed for approval.

Release for Compelling Personal Circumstance

A program may release a participant upon a determination by the program, consistent with the criteria listed below, that the Member is unable to complete the term of service because of compelling personal circumstances, if the participant has otherwise performed satisfactorily and has completed at least fifteen percent of the agreed term of service, they will be eligible for a pro-rated education award.

The program must document the basis for any determination that compelling personal circumstances prevent a participant from completing a term of service.

Compelling personal circumstances include:

Those that are beyond the participant's control, such as, but not limited to:

- A participant's disability or serious illness;
- Disability, serious illness, or death of a participant's family member if this makes completing a term unreasonably difficult or impossible; or
- Conditions attributable to the program or otherwise unforeseeable and beyond the participant's control, such as a natural disaster, a strike, relocation of a spouse, or the

nonrenewal or premature closing of a project or program, that make completing a term unreasonably difficult or impossible;

- Those that CNCS, has for public policy reasons, determined as such, including:
    - Military service obligations;
    - Acceptance by a participant of an opportunity to make the transition from welfare to work; or
    - Acceptance of an employment opportunity by a participant serving in a program that includes in its approved objectives the promotion of employment among its participants.

Compelling personal circumstances do not include leaving a program:

- To enroll in school;
- To obtain employment, other than in moving from welfare to work or in leaving a program that includes in its approved objectives the promotion of employment among its participants; or
- Because of dissatisfaction with the program.

Contact your MCSC program officer with any specific questions regarding a potential exit. The change of status/early exit form must be completed prior to conducting a compelling personal circumstance exit.

Release for cause

A release for cause encompasses any circumstances other than compelling personal circumstances, or unsuccessful completion of term, that warrant an individual's release from completing a term of service. Programs must release for cause any participant who is convicted of a felony or the sale or distribution of a controlled substance during a term of service, unless noted above regarding rehabilitation.

A participant who is released for cause may not receive any portion of the AmeriCorps education award or any other payment from the National Service Trust. An individual who is released for cause must disclose that fact in any subsequent applications to participate in an AmeriCorps program. Failure to do so disqualifies the individual for an education award, regardless of whether the individual completes a term of service.

A Member released for cause may contest the program's decision by filing a grievance. Pending the resolution of a grievance procedure filed by an individual to contest a determination by a program to release the individual for cause, the individual's service is considered to be suspended. The suspension must be noted in eGrants. For this type of grievance, a program

may not—while the grievance is pending or as part of its resolution—provide a participant with federally-funded benefits (including payments from the National Service Trust) beyond those attributable to service actually performed, without the program receiving written approval from MCSC and CNCS.

Term of service limit

A Member may serve for no more than the following amount of terms in each program regardless of the number of hours served in each term.

- 4 with AmeriCorps State and National
- 2 with AmeriCorps VISTA (you can do a third term with VISTA and elect not to receive an Education Award)
- 2 with AmeriCorps NCCC

Even though a Member may serve four (4) terms of service in AmeriCorps State and National they may not earn more than the equivalent of two (2) full-time education awards. Once they have earned the equivalent of two (2) full-time education awards, they may serve up to the maximum amount of terms without the option of an education award.

Release prior to serving 15 percent of a term of service

If a Member is exited prior to 15 percent of service being completed, for reasons other than misconduct, the term will not count against the Members' service term limit. The Member will not receive a prorated education award.

MEMBER DEATH OR INJURY

The program must immediately report any Member death or serious injury to their MCSC program officer. Please utilize our provided templates for reporting all incidents.

Incidents must be reported via an Incident Report if they result in ANY of the following conditions:

- Any work-related fatality.
- Any work-related injury or illness that results in loss of consciousness, days away from work, restricted work, or transfer to another job.
- Any work-related injury or illness requiring medical treatment beyond first aid.
- Any violation of Federal, State or Local laws.
- Member perceived safety, mental health, or emotional well-being are brought into question.

LIVING ALLOWANCE/STIPEND

Full-time Members, unless in an Education Award only Program (EAP) or Professional Corps program must receive a living allowance/stipend at the minimum amount for the current grant year.

The living allowance/stipend should be paid out in equal amounts each pay period as the Member is not being paid for the specific hours served. Once the living allowance/stipend is exhausted the Member may continue to serve (up to the 12 month maximum) without payment in order to complete hours, if the Member did not complete the hours in the prearranged time period.

A living allowance is not required for less than full-time Members. If the program chooses to provide less than full-time Members with a living allowance, use the following chart:

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1,700	$16,502	$33,004
Three quarter-time	1,200	N/A	$23,103
Half-time	900	N/A	$16,502
Reduced half-time	675	N/A	$12,542
Quarter-time	450	N/A	$8,581
Minimum-time	300	N/A	$6,931
Abbreviated-time	100	N/A	$1,980

Programs occasionally request the ability to deduct amounts from living allowances for absences and other purposes. Programs may make deductions to the non-federal portion of living allowances or other payments made to AmeriCorps Members. Programs may not deduct any federal portion of the living allowance paid by CNCS funds. Before making any deductions, programs are advised to consider implications related to the treatment of employment laws. Further, programs making deductions in this fashion, it may be required to increase their matching funds. Please contact your MCSC program officer for more information.

WAGE GARNISHMENT

Any type of garnishment of the federal portion of a Member's living allowance is NOT permitted due to issues of sovereign immunity. Sovereign immunity protects the property interests of the United States from suits to which it has not consented. The federal government has a continuing property interest in AmeriCorps grant funds until they are expended in accordance with the grant's terms. With respect to the living allowance, CNCS has a property

interest in the federal share of the Member's living allowance, until the AmeriCorps Member actually receives it, and this property interest is protected by sovereign immunity. Only Congress may wave this immunity.

