

# AmeriCorps\*State Grant Application Toolkit

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# AmeriCorps\* State Grant Toolkit

## Purpose and Overview

This tool was originally created by Rosa Moreno-Mahoney and Bridget Lee from the One Star Foundation in Texas. They graciously shared it and we have adapted it for use in Kentucky. The tool is designed to help communities develop an AmeriCorps\*State program and complete a responsive application for funding. We recommend that communities complete the Readiness Assessment, which guides an organization to determine if they are prepared to administer and support an AmeriCorps\* State program, prior to using this toolkit. The Readiness Assessment and other helpful documents can be found on the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service web site, <http://chfs.ky.gov/dfrcvs/kccvs/americorps/grantinfo.htm>.

*NOTE: This toolkit is intended to assist communities to develop and design an AmeriCorps\* State program. Using this toolkit does not guarantee an award.*

## How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is organized into 4 categories. Within each category are a series of activities to guide your organization through reflection, discussion and decision making. Completion of each section is essential to designing your program and will complement the development of your proposal for funding.

### The Categories

- Phase 1: Community Need and Service Activities
- Phase 2: Member Recruitment, Development and Retention
- Phase 3: Community Strengthening
- Phase 4: The Proposal

### The Tools



- **Information:** These documents provide background information necessary for discussion and decision making. Review of these materials is crucial to learning some fundamentals that are critical to the activities and construction process.



- **Activities:** These activities outline the necessary discussions and decision making required for the program planning.



- Construction: This section is designed to capture the planning process and communicate the decisions. The details of this information may be used as part of the proposal. All elements for construction are noted by a check mark✓.

### **Timeline**

Complete planning and developing for your program model must happen prior to writing the grant application. Allow sufficient time to convene community partners in discussions that will ensure you reach sound decisions. Don't rush the process; doing so could lead to clear gaps in the program design. For specific dates and deadlines, please e-mail [kccvs@ky.gov](mailto:kccvs@ky.gov).

### **A Note about the Program Budget**

A budget tool kit will be developed separately after the official Notice of Funding is made available through the Corporation for National and Community Service. This will ensure the most accurate information will be provided to potential applicants. Please visit our website to learn more, [www.volunteerky.ky.gov](http://www.volunteerky.ky.gov).

## **Phase One: Community Need and Program Activities**

AmeriCorps “gets things done” through demonstrable service that helps solve compelling community problems. AmeriCorps\*State programs provide a variety of specific and identifiable services that address community needs. The program should provide opportunities for your community to identify its needs and implement ways to make positive change. To ensure that the program is making an impact, programs must outline well-designed activities that engage members in meaningful activities that lead to measurable outcomes. The result is that people are served, things are created, and a change is made in the lives of people and communities. Programs will be accountable for measuring and reporting their program’s impact. This phase of the toolkit will help you meet the expectations for this process.

**Key Elements:**

Ensure that programs are addressing critical community needs that are valued by the community by including essential criteria such as:

- Documented Needs Assessment;
- Community Involvement and Consultation;
- Effective Program Model
- Quality Service Activities;
- Measurable Impact; and,
- Comprehensive Evaluation Plan.

**Outcomes and Objectives of the Phase:**

Your organization/community will:

- Identify and document a compelling critical need affecting your community,
- Involve community members in the planning and decision making process,
- Design service activities that will generate a social impact,
- Determine a program model to meet the critical community need, and
- Create performance measures.



## Information: Phase One

### Glossary of Terms

The following are terms and definitions to assist you.

**Act** means the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009

**Administrative Costs** are expenses associated with the overall administration of a Program, and are defined in the General Provisions, Administrative Costs.

**AmeriCorps** means AmeriCorps\* State, AmeriCorps\* National, AmeriCorps\* Tribes and Territories, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), and National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), programs taken together as programs dedicated to national service. VISTA is authorized under the National and Community Service Act (42 U.S.C. sec. 12651)

**Approved National Service Position** means a national service position for which the Corporation has approved the provision of a national service education award as one of the benefits to be provided for successful service in the position.

**Corporation** means the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), established under section 191 of the Act (42 U.S.C. sec 12651)

**Community Beneficiaries** refer to those persons who receive services or benefits from a program, but are not AmeriCorps members or staff.

**Education Award** means an award provided to a member who has successfully completed a required term of service in an approved national service position and who otherwise meets the eligibility criteria in the Act. An education award may be used: (1) to repay qualified student loans, as defined by the Act; (2) toward educational expenses at a Title IV Institution of Higher Education; and (3) toward expenses incurred participating in school-to-work programs approved by the Secretaries of Labor and Education.

**End-outcome Indicators** specify changes that have occurred in the lives of the community beneficiaries and/or members that are significant and lasting. These are actual impacts, benefits or changes for participants during or after a program.

**Evaluation** uses scientifically based research methods to systematically investigate, on a periodic basis, the effectiveness of AmeriCorps Programs by comparing the observed program outcomes with what would have happened in the absence of the program.

**Faith-based Organizations** include:

- Religious congregations (churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, etc.);
- Organizations, programs, or projects operated or sponsored by a religious congregation;
- Nonprofit organizations that clearly show by their mission statement, policies, and/or practices that they are religiously motivated or religiously guided institutions;
- Organizations that, when asked, designate themselves as a faith-based or religious organization; or
- Collaborations of organizations led by an organization from the previously described categories, or of which half or more of the members are from the previously described categories.

**Indian Tribe** means a federally-recognized Indian tribe, band, nation, or other recognized group or community, including any Native village, Regional Corporation, or Village Corporation, as defined under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1602), that the United State Government determines is eligible for special programs and services provided under federal law to Indians because of their status as Indians. An Indian tribe also includes any tribal organization controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by one of the entities described above.

**Member** is an individual who:

- Is enrolled in an approved national service position;
- Is a US citizen, US national or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States;
- Has a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate (or agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent before using an education award) and who has not dropped out of elementary or secondary school in order to enroll as an AmeriCorps member (unless enrolled in an institution of higher education on an ability to benefit basis and is considered eligible for funds under section 484 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. 1091), or who has been determined through an independent assessment conducted by the Program to be incapable of obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent.
- Is at least 17 years of age at the commencement of service unless the member is out of school and enrolled;
  - In a full time, year round-round youth corps Program or full-time summer Program as defined in the Act (42 U.S.C. 12572 (a) (2)), in which case he or she must be between the ages of 16 and 25, inclusive, or
  - In a Program for economically disadvantaged youth as defined in the Act (42 U.S.C. 12572 (a) (9)), in which case he or she must be between the ages of 16 and 24, inclusive.

**Member Service Year (MSY)** more accurately describes units of AmeriCorps service than FTE (full time equivalent), which is commonly associated with budgeting for employee

payroll. The Corporation changed terminology to avoid any misimpression that AmeriCorps members are Federal employees.

**National Service Trust** is the account established in the U.S. Department of the Treasury under the Act (42 U.S.C. 12601) for the purpose of holding and making payments of education awards and other education benefits to AmeriCorps members.

**OMB** means the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

**Out-of-School Youth** means youth age 16 and older that have either dropped out or otherwise have no permanent affiliation with a secondary school. This definition does not include individuals who are in between school years and fully intend to return to school in the fall.

**Output Indicators** are the amounts or units of service that members or volunteers have completed, or the number of community beneficiaries the program has served. Output indicators do not provide information or benefits or other changes in the lives of members and/or community beneficiaries.

**Parent Organization** means a program that is responsible for implementing and managing a National Direct AmeriCorps Program.

**Performance Measures** are indicators intended to help a program measure the results of an AmeriCorps program's activities on community beneficiaries and participants. Performance measures are based on outputs, intermediate outcomes, and end outcomes.

