



*The Governor's Commission on
Service and Volunteerism*

Serve Idaho
Program Director Manual
2026-2027
Updated October 2026



AmeriCorps

Contents

SERVE IDAHO PROGRAM DIRECTOR MANUAL 2026-2027	1
Contents	2
Chapter one: Introduction, history, and structure.....	4
Mission	4
Purpose.....	4
National service and Serve Idaho history	4
Organizational structure.....	5
Active AmeriCorps streams of service.....	5
Chapter two: AmeriCorps state grants and requirements	7
Grant funds and activities	7
Fundraising rules for members, 45 CFR 2520.40 and 2520.45.....	8
Fundraising rules for program staff	9
Ineligible service categories, activities, and uses of grant funds	10
Prohibited activities, 45 CFR 2520.65.....	10
Reporting requirements	11
Chapter three: Program staff	12
Program Director expectations.....	12
Chapter four: Program expectations.....	14
100% enrollment.....	14
Retention.....	14
Compliance.....	14
Chapter Five: Serve Idaho Program Support.....	17
Monitoring.....	17
Risk-based monitoring and compliance	17
Program Officer check-ins	18
On-site monitoring visits.....	18
Desk audit monitoring	19
NSCHC review	19
What is considered “noncompliance”?	19
Chapter six: Regulations and requirements	23
Federal regulatory and executive order compliance	23
Code of federal regulations	23
2 CFR.....	24
State and local regulations.....	24
Grant terms and conditions	24
Understanding your IDOL sub-recipient agreement.....	25
File retention.....	25
Sustainability.....	25
Chapter seven: Required program policies and procedures.....	27
Program-developed policies and procedures.....	27
Required Serve Idaho policies and procedures.....	28
Special initiatives.....	32
Chapter eight: Member living allowance.....	35

Living allowance distribution	35
No hours served in a pay period.....	36
Taxes on living allowance	36
Garnishment.....	37
Maximum living allowance	37
Living allowance distribution policy.....	37
Serve Idaho Personally Identifiable Information Policy.....	40
Member safety policy	43
Reporting member safety concerns.....	43
Member and site supervisor training policy	43
Site Supervisor training policy	45
Chapter nine: National Service Criminal History Checks	47
ASN NSCHC policy	47
NSCHC training.....	47
Chapter ten: Member management.....	52
Member eligibility.....	52
US citizenship verification.....	52
Member recruitment.....	53
Member selection	54
Enrollment process.....	56
Member timekeeping.....	63
Member suspension.....	66
Member release from service	67
Chapter eleven: Member benefits	77
Living allowance	77
Segal education award.....	77
Schools of national service	79
Student loan deferment and forbearance	79
Healthcare (CNCS Terms and Conditions - Specific VIII.D)	80
Childcare.....	81
Eligibility for other federal government benefits.....	81
Unemployment.....	82
Workers' compensation.....	82
Member travel reimbursement/relocation expenses	82
Jury duty	83
Chapter twelve: Site management	84
Service site selection.....	84
Chapter thirteen: Branding and marketing	88
Presentations and published material.....	88
Publications required verbiage	88
AmeriCorps signage.....	88
AmeriCorps logo	88
Photographs.....	88
Key terms and definitions	90

Chapter one: Introduction, history, and structure

Mission

The Serve Idaho mission is to inspire and recognize volunteers and empower communities through service and AmeriCorps to address Idaho's unmet needs. To achieve this mission, Serve Idaho promotes collaborative efforts among private and nonprofit organizations, schools, and state and local government agencies to advance national service programs and volunteerism throughout the state. More information can be found at the Serve Idaho website.

Serve Idaho meets its mission through:

- Administration of Idaho's AmeriCorps grants to address critical community needs through a year of dedicated service.
- Hosting the annual Serve Idaho Conference on Service and Volunteerism to provide volunteer management and professional development training for AmeriCorps members.
- In partnership with the Idaho Nonprofit Center/ Community Foundation, provide volunteer management.

Purpose

The Serve Idaho Program Director Handbook has been specifically designed as a guide for those who administer Serve Idaho AmeriCorps programs. This handbook will assist in detailing the process for monitoring, supporting, and evaluating programs and, above all, for working collaboratively to make the AmeriCorps programs in Idaho successful.

Please note that the information contained in this handbook does not include all the legal requirements of an AmeriCorps grant. Program Directors or individuals with particular legal questions should consult the regulations, laws, and governing documents listed in the law and on the AmeriCorps Agency website. Sub-grantees (programs) must become familiar with all the information contained in this handbook.

The Program Director handbook will be revised as needed. It is the responsibility of each Program Director to stay up-to-date and abide by all changes to policies and procedures. Any exceptions to the policies outlined in this handbook must receive prior written approval from Serve Idaho staff. For questions, comments, or concerns regarding this document, contact the Serve Idaho Program Officer.

National service and Serve Idaho history

The history of formal national service began in the 1960s. See this timeline for more information at the [America's Service Commissions website](#).

Serve Idaho was established through Executive Order by Governor Cecil D. Andrus in 1994 as a result of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 and the creation of AmeriCorps.

Serve Idaho has been housed with the Idaho State Board of Education and the Idaho Department of Correction. The commission joined the Idaho Department of Labor in July 2009. The Department of Labor serves as the host agency for the administration of the Serve Idaho Commission.

Serve Idaho is funded by grants from AmeriCorps and through cash and in-kind donations from state and local partners. The Department of Labor provides matching funds and other administrative support

to the commission. Serve Idaho does not receive general funds from the state.

Organizational structure

AmeriCorps operates in a decentralized manner that places significant administrative responsibility on states and nonprofits.

Regional offices

Regional AmeriCorps offices partner with State Commissions and administer AmeriCorps National, VISTA, and Senior programs. Idaho is in the Mountain Region, based in Denver and supported by a Senior Portfolio Manager and three Portfolio Managers. The Senior Portfolio Manager serves as an ex-officio member of the Serve Idaho Commission. More information about Regional AmeriCorps offices can be found at [AmeriCorps Region Offices](#).

AmeriCorps support offices

AmeriCorps office	AmeriCorps support functions
Office of Regional Operations	Oversees programmatic aspects of grants and awards. Portfolio Managers serve as primary liaisons with state service commissions and national program grantees.
Office of Grant Administration	Oversees financial aspects of grants and awards.
Office of Monitoring	Oversees monitoring of AmeriCorps direct grantees, including state commissions.
Office of Research and Evaluation	Manages research and evaluation efforts and sets guidelines around evaluation.
National Service Trust	Manages the Education Awards for AmeriCorps members.
Communications and Marketing	Oversees media relations, marketing, and publications, including online recruitment website. Provides marketing and branding information to the field.
General Counsel	Provides legal counsel for AmeriCorps and can answer legal questions related to AmeriCorps program management.

Active AmeriCorps streams of service

AmeriCorps currently supports national service at national, state, and local levels:

- AmeriCorps programs: Members serve with local and national organizations to meet community needs, and upon successful completion, receive Education Awards or cash stipends, depending on the stream of service. AmeriCorps is subdivided into three streams: AmeriCorps State and National (ASN), VISTA, and NCCC.

- AmeriCorps Seniors: Americans 55 and older contribute skills and experience to their peers, elementary school students, and the community (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, Foster Grandparents, and Senior Companions).

AmeriCorps state

State Service Commissions administer a significant portion of the AmeriCorps programs' budget via grants to eligible public and nonprofit organizations that sponsor national service programs. Grants assist these entities in recruiting, training, and placing AmeriCorps members to meet community needs.

- AmeriCorps State programs based outside of Idaho but planning to or discovered to be operating in Idaho are expected to consult with Serve Idaho. If the program fails or refuses to consult with the Commission, Serve Idaho may request information and communication regarding the program's activities in Idaho from the State Service Commission responsible for that program.

AmeriCorps national direct

Grantees, including public and nonprofit organizations, leverage program funds directly from ASN to provide service across multiple states. Grantee assist these entities in recruiting, training, and placing AmeriCorps members to meet community needs.

For information on submitting a National Direct Consultation form, visit [America's Service Commissions](#).

AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps)

Members serve in a residential program operated directly by AmeriCorps. NCCC combines the best practices of civilian service with those of military service, including leadership development and team building. Members aged 17-24 live and train at campuses and deploy from those campuses to provide direct service in their region, conducting projects in partnership with local and state sponsors. FEMA Corps focuses on disaster response. More information can be found at [AmeriCorps NCCC](#).

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)

Members serve income-eligible communities and families across the country. VISTA members typically serve terms of one year and live in the communities they serve. They are placed with local project sponsors, creating or expanding initiatives that can continue after they complete service. Their focus is indirect service, such as building capacity, mobilizing resources, and increasing self-reliance. More information can be found at [AmeriCorps VISTA](#).

Chapter two: AmeriCorps state grants and requirements

AmeriCorps State grants initiate, improve, or expand the ability of an organization and community to provide service to address unmet environmental, educational, public safety (including disaster preparedness and response), and other needs. Serve Idaho strives to connect AmeriCorps resources to meet the goals and objectives of the Serve Idaho State Service Plan. AmeriCorps has a dual mission: to meet community needs while developing service members in the areas of leadership and civic engagement.

This manual is to guide two streams of AmeriCorps grant funding in Idaho: **formula** (awarded at the state level), and **competitive** (awarded at the national level). Formula funding is based on allocation, a population-driven formula, and awarded to State Commissions to fund AmeriCorps programs. Competitive funding is awarded to Commissions, with all subrecipient funding determinations made by AmeriCorps. The determination as to whether an application is submitted at the competitive level or not is given to the state commission and is based on the strength of the application, organizational history, and other strategic grantmaking decisions.

Whether it is a competitive or formula grant, awards are made for three years, with annual continuation applications. Each three-year cycle is referred to as a "recompete." When feasible, funds are available for planning grants, which have a one-year budget period for an organization to develop an AmeriCorps program. Planning grants do not have members or performance measures.

Grant funds and activities

Grant Funds: AmeriCorps grants provide dollars, service positions (slots and Member Service Years), and Education Awards, but do not provide all funds needed to administer a program. ASN grants fund one of two types of cost reimbursement grants:

- **Line item:** grant with a detailed budget. The subrecipient must expend and report on federal and grantee shares. A first-time successful applicant is required to match 24% for the first three-year funding period. Starting in year four, the match requirement gradually increases each year according to [45 CFR 2521.60](#).
- **Fixed amount:** grant with a budget consisting only of the number of Member Service Years (MSY) and cost per MSY. The amounts are identified in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and with application instructions issued each year. There is no specific match requirement for fixed amount grants. While fixed amount grantees provide the resources needed to operate the program, they are not required to track or report on the grantee share. Fixed amount grants do not cover all costs, and reimbursement is based on the AmeriCorps member enrollment, service hours, and retention rates. For a subgrantee to access the whole award, 100% recruitment and retention must be achieved.

Eligible service activities, [45 CFR 2520](#)

To determine the eligibility of a service activity, decide whether it falls within AmeriCorps' Focus Areas: Disaster Services, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, Economic Opportunity, and Veterans and Military Families. From there, it is the legal applicant's responsibility to demonstrate that one or more of the priority areas are met in a proposal and in service activities. Within each priority area, AmeriCorps members provide *direct service* and/ or *capacity building* activities that initiate, improve, or expand the capacity of an organization and community to meet the needs of those it

serves.

Direct service: generally, refers to activities that provide a visible, measurable benefit to an individual, a group, or a community. Some examples are:

- Mentoring young adults in schools and communities.
- Engaging in community clean-up projects, trail maintenance and winterization.
- Providing information and education to vulnerable populations.
- Providing information and/or services to an area affected by a disaster, such as a wildfire.

Capacity building: activities that increase an organization's ability to deliver its mission and are included in, or consistent with, the approved grant application. Some examples are:

- Strengthening volunteer management and recruitment.
- Conducting outreach and securing resources in support of service activities that meet specific needs in the community.
- Helping to build the infrastructure of the sponsoring organization.
- Developing collaborative relationships with organizations working to achieve similar goals such as nonprofits, faith-based organizations, local government, institutions of higher education, and local education agencies.

Member development activities, [45 CFR 2520.50](#)

No more than twenty percent (20%) of the aggregate of all AmeriCorps member hours in the program, as reflected in the member enrollments in the National Service Trust, may be spent on member education and training. During the grant application process, under certain circumstances, applicants may request a waiver allowing allocation of up to fifty percent (50%) of the aggregate required service hours to member education and training. As of 2025, AmeriCorps has not released guidance on how to request this waiver; however, applicants are encouraged to consult with Serve Idaho if considering applying for the waiver.

Training opportunities may include but are not limited to: Serve Idaho Annual Conference, orientations, in-service training, Life After Service training, and other member development activities as approved by the program, the service site, and Serve Idaho. For more information on development activities, see Chapter Four: Member Management, subsection Member Development.

Fundraising rules for members, [45 CFR 2520.40](#) and [2520.45](#)

AmeriCorps permits limited member fundraising activities when resources are raised directly in support of the program's service activities. Members' hours earned fundraising must be tracked on time sheets in a discrete category and may not exceed ten percent (10%) of the agreed-upon term of service, as reflected in the member enrollment in the National Service Trust. Examples of allowable activities include, but are not limited to:

- Seeking donations of books from companies and individuals for a program in which volunteers teach children to read.
- Writing a grant proposal to a foundation to secure resources to train community volunteers.

- Securing supplies and equipment from the community to enable volunteers to help build houses for low-income individuals.
- Securing financial resources to assist in launching or expanding a program that provides social services to the community and is delivered, in whole or part, through the members of a community-based organization.
- Seeking donations from program alumni for service projects performed by current members.

AmeriCorps members **may not** raise funds for member living allowances or for an organization's general (as opposed to project) operating budget. They **may not** write grant applications to AmeriCorps or any other federal agency.

Fundraising rules for program staff

Generally, program staff and members may not lead the organization's major fundraising efforts. AmeriCorps policy permits limited fundraising by grant-covered staff, as long as such activities:

- Provide immediate and direct support for a specific, direct service activity.
- Fall within the program's approved direct service objectives.
- Are not the primary activity of the program; and
- Do not involve more than ten percent (10%) of any individual member's time.

Under the Uniform Guidance, it is unallowable to directly charge the grant for costs such as "organized fundraising," or expenses incurred "solely to raise capital or obtain contributions." ([2 CFR 200.442](#)). However, it is allowable to apply an appropriate amount of indirect funds to the preparation of bids, proposals, and applications on potential federal and non-federal awards. ([2 CFR 200.460](#)).