Any funds paid to the Member using non-federal sources (match) may be eligible for wage garnishment.

SEGAL EDUCATION AWARD

Amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award

The amount of the AmeriCorps Education Award depends on the length of a Member's term of service. The current amount of the Education Award for each term of service is as follows:

Service Term	Minimum # of hours	Amounts
Full-time	1,700	$6,495.00
Three quarter-time	1,200	$4,546.50
Half-time	900	$3,247.50
Reduced half-time	675	$2,474.27
Quarter-time	450	$1,718.25
Minimum-time	300	$1,374.60
Abbreviated-time	100	$365.52

Eligibility

Members are eligible for a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award if they successfully complete their term of service in accordance with the Member service agreement with one of the following approved AmeriCorps programs:

- AmeriCorps*State and National
- AmeriCorps*VISTA
- AmeriCorps*NCCC

Before the Member uses the AmeriCorps Education Award, they must have received a high school diploma, or the equivalent of such diploma.

Award Limitations

The maximum numbers of education awards a Member may earn is the equivalent of two full-terms. The Member may serve more terms (based on the limits outlined in the "Member Term and Status Section"), but they will not be eligible for an education award once they have earned the equivalent of two full-time awards.

Full-time, three-quarter-time, half-time, reduced half-time, quarter-time, and minimum-time, and abbreviated-time terms of service each count as one term of service.

The Trust does not make payments to anyone other than qualified schools and loan holders. It will not make payments directly to the Member. Members should see their financial aid counselor for information on how they handle disbursements and reimbursements.

If the Member withdraws from the school at which they have used the education award, the school may be required to refund the Trust. If any refund is owed, it is credited to the Member's education award "account," and is subject to the award's original expiration date (seven years from the date the award was earned). For general information on how withdrawing from school may affect a Member's student financial aid, the Member should contact their financial aid counselor or refer to the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid Handbook.

Under certain circumstances, the Member can use the education award to study outside the U.S. Contact the National Service Hotline at 1-800-942-2677 for further information.

The Member has seven (7) years to use the education award from the date of their completion of service. They can divide up their award and use portions of it at different times, as long as it is for authorized expenditures within the specified time period. The Member could, for example, apply a portion of it to existing qualified student loans, and save the remainder to pay for authorized college costs a few years down the road.

Transfer of the Education Award

The Serve America Act of 2009 allows for the transfer of education awards under certain conditions. To transfer their award, the Member must be at least 55 years old at the **start of service** and the award must go to their child, stepchild, grandchild, step-grandchild, or foster child. Awards may not be divided to transfer to more than one person.

Taxes

The IRS and the Missouri Department of Revenue has determined that payments made from an education award are considered to be included in a Member's taxable income in the year the payment is made to the school or loan holder. Interest payments are also considered taxable. This increase in a Member's income could affect their tax liability for that year. **Members should be made aware of this.**

Education Award Matching Institutions (Schools of National Service)

There are over 100 schools across the U.S. that offer partial or full matching of the education award in order to attract Members to their schools. For a full list, visit Schools of National Service.

Additional Questions

Understanding and learning how to use and/or transfer education awards can be challenging as every Member's situation and intended use can be different and unique. CNCS has developed a comprehensive FAQ to provide direction. Visit the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award page for more information. If the Member or program has additional questions, call the National Service Hotline at 1-800-942-2677.

LOAN FORBEARANCE, INTERST ACCRUAL, AND DEFAULT LOANS

Loan Forbearance

Members who are earning a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award are eligible for one type of postponement of the repayment of their qualified student loan called forbearance. During the forbearance period, interest on the principle amount of the loan continues to accrue. If a Member successfully completes their term of service and earns an Education Award, the National Service Trust will pay all or a portion of the interest that has accrued on the qualified student loans during this period. This accrued interest paid by the Trust, like the education award itself, is subject to income taxes.

Members enrolled in an AmeriCorps program are eligible for forbearance for most federally-subsidized student loans. For other types of student loans, Members must ask their loan holder if their AmeriCorps service qualifies for a deferment or forbearance.

Forbearance is not automatic. Members must request it from their loan holders by completing the National Service Forbearance Request Form. Members may complete the Forbearance Request Form online by accessing their My AmeriCorps Portal. Programs should ensure all Members are notified during orientation of this requirement.

The National Service Trust does not grant forbearances. Loan holders do. The Trust merely verifies Membership in AmeriCorps and forwards the documents to the loan companies. The Trust is able to verify Membership only when it has proof from a project that the individual is an AmeriCorps Member.

Interest Accrual Payments

AmeriCorps Members who have earned an education award are eligible to have the Trust pay up to 100% of the interest that accrued on their qualified student loan during their service. To have the Trust pay all or a portion of the interest accrued on a qualified student loans, the Trust must see that the Member was exited in eGrants after a successful term. A Member and their lender also must complete the Interest Accrual Form, which indicates the amount of interest accrued during their service period. The loan holder sends this completed form to the Trust for payment.

Defaulted Loans

Most student loans that are in default are not eligible for forbearance. If a Member has loans that have gone into default before they begin their AmeriCorps service, they can attempt to negotiate an arrangement with the loan holder or collection agency to bring the loan out of default so forbearance can be granted and interest paid. Also, Members can use their education award to repay defaulted student loans as long as the loans meet the definition of qualified student loans.