**Program** means a national service Program, described in the Act, carried out by the Program through funds awarded by the Corporation and carried out in accordance with federal requirements and the Provisions of the Grant.

**Project** means an activity or set of activities carried out under a Program that results in a specific, identifiable community service or improvement:

- That otherwise would not have been made with existing funds, and;
- That does not duplicate the routine services or functions of the organization to which the members are assigned.

**Project Sponsor** means an organization or other entity that has been selected to provide a national service position for a member.

**Service Recipient** means a community beneficiary who receives a service or benefit from the service of AmeriCorps members.

**Subprogram** refers to an organization receiving AmeriCorps grant funds from a Program.



## Information: Phase One

### Prohibited Member Activities

AmeriCorps members may not engage in the following activities and programs may not use grant funds (cash and in-kind donations of goods and services – including matching funds) to support the following activities. Individuals may exercise their rights as citizens and may participate in the following activities on their own initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, using non-Corporation funds.

Prohibited member activities include the following:

- ❖ Attempting to influence legislation.
- ❖ Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes.
- ❖ Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing.
- ❖ Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements.
- ❖ Engaging in partisan political activities or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to Federal office or the outcome of an election to a State or local public office.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ 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 proselytization, consistent with section 132.
- ❖ Consistent with section 132, providing a direct benefit to any--
  - business organized for profit;
  - labor union;
  - partisan political organization;
  - nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, except that nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
  - organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (7), unless the position is not used to support those religious activities.
- ❖ Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services.
- ❖ Conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation funds to conduct a voter registration drive.
- ❖ Carrying out such other activities as the Corporation may prohibit.
- ❖ Ineligibility- No assistance provided under this subtitle may be provided to any organization that has violated a Federal criminal statute.

- ❖ Nondisplacement of Employed Workers or Other Volunteers- A participant in an approved national service position under this subtitle may not be directed to perform any services or duties, or to engage in any activities, prohibited under the nonduplication, nondisplacement, or nonsupplantation requirements relating to employees and volunteers in section 177



## **Information: Phase One**

### **Member Type and Terms of Service**

Programs must decide on the member type(s) that best fits their program design. In addition, each program must define the specific member term(s) of service outlining the hours and length required for each member type to qualify for a post-service education award. Program standards must comply with the conditions set by the Corporation for National & Community Service as defined below. The member type(s) and term(s) of service should be in alignment with the program design. In addition, programs must ensure members have sufficient opportunity to complete the specific terms of service.

#### **What is a “Member Term of Service”?**

A member term of service refers to the member hours, length of service, and other requirements (as defined within the program) an individual enrolled in an AmeriCorps\*State program needs to qualify for a post-service education award. A member term of service must be completed by the end of the program’s budget period.

Member Term of Service = Member Hours + Length + Other Defined Requirements

#### **Member Type and Member Hours**

To provide programs flexibility in their program design, there are different member types with corresponding minimum service hour requirements to best fit your needs.

- ❖ Full-Time Members must serve at least 1700 hours.
- ❖ Half-Time Members (One Year) must serve at least 900 hours.
- ❖ Half-Time Members (Two Years) must serve at least 900 hours.
- ❖ Reduced Half-Time Members must serve at least 675 hours.
- ❖ Quarter-Time Members must serve at least 450 hours.
- ❖ Minimum Time Members must serve at least 300 hours.

The program must define the minimum hours of service to successfully complete the program. The program design must allow for sufficient opportunity for the members to meet the service hour requirements. The program requirements must meet the minimum set by the Corporations as noted above. A 1700 hour service year is considered a “member service year” or “MSY”.

## Member Length of Service

The program must define the period that the member must commit to the program to successfully complete the program requirements. For example, if successful completion of a program requires a 12 month length of service, members in that particular program are not eligible for an educational award simply upon completion of their hours after 10 months. The length of service must allow for sufficient opportunity for the member to meet the service hour requirement. In planning for the member's term of service, the program must account for holidays and other time off, and must provide each member with sufficient opportunity to make up missed hours. The program requirements must meet the minimum set by the Corporation.

- ❖ **Full-time Members.** The length of service must be a period of not more than one year.
- ❖ **Half-time Members (One Year).** The length of service must be a period of not more than one year.
- ❖ **Half-time Member (Two Years).** The length of service must be a period of not less than one year and not more than two years.
- ❖ **Reduced Half-time Member.** The length of service must be a period not to exceed one year.
- ❖ **Quarter-time Member.** The length of service must be a period not to exceed one year.
- ❖ **Minimum-time Member.** The length of service must be a period not to exceed one year.

## Member Term of Service\* Reference Chart

Member Type	Number of Hours	Length of Service
Full-time	At least 1700	Not less than 9 months AND not more than one year
One Year Half-Time	At least 900	Not more than one year
Two Year Half-Time	At least 900	Not more than two years
Reduced Half-Time	At least 675	Not more than one year
Quarter-time	At least 450	Not more than one year
Minimum-time	At least 300	Not more than one year

*\*A member term of service must be completed by the end of the Program's budget period in which the term of service commences. The exception to this is for two year half-time members.*



## **Information: Phase One Performance Measures**

All programs must develop measurable performance goals to determine the impact of AmeriCorps on communities and participants. Performance measures are designed to capture ongoing progress towards meeting program objectives. To this end, programs must establish, track and evaluate performance measures (i.e., outputs, intermediate-outcomes, end-outcomes) for their programs. The Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service (KCCVS) and CNCS requires that programs establish performance measures, collect data on an ongoing basis, track progress toward meeting performance goals, account for shortfalls in measured performance by explaining why they occurred and providing plans for responding to the shortfalls and include the results in reports.

### **Performance Measurement**

Performance measurement is the process of regularly measuring the outputs and outcomes produced by a program. It allows programs to track both the amount of work done and the impact of this work on program beneficiaries.

Performance measurement is a useful tool for managing programs. It allows programs to

- ❖ Track progress towards larger goals,
- ❖ Identify program strengths and possible areas for improvements,
- ❖ Ensure accountability, and
- ❖ Improve services and client outcomes.

### **Resources**

The Corporation has made available, on the national service website and through technical assistance resources, information that facilitates the development of performance measures and assist in the long-term implementation of performance measures within national and community service. Visit the website [www.nationalservicerresources.org/star/ac](http://www.nationalservicerresources.org/star/ac) for information on performance measurement topics. We also encourage programs, when needed, to seek the help of local or regional professionals to perform and oversee performance measurement activities, including the development of a plan that encompasses the collection of and reporting on outcome data that is used to improve program quality.

Below is a worksheet to help you write the performance measures.

## Performance Measurement Worksheet

Creating Performance Measures	Enter Response Below:
1. Identify the result you expect to achieve. Be specific.	
2. Describe how you will achieve this result. Outline the activities. Provide details on the intensity and/or frequency of the activities.	
3. What data and instruments will you use to measure the results?	
4. What are the targets that you expect to meet during the three-year grant period?	

As you develop performance measures, use this checklist.

- ❖ Have you developed a performance measure for your primary/significant activity? Is this measure clearly linked to the community need and the program activities?
- ❖ Is the result stated in the measure linked to the identified community need, member development goals, OR the strengthening community goals?
- ❖ Do the targets seem reasonable yet ambitious for the activity identified and do they relate clearly to the need identified?
- ❖ Will the data collected support the result you are attempting to measure?
- ❖ Is the Performance Measure accurate and measurable?