Examples of what grant-covered staff may do with federal grant funds:

- Develop and print materials such as brochures and annual reports to be used for educating the public, including potential board members, funders, community partners, and elected officials.
- Contact individuals and organizations (potential partners) who may assist in delivering services.
- Ask the board of directors and other volunteers to raise funds on their own time.
- Pay for a program evaluation to demonstrate the program's impact and effectiveness.
- Solicit community involvement with or in-kind support for the program – e.g., seek volunteers to help with a project and donations of building supplies for a construction project.
- Coordinate community involvement in a day of service and other direct service activities that may have a fundraising element.
- Include members of the public (including funders and other community partners) on a general mailing list for newsletters or brochures and other general interest publications. (Publications paid for with AmeriCorps grant funds, federal or matching funds, should not solicit donations).
- Include in a general-purpose newsletter a "wish list" of needed in-kind items.

- Seek advice from individuals with expertise who may be business or foundation staff regarding matters such as program development, training, and evaluation.
- Invite members of the public, funders, and other community partners to attend orientation, end of service ceremonies, and other special events.
- Ask a local business to sponsor a recognition event for members or volunteers.

Program staff may not use AmeriCorps grant funds, including matching or other federal funds, to:

- Develop promotional materials solely targeted at prospective funders.
- Engage in a direct mail campaign to raise funds.
- Capital campaigns or endowment drives.
- Hire and pay a development consultant, or
- Charge time spent by staff on fundraising.

Ineligible service categories, activities, and uses of grant funds

There are activities which grant-funded staff and members may not participate in while on duty or perceived to be on duty. There are specific types of organizations whose mission may fit eligibility criteria but are prohibited from receiving AmeriCorps funding under federal law. This section is intended to provide an outline. For full descriptions, refer to AmeriCorps legislation linked below.

Prohibited activities, [45 CFR 2520.65](#)

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the program or AmeriCorps, staff and members may not engage in the following activities:

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 outcomes 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 business organized for profit;
 - A labor union;
 - A partisan political organization;
9. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and,
 10. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (7) of this section, unless AmeriCorps assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
 11. Conducting a voter registration drive or using AmeriCorps funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
 12. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
 13. Such other activities as AmeriCorps may prohibit.
 14. Engaging in any activity or taking any action that violates an applicable Executive Order issued by the President of the United States.

Additionally, grant terms and conditions prohibit AmeriCorps members from engaging in census activities, and from providing services for election or polling locations.

AmeriCorps members may not engage in prohibited 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 so.

Prohibited activities should be posted at program offices and all service locations. Programs should review prohibited activities with members and site supervisors.

Reporting requirements

Each AmeriCorps subrecipient is required to submit Program Progress Reports. Progress reports document achievements under performance measures. Programs should review their subrecipient agreement for reporting dates. All reports will be submitted through America Learns.

Chapter three: Program staff

To ensure the success of an AmeriCorps program, it is essential to have dedicated staff overseeing its operations. At a minimum, each program should have a Program Director who devotes the majority of their time to managing AmeriCorps activities. The Program Director is expected to be the main point of contact for Serve Idaho.

Throughout this handbook, the terms and conditions, and your subrecipient agreement, there are many situations in which you must seek prior approval or provide notification to Serve Idaho or your Program Officer.

Depending on the organization's structure and needs, additional staff may also contribute to the program. These individuals, whether funded by the grant or through other sources, can support a range of functions, including fiscal management, member recruitment, and general program administration.

Whenever there is a change to key personnel, the program must inform Serve Idaho.

Program Director expectations

The Program Director has a very important role in the administration of an AmeriCorps grant. Directors are expected to understand AmeriCorps' Rules and Regulations, as well as Serve Idaho's requirements.

Program Director's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

Program administration

- Oversee overall administrative operations of the program
- Submit programmatic and fiscal reports on or before due dates
- Communicate with fiscal staff and other key organizational staff to ensure compliance
- Communicate with Serve Idaho staff and attend required Serve Idaho meetings and training

Grant and compliance management

- Review and manage grant applications
- Track performance measures and conduct program evaluation
- Compile and submit progress report data

Staff and site management

- Supervise and train Site Supervisors and other staff
- Ensure effective communication with Site Supervisors and service site partners

Member management

- Recruit and onboard AmeriCorps members
- Ensure members are engaged in meaningful direct service activities
- Provide ongoing training and support for members
- Perform member evaluations

- Ensure timely and accurate submission of member timesheets

Volunteer and event coordination

- Coordinate and facilitate training for members and non-AmeriCorps volunteers
- Participate in National Days of Service

Staff files

Programs are expected to maintain staff files for any staff person paid on grant funding and are reviewed as part of Serve Idaho's monitoring activities.

Staff files should include:

- Copy of a government ID
- Staff Position Description
- Staff Timesheets
- National Service Criminal History Check
 - A nationwide name-based check of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW).
 - A name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the candidate's state of residence and in the state where the person will serve or work, and
 - A fingerprint-based FBI check
 - National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) Consent
 - Proof of Staff Member's First Day of Work

Chapter four: Program expectations

100% enrollment

AmeriCorps expects programs to maintain a 100 percent enrollment rate, calculated as the number of filled slots divided by the number of awarded slots. Refill slots count toward this rate. Programs must report enrollment rates in each progress report and can access their rate by running the Enrollment Rate Report in eGrants. Programs that anticipate difficulty meeting 100 percent enrollment should contact their Serve Idaho Program Officer. Programs with annual enrollment rates below 75 percent may receive reduced funding in future years.

Retention

AmeriCorps defines acceptable retention as 85 percent. Retention begins in the interview process by understanding each applicant's motivation for serving and ensuring the program supports that motivation throughout their term. Strong retention is supported through appropriate placement, comprehensive orientation, ongoing training and professional development, consistent supervision, regular evaluation, meaningful recognition, and opportunities for members to provide feedback that leads to responsive program improvement. Programs should strive to retain 100 percent of members. Retention rates, defined as the percentage of members who complete their term and earn a full or prorated education award, must be reported in progress reports and can be found by running the Retention Rate Report in eGrants.

Compliance

Program compliance is a core component of overall success and reflects a program's ability to meet all AmeriCorps and Serve Idaho requirements. Strong compliance ensures member safety, protects grant funds, and supports continued program eligibility. Compliance includes accurate and timely documentation, adherence to grant regulations, and consistent implementation of required policies and procedures.

Key elements of compliance include:

- Meeting all AmeriCorps and Serve Idaho deadlines for reporting, member enrollment, member exit, performance measures, progress reports, and financial documentation.
- Maintaining complete and accurate member files, including Member Service Agreements, eligibility verification records, NSCHC documentation, timesheets, performance evaluations, and exit documentation.
- Ensuring all required National Service Criminal History Checks are completed, adjudicated, documented, and certified in eGrants before a member's first day of service.
- Following approved policies consistently, including enrollment and exit procedures, teleservice protocols, supervision rules, alternative service activities, and documentation requirements.
- Providing timely updates to Serve Idaho when issues arise, including enrollment delays, potential compliance risks, member concerns, or anticipated barriers.
- Ensuring program staff completes all required annual compliance trainings, including NSCHC training, financial management training, and any additional trainings required by Serve Idaho or AmeriCorps.

- Maintaining branding and visibility requirements, documenting prohibited activities training, and ensuring consistent use of nondiscrimination language across program materials.
- Demonstrating financial compliance through accurate budgeting, allowable cost tracking, and correct stipend and timesheet management

Progress reports

Operational programs (those with members) are required to submit Progress Reports in America Learns at mid- year and at grant closeout for low risk programs and quarterly for high risk. The report provides information for Serve Idaho and AmeriCorps to monitor grantee progress and to respond to requests from Congress and other stakeholders. The information you provide helps to identify trends and issues that may lead to changes in policies and procedures, allocation of training and technical assistance, or opportunities for peer learning.

Financial reports

Periodic Expense Reports (PERs) are submitted monthly or quarterly depending on the grant agreement, through America Learns. This does not apply to Education Award Only Programs. For more information on financial reports, see the Financial Management supplemental guidelines.

Concerns regarding program operation

If significant concerns at a program or local site become apparent, a targeted site visit, technical assistance visit, or other means will be used by Serve Idaho to provide additional support and monitoring. If a program is found to be in violation of key compliance issues, the Serve Idaho Program Officer will immediately follow up with the Program Director to start the correction process.

Criminal activity

If, at any time, Serve Idaho suspects misconduct or malfeasance related to the grant or program, including waste, fraud, abuse or any violation of criminal law, Serve Idaho will take appropriate and immediate steps to address these concerns.

Program training and support

Program training and technical assistance are priorities for Serve Idaho and AmeriCorps. In addition to monitoring and technical assistance provided by your Program Officer, Serve Idaho delivers and promotes statewide and national opportunities for learning. Staff welcomes training suggestions from all Serve Idaho AmeriCorps Program Directors. All training dates are set forth in the annual Program Director Calendar.

Monthly Program Director community learning calls

Virtual Program Director calls will take place on the first Monday of each month at 11 AM MST, unless otherwise indicated on the 2026 – 2027 Program year Notable Dates and Events document shared on Basecamp. The calls will be held over Teams and are required by at least one key staff member from your program. These meetings are not for Site Supervisors or members, but for Program Directors and designated program staff (co-director or finance person). Please provide advance notice if you will be unavailable.

Program Director quarterly meetings

In-person Program Director meetings:

- Thursday, October 21, 2026
- Thursday, April 23, 2027
- Thursday, July 22, 2027

Virtual Program Director meeting:

- Thursday, January 21, 2027

Quarterly Program Director Meetings are mandatory and will be held in-person in Boise or at a program's location. If the Program Director cannot attend, they should send a representative in their place. If the Program Director or a staff member from the AmeriCorps program is unable to attend, please contact the Program Officer assigned to your program. Failure to attend the Program Director Meetings or send a representative may impact a program's overall risk assessment standing.

Program Directors failing to provide 24-hour notice of their inability to attend a Program Director's Meeting will be charged for costs associated with the meeting. This includes the cost of food.

Serve Idaho AmeriCorps Conference

The Serve Idaho AmeriCorps Conference will be held in-person on April 7-8, 2027, in Boise, Idaho at Boise State University. Lodging information will be forthcoming.

The Serve Idaho AmeriCorps Conference is mandatory for full-time, three-quarter-time and half-time AmeriCorps members serving at the time of the conference, and for at least one AmeriCorps program staff. If a member is unable to attend, the program will need to provide an avenue for them to receive pertinent training.

2027 National Service Training Conference

America's Service Commission hosts an annual national training specifically for AmeriCorps programs and State Commissions. Workshops include topics on financial management and monitoring, national service criminal history checks, conducting evaluations, managing members, and more. Programs are required to budget for one staff member to attend this conference, either virtually or in person, in the grant budget. These funds cannot be used for any other purpose than attendance at the ASC National Service Training Conference.

The 2026-2027 Program Year conference will take place in St. Louis, Missouri.

- In person: April 13-15, 2027
- Virtual: May 5-6, 2027

Chapter Five: Serve Idaho Program Support

All programs are assigned to Serve Idaho Program Officer. Your Program Officer is familiar with your program's design, performance measures, management strategies, data collection measures, strengths, and areas for improvement. Your Program Officer is your first point of contact for technical assistance and any questions, concerns, or issues that arise during the program year.

Monitoring

Serve Idaho is tasked with ensuring that its programs and affiliated service sites operate in accordance with the obligations outlined in their grant agreements and are in compliance with all applicable federal regulations and provisions. All National Service programs face challenges as they administer their AmeriCorps programs. Serve Idaho is committed to addressing those challenges by working with programs to find adequate technical assistance to meet their needs. To that end, Serve Idaho has developed a monitoring strategy that increases opportunities for guidance and intervention.

Monitoring by Serve Idaho staff can have many purposes; some of the most important are summarized below:

- **Learning** - Finding out about AmeriCorps service activities and community partnerships.
- **Compliance** - Assuring that all federal, state, local, contractual, and organization-specific regulations, policies, and provisions are being followed.
- **Monitoring progress** - Comparing actual outputs and outcomes to the performance measures outlined in the AmeriCorps grant.

Risk-based monitoring and compliance

Risk Assessment is a comprehensive tool that measures 1) organizational and grant-specific risk 2) programmatic risk, and 3) fiscal management risk. The Program Officer will fill out the tool within the first 3 months of program operation using all available grant documents, including the current year and the previous full year of data (unless otherwise noted), application documents, and the staff's overall knowledge of the programmatic/fiscal operations.

The Risk Assessment tool is built to calculate the score ranges that result in each risk level (low, medium, and high) for programmatic and fiscal risk. The score ranges can be reviewed and adjusted annually when tools are revised. Once staff has completed the Risk Assessment tool, they will rank subrecipients by risk level from highest to lowest scores. Based on these rankings, Serve Idaho will implement the Monitoring Plan, which will serve as the guiding document for all monitoring activities for the year.

Risk analysis consists of two steps:

1. **Rating:** Assessing and recording risk via the Risk Assessment by Program Officers and reviewing results with Serve Idaho Staff.
2. **Ranking:** Ranking subrecipients by score, from highest to lowest.

Risk analysis provides the information needed for Serve Idaho to effectively target its resources to subrecipients that pose the greatest risk to the integrity of AmeriCorps programs, including identification of the subrecipients to be monitored, the areas to be covered, and the depth of the review. The Risk Assessment and subsequent monitoring selection process should result in identifying

those subrecipients and activities that represent the greatest vulnerability to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.

High risk factors may include but are not limited to:

- A first-year program
- A change in Program Director or other key staff
- Multi-site program
- Size of grant (high MSY)
- Poor past performance (based on progress reports, desk reviews, previous site visits, unexpended funds, repeated PER errors, non-communication with staff, etc.)
- Concerns regarding prohibited and/or unallowable activities
- Compliance with reporting deadlines and financial compliance issues

Program Officer check-ins

Program Officers will schedule regular check-ins with their assigned AmeriCorps programs. The frequency of check-ins is based on the program's risk level.

Programs can request meeting more frequently if they have questions or concerns. If a program has non-compliance or communication issues, Program Officers will require more frequent meetings.

High risk or new programs	Monthly
Moderate risk	Bi-monthly
Low risk	Quarterly

On-site monitoring visits

The purpose of an on-site monitoring visit is to assess the program's compliance with federal regulations, help the program improve its systems, and gain a greater understanding of the program activities and concerns. First-year operating programs may receive a courtesy visit by their Program Officer after members begin service midway through their program year.

The site visit is comprised of the following:

- Interviews with the Program Director, selected AmeriCorps members, and at least two Site Supervisors
 - A visit to a member service site
- Review of files as noted below (Module A)

Module A: Policies, procedures and reporting compliance

Serve Idaho will complete section I of this document. The program will complete section II and provide a completed copy to the Serve Idaho Program Officer during the visit. Any concerns in this area will be addressed in the site visit feedback letter, and a corrective action plan to improve future performance will be required. Programs must have all documentation listed for this compliance check readily accessible to your Program Officer during the monitoring review.