CHILD CARE BENEFIT PROGRAM

The AmeriCorps Child Care Benefit Program is available for qualified, active full-time, AmeriCorps Members who need the benefit to serve. To qualify for this benefit the Member must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Member's household income must not exceed 75% of the state's median income for a family of the same size. In determining household income the Member's living allowance is disregarded.
- Member must not currently receive a child care subsidy from another source at the time of acceptance into the program (including a parent or guardian) which would continue to be provided while the Member serves in the program
- Member must be the parent or legal guardian of a child under the age of 13
- Child must reside with the Member

Child care benefits are paid to qualified child care providers for all or a part of the Member's child care costs during their active time of service with AmeriCorps. These payments are paid directly to child care providers and are not paid to the Member. Child care providers must meet eligibility requirements as regulated under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990.

If the Member exits early, the program MUST notify the AmeriCorps Child Care Benefit Program immediately in order to stop reimbursements to the Member's child care provider. Failure to do so may make the Member and program liable for any payments made after the Member's was exited.

GAP Solutions, Inc. (GAPSI) administers the AmeriCorps Child Care Benefits Program for CNCS. Members must apply directly to GAPSI for the benefit. Interested and eligible Members should call (855) 886-0687 toll free for more information or visit their website at https://www.americorpschildcare.com.

HEALTH CARE COVERAGE

Except for EAPs, Professional Corps, or Members covered under a collective bargaining agreement, the program must provide, or make available, healthcare insurance to those Members serving a 1700-hour full-time term who are not otherwise covered by a healthcare policy at the time the Member begins their term of service. The program must also provide, or make available, healthcare insurance to Members serving a 1700-hour full-time term who lose coverage during their term of service as a result of service or through no deliberate act of their own. AmeriCorps will not cover healthcare costs for dependent coverage.

Less-than-full-time Members who are serving in a full-time capacity for a sustained period of time (e.g. a full-time summer project) are eligible for healthcare benefits. Programs may provide health insurance to less-than- full-time Members serving in a full-time capacity, but they are not required to do so. For purposes of this provision, a Member is serving in a full-time capacity when their regular term of service will involve performing service on a normal full-time schedule for a period of six weeks or more. A Member may be serving in a full-time capacity without regard to whether their agreed term of service will result in a full-time Segal AmeriCorps Education Award. Any of the following health insurance options will satisfy the requirement for health insurance for full-time Members (or less than fulltime Members serving in a full-time capacity):

- staying on parents' or spouse plan;
- insurance obtained through the Federal Health Insurance Marketplace of at least the Bronze level plan;
- insurance obtained through private insurance broker;
- Medicaid, Medicare, or military benefits.

Programs purchasing their own health insurance for Members must ensure plans are minimum essential coverage (MEC) and meet the requirements of the Affordable Care Act.

On Friday May 2, 2014 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) for Members in AmeriCorps State and National programs, who are not provided health insurance options or who are provided short-term limited duration coverage or self-funded coverage not considered MEC.

Members in the AmeriCorps State and National programs and their dependents in the Federally-facilitated Marketplace (FFM) are eligible to enroll in Marketplace coverage when they experience the following triggering events:

- On the date they begin their service terms; and
- On the date they lose any coverage offered through their program after their service term ends. (Source: 45 CFR § 155.420(d)(9)).

Members have 60 days from the triggering event to select a plan.

Coverage effective date is prospective based on the date of plan selection. A copy of the HHS Notice, which provides instructions on how to activate the special enrollment period is available at https://www.cms.gov/CCIIO/Resources/Regulations-andGuidance/Downloads/SEP-and-hardship-FAQ-5-1-2014.pdf. Members can also visit healthcare.gov for additional information about special enrollment periods: https://www.healthcare.gov/coverage-outside- open enrollment-enrollment-period/.

If coverage is being provided via the Healthcare Marketplace, and thus third-party payment is not an option, programs must develop a process to reimburse Members for monthly premiums. Reimbursements for health insurance premiums are considered taxable income for the Member, and programs must have a way to document such reimbursements.

As a MCSC program, you also have membership in The Corps Network, which offers an AmeriCorps specific healthcare plan. Use of this plan is not required.

ORIENTATION AND MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

Orientation

Members should clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, as well as have an understanding of national service and AmeriCorps. A good Member Orientation lays the foundation for providing information that will be used by the Member throughout the year.

Orientation begins this onboarding process for Members. It provides valuable information on important requirements, pieces of information they will use throughout the service year, and other useful tools knowledge, and skills they will need to conduct themselves properly and have

a successful year. An organized and creative orientation program will go a long way towards setting the stage to helping all "get the job done."

Below are the items CNCS mandates to be covered in any Orientation program:

- Specific skills and knowledge needed to perform service at the service site
- Member rights and responsibilities
- Program's Code of Conduct
- Prohibited activities
- Drug Free Workplace rules
- Suspension and termination rules
- Grievance procedures
- Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, Non Discrimination Activities
- Preventing sexual harassment education
- Specific safety procedures for Member safety
- Diversity awareness
- Inclusion and reasonable accommodation requests
- Member benefits (including, but not limited to, living stipend, health care, and child care)
- Background checks
- Member wage garnishment
- Introduction to National Service and AmeriCorps
- My AmeriCorps Portal (including loan forbearance, education award, and interest accrual)
- Time sheets

In order for your orientation program to be comprehensive and cover all pertinent aspects of service, MCSC strongly urges programs to include the following topics:

- History of service in America
- Roles and responsibilities of host sites and supervisors
- AmeriCorps programs and network (AmeriCorps Alums, other programs, etc.)
- Service in the local community
- Specific issues faced by the communities being served
- Civic Reflection and Civic Responsibility (meaning of service)
- Understanding the objectives of the program

Member Development

Programs are required to provide continual training to Members throughout their service. This may include training specific to the areas they serve and general training that may support them after their service has completed.