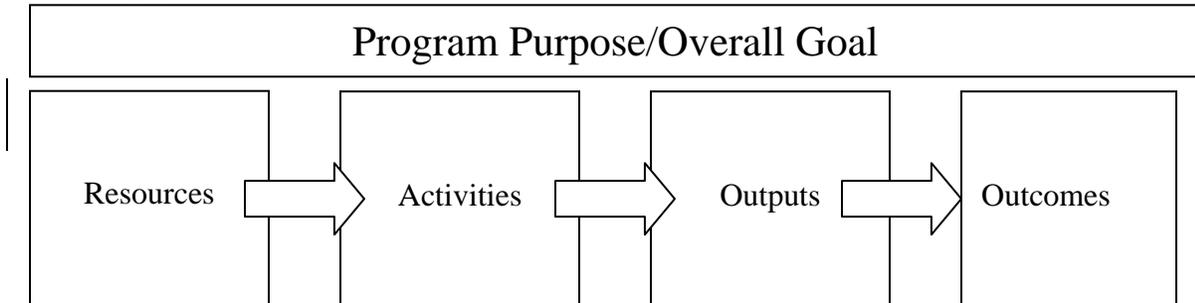


## Information: Phase One

### Logic Model Resources from Innovation Network, Inc.

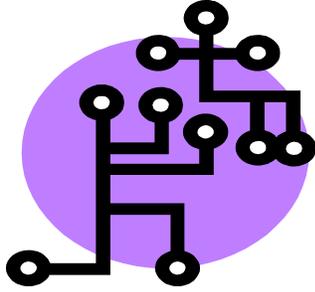
A logic model shows the relationships between what is put into the program (resources), what the program does (activities and outputs), and what results (outcomes) the program produces.

#### The Model



**Innovation Network's Workstation** is an online workstation with evaluation and planning tools designed specifically for nonprofit organizations. The Workstation allows you to develop a blueprint for designing, evaluating, and budgeting a successful program. Each plan has a corresponding work plan – a management tool to help you get the job done. The result is stronger programs with measurable results. (<http://www.innonet.org>)

**W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide** is a clear and concise discussion of the use of logic models and their importance from program and evaluation planning. (<http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf>)



## Activities: Phase One

### Critical Community Needs: The Brainstorm

Identifying a compelling unmet or under met need in your community is the first step in the program planning process. Gather community stakeholders together to identify 5-10 needs in the community that are currently unmet or under met and answer the following questions based on the list of needs.

- ❖ What need(s) could be better met through direct services provided by additional human resources?
- ❖ What could be better met through human services, choose the most compelling. (select only one or two)
- ❖ What data is available to document the identified need as a compelling need facing the community? Be sure that the data are relevant to the identified need, current, and/or pertinent to the community.
- ❖ Who would benefit from this need being addressed?

### Community Involvement & Consultation – Part One

Local involvement and input is vital to the development of high quality service programs that sustain and build communities. Successful programs will be those that use extensive, broad based, local input to design, implement, and evaluate their projects. This activity assists your organization begin this essential step.

Based on the need and beneficiaries you have identified in the previous activity, please consider the following:

- ❖ Brainstorm a list of at least 5 other organizations or agencies in the community that are addressing this issue or working with the population of beneficiaries that you want to target.
- ❖ Does the list reflect diverse stakeholders? This includes representatives from the communities you will serve; potential beneficiaries, member (or potential members) in the program, and appropriate community agencies (secular or faith based), business, foundations, local labor organizations representing employees of service sponsors, and local government. If no, who else should be added to the list?
- ❖ How could each of these agencies and/or stakeholders be involved in the planning or designing of this project?

- ❖ How might each of these agencies and/or stakeholders support or partner with this project?

## **Community Involvement & Consultation – Part Two**

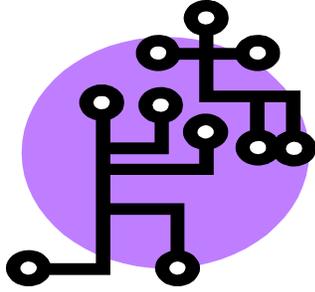
Now that you have created a list of diverse stakeholders, invite them to a meeting to provide input in the program planning and development. Engage the stakeholders in meaningful discussions and work together in a collaborative effort; this approach will surely strengthen your program model.

Prior to initiating discussions around the topics below, provide some information about AmeriCorps, present the results from the *community need brainstorm*, and let them know why you have invited them to participate in the process.

The group should discuss the following:

- ❖ What data are available to document the identifiable need as a compelling need facing the community? Be sure that the data are relevant to the identified need, current, and/or pertinent to the community.
- ❖ List some activities that members could conduct to address the identified need.
- ❖ What are the measurable impacts you would hope to see as a result of members' work?
- ❖ Identify the target population that members will serve, including geographic area.
- ❖ Where in the community could the potential member service activities take place?
- ❖ What added value will the AmeriCorps\*State program bring to addressing the identified need beyond what would occur without the grant funds?
- ❖ What resources are currently available to support the program?
- ❖ What additional resources are needed to run a successful program? (Note: the list of resources may serve as a reference when developing the budget in phase 4)

***It is now time to use the rich discussions to make some decisions about the program model!***

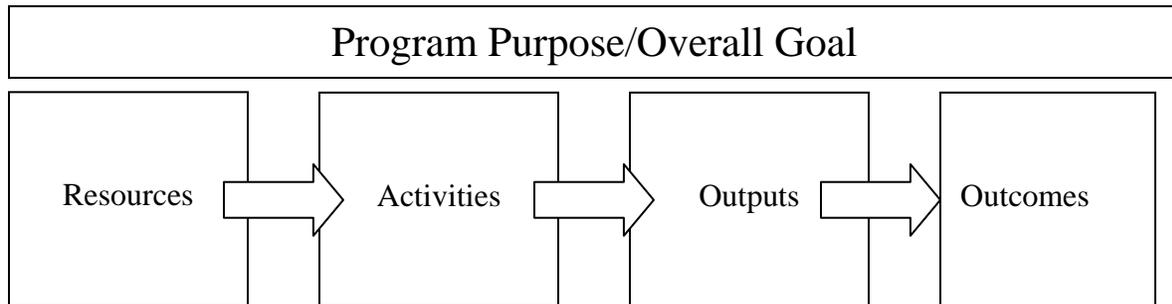


## Activities: Phase One

### Logic Model: Program Alignment

The Logic Model provides an outline (or roadmap) for your program. Logic models are intended to be a useful tool to define and communicate your program design – the needs your program will address, the activities the members will conduct, and the impact the program will have. It requires you to think through the identified needs, member activities, outputs, outcomes, and measurements. The Logic Model should be completed in partnership with the community stakeholders and your potential sites.

#### The Model



#### Discuss and decide the following:

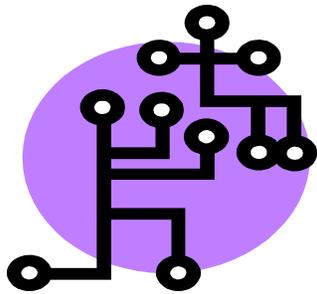
- ❖ **PROGRAM PURPOSE:** *What is the overall goal of the program? Specify the need to be addressed, desired results, and target population.*
- ❖ **RESOURCES:** *What resources are needed to successfully run the program?*
- ❖ **ACTIVITIES:** *Given the resources, what activities will the members' conduct to achieve the outcomes and ultimately meet the identified need?*
- ❖ **OUTPUTS:** *What tangible results, services, or products delivered will result from the activities performed?*
- ❖ **OUTCOMES:** *What changes will occur as a result of the activities and outputs accomplished?*

## **REVIEW FOR ALIGNMENT**

Once the logic model is complete, review the following questions.