Module C: Financial compliance

The majority of this module will be completed with the assistance of the program's fiscal staff, but some questions will most likely be answered by program staff. Documentation for match and AmeriCorps / CNCS dollars may be reviewed, as well as staff timesheets. This will be utilized during a virtual Fiscal site monitoring visit.

Desk audit monitoring

The purpose of a desk review is to assess the program's compliance regarding member and staff files, including member eligibility, time sheets, and NSCHC documentation.

The desk audit is comprised of the following:

- A request for several member and staff files as determined by your program's risk determination
- Submission of member and staff files in America Learns or via a secure link
- Review of staff files including NSCHC documentation and timesheets
- Review of member files as noted below (Module B)
- Review of data collection and quality (Module D) (if applicable)

Module B: Member file checklist

Serve Idaho will review member files each year. The number of files reviewed is based on program risk. Please see the Serve Idaho Monitoring Plan to see the sampling sizes based on risk. Member files are reviewed to determine if required documentation is being kept by the program. Your Program Officer will randomly select the member files to be reviewed. All member files reviewed must contain the required documentation outlined in the Module B Member File Checklist.

Module D: Data quality review tool

Using the information in the Data Collection Plan Outline you submitted prior to the program year, Serve Idaho will choose one data point and review sample documentation related to that, from source documents, to collecting and reporting the data to Serve Idaho.

NSCHC review

Serve Idaho will review NSCHC's during the first three months of the program year. For high-risk programs, all NSCHC's must be reviewed before members can start. For moderate and low-risk programs, a portion of NSCHC's will be reviewed at the start of the program year. Please see the Serve Idaho Monitoring Plan to see the sampling sizes based on risk.

What is considered "noncompliance"?

In the context of AmeriCorps programs, noncompliance refers to any failure to adhere to applicable laws, regulations, grant terms and conditions, or AmeriCorps policies. This can involve financial mismanagement, misuse of member service hours, or inadequate oversight. Noncompliance may jeopardize a program's funding and can lead to enforcement actions, including repayment of funds or termination of the grant.

Examples of noncompliant activities or findings:

- Allowing staff or members to perform prohibited activities (e.g., political campaigning or religious instruction during service hours)
- Falsifying or inaccurately reporting member service hours
- Failing to conduct required criminal history checks before members begin service
- Misusing AmeriCorps funds (e.g., spending grant money on unallowable costs)
- Not maintaining documentation to support program or financial activities
- Inadequate supervision or training of AmeriCorps members
- Enrolling or exiting members in the portal outside of required timeframes
- Failing to submit required reports (e.g., periodic expense reports, progress reports, financial reports) accurately or on time
- Charging time or costs to the grant for non-AmeriCorps activities
- Violating non-duplication or non-displacement rules (e.g., replacing paid staff with AmeriCorps members)

Noncompliance in AmeriCorps programs can be either intentional or unintentional, and understanding the difference is important for assessing risk and applying appropriate corrective actions. Intentional noncompliance involves willful disregard for rules or regulations—such as knowingly submitting false service hour records or misusing federal funds. These cases may indicate fraud or unethical conduct and can lead to severe consequences, including criminal charges or disqualification from future funding.

Unintentional noncompliance often results from a lack of understanding, inadequate training, or insufficient oversight. For example, a program might fail to conduct background checks properly due to staff turnover or unclear procedures. While still serious, these violations are generally addressed through corrective action plans, technical assistance, and training rather than punitive measures.

Regardless of intent, all noncompliance must be corrected to maintain the integrity of the program and ensure federal resources are used appropriately.

Noncompliance procedures

Serve Idaho is committed to ensuring compliance with all program requirements. As part of our monitoring process, when noncompliance is discovered, Serve Idaho will follow established monitoring procedures. The steps taken may include:

Informal correction

Before issuing a formal Notice of Noncompliance, Serve Idaho prioritizes informal correction as the first step in addressing compliance concerns. When an issue is identified, the Program Officer will notify the sub-recipient and offer an opportunity to correct the issue through technical assistance, clarification of requirements, or resubmission of documentation. If the issue is resolved promptly and to Serve Idaho's satisfaction, no formal notice will be issued. This proactive approach supports continuous improvement and helps prevent escalation. If the nature of the noncompliance is considered a "high-risk violation," then the notice of noncompliance procedures will be automatically initiated.

Examples of high-risk violations include:

- NSCHC failures
- Prohibited/unallowable activities
- Harassment or nondiscrimination violations
- Grievance procedure violations
- Breaches of Personally Identifiable Information (PII)
- Waste, fraud, or abuse

Issuance of a notice of noncompliance

If informal correction is unable to fix the issue or high-risk violations occur, a formal notice will be issued to the program identifying the specific areas of noncompliance. There are three levels of noncompliance:

- Level 1 involves low-risk violations
- Level 2 involves repeated or high-risk violations
- Level 3 involves waste, fraud, or abuse

Level 2 and Level 3 instances of noncompliance elevate the program's risk level and trigger formal reporting to the Board of Governor-Appointed Serve Idaho Commissioners. Level 3 also requires referral to the AmeriCorps Office of Inspector General.

Corrective action

Programs will be required to take corrective actions to address noncompliance. These actions may include, but are not limited to:

- **Additional training:** The program may be required to undergo additional training to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps regulations and standards.
- **Updating policies and procedures:** Programs may be asked to amend policies to address and prevent future noncompliance.
- **Holds on budget changes or cost reimbursements:** A hold may be placed on the program's budget changes or cost reimbursements until compliance is restored.
- **Program holds:** This may include holds on program modifications such as slot conversions until compliance is achieved.
- **Cost disallowance:** Certain costs or instances of noncompliance may be deemed unallowable and must be refunded.

Termination of grant funding

Serve Idaho reserves the right to terminate grant funding for any program that has severe and/or repeated instances of non-compliance.

Self-reported noncompliance

If a program identifies potential or actual noncompliance, such as a possible violation of federal or state regulations, AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions, the approved sub-recipient grant application, etc., it is

strongly encouraged to contact their Program Officer promptly to discuss the issue and begin corrective steps. Serve Idaho values proactive communication and is committed to working collaboratively with programs to resolve concerns in a timely and constructive manner, helping safeguard both program integrity and the AmeriCorps mission.

When noncompliance is self-reported and does not involve high-risk violations or potential fraud, waste, or abuse, Serve Idaho will typically focus on technical assistance and corrective action planning. While a formal Notice of Noncompliance may still be issued depending on the circumstances, **early and voluntary disclosure can help limit the extent of any cost-based disallowance** or further administrative action. Repeated or unresolved issues following self-reporting may, however, result in formal notices or additional oversight.

Chapter six: Regulations and requirements

Sub-grantees bear full fiscal and programmatic responsibility for administering their AmeriCorps grant and all grant-supported activities, subject to the oversight of Serve Idaho. Program, member, and financial management functions are inherently interconnected; deficiencies in program or member management may result in compliance issues and subsequent disallowed costs. All staff are expected to adhere to established grants and financial management standards, demonstrate responsible stewardship of federal resources, and continuously strengthen related systems and practices.

Sub-grantees are accountable to Serve Idaho and the AmeriCorps Agency for the operation of the Serve Idaho AmeriCorps Program and the proper use of AmeriCorps funds. Although Serve Idaho may provide guidance when specific issues arise, such guidance does not diminish or replace the sub-grantee's responsibility for all operational decisions.

Federal regulatory and executive order compliance

Sub-grantees are required to comply with all applicable Federal regulations, including any updates or changes resulting from Federal policy or Executive Orders issued by the Administration. Serve Idaho will communicate these changes promptly upon release and will provide guidance and action plans, as necessary, to support sub-grantee compliance.

Code of federal regulations

[45 CFR Subtitle B, Chapter XXV](#)

These contain the [regulations for the Corporation for National and Community Service](#). Sections in these regulations were amended to update National Service Criminal History Check regulations. Below is a table of some notable topics and where they can be found in the regulations.

Topics	Citation in the AmeriCorps regulations
Member service activities	§2520.20 - §2520.55
Prohibited activities	§2520.65
Matching funds	§2521.35-2521.90
Tutoring programs	§2522.900-2522.950
Member benefits	§2522.240-2522.250
Calculating cost per Member Service Year (MSY)	§2522.485
Performance measures	§2522.500-2522.650
Evaluation	§2522.500-2522.540 and §2522.700-2522.740

If there is any inconsistency between the AmeriCorps regulations, the *NOFO*, and the Application Instructions, the order of precedence is as follows:

1. AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR §§ 2520–2550 take precedence over the
2. Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), which takes precedence over the

3. Application Instructions.

2 CFR

In 2014 the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) streamlined the federal government's guidance on Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for federal awards in an effort to reduce the administrative burden for nonfederal entities receiving federal awards while also reducing the risk of waste, fraud, and abuse. The Uniform Guidance, also known as 2 CFR, supersedes and streamlines requirements from previous OMB Circulars. This final guidance is located in [Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#). The [preamble](#) will provide you with an overview of the major changes from previous OMB guidance.

Fixed Amount awards are not subject to the cost principles in 2 CFR, Part 220, Subpart E. Fixed Amount awards must comply with the remaining Terms and Conditions of 2 CFR Part 220, including Subpart F relating to audit requirements. Fixed Amount awards include Education Award program (EAP) Fixed Amount awards, Professional Corps Fixed Amount awards, Full-Time Fixed Amount awards, and Partnership Challenge awards.

State and local regulations

These often have implications for financial management practices, documentation, employment status of members, and subsequent coverages, etc. Each program is expected to comply with all federal and state laws.

Workers' Compensation is mandatory in Idaho for any organization that is not designated a charitable organization. With prior approval from Serve Idaho, organizations that are designated as a charitable organization may provide Occupational Accidental Death and Dismemberment coverage in lieu of workers' compensation coverage.

Members serving in Idaho are not eligible for unemployment when they leave their term of service.

Grant terms and conditions

By accepting AmeriCorps/CNCS funds, recipients agree to comply with AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions, all applicable Federal statutes, regulations and guidelines, and any amendments. AmeriCorps subgrantees agree to operate the funded program in accordance with the approved application and budget, supporting documents, and other representations made in support of the approved application.

Serve Idaho supplementary terms and conditions

Serve Idaho compliance requirements can be found in your program's signed Serve Idaho AmeriCorps Subrecipient Agreement.

Please note: No amendments, slot conversions, or budget changes submitted within 45 days of the program end date will be approved by Serve Idaho.

AmeriCorps terms and conditions – general and AmeriCorps state

More information can be found at [AmeriCorps' Manage Your Grant](#).

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) application instructions

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) (also referred to as a Request for Proposal, RFP) is a critical document that outlines the requirements, priorities, and expectations for applying for AmeriCorps funding. While AmeriCorps releases a federal NOFO each year, state commissions issue their own NOFOs that include additional, state-specific guidance and requirements.

A state NOFO provides detailed instructions on how to design, plan, and implement a program that aligns with both federal AmeriCorps regulations and the state commission's strategic priorities. It outlines program expectations, compliance requirements, and may include rules specific to the state that differ from the federal guidelines.

It is essential to read the NOFO thoroughly each year, as key elements often change annually.

These changes can include the maximum cost per MSY, updated minimum and maximum living allowance amounts, and the value of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award.

Overlooking these changes can impact program design and compliance.

Understanding your AmeriCorps grant application

Programs must comply with the program design and member activities **outlined in their approved AmeriCorps Grant Application and budget**, including any assurances, certifications, and attachments. Programs must meet the match dollars (grantee share) percentage as approved in their application. Programs will work to meet the performance measures as stated in their application.

Understanding your IDOL sub-recipient agreement

The sub-grant agreement is a legally binding contract that establishes a program's relationship with the Idaho Department of Labor / Serve Idaho. A new sub-grant agreement is signed each year, after a program has been approved for new or continued AmeriCorps funding. It is the most essential document for an AmeriCorps program. Program Directors and key staff persons should become familiar with the full grant agreement.

The deliverables listed in the grant agreement are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all the Serve Idaho and AmeriCorps requirements. As stated in the sub-award agreement, there are referenced laws, regulations, provisions, and documents that govern the program. The agreement also includes additional requirements (terms and conditions) set forth by Serve Idaho or AmeriCorps at any time during the program year. Program Directors are responsible for meeting all requirements.

File retention

The program is subject to Federal record retention requirements, specifically [2 CFR 200.334](#). Programs are required to retain all records; including financial records, supporting documentation, statistical records, evaluation and program performance data, member information and personnel records pertinent to the grant agreement for a period of three (3) years from the date of submission of the final annual financial report or completion of any required audit and resolution of any findings, whichever is earlier.

Sustainability

Sustainability is essential to the long-term prosperity of your AmeriCorps program and your organization. The more support from members, volunteers, funding sources, staff, board members, and

the community that your program receives, the more sustainable your program becomes. Program Directors need to consider how to showcase the impact your AmeriCorps members are making in your community.

In the second year of each three-year funding cycle, programs should consider the long-term viability of their program and may be asked to present a written sustainability plan to their Program Officer at the end of the grant year. The Sustainability Plan will assist Serve Idaho in assessing community resources, public policy issues and long-term planning.

Chapter seven: Required program policies and procedures

Programs must ensure their organizational policies specifically include AmeriCorps members. Any policy included in the Member Service Agreement should be approved by appropriate organizational staff (CEO, HR Department, etc.).

Program-developed policies and procedures

Programs must develop the following policies and procedures as part of their governing documents. All policies must align with the requirements outlined in 2 CFR and by Serve Idaho. These materials may be reviewed by Serve Idaho staff during pre-award risk assessments, desk audits, and site visits. When applicable, templates are available on Basecamp to support policy development

- National Service Criminal History Check Procedures – These must be in line with the Serve Idaho NSCHC Policy. Programs may choose to utilize the Serve Idaho NSCHC Policy and Procedure. If you choose to develop your own procedures, they must include all items in the Serve Idaho NSCHC Policy and Procedures Checklist.
- Drug-free workplace policy – Program may use their organization’s policy, adjusting to specifically include Members. Programs may develop a separate policy or add an addendum/statement to their organization’s current policy.
- Grievance policy – Serve Idaho has provided a [template](#), which we prefer to be used. If you choose to use your own grievance policy, you must ensure it includes all the elements found in the CNCS/ Serve Idaho Grievance Procedure Checklist.
- Rules of conduct and disciplinary policy – May use their organization’s policy(ies). Must specifically include AmeriCorps Members. Programs may develop a separate policy or add an addendum/statement to their organization’s current policy.
- Personally identifiable information policy – Program may use their organization’s policy. These must be in line with the Serve Idaho PII Policy. If a breach occurs, the program must notify Serve Idaho immediately, using the PII Breach Response Form from the AmeriCorps Agency [Privacy Policy webpage](#). Please follow the instructions on the Agency website.
- Member enrollment and exit procedures – Program must develop specific procedures for the enrollment and exit of members. Programs may utilize the Serve Idaho Enrollment and Exit Procedures, but they should be customized to your program.
- Suspension policy and procedures – Programs must have a policy and procedures to be followed when considering suspensions. These should include both disciplinary suspension and suspensions for extenuating circumstances.
- Social media policy – Programs must add information specific to AmeriCorps if they have an existing social media policy. For questions and concerns, contact the Serve Idaho’s Program Coordinator. Social media policy addendum language:

“The following guidelines apply to individuals who comment, share, retweet, tweet or post information to any Serve Idaho program social media platforms or utilize their personal platforms to share information about their service as an AmeriCorps member. AmeriCorps prohibits enrolled members from various activities, including trying to influence legislation or participating in or endorsing political events or activities, during service hours or while

identifying as an AmeriCorps member. When engaging in such advocacy efforts online, members should not identify themselves as an AmeriCorps member, use the AmeriCorps logo, nor be pictured wearing AmeriCorps gear.”