MCSC requires the following trainings for all Members within the first quarter of the Member's service term:

- CPR training/certification
- First aid training/certification
- Sexual harassment, non-discrimination, and anti-bullying training
- Citizenship training that includes, but may not be limited to:
    - Fostering positive attitudes towards lifelong citizenship and service
    - Enhancing the ability of Members to discuss and explore their community and people, processes, and institutions with the goal of improving conditions
    - Planning and implementing effective service projects
    - Developing social, cultural, and analytical skills necessary to effectively participate in American democracy.
- On3Learn
    - AmeriCorps 101 for Members
    - Prohibited, Unallowable and Allowable Activities
- Disaster response training that includes, but may not be limited to:
    - ICS-100 - Introduction to the Incident Command System
    - IS-244.B - Developing and Managing Volunteers
    - The following trainings are optional additions to the required disaster training:
        - IS-315.A - CERT and the Incident Command System (ICS)
        - FEMA Donations Management Training

    *Completion of FEMA training is only required once. If a Member previously completed a FEMA course, they do not have to complete it again.

MCSC also requires Life After AmeriCorps training. This can be one or a series of trainings that work to prepare the Member for what comes after their services. These trainings can include, but are not limited to:

- Reflection activities that assist Members in understanding their individual strengths and weaknesses
- Reflection activities that assist Members in understanding the transferrable skills developed during the service experience (i.e. leadership, time management, project management, etc.)
- Training on how to use the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award
- Training on preparing for the job search (i.e. résumé writing; how to talk about the AmeriCorps experience in an interview, etc.)
- Participating in AmeriCorps Alums
- Finding ways to volunteer in the future

CONTINUAL TRAINING OF MEMBERS

All programs are responsible for the continual training of their Members throughout their terms of service. MCSC recommends that training of Members be done on both an individual and group basis. Training hours may not exceed 20% of the program's aggregate of all Member service hours.

Opening Day

Members will attend an annual Opening Day/Swearing-In event hosted by MCSC. This event will usually be in the early part of October in Jefferson City. MCSC recognizes that all Members may not be able to attend, but programs should make every effort to bring a sizable portion of their corps to the event.

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

The program must conduct and keep a record of at least a midterm and an end-of-term written evaluation of each Member's performance for full, three-quarter, and half-time Members and an end-of-term written evaluation for all Members. Evaluations should be signed by both the Member and the supervisor and placed in the Member file.

The midterm evaluation should address, at a minimum, the following:

- How many hours has the Member completed?
- Is the Member on track to successfully complete their term of service?
- Is the Member satisfactorily completing assignments?
- Is the Member meeting other performance criteria as communicated at the beginning of the term of service?

The end-of-term evaluation should address, at a minimum, the following:

- Has the Member completed the required number of hours?
- Has the Member satisfactorily completed assignments?
- Has the Member met other performance criteria as communicated at the beginning of the term of service?

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

In accordance with 45CFR 2540.230 all programs must establish and implement a process for filing and adjudicating grievances from Members and other interested parties. This grievance process may include dispute resolution such as mediation, facilitation, assisted negotiation, and neutral evaluation. These procedures should be specific to Members as they have different rights than employees.

MCSC encourages programs to informally resolve disputes through the use of such as mediation or facilitation. These means of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) must be initiated within 45 days of the date of the alleged occurrence. At the initial session of the ADR proceedings, the party must be advised in writing of the right to file a grievance and right to arbitration. If the matter is resolved and a written agreement is reached, the party will agree to forego filing a grievance.

While going through the grievance procedure, be sure to make it very clear to all parties what stage they are in, what the time-line is, and what the next steps are (i.e. whether they are in mediation, grievance hearing, or binding arbitration).

There are time limits that must strictly be adhered to during the grievance process. Except for a grievance that alleges fraud or criminal activity, a grievance must be made no later than one year after the date of the alleged occurrence. If a hearing is held on a grievance, it must be conducted no later than 30 calendar days after the filing of such grievance. A decision on any such filed grievance must be made no later than 60 days after the filing.

The grievant can request binding arbitration if decision is adverse to grievant or if decision is not reached within 60 calendar days. The arbitrator must be independent and selected by mutual consent of the parties involved. If the parties cannot agree on the arbitrator, CNCS will appoint one within 15 days of receiving the request. The arbitration hearing must be held no later than 45 days after request for arbitration and no later 30 days after the arbitrator's appointment. An arbitration decision must be made within 30 days after the commencement of arbitration proceedings. The cost of arbitration must be divided evenly between the parties,

unless the aggrieved party prevails. In that case the program will be responsible for paying the total cost of the proceedings including any attorney fees of the prevailing party.

In the event an aggrieved party files a grievance after participating in an informal dispute resolution process, the neutral party may not participate in the formal grievance proceeding. In addition, no communication or proceeding of the informal dispute resolution process may be referred to or introduced into evidence at a grievance or arbitration proceeding.

Programs are required to contact their MCSC program officer if a Member starts a grievance procedure process. The written grievance should be sent to MCSC and any correspondence with the Member should also be included. All grievances that allege fraud or criminal activity MUST be brought to the attention of CNCS along with MCSC.

MILITARY SERVICE

Programs should endeavor to recruit active service members, reservists, and military family members into AmeriCorps. During the term of service, active military service members and reservists may need to spend time away from the program. Each condition is outlined below.

Deployment

The deployment of a Member or their spouse is a compelling personal circumstance reason to exit from service, and the Member would receive a pro-rated education award for time served.

The Member may also be placed in suspension, if the program and the Member determine that the Member will be able to complete service after deployment. See the "Member Term and Status" section for more information.