- ❖ Are the resources adequate to implement the activities and achieve the desired outcomes?
- ❖ Have you included all the *major* member activities needed to achieve expected outcomes and impact the community issue?
- ❖ Have a variety of perspectives been taken into consideration when developing the program logic model?
- ❖ Do activities, outputs, and short – and long-term outcomes relate to each other logically (the “if-then” relationship?)
- ❖ Does the program logic model clearly identify the scope of the program’s influence?
- ❖ Does the model represent the results or impacts that occur as a result of activities and services?
- ❖ Are the outcomes within the scope of the program’s control or sphere of reasonable influence, as well as the timeframe of the program?
- ❖ Is the level of change/success outlined viewed by stakeholders as ambitious, yet achievable?
- ❖ Are the outcomes measurable?

(Activity based on Innovation Network. Logic Model Workbook)



## Activities: Phase One

### Member Term of Service

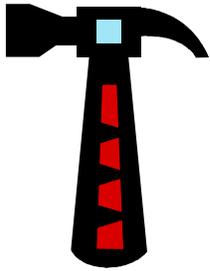
Programs must decide on the member type(s) that best fit their program design. The member type(s) and term(s) of service should be in alignment with the program design. For example,

- ❖ What type (e.g. full time, half time ...) of AmeriCorps members and how many members would you need to make an impact on the identified issue? *(note: The KCCVS may have a minimum number of members that you must request to be eligible to apply, contact [Andrea.Stieloff@ky.gov](mailto:Andrea.Stieloff@ky.gov) to learn what the requirements are)*
- ❖ How many months do you want members to serve (i.e. length of service)?
- ❖ What is the timeframe for this length of service?
- ❖ How many hours must the members complete?
- ❖ What is the average number of hours per week each member will be expected to serve?
- ❖ What holidays and/or other time off will members receive during their term of service?
- ❖ Does the length of service, timeframe and expected number of hours seem reasonable for a member to complete?
- ❖ What opportunities will a member have to make up hours?

### The Legal Applicant

A legal applicant has full fiscal and programmatic responsibility for managing all aspects of the grant and grant supported activities. The legal applicant is accountable for its operation of the AmeriCorps Program and the use of grant funds. Programs are bound by the AmeriCorps grant provisions. Therefore, certain information must be provided such as:

- ❖ Who will be the legal applicant for administering and running the program?
- ❖ What is this organization's mission?
- ❖ Discuss and document the organization's (applicant's) history and past accomplishments in the proposed activity area.
- ❖ List the relevant experience in federal grant management.
- ❖ What staffing level is required to run the program successfully?
- ❖ List the key staff position(s) that will have a role in the day to day management of this program.
- ❖ Check the KCCVS Financial Assessment tool
- ❖ A strong commitment from the legal applicant is essential; list some examples of resources and support that illustrate the commitment.
- ❖ Where will the AmeriCorps\*State program fit within the organizational structure of the legal applicant? Reflect this in an organizational chart.



## Construction: Phase One

### Compelling Need Summary

To address critical needs valued by the community, you must identify a compelling community need in partnership with community stakeholders. Please provide a written response based on the discussion and decisions achieved during the Activities section of this phase.

- ✓ **Describe the specific community need(s) the program will address. Cite data as supporting evidence to demonstrate need(s) as a compelling issue facing the targeted community**
- ✓ **Describe how the target community/communities were involved and/or consulted in identifying the need(s) and planning the program.**
- ✓ **Over the course of the grant cycle, describe the program's plans for reviewing the identified need and making adjustments based on the review.**

### Member Request

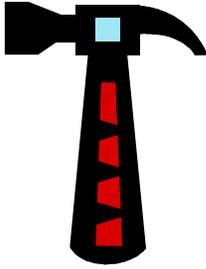
AmeriCorps\*State programs engage members to address critical needs facing local communities. Specify the number and type of members that you are requesting. Provide justification for awarding the grant funds.

- ✓ What type of AmeriCorps members and how many members are you requesting?
  - Full time
  - One year half time
  - Two year half time
  - Reduced half time
  - Quarter time
  - Minimum time
- ✓ What is the member term of service for each type required for the program?
  - How many hours must each Member Type serve? (must meet the minimum requirements)
  - Length of service: how many months must each Member Type serve? (must meet the requirements)

# of Members Requested	Member Type	Number of Hours	Length of Service
	Full Time		
	One Year Half Time		
	Two Year Half Time		
	Reduced Half Time		
	Quarter Time		
	Minimum Time		

✓ **Explain why AmeriCorps\*State members are needed to carry out the service activities**

✓ **Describe the added value that the AmeriCorps\*State program will bring to addressing the identified need beyond what would occur without the grant funds.**



## Construction: Phase One

### Service Activities Summary

Programs must develop well designed and effective activities that have a measurable impact on the identified need. Please provide a written response based on the discussion and decisions achieved during the Activities section of this phase.

- ✓ **Provide a detailed description of the proposed member activities. Include information about the frequency and intensity of the service activities.**
- ✓ **Describe why the program's approach will be effective.**
- ✓ **What would a member's day look like? Draft a schedule that illustrates this.**
- ✓ **Articulate how the proposed member activities are significant and meaningful and warrant the use of AmeriCorps members.**
- ✓ **Describe the impact and measurable outcome of these activities.**
- ✓ **Define the level of change/success the program intends to accomplish and explain why this is an ambitious yet achievable level.**
- ✓ **Create one or more performance measure(s) to capture the desired outcome.**
- ✓ **Provide a description of the beneficiaries to be served.**
- ✓ **Identify the community to be served. Include geographic area.**

### Community Involvement Summary

Programs must develop well-designed and effective activities that have a measurable impact on the identified need. Please provide a written response based on the discussion and decisions achieved during the Activities section of the phase.

- ✓ **Provide a list of the community stakeholders involved in the planning, discussion, and/or designing the program. Specify the type of organizations involved, i.e. civic, education, faith-based, etc. Describe their involvement.**
- ✓ **Describe why these community stakeholders were selected to participate in the process.**
- ✓ **Describe why these community stakeholders were a good choice for the planning and designing process.**

## **Phase Two: Member Recruitment, Development & Retention**

Part of AmeriCorps' mission is to encourage member responsibility and expand their opportunities. Therefore, the program must focus on the professional and personal development of the members that serve in the program. All programs should provide year-long development of its members that supports the service they are charged with in the community and their long term leadership, civic involvement, ethic of service and volunteerism. The program must provide members with supervision, training, skills, and knowledge they need to perform their tasks.

### **Key Elements**

To help ensure that members are prepared for and benefit from their service, programs should include the following:

- Comprehensive Member Recruitment and Selection Plan;
- Clear Pre-service Training/Ongoing Development;
- Adequate Support/Supervision;
- Retention; and,
- Service Learning and Reflection.

### **Outcomes and Objectives of this Phase:**

Your organization/community will have:

- Identified the necessary member skills, knowledge and abilities.
- Drafted a member recruitment plan.
- Designed a member training plan.
- Identified potential service site locations and selection process.
- Outlined plans for quality member supervision.



## Information: Phase Two

### Member Benefits

The AmeriCorps program provides its members with both in-service and post-service benefits. There are restrictions and eligibility requirements for these benefits. In-service benefits are designed to provide members with the support necessary to participate in the AmeriCorps Program. In-service benefits provided to members may include: *living allowance, child care, health care, student loan forbearance, and student loan interest accrual*. An education award is a post-service program benefit that is provided for successful service in the program.