Required Serve Idaho policies and procedures

Programs must abide by the following Serve Idaho Policies and/or procedures outlined in this manual.

- Serve Idaho Electronic Timekeeping Policy
- Serve Idaho Alternative Community Service Activities Policy
- Serve Idaho Disaster Response and Recovery Policy
- Serve Idaho Living Allowance Distribution Policy
- Serve Idaho Personally Identifiable Information Policy
- Serve Idaho National Service Criminal History Check Policy
- Serve Idaho Member Safety Policy
- Serve Idaho Member and Site Supervisor Training Policy

Serve Idaho electronic timekeeping policy

Serve Idaho requires programs and their members to utilize an electronic timekeeping system. The Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) affirms the legal validity of electronic records and signatures, and CNCS policy authorizes AmeriCorps State and National grantees to use electronic timekeeping systems as the official record, subject to established minimum standards.

The Serve Idaho–approved web-based management platform, America Learns, provides a secure, verifiable electronic signature system that:

1. Identifies and authenticates members and Site Supervisors as the source of the electronic signature; and
2. Confirms their approval of the information contained in the electronic submission.

Once required electronic signatures, including date and time stamps, have been applied, no changes may be made unless an auditable record of the revision is maintained.

In rare circumstances, Programs may request approval to use an alternative electronic timekeeping system, provided it meets all Serve Idaho requirements. To request approval, Programs must email their Program Officer with justification for the alternative system. Programs must ensure Serve Idaho has full access to the system for monitoring purposes.

The Program Director (or designee) must sign and date each timesheet, either electronically or by printing and manually signing and dating each timesheet. The designee must be listed on the grant, is recommended to complete the “Timekeeping Training for AmeriCorps Grantee” Litmos course, and be included on the Member Timekeeping, Teleservice, and Alternative Activities Policy.

Timesheets must be retained in the member’s file in America Learns. Printing timesheets introduces audit risks, including unauthorized access, loss, data breaches, and discrepancies between printed and digital records. If printed timesheets are modified for any reason, changes must be made in ink and

initialed. White-out and pencil are prohibited.

Regular email communications do not constitute a secure, verifiable electronic signature system.

Alternative community service activities policy

Members are to accrue hours based on their established position descriptions, with limited exceptions. These alternative or supplemental service activities should never be allowed to make up service hours when the member could otherwise complete their hours within regular program activities and service sites.

In rare cases, a legitimate need may arise for a member to perform alternative service activities because adequate hours are not available through the member's normal service assignment. Some examples of such rare cases are:

- Closure of service site.
- A period of illness or family emergency AND regular service activities are time-bound (for example, service within a school-based program).
- Federally or state-declared emergency or disaster.

In selecting alternative service projects or activities for members, Program Directors must exercise good judgment in ensuring that priority is given to their AmeriCorps program mission and that all service activities provide meaningful services that meet identified critical community needs and stem from sound partnerships with other community organizations.

Mission related alternative activities policy

Program Directors may approve members to participate in organized, prearranged, and supervised service activities *directly related* to the member position descriptions or performance measures of the program.

The Program Director must obtain written pre-approval, such as a site agreement, from the activity sponsor or site administrator specifying the member activities to be performed and identifying the individual responsible for supervision and verification of service hours. Programs must ensure the organization understands CNCS-prohibited activities and determine how activity outcomes will be tracked and aligned with program performance measures.

Program Directors may assign members to conduct position-related activities independently, such as volunteer recruitment or curriculum and lesson planning. All independent activities require prior approval and must comply with the Serve Idaho Teleservice Policy and the Program's Teleservice Policy.

Non-mission related alternative activities policy

Program Directors must ensure that member activities directly supporting the grant-approved scope of work and performance measures are prioritized above all supplemental service activities. Directors must exercise due diligence to ensure additional service opportunities do not interfere with meeting required performance outcomes.

Program Directors may arrange for members to participate in organized, preapproved, and supervised non-mission community service projects that address community needs, strengthen member engagement, or foster collaboration with other AmeriCorps programs.

If the Program Director or a trained AmeriCorps Site Supervisor cannot supervise the activity, the Program Director must obtain a written site agreement in advance. The agreement must:

- Specify the services members will perform;
- Outline prohibited member activities; and
- Identify the individual responsible for supervising members and verifying service hours.

Programs must notify Serve Idaho in advance when members participate in non-mission community service activities. Notification must include the number of participating members, a description of the activity, and the sponsoring organization.

Teleservice policy

AmeriCorps members are expected to perform their daily service activities within the communities they serve. Teleservice is defined as service performed away from the assigned service site with limited supervision and is permitted only when hours can be independently and reliably verified by the Program Director.

Because teleservice increases the risk of inaccurate hour reporting, this policy follows guidance from the AmeriCorps Office of Inspector General and AmeriCorps State and National. Members and program staff may be subject to legal sanctions for reporting or certifying invalid service hours. Programs should also review insurance coverage to ensure appropriate liability protection for teleservice activities.

Remote service is **not permitted**. Remote service occurs when a member is outside the commuting area of the service location and is not expected to be physically present at the site or related community events.

Episodic teleservice

Some activities, such as lesson planning, virtual tutoring, or online training, may appropriately occur through episodic teleservice. These activities must be minimal, directly connected to the member's position description, and verifiable. Programs may be required to provide documentation during Serve Idaho site visits or desk audits.

Episodic teleservice hours are allowable only when all of the following conditions are met:

1. Activities fall within the program's approved grant scope and member duties.
2. The program maintains a written teleservice policy that includes:
3. A limit on unsupervised teleservice hours (e.g., a maximum per week or a planning-to-presentation ratio).
4. Procedures for documenting, verifying, and approving teleservice activities and hours.
5. Requirements for members to obtain prior authorization from the Program Director;
6. Expectations for communication between supervisors and members performing teleservice.

Extended teleservice

Extended teleservice activities performed off-site for more than 10 consecutive days with limited supervision is allowed only in very rare circumstances and **never** without prior discussion with the Serve Idaho Program Officer. Examples include:

- Reasonable accommodation requests for a disability.
- A state or federal emergency or disaster affecting the service site.
- Temporary site closures due to unforeseen circumstances (such as school district closures, strikes, or severe weather).

National service disaster response and recovery policy

Serve Idaho requires the availability of Serve Idaho AmeriCorps members to support disaster response and/or recovery efforts as needed by the State of Idaho. Programs may be asked to identify and select members who would be most appropriate for the anticipated tasks based on their abilities, interests, and availability. Waivers to this requirement will be considered on a case-by-case basis for programs that can demonstrate that this requirement would cause undue hardship or be otherwise unreasonable for reasons related to specific program design (for example, programs designed to enroll members who are under the age of 18 or who are full-time students).

Serve Idaho as point of contact

Serve Idaho serves as the primary point of contact for national service resources in Idaho during times of disaster and may receive requests for support from governmental or non-governmental partner(s), including Idaho Division of Emergency Management (ADEM), Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) members, and federal National Service Disaster Corps. If Serve Idaho receives such a request, Serve Idaho may require members to activate or deploy to provide disaster response and recovery service. When possible, Serve Idaho will first seek members for activation or deployment on a voluntary basis.

Duration

When possible, members may split time between disaster recovery work and their normal service duties to minimize impact on programming and to allow members to stay connected with their service sites. Serve Idaho anticipates being able to accommodate this request and will do its best to make rotation possible for programs. The primary concern would be to ensure that all members are trained together at the outset instead of hosting multiple-staggered trainings.

Serve Idaho will work with disaster response entities to determine a duration of activation that is effective and reasonable, not to exceed two weeks or 15 consecutive days per rotation.

According to Serve Idaho Terms & Conditions, "Serve Idaho may require AmeriCorps members to temporarily deploy to an affected area to participate in response or recovery operations for up to 15 days" and "members will spend no more than 30 days on disaster-related activities in a given member year." Serve Idaho will not ask members to deploy or activate for more than 15 consecutive days, but if another disaster were to occur during a term of service a member may be asked to deploy or activate again, with the total days not to exceed 30 days. Serve Idaho will be coordinating activation needs on a week-by-week basis.

Training

Serve Idaho will provide members with basic training on disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. If member support is requested, Serve Idaho will ensure members are provided with task-specific training and supervision by the governmental or nongovernmental entity that has requested support.

Member activation and member deployment

Serve Idaho uses the following definitions for member activation and deployment:

1. **Member activation:** Members participate in Serve Idaho-determined disaster response and recovery within their service area. This may involve virtual service opportunities or in-person service opportunities. This may include service opportunities outside of the members' standard service hours or in place of their standard service duties.
2. **Member deployment:** Members may deploy outside of their service area to participate in Serve Idaho-determined disaster response and recovery activities.

In the event of a member activation, service activities are likely to include remote opportunities such as supporting virtual call centers or social media monitoring. Member activation and member deployment opportunities may include assisting organizations with volunteer reception centers (ex: registering spontaneous volunteers and/or data entry), donations management (ex: sorting, inventorying and/or distributing donations), shelter operations, feeding, clean-up (mucking & gutting), and/or debris removal. If members are activated or deployed by Serve Idaho, service hours spent in response to the event will be counted towards the total required service or training hours for their term.

Program-specific disaster related activities

Programs may allow members to voluntarily earn service hours through local disaster relief activities outside their normal schedules. Member position descriptions should include a statement such as: "During a local, state, or federal disaster declaration, AmeriCorps members may be asked voluntarily or as required by Serve Idaho to assist with disaster response or recovery through virtual or in-person service. This may occur outside standard service hours or replace regular duties. In large-scale disasters, members may also be asked or required by Serve Idaho to deploy outside their usual service area to assist in disaster response and recovery activities." Programs should also specify how many service hours members may devote to voluntary disaster response activities.

Special initiatives

National Days of Service

National Days of Service provide an opportunity to engage members and volunteers in unique and creative service projects in the community, serve alongside other local AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors programs, and recruit new volunteers and potential members for your program. Service days are an excellent opportunity for members to take on planning a creative service event and to sharpen their skills related to recruiting and supervising volunteers, community outreach and education, or organizing a proclamation. This should be discussed during the member orientation or early in the program year.

Guidance for participation in service days is provided by AmeriCorps Agency and/or Serve Idaho.

All programs are expected to participate in the **three** National Days of Service (given active members are serving): MLK Day, National AmeriCorps Week, and Idaho@Play, and one day of service of their choice.

Required participation in National Days of Service

If your program has active members, Serve Idaho requires programs to participate in the following

National Days of Service each year:

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

MLK Day of Service is a day that celebrates the Civil Rights leader's life and legacy. Observed each year on the third Monday in January as "a day on, not a day off," MLK Day is the only federal holiday designated as a National Day of Service to encourage all Americans to volunteer to improve their communities. Each year, Engage promotes the consistent statewide service theme of food insecurity, encouraging organizations to develop projects that help address hunger in Idaho. Common service activities include food drives, meal-packing events, volunteering at local food banks or pantries, distributing fresh produce, or hosting educational sessions about nutrition and food access.

National AmeriCorps Week

AmeriCorps Week is a celebration of all things AmeriCorps – from the programs and organizations that make this national service initiative possible in communities across the country, to the members who have pledged to "Get Things Done" since the program's inception in 1994. This week provides an opportunity for AmeriCorps Members, alums, grantees, program partners, and friends to shine a spotlight on the service done by Members—and to motivate more Americans to serve their communities. AmeriCorps Week generally occurs in the second week of March.

Idaho@Play

Celebrated the first week of June – Let's play outside! With the help of AmeriCorps members, Idaho@Play is a call for all kids and adults alike to get moving and play outside.

Additional recognized days of service

Programs are encouraged to develop additional service projects, whether from the following list, or an independent event or project within your program or organization.

9/11 Day of Service

September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance is the culmination of efforts, originally launched in 2002, that promote community service on 9/11 as an annual and forward-looking tribute to the 9/11 victims, survivors, and those who rose up in service in response to the attacks.

National Volunteer Week

This week takes place after AmeriCorps week at the end of April to recognize and celebrate the efforts of volunteers. To learn more, please visit [Points of Light](#).

Global Youth Service Day

Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) is an annual celebration for young volunteers around the world. It is designed to encourage youth to participate in community service and service learning and to honor those who have contributed to their communities through voluntary commitment. GYSD is usually observed on a weekend in April, beginning on Friday and ending on Sunday. To learn more, please visit [Youth Service America](#).

Memorial Day

Memorial Day is the time when we honor those who have died in the nation's wars. It originated during the American Civil War when citizens placed flowers on the graves of those who had been killed in battle. A large observance, primarily involving African Americans, took place in May 1865 in Charleston, South Carolina. Columbus, Mississippi, held a formal observance of the dead in 1866.

Civic Season

Civic Season runs from Juneteenth, June 19, to Independence Day, July 4, each year. It is a time to reflect on the past, engage with the present, and come together as we shape the future.

Days of Service reporting

Programs may be asked to complete a report of service day activities that includes activities performed, the number of participants and volunteers, and other information as needed.

Programs must collect the following information (as applicable) for Days of Service to be reported in the National Day of Service Reports.

The following elements are required on all Days of Service reports for all grantees for whom the indicator is relevant to their program model:

- Number of members who participated
- Number of external volunteers recruited for National Days of Service
- Number of hours served by external volunteers during National Days of Service
- Number of volunteers recruited or managed by AmeriCorps members; dollar amount of resources leveraged by the program (required in 4th quarter report only)
- Dollar amount of resources leveraged by AmeriCorps members
- Number of Individuals assisted in preparing for disasters.
- Number of Children and Youth Served
- Number of veterans served
- Number of veteran family members served
- Number of military family members served
- Number of active-duty military members served

AmeriCorps Alums

[Service Year Alliance Alums](#) is the only national network that connects over one million alumni of all AmeriCorps programs to resources that support their lifetime of service. Members can connect with Alumni in Idaho on Facebook or LinkedIn or engage with the national network on [LinkedIn](#). Let your members know that they don't have to be an alum to participate; current members are also welcome.