Reserve Duty

Generally, the Reserves of the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Space Force, U.S. Coast Guard, the Army National Guard, and the Air National Guard require reservists to serve one weekend a month plus 12 to 15 days a year (hereafter referred to as the two-week active duty service). To the extent possible, the program should seek to minimize the disruption in Members' AmeriCorps service as a result of discharging responsibilities related to their reservist duties. If Members have a choice of when to fulfill their annual two-week active duty requirement, they should do so when it will not disrupt their AmeriCorps service. In instances where the dates of active duty are inflexible and conflict with AmeriCorps service, Members should be granted a leave of absence for the two-week period of active duty service in the Reserves.

The program should credit Members for AmeriCorps service hours during their two weeks of active duty service in the Reserves if it occurs during their AmeriCorps service. The Member would receive credit for the number of hours they would have served during that period had there been no interruption. For example, if a full-time Member is scheduled to serve 30 hours of AmeriCorps service one week and 40 hours of AmeriCorps service on the following week, they would receive 70 hours of AmeriCorps service credit for the two weeks of active duty service regardless of the actual number of hours served in the Reserves.

The program should continue to pay the living allowance and provide any health care and child care coverage for the two-week period of active duty.

Members may not receive time-off for additional Reserves-related service beyond the two-week active duty service. No AmeriCorps service credit is earned for the once-a-month weekend service in the Reserves.

JURY DUTY

The program must allow Members to serve on a jury without being penalized for doing so. During the time Members serve as jurors, they should continue to receive credit for their normal service hours, a living allowance, healthcare coverage and, childcare coverage regardless of any reimbursements for incidental expenses received from the court. These hours should be noted on the time sheet as service hours.

VOTING

The program should encourage all eligible Members to register and vote. However, the program is prohibited from requiring Members to register or to vote, and from attempting to influence how Members vote.

Members who are unable to vote before or after service hours should be allowed to do so during their service time without incurring any penalties. The site supervisor should determine the length of absence.

DRUG FREE WORKPLACE

In accordance with the AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions, programs are required to give notice about the Drug-Free Workplace Act to Members through the Member Service Agreement and to conduct a drug-free awareness program. This program is a mandatory part of the orientation for Members.

Therefore, AmeriCorps prohibits federally illegal drug use and alcohol abuse by its leaders and members. Some sponsoring organizations may require leaders and members to pass a drug screening test before or upon arrival or during service at the project site. Failure to submit to drug screening, or a positive test result for illegal drugs, may lead to deselection of the candidate or early termination of the member.

If a Member is arrested for or convicted of a drug offense, they must notify the Program Director in writing within five (5) days. Appropriate action must be taken including suspension and referral to a drug rehabilitation program, or release for cause consistent with CNCS's rule on termination and suspension of service. See the "Member Terms and Status" section of this manual for more information.

Any arrest or conviction must be reported to MCSC, in writing, within ten (10) days. MCSC will then notify CNCS in writing.

LEADERCORPS

MCSC will convene a representative body of the AmeriCorps Members. This group will be known as LeaderCorps and will be made up of one to two Members from each of the programs.

These Members will meet regularly with the LeaderCorps group to gain additional training that can be then taken back to their fellow Members. They will also assist MCSC in planning service and training activities throughout the year.

MCSC recognizes that the Members' first responsibility is to their programs, so MCSC will limit the amount of time spent on LeaderCorps activities. All time logged for LeaderCorps activities will count towards the Member's term of service. Training and service hours should be logged accordingly.

Any travel/lodging incurred due to LeaderCorps activities will be reimbursed to the program by MCSC. The program will be responsible for covering the Member's travel upfront.

DISASTER DEPLOYMENT

MCSC, and all grantees of MCSC, are part of the national AmeriCorps – Disaster Response Team (A-DRT). MCSC may activate and/or deploy any AmeriCorps Member to serve during a disaster response or recovery effort. Wherever and whenever possible, Members will serve in their previously assigned service area. Programs will be response for any service/travel related expenses the Members may incur during deployment. MCSC/CNCS will reimburse those expenses through the AmeriCorps grant or other funding that may be available depending on the disaster.

5. MEMBER ASSISTANCE

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Members should be encouraged to apply for any public assistance benefits that they may be eligible for during their term of service.

Not all case workers are knowledgeable of AmeriCorps benefits. It is the responsibility of the program to advocate for their Members as needed.

If the program or Member experiences difficulty applying for a benefit, contact your MCSC program officer.

FOOD STAMPS/ SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE BENEFITS (SNAP)

A Member's Food Stamp/ SNAP benefits are not affected because a Member receives the AmeriCorps living allowance ([1115.015.90 Other Excluded Income](#)). This means that a Member's benefits should not be decreased, increased, or terminated because they receive the living allowance.

A Member may apply for benefits at https://mydss.mo.gov/food-assistance/food-stamp-program.

MEDICAID/MO HEALTHNET

Medicaid coverage may satisfy the full-time healthcare requirement. Each Member's situation is different, so the program should work to ensure the Member has minimum essential coverage as outlined in the [AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions](#).

Members may apply for Medicaid/MO Healthnet at https://mydss.mo.gov/healthcare.

PUBLIC HOUSING

AmeriCorps Member benefits do not affect a Member's eligibility for federal, need-based housing assistance, such as Section 8 housing and other federally subsidized housing. This means that the living stipend cannot be taken into consideration when a Member applies for or if their eligibility for public housing is being re-examined. This is a federal rule and is the same in all states.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

A Member's TANF benefits ARE affected by the AmeriCorps living allowance. Each Member's eligibility will be different. The Member may apply for TANF at https://mydss.mo.gov/temporary-assistance.

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME

SSI is a federal program that provides a monthly cash benefit to low-income individuals who are certain age, blind, or who have a qualifying disability. The Heroes Earnings and Relief Tax Act of 2008 (HEART Act) exempts the AmeriCorps living allowance and education award from being counted as income when calculating SSI eligibility (SI 00830.537 AmeriCorps and National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) Payments).