#### Living Allowance

The living allowance is designed to help members meet the necessary living expenses incurred while participating in the AmeriCorps Program. There are maximum and minimum requirements by member type (refer to grant guidelines for details). Programs **must not** pay a living allowance on an hourly basis. It is **not a wage** and should not fluctuate based on the number of hours members serve in a given time period. Programs should pay the living allowance in increments, such as weekly or bi-weekly. **A member must be actively engaged in providing service to receive the living allowance.**

#### Child Care

Child Care for any full-time member who is eligible for and needs such assistance to participate in the program may be provided by the Corporation. The Corporation will pay 100 percent of the allowance as defined by payment rates of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). Child Care Providers receive direct payment from the Corporation. Therefore, do not include child care assistance in the AmeriCorps budget. Member eligibility is based on need. Members' needs must be consistent with the following: total family income of members must be less than a percentage of the state median income, as defined by the state under CCDBG guidelines; members must reside with and be a parent or guardian of a child under the age of 13. When you accept members in the program that are receiving and continue to receive child care assistance from other sources such as a parent or guardian, they are ineligible for child care from the program. On the other hand, if members become ineligible for assistance because of their enrollment in the program, or the member certifies that he or she needs child care to participate in the program, child care must be provided.

#### Health Insurance

You must offer health care benefits to full-time members in accordance with AmeriCorps requirements. The health care coverage must provide or exceed the minimum benefits outlined in the AmeriCorps provisions. You may obtain health insurance for members through any provider you choose, as long as the policy provides the minimum benefits and is not excessive in cost. You must provide full-time members with health insurance at the time

of acceptance into the program if the member is not otherwise covered by a health insurance policy. If a full-time member who previously had coverage loses it through no deliberate act of his or her own, such as parental or spousal job loss, you must provide the member with health benefits. You may not pay health care benefits to half-time members with federal funds. You may choose to provide health care benefits to half-time members from other sources (i.e., non-federal). However, half-time members who are serving in a full-time capacity for a sustained period of time (such as a full-time summer project) may be eligible for health care benefits supported with federal funds, subject to applicable match requirements. The KCCVS staff must either approve this in the grant agreement or by prior written approval. The grant does not cover any person other than members.

### **Student Loan Postponement**

AmeriCorps members who are earning an education award are uniquely eligible for one type of postponement of the repayment of their qualified student loan called forbearance. During this forbearance based on national service, interest continues to accrue. The National Service Trust (Trust) will pay all or a portion of the interest that has accrued on qualified student loans for members that successfully complete their term of service and earn an education award. Most student loans that are in default are not eligible for forbearance.

### **Interest Accrual Payment**

AmeriCorps members who have earned an education award are eligible to have the Trust pay up to 100 percent of the interest that accrued on their qualified student loan during their service. The Trust will not pay interest on qualified student loans if a member fails to complete their term of service. The Trust will only pay interest on qualified student loans.

### **Post-Service Education Awards**

An education award is a program benefit that is provided for successful service in the program. In order to receive a full education award, a member must perform the minimum hours of service and successfully complete the program requirements as defined by the Program. The education award will reflect the maximum Pell Grant so is subject to change.

<b>Education Awards Table</b>		
<b>Member Term of Service</b>	<b>Number of Hours</b>	<b>Education Award</b>
Full-time	At least 1700	\$5,350
One Year Half-time	At least 900	\$2,675
Two Year Half-time	At least 900	\$2,675
Reduced Half-time	At least 675	\$2038
Quarter Time	At least 450	\$1,415
Minimum Time	At least 300	\$1,132



## Information: Phase Two

### Member Eligibility

A program may select as AmeriCorps members only those individuals who are eligible to enroll in AmeriCorps. In order to be eligible, an individual must meet the statutory requirements noted below.

- An approved national service position is available. (Service positions are made available only if an organization/agency is awarded a grant.)
- Individual is a U.S. citizen OR U.S. national or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States.
- Individual is at least 17 years of age at the commencement of service. *(There are some exceptions which allow enrollment of 16 year olds if program meets some specific conditions. Contact the KCCVS for details.)*
- Individual has a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate (or agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent before using an education award) and who has not dropped out of elementary or secondary school in order to enroll as an AmeriCorps member.

The program is responsible for obtaining and maintaining adequate documentation to demonstrate the eligibility of members.

### Training, Supervision, and Support

The following are requirements stipulated in the grant provision. Adherence to these requirements in your discussion and planning is essential.

- **Site Agreement.** A program must ensure that site agreements are executed between the program and any project sponsor/host site where the member will be performing service. This site agreement specifies roles and responsibilities to ensure that the grant provision and program requirements are met.
- **Planning for the Term of Service.** The program must develop member position descriptions that provide for meaningful service activities and performance criteria that are appropriate to the skill level of the members. The program must ensure that each member has sufficient opportunity to complete the required number of hours to qualify for a post-service education award. In planning for the member's term of service, the program must account for holidays and other time off, and must provide each member with sufficient opportunity to make up missed hours.
- **Member Contract.** The program must require that members sign contracts. Refer to grant provisions for details about the contract requirements.

- **Training.** Training, skills, knowledge and supervision necessary to perform the tasks required in their assigned project positions, including specific training in a particular field and background information on the community service must be provided to the member. Details of training plans should be specified in the grant proposal. Program orientation for members must be conducted for members. This orientation should be designed to enhance member security and sensitivity to the community. Orientation should cover member rights and responsibilities, including the program's code of conduct, prohibited activities, suspension and termination from service, grievance procedures, sexual harassment other non-discrimination issues, and other topics as necessary.
- **Service Learning.** The service experiences of members should be used to help them achieve the skills and education needed for productive, active citizenship, including the provision, if appropriate, of structured opportunities for members to reflect on their service experiences.
- **Limit on Education and Training Activities.** No more than 20 percent of the aggregate of all AmeriCorps member hours served in a program may be spent in education and training activities. The limit is based on an aggregate to allow flexibility in education and training activities to meet the various levels and needs of the selected members. Programs will likely experience attrition which impacts the aggregate percentage; therefore, this should be considered when determining the hours allotted for training and education activities.
- **Supervision.** Members must be adequately supervised by qualified supervisors. There must be an established and enforced code of conduct for members.
- **Performance Reviews.** All members must have a mid-term and end-of-term evaluation completed. Written records of evaluations must be kept on file.
- **Support Services.** Specific support services must be provided to members who have dropped out of school by assisting them in earning the equivalent of a high school diploma; and to members who are completing a term of service and are making the transition to other education and career opportunities.

## **Required Member Training Topics**

### **Member Orientation**

Inclusion of the following topics are required as part of the member orientation schedule.

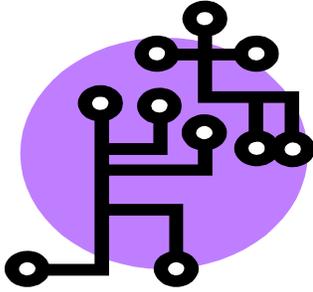
- Introduction to National Service, AmeriCorps, and other Streams of Service
- Overview of Program – mission, needs addressed, and approved performance measurements
- Overview of member contract
- Review of member direct service description
- Member rights and responsibilities
- Program's code of conduct
- Prohibited Activities
- Drug Free Workplace requirements
- Suspension and Termination rules
- Grievance Procedures

- Sexual Harassment
- Non-discrimination issues

**On-going Training Plan**

It is recommended that the following training be included as part of the annual member training plan:

- Specific training on the particular field in which the members are serving
- Background information on the community served
- Civic Responsibility Training
- Volunteer recruitment and management
- Life After AmeriCorps and information on education award use



## Activities: Phase Two

### Member Recruitment, Development & Retention Activities

#### Ideal Member

Programs are required to develop a member recruitment and selection plan. The program is responsible for establishing the minimum qualifications for membership in the program, selecting members who meet those qualifications, and assigning members to projects that are appropriate to their skill. This activity will help you identify the characteristics that you are seeking and inform the development of the required plans.

- ❖ Write a service description that details a member's task and duties he/she will be required to perform.
- ❖ Brainstorm at least five qualifications and/or characteristics you'd like to have in an "ideal" AmeriCorps member to make the program successful.
- ❖ From the list which are "must-have", non-negotiable qualifications/characteristics? Which are "would like to have" qualification/characteristics?
- ❖ Review the "must have" list of qualifications/characteristics. Are they truly non-negotiable?