All forms are in Basecamp.

Chapter eight: Member living allowance

(CNCS Terms and Conditions - Specific VIII. A, B, C and [45 CFR 2522.240](#))

All full-time AmeriCorps members must be provided with a living allowance (member stipend). Though not required, programs have the option to provide an allowance to part-time members. Living allowances must be provided within the minimums and maximums which are stipulated in each year's application instructions and must align with the budget outlined in your approved grant agreement. If your program is a professional corps or education award only program, it is important that you understand the specific regulations that guide those unique programs. For more information about the living allowance please review the AmeriCorps FAQ and/or contact Serve Idaho prior to the beginning of the program year.

Living allowance distribution

Each program determines how often members receive their living allowance.

AmeriCorps members are not employees, and a living allowance is not a wage. Member living allowances are to be distributed to members evenly throughout their term and not tied to number of hours served during the pay period. Only in very specific circumstances and only after approval of Serve Idaho, should a member's living allowance increase or decrease during their term of service. Please refer to the Serve Idaho Living Allowance Distribution Policy for rules and regulations regarding distribution of the Living Allowance. Programs may develop a program-specific Living Allowance Distribution Policy to address prorating the living allowance based on member start date and requiring a minimum number of hours within a period.

If a program does not have a living allowance distribution policy that states otherwise, a member who starts their term of service in the middle of a pay period and serves hours in that pay period will be paid the full living allowance payment for that period. For example, if members are paid monthly, a member who begins on the 5th will receive the same living allowance as one who begins on the 17th. The living allowance must be distributed as stated in the member service agreement.

If a member does not complete the term of service within the amount of time designated or if the member begins service late, the program may extend the member's term. If the member's service term is extended, and the member has received the full living allowance amount, the member must complete the service hours with no additional living allowance payments.

If a member does not complete the term of service within the amount of time designated, and the program extends the member's term, and the member has not received the full living allowance (ex: member starts late or member suspension during the term with no living allowance), the member may complete the service hours with the living allowance up to the total living allowance for that position type. **The total living allowance must be clearly stated in the member service agreement.**

See table below.

Member situation	Length of service	Amount per month	Total living allowance provided
Member A starts and finishes on time	10 months	\$1,210	\$12,100
Member B starts on time and finishes one month early	9 months	\$1,210	\$10,890
Member C starts late and finishes late	10 months	\$1,210	\$12,100
Member D starts on time and finishes one month late	11 months	\$1,210	\$12,100
Member E starts one month late and finishes on time	9 months	\$1,210	\$10,890

Source: Financial and Grants Management Institute. (2012). *Round Robin: AmeriCorps: Living Allowance Distributions, Handout 1*.

As long as a member is enrolled, has in-service status, and has service hours, they must receive their living allowance, listed in their MSA throughout the program year. If a member is released early for any circumstance (including a compelling personal circumstance) they may not receive a lump sum of the remaining balance of their living allowance.

No hours served in a pay period

Living allowance is not tied to the number of hours served in a specific pay period and is required to be evenly distributed over the member's term of service. **Therefore, if a member does not serve any hours in a pay period but is not formally placed on suspension, they should still receive their scheduled living allowance payment.**

Programs are encouraged to stipulate conditions under which the living allowance is paid and what the member should do if a period occurs in which no hours are served in the Member Service Agreement's Rules of Conduct and Member Discipline Policy (Attachment C). This may include:

- The minimum service expectations per pay period (e.g., 1 hour or other set minimum).
- Conditions under which the living allowance continues despite zero service hours (e.g., school breaks, natural disaster, site closure, etc.)
- Steps a member must take if they are unable to serve during a given pay period (e.g., notify the site supervisor, request a temporary suspension).

The program's right to initiate corrective action, suspension, or termination if the member fails to meet service obligations without approved leave or accommodation.

Programs interested in prorating living allowance during a member's suspension must have an active Living Allowance Distribution Policy which outlines this option.

Taxes on living allowance

Deductions should be made for federal and state income taxes, and FICA (Social Security and Medicare taxes). Programs are responsible for setting up their payroll systems to account for FICA.

Applicants/members will need to complete a W-4.

Garnishment

The federal portion of the living stipend is protected from garnishment, but different conditions may apply to the match portion. A member may also approach you for help if their bank account has been levied. They may have some protection and may seek legal counsel.

Maximum living allowance

Each year, AmeriCorps will update the minimum and maximum living allowance amounts by slot type in the NOFO, based on federal requirements, cost-of-living adjustments, and other relevant factors set by AmeriCorps. Programs must ensure proposed living allowances fall within the published ranges.

PY26 Minimum/Maximum living allowance

Service term	Min. hours	Min. living allowance	Max. total living allowance
Full-time	1,700	\$20,400	\$40,800
Three-quarter-time	1,200	n/a	\$28,560
Half-time	900	n/a	20,400
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$10,608
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$8,568

Living allowance distribution policy

Programs are to utilize a program-specific Living Allowance Distribution Policy to prorate living allowance based on member start date of the program year, and a copy of the policy will be attached to the Member Service Agreement. Additionally, it should be implemented at the start of the program year and maintained throughout the duration of the program year. **If your program decides not to implement a living allowance distribution policy, the program will be required to follow all Serve Idaho and AmeriCorps rules and requirements for distributing the living allowance as outlined below.**

Distribution guidelines:

- Living allowance is not a wage. It is designed to help members meet the necessary living expenses incurred while participating in an AmeriCorps program.
- Living allowance must not be paid on an hourly basis. It must not fluctuate based on the number of hours members serve within a given time period.
- Program should pay the living allowance in regular increments, such as weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly.
- Program may increase the living allowance increment only on the basis of a program-wide increase in living expenses such as food, housing, or transportation, with Serve Idaho approval.
- If a member serves all required hours and is permitted to conclude the term of service before the originally agreed-upon end of term, the program may not provide a lump sum payment to the member for the remainder of the living allowance.

- Members of a particular member type who start later than members of the same member type should be paid the same per pay period as the group of members who started first. Programs may not increase the member's living allowance incremental payment or provide a lump sum to make up any missed payments.
- If the program is designed to have two or more groups of members of the same member type serve different term lengths, members should be paid the same per pay period, as opposed to the same total pay. This does not apply when the lengths of service are significantly different, such as a school year-length term versus a summer term of service.
 - For example: A program enrolls two different groups of Minimum-Time members, both serving 300 hours, both paid bi-weekly. MT Group 1 serves 300 hours over 8 weeks; MT Group 2 serves 300 hours over 10 weeks. MT Group 1 and 2 should both receive \$200 bi-weekly, resulting in Group 2 receiving an additional pay period, and therefore a larger total living allowance.
- A member who starts service mid-pay period or completes service early is to receive the full living allowance amount for the pay period unless the program has developed an approved program- specific Living Allowance Distribution Policy.

Waiving the living allowance

- If a living allowance is paid a member may waive all or part of the payment of a living allowance if, for example, the member's public assistance may be lost or decreased because of the living allowance.
- A member who has waived the living allowance may revoke the waiver at any time and may begin receiving the living allowance going forward from the date the individual revoked the waiver. A member may not receive any portion of the living allowance for the period of time the living allowance was waived.
- Program should document any such waivers in the member's file.

Prorating living allowance for a pay period

- A program may prorate the living allowance if a member starts service late or exits early in a pay period. The living allowance should generally be prorated based on the start or end date.
- Each program may establish a written policy that is reasonable and followed consistently. This policy should be documented and reviewed by Serve Idaho before implementation. A copy of the policy will be attached to the Member Service Agreement.
- Examples of prorating models.
 - [EXAMPLE 1] Prorated amounts will be based on the number of days in the pay period the member served or will serve. The full pay period amount will be divided by the number of possible service days during a pay period (Monday-Friday, excluding holidays). This will provide a daily rate of \$X.XX. The daily rate will be multiplied by the number of days served to determine the prorated amount.
 - [EXAMPLE 2] Members who serve up to 25% of the number of days in the pay period

receive 25% of the pay period amount. Members who serve 26% to 50% of the number of days in the pay period will receive 50% of the pay period amount. Members who serve more than 50% of the days in the pay period will receive the full 100% of the pay period amount.

- Example: The month of September 2024 has 20 possible service days (Mon-Fri excluding Labor Day). If a member serves four (4) days, they will receive 25% of the monthly living allowance. (20% the possible days of service during the month of September.) If a member serves 16 days, they will receive 100% of the monthly living allowance. (80% of the possible days of service during the month of September.)
- [EXAMPLE 3] If a program pays members on a monthly basis, it may set a policy that if a member comes on board within the first two weeks of the month, they will still receive the full living allowance for the month. But if they start their service later than that, they could prorate the amount based on the number of days in the month that they serve. The same would hold true for the end of service.

Requiring a minimum number of hours within a pay period

Programs may require members to serve a minimum number of service hours within a pay period but cannot tie the minimum number of hours to receiving the living allowance. **Unless suspended or exited, members must receive a living allowance stipend.** If members do not serve the minimum hours and/or have not communicated with the program (or Site Supervisor) that the hours will not be met for that pay period, the program can utilize its disciplinary policy that includes progressive action for unauthorized absences or not meeting a minimum number of hours in a pay period.

Withholding living allowance for late timesheets

Programs may temporarily withhold a member's living allowance if the member has failed to submit timesheets. The member agreement **must clearly state the policy** and the withholding must be temporary and not result in the program docking the member's living allowance.

Each program may establish a written policy that is reasonable and followed consistently. This policy should be documented and reviewed by Serve Idaho before implementation, and a copy of the policy will be attached to the Member Service Agreement.

Leadership stipends (team leaders)

Programs are allowed to provide leadership stipends for certain members placed in additional leadership roles (i.e.; Team Leaders), subject to the following conditions:

- The leader member positions are a strategic addition to the program design and are necessary to provide enhancement to the service proposed.
- The leader position must have a different service position description than the other members. The service description must describe the leadership duties.

Although these positions are in a leadership role, the members may not engage in any activities prohibited by AmeriCorps members. These include:

- Supervising AmeriCorps members

- Performing non-direct service duties related to management and operations of the AmeriCorps Program (e.g.; completing reports for Serve Idaho, entering timesheet data for members into a database, tracking performance measures for the program as a whole).
- Performing other services for the organization that is unrelated to the service activities in the approved grant application.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and living allowance

The AmeriCorps living allowance is counted as earned income for those who receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). However, because of the HEART ACT, living allowance, healthcare and childcare are not counted as earned income for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients and does not affect eligibility.

The HEART Act makes AmeriCorps more accessible to people with disabilities. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federal program that provides a monthly cash benefit to low-income individuals who are aged, blind, or who have a disability. In the past, receiving an AmeriCorps living allowance could disqualify an individual from eligibility. The new law directs the Social Security Administration to ignore an individual's receipt of AmeriCorps benefits for purposes of SSI eligibility.

Serve Idaho Personally Identifiable Information Policy

Serve Idaho Personally Identifiable Information (PII) Policy and Procedures and Reporting Requirements. Employees, in the course of their normal job responsibilities, will come into contact with Personally Identifiable Information (PII) as relates to their AmeriCorps program. Organizations must follow the Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS) mandates as well as the organization's policies and procedures on PII.

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this document is to provide details on how to identify and handle Personally Identifiable Information (PII), how to securely store any PII that the organization is required to maintain, and what to do in the event of an unauthorized disclosure of PII.
2. **Scope:** All staff who are part of an organization hosting an AmeriCorps program are subject to this policy and procedures.
3. **Procedure:** Identifying PII - There are two types of PII, and the identification of each type will dictate the actions needed to ensure its safety and integrity.
 - a. Public PII: This is information that is available in public sources such as telephone books, employee directories, public websites, etc. The following can be considered Public PII:
 - i. First and last name
 - ii. Address
 - iii. Work telephone number
 - iv. Work email address
 - v. Home telephone number
 - vi. General educational credentials
 - b. Protected PII: This is defined as any information which, if lost, compromised, or

disclosed without authorization could result in substantial harm, embarrassment, inconvenience, or unfairness to an individual. It includes, but is not limited to, any one or more of the types of information that are outlined below:

- i. Social security number
 - ii. Username and password
 - iii. Passport number
 - iv. Credit card number
 - v. Clearances
 - vi. Banking and financial information
 - vii. Biometrics
 - viii. Date and place of birth
 - ix. Mother's maiden name
 - x. Criminal history records and fingerprints
 - xi. Medical records
 - xii. Educational transcripts
 - xiii. Photos and video including any of the above
 - xiv. Non-business telephone, email, addresses
 - xv. Driver's license number
 - xvi. Birth Certificate
- c. Maintaining PII: During the course of normal job responsibilities, employees may come in contact with either Public or Protected PII, either already existing in the organization's network, or as part of managing an AmeriCorps program. Because Protected PII requires special handling due to potential risk associated with its disclosure, it is important to 1) verify the need for the existence of PII in the organization's network and/or files, 2) ensure that the information is properly secured, and 3) access to the information is limited.
- d. Verifying the need to collect PII: Best practice dictates that an organization only collects the least amount of information in order to comply with CNCS and Serve Idaho processes. Caution should especially be taken when collecting Protected PII. The need to collect the information should be periodically reviewed, and if deemed unnecessary, the procedures should be altered to reflect the change.
- e. Collection procedures: When PII needs to be collected, organizations have certain responsibilities in making sure the information is secured. Any written information as a result of a phone conversation must be destroyed via shredding. Physical files should be locked in a secure cabinet or room when not being actively viewed or modified. Electronic files will reside within a protected information system. PII should be accessed only on organization-approved devices.