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE

A Member's AmeriCorps income MAY have an impact on SSDI eligibility. The Member should consult with the Social Security office to determine the impact AmeriCorps may have on their individual situation.

MEMBER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MAP)

MCSC has purchased basic membership for all current Members and program staff (listed in Section 1 of the budget) in the Member Assistance Program provided by America's Service Commissions.

MAP provides 24/7 telephonic mental health services with a trained and certified counselor along with several other virtual and referral services. The program should ensure all Members are aware of this benefit. More information can be found at https://www.statecommissions.org/americorps-member-assistance-program.

The program should receive enrollment information from America's Service Commissions/AllOne Health at the beginning of the program year. If that information is not received, please contact your MCSC program officer.

6. REPORTING AND RECORDS RETENTION

MATCH

Programs must continually be on track to meet their proposed match.

Programs that are not meeting proposed levels of match should include the following comments with their Periodic Expense Report (PER):

- An explanation as to why match was not met, and
- Plans to meet match the next month.

Programs that do not meet match requirements and do not include comments in their PER reports will be required to submit a letter addressing the two issues noted above.

AmeriCorps funds may be reduced by MCSC for failure to meet the proposed match requirements. This would be done to bring the program in line with the match requirements as submitted in the application.

Programs must provide and account for the matching funds as agreed upon in the approved application. The proposed match included in the application must be met even if it exceeds the minimum match requirement.

Cash or in-kind matching contributions that exceed the budget match will be considered voluntary cost share. Programs that cannot meet the amount of match proposed in their application may submit a request to reduce the amount of match their program will contribute via a budget modification. However, the match cannot be reduced below the minimum percentage requirements as indicated in the table below.

Overall Cost Match

Subject to the requirements of § 2521.45, a program's overall share of program costs will increase as of the fourth consecutive year that they receive a grant, according to the chart below. The program must have contributed matching resources by the end of a grant year equal to the budgeted match.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10+
Minimum Overall Share	24%	24%	24%	26%	30%	34%	38%	42%	46%	50%

Alternative Match

If the program is unable to meet the match requirements and is located in a rural or a severely economically distressed community, it may apply to CNCS for a waiver that would require the program to increase the overall amount of their share of program costs beginning in the seventh consecutive year that you receive a grant. Contact your MCSC program officer if you believe your program meets the requirements and are interested in applying. If you receive alternative match, you will follow the timetable below.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10+
Minimum Overall Share	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	29%	31%	33%	35%

PROGRAM/GRANT MODIFICATIONS

MCSC understands that AmeriCorps programs must sometimes modify their programmatic design during the program year based on circumstances outside of their control.

These modifications may include, but are not limited to:

- Changes in scope, objectives, or goals
- Substantial changes in the level of Member supervision
- Entering into additional sub-awards or contracts for AmeriCorps activities funded by the award

Any such modifications must be approved by MCSC prior to implementation of any changes. Significant changes may also require CNCS approval.

BUDGET MODIFICATIONS

MCSC understands that AmeriCorps programs must sometimes modify their budget during the program year.

A program may expend more funds in a given line item as long as the difference between the actual expenditure and the budget will be less than 5% of the total grant budget (grant share + match share).

If a program will expend more funds on a given line item, and the difference between actual expenditure and the budget will be greater than 5% of the total grant budget (grant share + match share), the program must seek prior approval by contacting their MCSC program officer.

Any line item expenditures that are 10% or more over the total grant budget (grant share + match share) will require a grant amendment approved by both MCSC and CNCS.

Deadline and Process

Programs must submit budget modification request to their MCSC program officer in a timely manner.

While budget modification requests will be accepted on a rolling basis, programs are requested to submit budget modifications by April 1 of the current program year. This will provide sufficient time for MCSC to review the request before the end of the program year.

Programs submitting a budget modification request must submit the following:

- A letter detailing the request and explaining why the modification is needed,
- A revised budget

PERIODIC EXPENSE REPORTS (PERS)

AmeriCorps programs must submit PERs on a monthly basis through MCSC's online reporting system (OnCorps Reports). It is due no later than the 15th day of each month, following the month in which expenses were incurred (i.e., September expenses are due by October 15th). If the 15th falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, the report is due on the Friday before the due date.

The following steps must be taken in order to receive reimbursement:

1. The AmeriCorps Program must submit an electronic request for reimbursement which will be reviewed by the Program Officer.

2. The Program Officer will complete the data fields listed in the program's report card and e-mail it to the authorized representative and the program director to determine accuracy. If the AmeriCorps Program is in agreement with the data, the authorized representative must sign-off (with either a wet signature or an electronic signature) within 5 business days of receipt. If the report card is received after 5 business days, there is no guarantee that the PER will be processed on the next reimbursement cycle. Please note that it is acceptable to have more than one authorized representative sign-off on the PER request for reimbursement. Each AmeriCorps Program must decide internally who is responsible for authorizing requests for reimbursement. MCSC will not monitor or keep an active list of authorized representatives for programs.

3. If there is a discrepancy in the data submitted on the report card, the authorized representative is responsible for contacting the Program Officer for resolution. Once resolved, and signed, the PER will be approved and submitted for reimbursement.

MCSC may deny reimbursement requests that are not received by the deadline. In addition, MCSC reserves the right to delay or terminate reimbursements if a program does not meet grant requirements are is delinquent in financial or programmatic reporting.

The program is required to keep all supporting documentation related to expenses noted on the PER. These documents should be kept based on the "Records Retention" section policies. MCSC and CNCS may request said documents at any time during the records retention window. Failure to provide accurate supporting documentation may result in disallowed costs, disallowed hours, grant termination, and/or legal liability.