*Keep in mind that "must haves" increase the quality of members (and may reduce your training needs,) but limit the pool of potential applicants. "Would like to have" characteristics can be great member development topics to incorporate into the training plan and good selling points for the program. ("If you become a member with our program, we'll train you to...")*

(Based on an activity created by Allen Dietz)

#### Member Recruitment & Selection

Recruit program members from the community in which the project is conducted, as well as members of diverse races, ethnicities, genders, ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, education levels, and mental physical capabilities. Select members who possess a commitment to the goals of AmeriCorps.

Based on the type of individuals you determined you needed from the previous activity (called the target member population) answer the following questions.

- ❖ How does the target member population obtain information about potential employment, community events, volunteer opportunities, etc.? (e.g. internet, newspapers, television, mailings)
- ❖ Where would you encounter and/or find the target member population?
- ❖ What skills, experience, and/or benefits might a member gain as a result of the program? What about the program will interest them?
- ❖ How many applications do you need to fill the number of member positions?
- ❖ How can you make the recruitment process accessible to audiences with different language and educational backgrounds?
- ❖ Which community partners can help to recruit members?
- ❖ How will you screen the applicants for “must have” characteristics identified in the Ideal Member Activity?

### **Member Orientation & Training**

Provide members with the training, skills and knowledge they need to perform well in their assigned service project. Member Orientation should prepare members for their year of service. In addition, training must be an ongoing part of a program and each program that includes yearlong training plan. A strong orientation and training plan will pay off in program outcomes, with members who know the purpose of their service and have the skills to accomplish program objectives.

- ❖ What specific training would increase the members’ knowledge and awareness of the community and beneficiaries served?
- ❖ What skills and knowledge are necessary to perform the required member tasks as stated in the service description?
- ❖ How will you train members to have these skills and knowledge?
- ❖ From the ideal member activity, if you listed “would like to have” characteristics, how will you train the members to have those traits or skills?
- ❖ Brainstorm at least five training topics that you could incorporate into the plan that would foster a sense of civic responsibility.
- ❖ What is the timeframe for completing member orientation?
- ❖ How frequently will on-going member training be held?
- ❖ Create a calendar/schedule to illustrate when in the member term of service topics will be covered. (i.e. if a member’s length of service is 10 months, then what will happen in month one, month two, month three, etc...)
- ❖ List at least three strategies you could implement to ensure compliance with the 20 percent limitation on education and training activities.

## **Project Sponsor Host Sites**

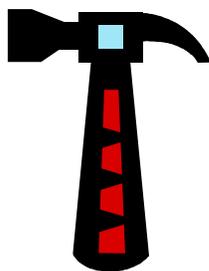
Project sponsors/host sites are the locations where the members perform service. Complete the following activity to assist with determining appropriate sites.

- ❖ Where will members be placed? List ALL locations.
- ❖ How will host sites be selected?
- ❖ How often will program staff visit and monitor host sites?
- ❖ List at least three methods that you can implement to ensure that the grant provisions and program requirements are met by the host sites/project sponsors.
- ❖ List at least three ideas to guarantee that host sites are familiar with AmeriCorps and the National Service Network.

## **Support and Supervision**

Members must have the supervision necessary to perform the tasks required in their assigned positions. Supervision is necessary to provide members with clear performance expectations, feedback, and on-going support. Effective supervision ensures that members are able to perform their duties and are meeting program expectations.

- ❖ Who will supervise the members?
- ❖ Describe the level of supervision. What is expected of the supervisors? List specific responsibilities, expected time to be spent supervising members, etc.
- ❖ What qualifications must the direct supervisor have?
- ❖ Explain why this level of supervision and the qualification standards are adequate to meet the needs of the members.
- ❖ What information about the program must a supervisor have to successfully supervise a member?
- ❖ How will supervisors receive the necessary information and/or training?
- ❖ List some ideas about how to provide on-going support to supervisors.
- ❖ To whom do the supervisors report?



## Construction: Phase Two

### Member Recruitment & Selection Plan

Applicants must develop their own recruitment and selection system and are responsible for establishing the minimum qualifications for program participation, including selecting members who meet those qualifications, and assigning members to projects that are appropriate to their skill level.

- ✓ **Define the minimum member qualifications required for the program.**
- ✓ **Describe how the organization will recruit members to serve in this program.**
- ✓ **Specify the target population and the recruitment strategies.**
- ✓ **Describe the member selection process.**

### Member Training Summary

Programs must have well-designed and effective activities with measurable impacts on the identified needs. Please provide a written response based on the discussion and decisions achieved during the Activities section of this phase.

- ✓ **Describe the program plans for orienting, training and developing member's skills to ensure that members are prepared for and benefit from their service.**
- ✓ **Explain how to increase members' understanding of civic responsibility and help members' achieve the skills and education needed for productive, active citizenship.**
- ✓ **Defend why this member development plan meets the development needs of the targeted member pool.**
- ✓ **Illustrate how the member development plan meets the training requirements outlined in the "Information" Section of Phase 2.**
- ✓ **Outline the leadership opportunities and other training the program will provide to create a quality and positive service experience.**
- ✓ **Create one or more performance measure(s) to capture the desired outcomes.**

### Host Site & Supervision Overview

- ✓ **Define the member service sites. If available, include an organizational/agency list of where the members will be placed and the number of members to be placed at each site.**
- ✓ **Describe how host sites were or will be selected.**
- ✓ **Illustrate the level of supervision the members will receive and how this meets the developmental needs of the potential members.**

- ✓ **Explain who will supervise the members and list their responsibilities. Include required skills and qualifications.**
- ✓ **Outline a comprehensive plan to train, monitor, support and manage host sites and supervisors to ensure program requirements and expectations are met.**

## **Phase Three: Community Strengthening**

AmeriCorps strengthens communities by involving citizens directly in serving community needs. AmeriCorps members help bring individuals and groups from different backgrounds together to collaborate in achieving constructive change and to solve critical community problems. Through the program, communities should develop their capacity to make change and sustain change that can support the long term solution of the issue at hand. Examine how you will sustain service without the presence of AmeriCorps. Ultimately the goal is to “develop a program that is sustainable, builds organizational and local capacity, has the full involvement of community volunteers, and produces outcomes beyond those accomplished by AmeriCorps members alone” (CNCS toolkit for program sustainability).

### **Key Elements**

To help ensure that communities are strengthened as a result of the program, program design must include:

- Support for Community Organizations,
- Recruitment and Management of Volunteers, and
- Capacity Building and Sustainability

### **Outcomes & Objective of this Phase:**

At this point, your organization/community will have:

- Identified opportunities to mobilize volunteers to expand program impact,
- Established strategies to effectively support and manage volunteers,
- Brainstormed ideas to build capacity and sustainability, and
- Discussed opportunities to foster collaboration.



## Information: Phase Three

### Asset Mapping

Asset Mapping provides a strategy for your community to identify and define its needs and assets. This approach empowers the community by recognizing the talents within the area, fosters partnerships, and focuses on success. The process serves as a tool for understanding the wealth of resources that exists in each community.

#### How to Map Community Assets

There are many approaches to accomplish this task. Listed below are just some ideas for what you may want to consider in mapping a community.

- ❖ Define the purpose of the process and use of the findings.
- ❖ Identify the community's assets. Define what talents and resources exist in the community right now.
- ❖ Remember that the process is relationship driven. Foster collaboration and partnership.
- ❖ Develop a tool to capture the assets present in the community.
- ❖ Maintain on-going, open and timely communication.