- f. Authorized dissemination of PII: In the event an outside entity would need to have any information that includes Protected PII, said entity would need to confirm that they understand the sensitivity of the information, and the need to properly safeguard it. Transport of information should be done through secure means.
 - i. Protected PII is not to be downloaded to personal devices (such as laptops, personal digital assistants, mobile phones, tablets or removable media).
 - ii. PII will not be sent through any form of insecure electronic communication, e.g. email, texting, or instant messaging system.
 - g. Unauthorized dissemination of PII: In the event of a real or suspected unauthorized disclosure, which may include misplacing a paper report, loss of a laptop, mobile device, or removable media, accidental email of PII, possible virus, or malware infection, or a computer containing PII:
 - i. Complete the AmeriCorps Breach Reporting Form. Send the completed Breach Reporting Form within 24 hours to your Program Officer by email of a suspected or confirmed breach.
 - ii. Do not forward any compromised information in the email
 - iii. Upon receipt of a report, Serve Idaho will review the contents and may ask follow-up questions or provide additional guidance on how to proceed. The form will then be forwarded to CNCSS. Serve Idaho does not require a copy of your procedures; however, please be prepared to provide them if asked.
4. **Records disposal:** Records containing personal information are to be disposed of to prevent unintentional compromise of data. Paper records are disposed of by shredding or other method approved by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The disposal method will render all personal information unrecognizable and beyond reconstruction.
- All financial records, supporting documentation, statistical records, evaluation and performance data, member information, and personnel records, including timecards, must be retained for at least 3 years after the close of the AmeriCorps prime grant or until Serve Idaho provides written notification that grant files can be destroyed, whichever period is longer.
- If any litigation claim, negotiation, audit, or other action involving the records has been started before the expiration of the 3 years, the records must be retained until the completion of the action and resolution of all issues that arise from it, or until the end of the regular 3-year period, whichever is later.
5. Legal requirements
- a. Federal Office of Management and Budget
 - b. Privacy Act of 1974, as amended
 - c. Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014 (FISMA)
 - d. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
 - e. Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memoranda

f. Federal Records Act of 1950

Member safety policy

It is the program's responsibility to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place to protect the safety of members. Further, members should not participate in projects or undertake service activities that pose a significant safety risk. The physical safety of participants must be of paramount concern, and programs that do not take appropriate measures to protect the safety of participants will not be considered in future grant cycles. It should also be understood that members have the responsibility to take reasonable care for their own safety and the safety of others by complying with any reasonable instruction.

Reporting member safety concerns

All programs are required to report within 48 hours any of the following safety concerns:

- A member is hospitalized due to a service-related injury.
- A police report is completed that involves a member.
- If a member needs to exit their term of service early, due to an injury or an unsafe work environment.
- If a member files a formal grievance due to an unsafe work environment.
- If a newsworthy story involves an AmeriCorps Member (i.e. active shooters at a school).

Please include the name, phone number, and email address of the Member (s) involved. Include the time, date, location, and a brief description of the incident. Serve Idaho will discuss with the program staff if the Member should be contacted by someone from the Commission. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis and only as a way to offer additional support to the Member. If Members would prefer not to be contacted by Serve Idaho, please ensure that they have the AmeriCorps Program Director's or Officer's name, phone number, and email address if they decide to contact someone at the Commission later.

Member and site supervisor training policy

Member training policy

Program Directors are responsible for planning, delivering, and documenting comprehensive training for AmeriCorps members. This includes both the initial orientation and ongoing training throughout the program year. If members serve at a host site or subsite, the designated Site Supervisor or on-site support staff must provide site-specific orientation and ongoing supervision.

Member orientation requirements

In accordance with 45 CFR 2522.100(g)(2) and AmeriCorps State and National Terms and Conditions Section V.D, all programs must provide an orientation for new members at the start of their term. Program Directors must also ensure that no more than 20 percent of total AmeriCorps member service hours are used for education and training activities as defined in 45 CFR 2520.50, unless the Agency approves a waiver. Programs must maintain documentation showing member attendance at all required trainings.

Members should be provided with the benefit of training and education opportunities relevant to their service and to personal development. However, **programs should ensure that members do not spend more than 20% of their time on training activities**. Programs are required to identify training hours separately on the member time sheets.

As of October 2024, AmeriCorps programs can apply for a waiver of education hour limitations for apprenticeship programs, job training and readiness programs, activities to support attainment of GEDs and other credentialing or primarily enrolls economically disadvantaged members. Please see the [AmeriCorps State and National Updates webpage](#) for more guidance. Please contact your Program Officer for further guidance.

Required training topics and suggested training ideas are covered below. Training should also include structured opportunities for members to reflect on and learn from their service.

At a minimum, orientation must include the following topics:

- Review and signing of the Member Service Agreement, including:
 - Position description and attachments.
 - Specific skills and knowledge to perform service.
 - Member rights and responsibilities.
 - Program code of conduct.
 - CNCS prohibited activities.
- Overview of the Drug-Free Workplace Act (41 U.S.C. 701 et seq.; 2 CFR 182).
- Grievance procedures.
- Sexual harassment and nondiscrimination policies.
- Suspension and termination of service.
- Sensitivity to the Community.
- History of National Service and introduction to AmeriCorps ("AmeriCorps 101").
- Overview of Serve Idaho and other AmeriCorps programs in Idaho.
- The AmeriCorps Pledge.
- Unallowable activities and appropriate member conduct.
- Member timekeeping expectations and systems.
- Member safety policies and procedures.
- My AmeriCorps Portal.
- Development of an elevator speech to describe their AmeriCorps service.

Listed below are items the Commission **strongly encourages** to be included in the orientation of members:

- Serve Idaho's role, mission, staff, trainings, website, Facebook, newsletter, member highlights.
- AmeriCorps Pledge.

- Training and Professional Development.
- Serve Idaho AmeriCorps Conference.
- National Days of Service.

Introduction to host sites/service partners (if applicable)

- Resources.
- Basecamp.
- On3Learns.
- Loan Forbearance.
- Program rules, regulations, and benefits.
- Member handbook.
- Allowed activities.
- Living allowance.
- Staff and member roles.
- Understanding the objectives of the program and how to collect data.
- Eligibility of full-time members for Health Care/Childcare.
- Public Service Loan forgiveness.
- Idaho AmeriCorps Alum Chapter LinkedIn page.

Site-specific orientation and ongoing support

Each member must also receive a site-specific orientation at their placement location. This orientation should be led by the Site Supervisor and include:

- Introduction to the service site and key staff.
- Overview of site policies and procedures.
- Member roles, responsibilities, and day-to-day expectations.
- Safety protocols and reporting procedures.

Site Supervisor training policy

Site Supervisor orientation requirements

All Site Supervisors must complete an orientation prior to supervising members. This orientation must be conducted annually, regardless of the supervisor's prior experience with AmeriCorps. Orientation should occur before members begin service at the site and be documented with an agenda and sign-in sheet retained for Serve Idaho review. PowerPoint slides and/ or a list of attendee names may also be used as supporting documentation.

The Site Supervisor orientation must include:

- CNCS prohibited activities and the requirement to post a prohibited activities sign at the

service site.

- Review of member position descriptions, including allowable and unallowable activities.
- The Member Service Agreement and attachments, including:
 - Member rights and responsibilities.
 - Disciplinary, suspension, and termination procedures.
 - Grievance procedures.
- The role of the Site Supervisor and best practices for engaging and supporting AmeriCorps members.
- History and context of National Service and the AmeriCorps program.
- Overview of the program's structure, goals, and performance measures.
- Familiarity with Serve Idaho.
- Program-specific expectations for communication, compliance, and supervision.
- The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the service site and the program, including:
 - Site and supervisor responsibilities for member recruitment, supervision, training, and evaluation.
 - Branding and signage requirements.
 - Prohibited and unallowable member activities.
 - The supervisor's role in addressing member performance and discipline.
 - Site's financial and performance obligations.
 - Consequences for noncompliance with AmeriCorps rules and requirements.

Supervision protocols

Supervision protocols require that only program staff or individuals designated in the program's Timekeeping, Teleservice, and Alternative Activities (TTAA) Policy supervise members and approve time. AmeriCorps members may not supervise other members. Site Supervisors are responsible for ensuring compliance with branding, visibility, and documentation standards, including the following required actions:

- Ensuring members wear AmeriCorps gear during service.
- Posting the Serve Idaho "AmeriCorps Serving Here" sign.
- Posting prohibited activities and drug-free workplace notices.
- Using AmeriCorps branding and nondiscrimination language on relevant materials.
- Supporting member participation in required trainings, events, and National Days of Service.

Chapter nine: National Service Criminal History Checks

ASN NSCHC policy

Programs must maintain complete documentation of their NSCHC policies, procedures, and individual NSCHC records. These procedures must align with the Serve Idaho NSCHC policy and be applied consistently to all individuals subject to NSCHC requirements. Programs must also retain adequate documentation for each individual's NSCHC record, including:

- Proof that all required NSCHC components were completed on time, reviewed, and used to make an eligibility determination.
- Confirmation that the names used for name-based checks match the individual's current legal name.
- Documentation supporting eligibility if a "do not recommend" result is returned.

Programs should refer to the latest AmeriCorps information, as can be seen on the [AmeriCorps National Service History Check webpage](#).

The NSCHC is a screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service (45 CFR 2522 and 2540). NSCHCs have three components:

- A nationwide name-based check of the [National Sex Offender Public Website \(NSOPW\)](#). The NSOPW is a centralized system that identifies people who are registered as sex offenders in states, territories, and with many federally recognized Tribes,
- A name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the candidate's state of residence and in the state where the person will serve or work, and
- A fingerprint-based FBI check.

NSCHC training

All programs must complete the AmeriCorps NSCHC training each year using the CNCS-designated e-course available at [AmeriCorps Learning Management System \(Litmos\)](#). At minimum, staff responsible for conducting NSCHC checks must complete this training annually. Serve Idaho also requires the Program Director to complete the training each year, and all program staff are encouraged to do so to reduce compliance risks associated with absences or staff turnover. Programs must retain certificates of completion in program files and submit copies to their Serve Idaho Program Officer by **Oct. 1** of each program calendar year.

Individuals required to comply with NSCHC

The following individuals, who serve or work under an AmeriCorps grant, must have an NSCHC:

- AmeriCorps members serving in State and National programs.
- Individuals in positions in which they will receive a salary, directly from federal money or reflected as match in the budget.

NSCHC exemption for minors

Individuals who are under the age of 18 on the first day of service or work are exempt from NSCHC. Since minors are exempt from NSCHC, utilizing Truescreen and Fieldprint to run a check on an

individual under 18 is not authorized. Staff who are exempt from NSCHC requirements include: Individuals whose activity is entirely included in the grant recipient's indirect cost rate or cost allocation plan and staff on Fixed Amount grants.

For applicants under 18 who are exempt from the NSCHC Checks, programs will need to provide documentation of age and exempt status. A template can be located on Basecamp.

Eligibility to serve

Under AmeriCorps regulations and statute, an individual is ineligible to serve or work on an AmeriCorps grant if they:

- Refuse to consent to NSCHC.
- Make a false statement in connection with NSCHC (for example, incorrect or incomplete information, a false name, a government-issued identification belonging to another person, a false identification, or fingerprints of another individual).
- Is registered, or is required to be registered on a state sex offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry; or
- Has been convicted of murder, as defined in [18 U.S.C. 1111](#).

In addition to the federal eligibility conditions above, programs have the ability to make determinations of program suitability based on criteria that the program established. Suitability criteria must be consistent with state and federal Civil Rights and nondiscrimination laws. Additional criteria should be clearly described and adhered to within the program's policies and procedures.

Definitions

1. Covered position/covered individual (45 C.F.R. § 2540.201)
The AmeriCorps regulations require its grantees to conduct a NSCHC on people who serve or work in covered positions. A covered position occurs when a person receives a living allowance, stipend, education award or salary through a national service program. This applies to AmeriCorps members, staff, and site supervisors, whether their position appears on the federal or non-federal (matching) portion of the budget. NSCHC requirements also apply to individuals working or serving under subawards.
2. Adjudicate
A check is adjudicated when program staff signs off that the check has been reviewed and approved (or not approved) as specified in the Serve Idaho NSCHC Procedures.
3. Approved repositories
AmeriCorps Idaho Programs are required to utilize Truescreen to run NSCHC for all covered positions. FBI fingerprint checks will be ordered, received, and adjudicated in Truescreen, and members will set up an account and schedule fingerprinting through Fieldprint. NSOPW, Idaho State Checks and additional state checks as applicable, will be run through Truescreen. If Truescreen is down or delayed for specific states, please contact your Serve Idaho Program Officer for guidance on running an alternative check.

Conducting the NSCHC

Programs are to complete the NSCHCs using the approved AmeriCorps vendor Truescreen.

In Idaho, the following NSCHCs are to be completed and cleared in the Truescreen platform at least 24 hours prior to the individual's start date:

- FBI fingerprint checks
- NSOPW check
- State of residence
 - A state check is to be run on the applicants current state of residency. Additional state checks may be needed based on state repository agreement with NSOPW. See Truescreen agreement for more information.
 - The state where a candidate "resides" is the location the individual identifies as their place of residence at the moment in time they applied to serve or work.
 - There is no measure of how long the individual has resided at a location that validates the correct state of residence to check — even a single day as a resident would meet the test for where the individual has made a home.
 - Individuals enrolled as full-time college students are deemed to be residing in the state where the individual lives for the purpose of attending the school.
 - Programs are to include a process for determining the state of residency in their NSCHC Policy and Procedures. They should also document the reason for variance when a government-issued photo ID address does not match the indicated state of residence address.

For information on how to conduct checks, see the [Using AmeriCorps Approved Vendor Truescreen for NSOPW, State, and FBI Checks Guide](#) or Truescreen's AmeriCorps [Grantee](#) and [Applicant](#) Guides.

Note: The FBI authorizes Fieldprint (via Truescreen) to conduct FBI checks only for those who are required to comply with NSCHC. Truescreen should not be used to run a check on anyone who is not required to comply with an AmeriCorps NSCHC; this includes minors. If Truescreen is down or delayed, please contact your Serve Idaho Program Officer on how to run an NSOPW check outside of these platforms.

Name-based checks

Programs are expected to undertake due diligence to determine the current first and last name to conduct name-based checks. It is prudent, but not required, to check any other names that the person has used or is/was known by. Use of the first name and last name reflected on the following sources is acceptable:

- First and last name reflected on a signed Employee's Withholding Certificate W4 form.
- First and last name reflected on a signed USCIS Employment Eligibility Verification I-9 form.
- First and last name reflected on any document on the [USCIS Form I-9's list of acceptable documents](#).
- First and last name reflected on benefit or income documentation from SSA, including but not

limited to Social Security Benefit statement, SSA-1099, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) documentation, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) documentation.

Documents used to determine an individual's first and last name must be consistent with sources described in the grant recipient's NSCHC policies and procedures.

If the individual provides the Program with documents that reflect different names, the Program should obtain additional information from the individual to determine the first and last name of the applicant that will obtain the most accurate criminal history records. The process to reconcile documentation reflecting different names to determine the first and last name to be used on a name-based check should be recorded in the Program's policies and procedures and any additional documentation should be maintained as grant records.

NSCHCs do not need to be re-run when a member or staff person changes names during the course of their service/work. However, you are encouraged to have a memo for file describing the situation for future oversight activities.