*If you currently do not enter Member hours in OnCorps, you will still be required to submit your report of Member hours monthly when you submit your request for reimbursement. This is needed for Program Officers to determine if Members are on track to complete their term of service.

GRANT PROGRESS REPORTS (GPR)

MCSC requires programs to provide a report on their programmatic progress. These reports will include progress to meeting each performance measure as well as additional data as requested by MCSC.

Progress reports will be due on the following days in OnCorps:

- First Half (Program start – December) – due January 15th
- Second Half (January – September) – due October 15th
- End of Year (if program extends past September (October – end of program year)) – Due January 15th of following year

MCSC reserves the right to request additional reports outside of these due dates in order to provide program impact data to stakeholders.

Failure to provide prompt and accurate progress reports may result in the suspension of reimbursements and/or the termination of the grant.

GRANT CLOSEOUT

Federal Financial Report (FFR)

MCSC aggregates the Federal Financial Report (FFR) for Missouri' programs. Program PERs are used to complete this form. At the end of the grant cycle, a program will submit a PER that is marked as final. No additional AFRs or FFRs are required.

Programmatic Closeout

Closeouts are a requirement for all grants awarded by MCSC and CNCS. Closeout is the process by which the grantee completes all necessary financial, program, and administrative actions required under the grant. The provisions of CFR § 200.343 govern the closeout of federal grant awards.

No later than thirty (30) days after the end of the three-year grant cycle, or thirty (30) days after the termination of a grant, the program is responsible for the submission of applicable closeout reports and the reconciliation of the award.

MCSC and CNCS will not issue any new funds to grantees that have outstanding closeout issues or un-submitted documents.

Programs must submit the following documents to their MCSC program officer:

1. Equipment Inventory. This form catalogues items of equipment with a current fair market value of $5,000 or more and purchased with federal grant funds or provides a statement that there are no such items.
2. Inventory of Unused or Residual Supplies. This form catalogues items purchased with federal grant funds that, in aggregate, exceed $5,000 or provides a statement that such supplies (if any) do not exceed $5,000.
3. Subgrantee Certification. This form is used to certify the closeout of grant.
4. Records Retention Certification. This form is used to ensure proper records retention of all grant files until the retention time has expired. It also ensures the grant documents will be made available to MCSC and CNCS for review or audit purposes.

RECORDS RETENTION

All financial records, supporting documentation, statistical records, evaluation and performance data, Member information, and personnel records must be retained for three (3) years after the close of an AmeriCorps grant cycle (cycles are usually three years).

If any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit, or other action involving the records has been started before the expiration of the 3-year period, the records must be retained on site until completion of the action and resolution of all issues which arise from it, or until the end of the regular 3-year period, whichever is later.

Example records retention timeline:

Event	Year
Start of grant cycle	2022
End of grant cycle	2025
Last day to retain records	2028

7. PROGRAM MONITORING

PURPOSE OF PROGRAM MONITORING

As stewards of public funding, MCSC needs to ensure the programs they fund are aware of their contractual requirements and are in compliance with all of the rules, regulations, and provisions governing AmeriCorps funds. To accomplish this, MCSC must create adequate systems for monitoring programs.

First year programs will receive a site visit by their MCSC program officer within 60 days of their program start date. This will not be an official monitoring visit. It will be used to provide technical assistance to the program. In addition, first year programs will be considered high risk and will also have a monitoring review scheduled during their first year.

Programs with staff changes, i.e. Program Director, will also be considered high risk and will have a monitoring review scheduled within the first year of the new staff onboarding.

Other factors that may determine if your program is at high risk, include, but are not limited to, late reporting, not participating in mandatory trainings/events, and serious issues that arise during the program year, etc.

All programs, regardless of risk assessment will receive an on-site monitoring visit at least once every two years and/or a desk review each year.

MCSC will endeavor to complete an on-site monitoring visit for each program each year, but this will be determined by staff availability.

This approach helps to ensure high quality AmeriCorps programs are implemented while maximizing staff time and meeting the recommendations of CNCS and the OIG in regards to program monitoring.

CNCS and/or OIG may require additional monitoring not discussed in this manual. It is the requirement of MCSC and the program to comply with any such monitoring requests.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Each year, MCSC will conduct a risk assessment to determine if a program is low-risk or high-risk. Low risk programs are less likely to receive a yearly on-site visit. High-risk monitorings may include review items other than previously listed based on the reason for the high-risk assessment.

High-risk factors may include, but are not limited to:

- Being a first year program
- Having a first year program director
- Significant change in key staff
- Legitimate complaints made by Members or other stakeholders
- Previous disallowances and/or suspensions of operations in the last two program years
- Poor past performance (reporting, communication, or past monitorings)
- Poor performance with reporting deadlines
- Poor attendance at required events and trainings

DESK-BASED MONITORING

Your MCSC Program Officer may conduct desk-based monitorings at any time to review program performance. These monitorings may include any or all of the items listed in the "on-site monitoring" section. If the MCSC program officer requires additional documents that are not readily available in eGrants or OnCorps, the program will be requested to supply those documents via secure file transfer.

Unless the desk-based monitoring results in findings, disallowed costs/hours, or corrective actions, there will be no official closeout documentation sent to the program.

PERIODIC EXPENCE REPORT SAMPLING

Sampling is a way to review less than 100% of the total items within a budget by selecting a segment for review in order to determine general accuracy. It is a technique that provides supporting evidence that allows MCSC to determine if policy is being followed appropriately without reviewing every budget item and transaction.

Your program will be sampled at least two times during the program year. However, the program could be subjected to more frequent reviews if the following occurs:

- If significant issues are detected during a review.
- If significant issues are detected with the effectiveness of the organization's internal controls.
- If examples of non-compliance of federal and state regulations, MCSC policies, the Grant Agreement, and any other required guidelines are detected.
- Frequent staff turnover.
- Any other relevant determinations made by MCSC.