#### Resources

The following list is from the Educational Resources Information Center Trends and Issue Alert No. 47 created by Sandra Kerka. Please contact the KCCVS for additional resources.

Aigner, S.M.; Raymond, V.J.; and Smidt, L.J. "Whole Community Organizing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." **Journal of the Community Development Society** 33, no. 1 (2002): 86-106

Asset-Based Community Development Institute (John McKnight and John Kretzmann, co directors), 2040 Sheridan Rd., Evanston, IL 60208-4100, 847/491-8711

Bohach, A. "Fundamental Principles of Asset-Based Community Development." **Journal of Volunteer Administration** 15, no. 4 (Summer 1997): 22-29.

Community Building Resources. <http://www.cbrainhigh.com>

Dedrick, A.; Mitchell, G.; Miyagawa, M., and Roberts, S. **From Model to Reality – Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping**©. Edmonton, Alberta: Capital Health Authority, 1997. (ED 414 503)

Sharpe, P.A.; Greany, M.L.; Less, P.R.; and Royce, S.W. "Assets-Oriented Community Assessment." **Public Health Reports** 115, nos. 203 (March-June 2000): 205-211

## **Capacity Building**

AmeriCorps “strengthens communities”. Through a program, communities should develop their capacity to make change and sustain services without the presence of AmeriCorps. Members, as such, can serve in ways that develop that capacity and organizations can work to develop systems and make changes that can support the long term solution of the issue at hand. Successful applicants are able to demonstrate that their program or the service offered builds the capacity of organizations and communities to meet community needs.

### **What is capacity building?**

Capacity building is a process that helps an organization increase social impact and their ability to meet community needs effectively. Through capacity building an organization can gain greater independence and sustainability. Effective capacity building is a process that enhances the mission, strategy, skills and culture, as well as systems, infrastructure, and human resources of an organization.

### **How can AmeriCorps help?**

The AmeriCorps program is viewed as an investment expected to yield a set of self-sustaining activities over time. AmeriCorps members may assist organizations in capacity building activities in accordance with authorized activities of AmeriCorps members.

### **Resources**

*Building Capacity in Nonprofit Organizations:* The Urban Institute at [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org)

*Toolkit for Program Sustainability, Capacity Building and Volunteer*

*Recruitment/Management:* Corporation for National and Community Service at Resource Center: Toolkit for Program Sustainability ([www.nationalserviceresources.org](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org))

## **Volunteer Recruitment & Management**

### **Role of AmeriCorps**

A fundamental purpose of AmeriCorps is to help recruit, support, and manage the vast networks of volunteers that meet community needs. AmeriCorps has been called upon to make volunteer recruitment and management a major focus of its efforts. Programs should be designed to engage and support volunteers in meeting community needs. The involvement of volunteers should support the mission or enhance any direct service goals of the program or organization being served. AmeriCorps programs can utilize members to recruit, manage, support and develop volunteers.

Among the many strategies, members can:

- ❖ Develop and implement strategies, tactics and the “plan” to recruit volunteers,
- ❖ Write volunteer position descriptions,
- ❖ Develop promotional materials,
- ❖ Approach organizations with potential volunteer bases with opportunities for partnering,
- ❖ Develop and make volunteer recruitment presentations,

- ❖ Develop a volunteer manual,
- ❖ Plan and conduct volunteer training, and
- ❖ Develop a volunteer policies and procedures manual.

**Resources**

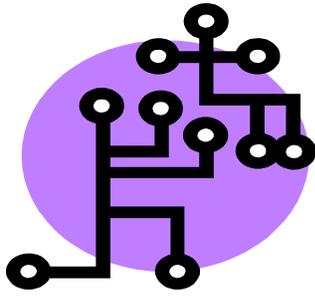
The Corporation has developed a toolkit on volunteer recruitment and management with resources that build on existing expertise in the field to support this program activity.

You may access these materials through their website at

[www.nationalserviceresources.org](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org).

The KCCVS offers organizations volunteer management training. Contact

[MelissaC.Newton@ky.gov](mailto:MelissaC.Newton@ky.gov) for additional information.



## Activities: Phase Three

### Community Strengthening Activities

#### Volunteer Involvement

Through the recruitment and management of volunteers, AmeriCorps programs can strengthen communities and develop community resources. Discuss strategies for mobilizing volunteers. When considering how your AmeriCorps program can promote the effective involvement of volunteers, you have flexibility to determine the best approach.

- ❖ Brainstorm ideas on how the program can involve volunteers. List some activities that volunteers could conduct.
- ❖ How can the program utilize volunteers to build the long term capacity of organizations and/or the community? List some ideas.
- ❖ How can you engage volunteers to meet the community need? List some ideas.
- ❖ What role could members play in the recruitment, support and/or management of these volunteers?
- ❖ Identify some likely sources of potential volunteers.
- ❖ List three to five ways the program could provide feedback to volunteers and/or recognize volunteer contributions.

#### Partner Organizations

Programs must demonstrate partnerships with community organizations (secular and/or faith-based). Partnerships with community groups help to enhance organizational capacity and strengthen communities. Identify opportunities to collaborate and share technical expertise and resources.

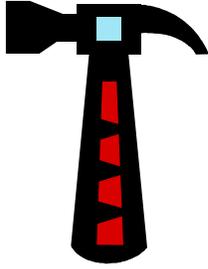
- ❖ Brainstorm at least five organizations for partnership and/or collaboration. This includes host sites and perhaps the three to five organizations you identified in the Phase 1 Activities Section.
- ❖ Based on the list you generated, brainstorm three to five resources per organization that could be available to the program as a result of the collaboration.

#### Capacity Building & Sustainability

AmeriCorps is viewed as an investment expected to strengthen communities and yield a set of self-sustaining activities over time. Programs are expected to achieve this goal through capacity building and sustainability plans.

- ❖ List the organizations and institutions as sites for member service.

- ❖ Work with sites to identify areas within the organization that would benefit from increased and/or improved capacity. Brainstorm assessment strategies that you could use to work with these sites to identify areas to increase/strengthen their internal organizational capacity.
- ❖ List three to five community resources the program could assist organizations to develop.
- ❖ Programs must make plans for sustaining the program in the absence of or a reduced level of grant funds. List three to five sustainability strategies the program could implement over the next three years to prepare for program sustainability.
- ❖ Share ideas on how members can play a role in these capacity building and sustainability activities.



## Construction: Phase Three

### Community Partners Overview

Community commitment is essential to an AmeriCorps program's success. Therefore, programs must secure community support.

- ✓ **Identify organizations with which the AmeriCorps program may partner and collaborate. Discuss their role(s) and responsibilities. Be specific about the technical expertise and resources available to the program as a result of the collaboration.**
- ✓ **Describe other community partnerships you intend to develop.**
- ✓ **What additional community support (not already mentioned) is there for this program?**

### Capacity Building & Sustainability

- ✓ **Describe plans for increasing the capacity of the organizations and institutions where members are serving. Be sure to include how the organizations' capacity will be enhanced as a result of the program's efforts.**
- ✓ **Describe the members' role in these capacity building activities.**
- ✓ **Include any other plans to develop community resources.**
- ✓ **Describe the program plans for achieving sustainability. The plan should explain how you will continue to meet community needs in the absence of or at a reduced level of Corporation funding.**

### Volunteer Management

Programs must effectively engage and support volunteers in meeting community needs. When considering how your AmeriCorps program can promote the effective involvement of volunteers, you have flexibility to determine the best approach.