NSCHC timing

Programs must conduct, review, and make an eligibility determination based on the NSCHC no later than the day before an individual begins any AmeriCorps-funded work or service, including orientation and training. Checks may be initiated as early as the application stage but should be completed as close to the start date as possible to ensure accuracy. If a completed and adjudicated check is older than 180 days from the individual's start date, the program must run a new check.

Individuals serving consecutive terms with the same organization do not need a new NSCHC if the break in service is fewer than 180 days and prior checks were compliant. If an individual turns 18 before a new term begins, a new NSCHC is required before they start work or service.

NSCHC monitoring and commission access

Serve Idaho conducts NSCHC reviews within the first three months of member start dates to ensure all required FBI fingerprint checks, state criminal history checks, and sex offender registry checks were completed, adjudicated, and properly documented. The number of files reviewed is based on risk, and the Program Officer may expand the sample if prior disallowances occurred. Additional audits may take place during high enrollment periods. For monitoring purposes, Serve Idaho requires access to each program's Truescreen files. Programs with multiple AmeriCorps grants must maintain separate Truescreen accounts for each grant to ensure correct mapping. More detailed instructions are available in the [Using AmeriCorps Approved Vendor Truescreen for NSOPW, State, and FBI Checks manual](#).

Enforcement

Serve Idaho and AmeriCorps will apply administrative enforcement related to findings of NSCHC noncompliance identified through oversight and monitoring. All costs associated with an ineligible individual or individual with an improper NSCHC will be disallowed. Costs include any salary/stipend/living allowance, FICA, and education award. Serve Idaho will use the enforcement guidance and remedies as outlined in the NSCHC Noncompliance.

According to federal guidance, findings of noncompliance with NSCHC requirements will result in cost-based disallowances. Common causes of noncompliance include:

1. **Missing components:** Not conducting one or more of the required checks (State, FBI, or

NSOPW) for covered positions.

2. **Late initiation:** Starting service or work before all required components of the check are completed and cleared.
3. **Missing documentation:** Failing to maintain clear documentation of the check results, adjudication decision, or the timing of checks.
4. **Improper adjudication:** Allowing individuals to serve or work without properly reviewing or documenting that they are eligible based on the results.
5. **Incorrect check sources:** Using a vendor or method not approved by AmeriCorps (e.g., using unapproved state repositories that are not listed as approved sources).
6. **Rechecks when required are not performed:** For example, not conducting updated checks after a service break or rehire, when required.

Disallowed costs may include staff salaries, staff FICA, member living allowance, and/or member FICA, depending on the nature of the findings. If a noncompliant period exceeds three months, **disallowances are capped at three months of associated costs.** Importantly, member service hours will not be penalized for NSCHC errors. Because disallowances are tied to the length of the noncompliant service period, early identification and correction of NSCHC issues is essential; **delayed discovery can result in greater financial impact.** Programs are strongly encouraged to self-report NSCHC noncompliance to Serve Idaho as soon as it is identified. **Self-reporting is not only beneficial for minimizing potential disallowances but also prevents the automatic issuance of a Level 2 Notice of Noncompliance, which is otherwise triggered by NSCHC findings.**

Chapter ten: Member management

Member eligibility

([45 CFR 2522.200- 45 CFR 2522.210](#))

Eligibility requirements

Programs must ensure candidates are eligible to serve as AmeriCorps members. An eligible candidate is an individual who:

1. Is 17 years of age or older.
2. Has or is working towards a high school diploma or GED.
3. Is a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or legal permanent resident alien of the United States.
4. Satisfies the National Service Criminal History Check eligibility criteria pursuant to [45 CFR 2540.202](#).

Programs must obtain and verify at least one document confirming an applicant's age and citizenship status. Copies of identification documents must be stored in a secure file in accordance with the program's PPI policy.

Please use the acceptable documentation from the [USCIS's Form I-9 Acceptable Documents list](#)

US citizenship verification

Citizenship verification and approval status must be completed through the My AmeriCorps Portal verification process when an applicant accepts a program invite or by submitting their application through the AmeriCorps Portal. Only those applicants who have received approval to serve through the portal are allowed to serve regardless of program interpretation of citizenship status. Status must be approved at least 24 hours before enrollment. Programs will be responsible for responding to AmeriCorps requests for additional documentation when needed. Interpretation of citizenship documents or status should be directed to either the program's trained human resources representative or AmeriCorps.

Verification of high school diploma or GED

An individual wishing to serve with AmeriCorps must meet certain education requirements. If members self-certify in MyAmeriCorps Portal that they have a high school diploma or GED, they meet the requirement with no additional documentation required.

If a member does not have a high school diploma or its equivalent at the time of enrollment, the program must obtain the member's written statement that they plan to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent before using the education award.

If the member has been determined to be incapable of obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent, the Program will need to obtain a waiver from the corporation showing an independent evaluation demonstrating the member's inability to meet this requirement; a copy of the approved waiver and the supporting independent evaluation will need to be retained in the member file.

An applicant is considered eligible for AmeriCorps service if the program has verification of the member's enrollment at an institution of higher education on an ability-to-benefit basis and eligibility for funds under section 484 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 ([20 U.S.C. 1091](#)).

Programs must ensure the availability of support services to members to assist them in earning the equivalent of a high school diploma during their service as specified in [45 CFR 2522.100 \(k\)\(2\)](#).

Minimum qualifications

The program is responsible for establishing the minimum qualifications for membership in its program, selecting members that meet those qualifications, and assigning members to projects that are appropriate to their skill level. Programs must select members in a fair, nonpartisan, nonpolitical and nondiscriminatory manner, without regard to the applicant's need for reasonable accommodation of a disability or childcare, without displacing paid employees or community volunteers, and in accordance with its approved application. See Terms and Conditions - General III.L for non-discrimination guidance, in addition to [45 CFR 2522.100](#) and [2540.210](#).

Term limits and education award eligibility

[45 CFR 2522.235](#)

Individuals may serve multiple terms of AmeriCorps service, but each branch of AmeriCorps does have its own term limit regulations. For guidance related to State and National's final rule please visit the [AmeriCorps State and National Updates webpage](#).

There is no limit to the number of terms an individual can serve in an AmeriCorps State and National program. However, the following restrictions apply:

1. An individual can only earn the equivalent of two full-time education awards in total.
2. AmeriCorps will provide benefits (as described in §§ 2522.240 through 2522.250) only for the number of terms it takes to reach two full-time education awards or for up to four terms—whichever is longer. If an individual serves more terms beyond that, grantees may choose to cover the benefits for those additional terms.
3. The new term limit eligibility goes into effect with FY 2025 funded members onward.

Table 1 This bar graph chart illustrates term eligibility for two members based on the type of term they served in. A graduation cap indicates when each member received the total aggregate of two full time education awards.



Member recruitment

AmeriCorps programs are responsible for proactively recruiting qualified individuals who are interested in contributing their knowledge, experience, skills, and service to the program's target community. A successful recruitment strategy is the foundation for a thriving AmeriCorps program and should be done continuously throughout the year. Since each AmeriCorps program is different, an individualized recruitment plan is necessary to gain members

Serve Idaho AmeriCorps programs are required to post their member opportunity listings on the AmeriCorps portal. A copy of the service opportunity description may be requested by Serve Idaho office for media recruitment efforts.

Public notice of nondiscrimination

Programs must inform the public of their obligation to operate in compliance with civil rights and nondiscrimination requirements. This notification must include, as appropriate, in recruitment materials, application forms, member service agreements, handbooks, manuals, pamphlets, and must be posted in prominent locations.

Programs are required to include the following nondiscrimination statement, as outlined in the 2025 AmeriCorps General Terms and Conditions:

"This program is available to all, without discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, religion, age, national origin, genetic information, disability, military status, familial status, political affiliation, or any other characteristic protected by law."

Where a significant portion of the population eligible to be served needs services or information in a language other than English, the recipient shall take reasonable steps to provide written material of the type ordinarily available to the public in appropriate languages.

MyAmeriCorps Portal

The MyAmeriCorps Portal is linked to eGrants and is an online member management system supported by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Among many functions, this resource gives AmeriCorps programs the opportunity to recruit members nationally. AmeriCorps requires the use of the MyAmeriCorps system as a part of a program's recruitment strategy.

AmeriCorps resources for creating service opportunity listings on the MyAmeriCorps Portal are available for programs in Basecamp.

MyAmeriCorps Portal features include the ability to:

- Create, post, and edit a service opportunity.
- Search for applicants based on specific programmatic needs.
- View applications.
- Approve or reject an application.
- Select applicants.
- Contact applicants.

Member selection

Program Directors need to ensure that each applicant understands that if selected, they will:

- Commit to a specific term of service, including number of months and average number of hours they need to serve each week, as reflected in the Member Service Agreement and/or Member Position Description.
- Not be an employee of your organization, CNCS, AmeriCorps, or Serve Idaho.

- Receive certain benefits as outlined in their Member Service Agreement over the course of the program year and/or upon successful completion of their service term.

Reasonable Accommodation and Disability Inclusion

[CNCS Terms and Conditions - Specific IV.E. and [45 CFR 2522.100\(h\)](#)]

Upon request, programs are required to provide reasonable accommodation for qualified candidates and members with a qualified disability, sincerely held religious belief, and/or limitation caused by a pregnancy. Qualified candidates and members may request accommodation at any time during their consideration and/or term of service.

An offer of the availability of reasonable accommodation should be made verbally and in writing (as prudent AND equally among all members) at the following times:

- When a candidate or member voluntarily discloses a disability.
- When any candidate is offered an interview.
- When any candidate is offered an AmeriCorps position.
- Within all member contracts and handbooks.
- During member orientation.
- No less than 48 hours prior to member orientation, meetings, and training throughout their term of service.
- When the nature of the conversation regarding a member's performance warrants the provision of reasonable accommodation as a solution to the performance issue.

Members will have access to the **Reasonable Accommodation and Disability Inclusion Policy and Procedure** in the Member Service Agreement. Programs need to be proactive to ensure that everyone - including individuals with disabilities – can serve and to be active participants. Examples of potential accommodation:

For reference, but not an exhaustive list:

- Making existing facilities used by employees and applicants accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities or limitations caused by pregnancies;
- Restructuring a job, for example, by changing when or how an essential function is performed;
- Allowing employees to work modified work schedules or to telework;
- Reassigning an employee to a vacant position;
- Modifying equipment and other devices used by employees and applicants;
- Providing qualified readers or interpreters or otherwise providing assistive technologies to employees and applicants;
- Allowing schedule modifications or breaks to accommodate religious practices;
- Providing leave.

Programs with questions about providing reasonable accommodations can:

- Visit the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) which provides free technical assistance on matters related to disability inclusion and providing accommodation.
- Connect with local/statewide assistive technology organizations such as [iCAN \(Increasing Capabilities Access Network and Tools for Life\)](#).
- Contact reasonableaccommodation@americorps.gov directly with questions on what a reasonable accommodation is.

Reasonable accommodation reimbursement requests

Each year, AmeriCorps Agency may make funds available to help cover the costs of providing reasonable accommodations to AmeriCorps members. Programs must work to accommodate any reasonable requests using their organization's resources. If this is not possible, programs may submit requests for reimbursement of the costs associated with providing a reasonable accommodation to a current AmeriCorps member with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADA Amendment Act of 2008. To request reimbursement, please submit the [Serve Idaho Disability Accommodation Reimbursement Request Form](#) to the Serve Idaho Program Officer.

Enrollment process

AmeriCorps requires programs to pre-enroll, enroll, and exit members electronically in eGrants. Serve Idaho also requires programs to develop enrollment and exit procedures. See Basecamp for templates and roadmaps.

Pre-enrollment

Pre-enrollment begins once an applicant has been selected and a service term has been offered. It must be completed before the enrollment button activates in eGrants.

Pre-enrollment includes:

1. Inviting the applicant in eGrants.
2. The applicant completing enrollment information.
3. Citizenship and Social Security verification by AmeriCorps.
4. Conducting and adjudicating NSCHC through Truescreen.
5. Certifying NSCHC verification in eGrants.
6. Entering the applicant's service location.

Verification may take several days, so programs should begin pre-enrollment well before the first service day. Manual enrollment exemptions may be requested through the Serve Idaho Program Officer.

Enrollment **must be completed within eight calendar days**, including the members' first day of service. Status cannot change from pre-enrolled to enrolled until the first service day and must occur within seven days. Enrollment also includes entering slot type, start date, and service location. Members cannot earn hours or receive stipends until successfully enrolled, and the eGrants start date must match the Member Service Agreement. Start dates cannot be changed after entry.

To be considered enrolled:

- Citizenship and SSN must be verified or manually verified in eGrants.
- Program Directors must actively monitor verification status, as no notifications are sent.
- All NSCHC checks must be completed and adjudicated before the first day of service and verified in eGrants.

See program guidance for more information on using eGrants.

America Learns

While eGrants is the official AmeriCorps grants management system, Serve Idaho also uses a web-based management platform, America Learns, for much of our reporting requirements and timekeeping purposes. As members are enrolled in eGrants, directors should in tandem, set up the member accounts. Use a common password for all members that they can change during timesheet training. Members will use this system to enter their training, fundraising, and service hours.

Before members can begin logging hours, you must set up your program's America Learns account. If you are a new program, Serve Idaho staff will create login credentials. For continuing programs, you must transfer the account information over from the previous program year. Furthermore, you must enter your budget, performance measures, and configure the specific timesheet style your program will use before members start accessing the platform.

All Serve Idaho staff should have full access to the program's America Learns interface and full access to all member and host site files for monitoring purposes.

Member Service Agreement (MSA)

(CNCS Terms and Conditions – Specific V. B.)

The Member Service Agreement (MSA) is a critical part of administering AmeriCorps programs. The MSA is the contract by which the terms, conditions, and rules regarding participation are delineated. This contract between the program and the member is the document that would be used to resolve any issues between the program and the member.

Programs will need to complete various parts of the MSA to make it specific to each member's service. Programs will also need to attach documents as noted below.

AmeriCorps members should receive, read, and agree to all elements of the member service agreement before they begin service. They should also receive a copy of the signed document, including all attachments.

The MSA must include the following documents, referred to as attachments. Programs are required to develop some of these policies, in conjunction with their human resources and/or financial offices.

1. Position Description.
2. Social Media Policy
3. Rules of Conduct and Discipline Policy.
4. Drug Free Workplace Policy.
5. Grievance Policy.
6. Reasonable Accommodation and Disability Inclusion Policy.

7. Living Allowance Distribution Policy (if applicable).

Optional attachments – other items the program may want to attach to this contract such as a Time Sheet Policy, Incentive Policy etc.

Member Position Description

(CNCS Terms and Conditions – Specific V. A.)