MCSC is completely committed to financial accountability and expects that programs will be very responsive to payment integrity requests for assessment. If you do not respond to PER sampling requests, your grant funds and/or program may be placed on manual hold pending the resolution of the request. It is the intent of MCSC to work with you to the extent possible for extensions and flexibilities upon reason.

Instructions for Sampling

Step 1:

The Program Officer will contact you via e-mail to inform you that you have been selected for sampling. The Program Officer will determine what budget line items will be reviewed. You are responsible for providing the requested documentation (as outlined in the "MCSC PER Documentation Requirements" guidance), along with the general ledger that applies to the portion of the requested sampling. You must upload the appropriate documentation through the MCSC website. Label the file name with your organization name followed by the document description. (ex., Get Things Done AmeriCorps – September 2022 PER) To upload your documents, access the following link: https://showmeservice.org/upload-documents/

Step 2:

If the review has no findings, you will receive an approval e-mail from the Program Officer.

Step 3:

If the review has issues, you will receive a rejection e-mail which includes details outlining the reasons why the sample is not approved. Once documentation is received again, the Program Officer will review and determine if sufficient evidence has been submitted to resolve the issues. This step will be repeated until an adequate solution has been met. If there are significant issues detected that could impact future requests for reimbursements, you may be required to submit a corrective action plan to address those issues. The plan should describe the specific actions the organization has taken, or plans to take, in response to the Commission's recommendations and feedback provided.

No additional PERs will be reimbursed until the sampling is satisfactorily completed.

If necessary, funds, Member hours, and/or staff may be disallowed.

ON-SITE MONITORING

MCSC will conduct an on-site monitoring visit for every program at least once every two years, or more often as may be appropriate. It is the goal of MCSC to complete monitoring visits to each program every year; however, this depends on staff availability. In most cases, on-site monitoring visits will be scheduled at least 30 days in advance. Your MCSC program officer will contact you to schedule the monitoring visit.

Generally, the monitoring visit will consist of reviews of the following areas:

- Reporting and communication
- Programmatic policies and procedures
- Fiscal policy
- Member documentation
- Staff documentation
- Host site visit(s) (at least one)
- Members interview(s) (at least one)

The purpose of an on-site monitoring visit is to assess the program's compliance with grant requirements and federal regulations and to help the program improve systems to pass a potential audit. Member files, program policies, and fiscal records may be reviewed during the visit. The MCSC Monitoring Tool will be used to assess program compliance. On-Site visits by program staff can have many purposes, some of the most important are summarized in the table below:

LEARNING	Finding out about service activities and community partnerships and to gather best practices that can be shared with other programs.
PUBLICITY	Gathering success stories
COMPLIANCE	Assuring that all federal, state, and local regulations, policies, and laws are being followed.
MONITORING PROGRESS	Comparing actual outputs and outcomes to the performance measures outlined in the grant agreement.
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	To improve overall quality of the program

MCSC reserves the right to conduct additional monitorings on a program based on performance and other risk factors.

PREPARATION FOR ON-SITE MONITIORING

To prepare properly for an on-site monitoring visit, program staff should:

- Review the MCSC Monitoring Tool
  - MCSC program officers will utilize the same tool when conducting the on-site monitoring
- Make certain appropriate staff will be available.
- Send all documents electronically ahead of time per the instructions of the MCSC program officer.
- Understand that Program Directors/staff are not included in the Member interviews.
  - To maximize the opportunity to assist our programs in their success and growth, it is vital that Program Staff be excluded from Member interviews.
- Make certain all required documents are in the Member/staff files and in the order listed on MCSC Monitoring Tool.
- Verify that Member time sheets are up to date and signed/dated based on grant requirements. See the "Member Timesheets" section for more information.

Programs should ensure the following people are available for each section of the visit:

REPORTING AND COMMUNICATION	Program Director or designee
PROGRAMMATIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	Program Director or designee
FISCAL POLICY	Program Director or designee and fiscal staff
MEMBER DOCUMENTATION	Program Director or designee
STAFF DOCUMENTATION	Program Director or designee
HOST SITE VISIT (AT LEAST ONE)	Program Director or designee, site supervisor(s), AmeriCorps Member(s)
MEMBERS INTERVIEW (AT LEAST ONE)	AmeriCorps Member(s)

MONITORING CLOSEOUT

After the completion of a desk or on-site monitoring, the MCSC program officer will provide the program with documentation that includes a summary of the monitoring, a list of any positive or negative findings, a list of any disallowed cost/hours, and a list of corrective actions. The disallowed costs/hours, and corrective actions will include due dates of any repayment or responses.

If there are no disallowed costs/hours or corrective action, or when all disallowed costs/hours and corrective actions have been adequately responded to by the program, the MCSC program

officer will provide the program with notification of closeout which will include a closeout letter and a copy of the fully completed monitoring tool for reference.

8. ATTACHMENTS

All attachments are available on the Program Director Manual site.

1. 2022 Year at a Glance
2. AmeriCorps Member Service Agreement Template
3. MCSC Monitoring Tool
4. Non-Member File Checklist
5. Member File Checklist
6. National Service Criminal History Checks Authorization and Results Form
7. Slot Conversion Request Form
8. AmeriCorps State & National Improper Payments Assessment Documentation Instructions
9. Change of Status/ Early Exit Form
10. Closeout documentation forms
    a. Certification of Subgrant Closeout
    b. Equipment Inventory
    c. Inventory of Residual Supplies
    d. Records Retention Certification
11. PER Documentation Requirements
12. Incident Report Form
13. Training/Event Reimbursement Form
14. Program Officer Assignments