- ✓ **Illustrate how the program will utilize volunteers to expand the reach of the program in the community.**
- ✓ **Describe the recruitment and selection process the program will use to obtain its volunteers and if the volunteers will be episodic or ongoing.**
- ✓ **Depict the program's strategy to provide sound volunteer management practices to effectively monitor, coordinate and assess volunteer performance.**
- ✓ **Identify how many volunteers you expect to recruit and the number of hours of service they will provide, in total and on average.**
- ✓ **Explain the program plans for orienting, training and developing volunteers.**
- ✓ **State the role members will have in the recruitment, support and/or management of these volunteers.**

- ✓ **If selected for funding, you will be expected to report on your actual volunteer recruitment levels.**
- ✓ **If you are requesting a waiver of the requirement to recruit or support volunteers (see 45 CFR § 2520.35), explain the basis for your request in the Waiver Request Justification field, which is in the Application Info Section in eGrants. If you are submitting a hard copy application, explain the basis for your waiver request in the program narrative.**

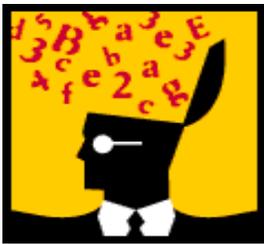
## Phase Four: The Proposal

Now that you have completed the first three phases, you are ready to prepare and submit a request for funding.

### Outcomes & Objectives of this Phase:

Your organization/community will be:

- Informed about the grant writing process, and
- Prepared and ready to write a grant proposal for AmeriCorps\*State funding.



### Information: Phase Four

### Submission Requirements

The application instructions detail the submission requirements. Failure to adhere to these requirements may likely compromise or eliminate your consideration for funding. Don't let this happen to you. Below is a sample list of tips to assist with application success.

- ❖ Note the important deadlines. This includes date(s) and time(s). The deadline to submit the grant to KCCVS is significantly earlier than the submission date to CNCS. This ensures time for the review process and possible fine tuning of grant applications prior to final submission to CNCS.
- ❖ Know the method of delivery. (e.g electronic vs. hard copy).
- ❖ Submit all the required components.
- ❖ Adhere to the format. This includes allowable margins, length and font size.
- ❖ Submit the exact number of requested copies.
- ❖ Meet ALL posted deadlines and submission requirements!!!

### Pitfalls to Avoid

It is important to remember that your grant application is reviewed by people who make funding recommendations and decisions. Your grant application is the first impression that they have of your organization and program. Earn a good impression by avoiding the following pitfalls.

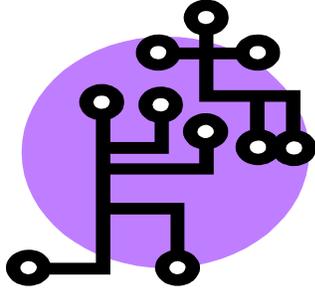
**Common Pitfalls when Writing the Application**

- ❖ Misspelling AmeriCorps. The “A” and the “C” are capitalized, and there is always an “s” at the end.
- ❖ Spelling errors
- ❖ Typos
- ❖ Grammatical errors
- ❖ Miscalculations
- ❖ Referring to member service using employment terminology. Members are not employees. They “serve”, not “work”. You “enroll and exit” members, not “hire and fire”.
- ❖ Inconsistencies. (E.g. you are requesting 40 full-time members but mention 55 full-time members carrying out activities in the narrative. Or you state that there will be 4 sites where members will serve but list 6)
- ❖ Assuming the reader knows about your program and leaving out important information for understanding your program.
- ❖ Using a Word document as a spreadsheet and not updating the calculations.

(This list was adapted from a document created by the Tennessee Commission on National and Community Service.)

**Common Pitfalls when Creating the Budget**

<b>Common Issues</b>	<b>How to Avoid</b>
Additional detail needed to determine what is being purchased or donated and how much each item costs or the value of a donated item.	Include detail of all items being purchased as a donation (e.g. rather than budgeting \$250 for a training, show a detailed budget indicating \$100 for the meeting space, \$100 for training booklets, and \$50 for snacks.)
Purpose of line-item not indicated.	Be sure that it is clear what the budgeted item will be used for if it is not obvious.
Justification of a line-item is not indicated.	Sometimes the justification of a line-item is obvious, but if not, include additional information to show why an item is needed or why a certain quantity is needed.
Budget calculations that are driven by the amount of salaries or living allowance budgeted, number of staff or member MSY’s, or number of staff FTEs do not coincide with the actual numbers or amounts that are included in the budget.	Check your budget and have it proofread to ensure consistency throughout. When a change is made during budget preparation to staff/member FTE/MSYs; staff salary amounts; member living allowance amounts; or member slot allocations; ensure that other parts of the budget that are driven by these numbers or dollar amounts are also changed.
Incorrect calculations-ensure that the calculations in your budget are easily understandable and equal the amounts that are entered.	Allow time to carefully proofread your budget and ask someone else in your organization to do the same.



## Activities: Phase Four

### Writing the Grant

You should be ready to write the grant application. By now you have conducted discussions and made the necessary decisions. It is now time to communicate your plans for meeting your local community needs, developing members and strengthening your community. This is also the time to highlight your organization's capacity to effectively administer and run a high quality program. Below are some tips and resources developed by Susie Bullock, Development Writer with Transylvania University.

1. Do your homework! Read up on the grantor and its mission and priorities. Read the grant instructions as often as needed to gain a "big picture" understanding of what the grantor wants to accomplish through grantees.
2. Read narratives of successful proposals, if possible.
3. What is your story? Draft a one-page executive summary of your program or project. This will help keep you focused and on track.
4. Follow instructions to the letter! Many worthy grant applications are declined because organizations requesting assistance did not follow instructions.
5. Cut and paste instructions or questions into a draft document. Questions and instructions should be in a different color font. Answer as many questions as possible in plain, simple English.
6. Seek and draft answers to remaining questions. Don't be concerned about style, transition, etc.
7. Be certain you have answered completely and that your answers are easy to understand.
8. When you are satisfied with your answers, highlight or change font color of corresponding questions. This should eliminate the possibility of leaving questions unanswered.
9. Cut and paste answers into another document and begin knitting everything together. Avoid adjectives! Instead, rely on verbs to paint the picture. Plan to review and revise several times.
10. Ask someone with good writing skills who knows nothing about your program or project to read your narrative and highlight anything that is confusing, repetitive, boring, or appears to be inaccurate.
11. Ask someone who knows grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc. to proofread your draft. Typos and grammatical and punctuation errors suggest a careless attitude and lack of attention to detail.
12. Review again, paying special attention to facts and figures. Highlight all numbers, percentages, etc. throughout. Make sure your math is correct and the data are accurate and consistent.
13. Circulate the draft and ask for input from co-workers, board members, etc.

14. Incorporate suggestions as appropriate, then let the draft marinate a few days.
15. Add finishing touches, then press “Send”.

#### Miscellaneous Recommendations

1. Buy and read Strunk and White’s The Elements of Style.
2. **AVOID USING PASSIVE VOICE.** It’s boring and wastes words.
3. Respect the time and intelligence of the grant reviewer by being honest and *making every word count*.
4. Don’t provide information the grantor has not requested.
5. Make your story interesting and compelling by “putting a face on it” when possible.

## Conclusion

This Tool Kit is being made available in the hopes that potential AmeriCorps\*State proposal writers will use it to develop a strong request. Traditionally, AmeriCorps\*State grant competition have been extremely fierce with many more requests than dollars available. In order to assist faith and community based organizations meet the needs in their communities we want to provide all the resources necessary to see more AmeriCorps\*State proposals from Kentucky receive federal funding. If used, this Tool Kit will enable grant writers to go step by step and more easily complete what can be a daunting application for funding.

As mentioned earlier, a separate Budget Tool Kit will be developed when specific guidelines are released from the Corporation for National and Community Service. If interested, you can view information regarding budget requirements from previous years’ grant applications at our web site, [www.volunteerky.ky.gov](http://www.volunteerky.ky.gov).