Member Position Descriptions is a required document and must be reviewed and approved by the assigned Program Officer at the start of each program year. A well-developed, written position description establishes the foundation for effective member recruitment by outlining specific service activities that align with the program's theory of change, performance measures, and approved grant award. Clear and accurate descriptions help prospective and enrolled members understand expectations and the nature of the service they will perform.

Programs must ensure that position descriptions do not include any activities that violate AmeriCorps prohibited activities, non-duplication, or non-displacement requirements. Phrases such as "other duties as assigned" or "etc." should not be used. All duties must be clearly described. Use proper AmeriCorps terminology: this is a "position description," not a "job description," and individuals serving are "members/volunteers," not "employees."

The presentation and clarity of a service position description strongly influence how the program is perceived, particularly by individuals unfamiliar with AmeriCorps or the host organization. Applicants often form their first impression of a program when reviewing a posted position description. They should be able to clearly understand the program's expectations and evaluate whether the role aligns with their personal goals and interests. All position descriptions will be expected to contain the following sections:

- **Position title**
- **Program name and host site**
- **Service term** (start and end dates)
- **Service schedule** (expected weekly hours, typical days, and any required events)
- **Purpose of the position** (how the role supports the program's theory of change).
- **Member service activities**
 - Detailed and allowable service activities.
 - No use of phrases such as "other duties as assigned" or "etc."
- **Expected outcomes and performance measures**
- **Eligibility requirements**
 - Standard AmeriCorps member eligibility.
 - Any program-specific qualifications.
- **Required skills and qualifications**
- **Training provided**
 - Pre-service orientation.
 - Ongoing training.
 - Site-specific training.
- **Supervision structure**
 - Name or role of site supervisor.
 - Description of how supervision will occur.
- **Location of service**
 - Primary service site.
 - Any additional or rotating service locations.

- **Member benefits** (as applicable to the grant type)
- **AmeriCorps compliance statements**
 - Prohibited activities.
 - Non-duplication and non-displacement requirements.
 - Adherence to AmeriCorps policies, rules, and code of conduct.
- **Physical or environmental demands** (if relevant)
- **Member evaluation process** (how performance will be assessed)
- **Additional program expectations**
 - Reporting requirements.
 - Communication expectations.
 - Attendance standards.
 - Any program-specific obligations.

This start date should be the same as on the MSA, in eGrants, and in America Learns.

Prohibited activities

(CNCS Terms and Conditions – Specific V. C. and [45 CFR § 2520.65](#))

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

- 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 any 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 religious proselytization.
- Providing a direct benefit to—
 - A business organized for profit.
 - A labor union.
 - A partisan political organization.
 - 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 a 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

- An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph C. 7. above, unless CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities.
- Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive.
- Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
- Such other activities as CNCS may be prohibited.

In addition to the above activities, the following 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 members 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-CNCS funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while engaging in any of the above activities in their personal time.

Team Leaders

(AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions-Specific)

Programs may create positions where AmeriCorps members provide an additional layer of leadership and support for members under certain conditions. All the activities and prohibitions that apply to AmeriCorps members also apply to Team Leaders. Team Leaders are not permitted to act in a staff capacity, including supervising members. Team Leaders must not be responsible for program development and coordination; however, they may assist by providing information and resources on best practices or by helping to develop portions of the program such as the training curriculum. Under no circumstances should an AmeriCorps member serving as a Team Leader be the individual legally responsible for the program or other members.

Team leaders cannot serve in an administrative capacity and must participate in direct service activities with other members. Team leaders may receive a higher living allowance but must have a separate position description and ideally, additional training. The Team Leader position description should emphasize activities that involve the member(s) in performing direct service or providing support to members engaged in direct service.

Examples of **allowable** Team Leader activities:

- Working alongside members performing direct service to serve as a model and to provide on-

the-spot assistance

- Providing guidance and support to members, including reflection exercises, conflict resolution, advice for transitioning out of AmeriCorps, etc.
- Arranging member development activities
- Building a sense of esprit de corps and general team cohesion among members
- Leading and facilitating team service projects
- Working with the community to develop partnerships, including community volunteers, which will support the members' projects.

Examples of **unallowable** Team Leader activities include:

- Signing, reviewing, or verifying member timesheets
- Evaluating member performance
- Disciplining AmeriCorps members
- Enrolling/dismissing AmeriCorps members
- Writing and/or signing program reports
- Managing the program's payroll and budget

Member uniforms

Members are required to wear an AmeriCorps uniform whenever they are accruing service hours. The uniform must consist of an item with official AmeriCorps branding.

Member files

[\(45 CFR§2541.420\)](#)

After you have selected a corps of individuals to serve in your program and enrolled them in eGrants and America Learns, you must establish member files. The documents maintained in these files provide evidence that members are eligible for their positions at the time of enrollment and qualify to receive member benefits.

These documents must be kept in a safe and secure location, with access granted only to essential program staff persons ([45CFR 2522.820](#)). They may be maintained on a secure electronic site. If a member submits a written request to view the contents of their file, they must be permitted to do so.

A copy of the Member File Checklist can be found in Basecamp. Serve Idaho staff will use the checklist during monitoring visits to ensure member files contain all required documentation.

Documents to retain in each Member's file include:

- Member Application (if using program specific application).
- Proof of Age (copy of approved document).
- Parental consent (if member is under 18).
- Member Citizenship Verification Documentation (if required).

- Member Service Agreement including Position Description and all required attachments.
- NSCHC Consent and Certification Form.
- NSCHC Results.
- NSCHC Under 18 Memo (if applicable).
- Healthcare & Childcare Acknowledgement Forms (if applicable).
- Paystub.
- Tax Documents (W-4, W-2 if tax year has ended).
- Performance Evaluations (Mid-year for FT, TQT, and HT Members; End of year for ALL).
- Member Suspension Documentation (if applicable).
- Member Discipline/Performance Issue Documentation (if applicable).
- Member Early Exit Form (if applicable).
- Member Compelling Personal Circumstances Documentation (if applicable).
- Member Serious Injury of Death Documentation (if applicable).

Additionally, some member records must be maintained in eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal and America Learns.

eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal

- Member Application (if using MyAmeriCorps Application).
- Member Enrollment Form.
- Member Suspension/Change in Status.
- Member Exit Form and Verification of Member Hours.

Programs **should not** rely on Truescreen to maintain NSCHC records. These must be downloaded and saved in the member file. Additionally, if a member is 55 or older, their time sheets should be downloaded from America Learns and saved in the member file. America Learns only stores records for seven years.

Members serving multiple terms

For members serving more than one service term over **multiple program years**, a separate file must be compiled and maintained for each service term. Some items, such as the national service criminal history checks and related documents may be copied for the new program year file.

For members who serve multiple terms during the **same** program year, it is not necessary to have separate member files. For example, if the member serves two 300-hour MT service terms during the Program Year it is not necessary to have to separate files, but programs should group service term specific documents (e.g. MSA and time sheets for each term).

Member supervision

Program Directors are responsible for ensuring members receive supervision and support at their service site. This can be challenging when members are supervised by others.

To ensure adequate supervision by qualified Site Supervisors, Program Directors should provide Site Supervisors with an orientation to AmeriCorps before members begin at their site. They should receive the same information covered in the member orientations, which include prohibited and unallowable activities, the Member Service Agreement and its attachments, as well as the MOU, when applicable.

Some programs find it beneficial to include supervisors and members in the same orientation. Please review the **Serve Idaho Member and Site Supervisor Training Policy** for further guidance and requirements.

Site supervisors and the organizations where members serve should understand that members are limited to the activities listed in their approved member position description.

Site supervisors are tasked with ensuring members receive site-specific training, which includes an overview of the placement site, introduction of key contacts, site policies and procedures, their roles, duties, tasks, etc. Site supervisors also benefit from ongoing training and/or communication from the Program Director. These may be conference calls, email updates or in-person training.

No AmeriCorps member may directly supervise another member. Members should only be supervised by program staff or designees. All staff or designees involved with member supervision should be listed and identified with your program's **Timekeeping, Teleservice and Alternative Activities (TTAA) Policy**.

Member timekeeping

When planning your AmeriCorps program, it is important to consider the earliest date members could start service, which is often not the day your grant starts.

Member timesheets are the official record of time and attendance in service, training, and fundraising. The timesheet is used to document a member's eligibility for in-service benefits (e.g. living allowance) and post-service benefits (e.g. education award). Failure to record time and attendance could result in disallowance of all benefits received, including (but not limited to) the living allowance and the education award.

Members must report their service hours in America Learns on a regular basis, as determined by each program. Site supervisors (if applicable) and Program Directors must ensure timesheets are correct, complete, and submitted in a timely manner. Members should not report daily activities in this system. Programs may utilize another system to capture members' daily activities.

Serve Idaho requires that Program Directors sign the timesheets. Electronic signatures are required, per the Serve Idaho Electronic Timekeeping Policy. This will allow the Program Director to digitally approve/review and sign the timesheet in America Learns with your name and date. Serve Idaho encourages programs to determine a schedule of auditing member timesheets.

The Program Director is required to track member hours to ensure each member has the opportunity to successfully complete their term of service. When planning for the term of service consider days that will be missed because of holidays, school calendar breaks, national days of service, etc. Allow time for members to make up for hours they may miss due to sickness, or any days as mentioned here.

Member service hours for: a) direct service b) training and c) fundraising must be logged in separate time- tracking columns (America Learns provides this feature as a default). If programs decide to add subcategories to the service column, this is acceptable but please note it may increase the risk of

noncompliance.

General member timesheet guidance

- Hours must be recorded in 15-minute increments, using these fractions: [15 minutes = .25] [30 minutes = .50] [45 minutes = .75] [60 minutes = 1.00]
- Members should submit timesheets regularly per the program's procedures
- Program Directors and/or Site Supervisors must verify the accuracy of the service hour totals and review/approve only those hours that have been served

Timesheets must be signed and dated in a timely manner by the member, the Program Directors and/or Site Supervisors

- Timesheets cannot be signed in advance of service being completed
- Members should use the description box on timesheets, except in rare circumstances as discussed with your Program Officer
- Lunch breaks do not count as service hours except in rare cases
- Training time cannot exceed 20% of total hours, unless you qualify for a waiver
- Fundraising is limited to 10% of the individual's hours and must be included in the approved application and Member Service Agreement

Timesheet compliance and accountability

To ensure compliance with timekeeping requirements, the program should take the following preventive measures:

- Provide clear and concise timekeeping policies and procedures to members and Site Supervisors, to include when members are to enter their hours, Site Supervisors and Program Director to approve the hours. Include consequences when this is not accomplished
- Regular and thorough review of member timesheets by the Program Director's and/or Site Supervisor prior to approval
- Periodic sampling of member files to ensure timesheets are properly maintained
- Periodic review of member timesheets for accuracy
- Periodic review to ensure members are on track to complete their required number of hours

Falsification of time sheets

There may be severe consequences if timesheets are falsified by the member, the Site Supervisor, or the Program Director. All parties must ensure hours entered and approved are correct. Falsifying or certifying timesheets without due diligence is **fraud** and will be reported to the Office of Inspector General for investigation and may result in member hour disallowances.

Protect yourself, your staff, and your members by looking for these common timesheet red flags:

- Direct supervisor does not review or verify service hours in a timely manner.
- Timesheets contain excessive hours (15+ hours in one day or unusual weekend or holiday

hours)

- Timesheets are submitted weeks/months late
- Timesheets are missing signatures
- Excessive or unusual corrections (e.g., all corrected on the same date; no explanations provided, or explanations that do not appear credible)
- Timesheets that appear prepopulated
- Same number of hours every day (e.g., same exact number of hours each day across timesheets for a given period)

Submitting false documents to the government is a crime. Criminal statutes that are often charged in timekeeping fraud cases include:

- False Statements (18 U.S.C. § 1001)
- False Claims (18 U.S.C. § 287)
- Theft of Government Money (18 U.S.C. § 641)
- Theft of Federal Funds (18 U.S.C. § 666)
- Wire Fraud (18 U.S.C. § 1343)

No hours served in a pay period

AmeriCorps members are expected to serve regularly throughout their term to demonstrate ongoing engagement. Situations in which a member serves zero hours during a pay period should be rare and could indicate the need for intervention, such as suspension, if there are extended periods in which no service is performed.

Living allowance is not tied to the number of hours served in a specific pay period and is required to be evenly distributed over the member's term of service. **Therefore, if a member does not serve any hours in a pay period but is not formally placed on suspension, they should still receive their scheduled living allowance payment.**

Programs are encouraged to stipulate conditions under which the living allowance is paid and what the member should do if a period occurs in which no hours are served in the Member Service Agreement's Rules of Conduct and Member Discipline Policy (Attachment C). This may include:

- The minimum service expectations per pay period (e.g., 1 hour or other set minimum).
- Conditions under which the living allowance continues despite zero service hours (e.g., school breaks, natural disaster, site closure, etc.)
- Steps a member must take if they are unable to serve during a given pay period (e.g., notify the site supervisor, request a temporary suspension).
- The program's right to initiate corrective action, suspension, or termination if the member fails to meet service obligations without approved leave or accommodation.

Programs interested in prorating living allowance during a member's suspension must have an active Living Allowance Distribution Policy which outlines this option.

Member suspension

Member suspension process

Programs should have a suspension policy in place, and conditions that justify member suspensions should be outlined in member contracts. Determine suspension to be the appropriate course of action (whether disciplinary or extenuating circumstances).

- Suspend the member in eGrants and America Learns
- Document the suspension in the member's file
- Make changes to the member's benefits when appropriate (living allowance, healthcare, and childcare)
 - Suspended members are not eligible to receive any living allowance payments while in suspension
 - If a member receives childcare through GAP Solutions or program-provided healthcare, the program must notify those designated agents within five (5) days in writing when a member's status changes, such that it would affect eligibility for childcare or health care
 - After five days, the recipient will be liable for any erroneous payments made to a childcare provider for an AmeriCorps member ineligible to receive AmeriCorps childcare benefits
 - Changes in status examples include terminating or releasing members from service, suspending members for cause for lengthy or indefinite time period, member is facing charges of a violent felony or controlled substance charge
- Under no circumstances may any member under suspension be allowed hours toward their term of service.

Member reinstatement

When a member returns from suspension, the effective date of the reinstatement must be after the suspension date and before the member's required completion date. AmeriCorps interprets this language as a reinstatement logically cannot occur before the suspension date or after the required completion date. The effective date of reinstatement is in between those two dates. When a member is reinstated, their number of suspension days are added to their original Service End Date to account for the suspension time. This adjustment ensures the required completion date comes after the reinstatement date.

Disciplinary suspensions

Programs must suspend members facing official charges for violent felonies, for selling or distributing controlled substances, or members convicted of possession of controlled substances. Members may be suspended for disciplinary reasons, for failing to uphold the service requirements and standards of conduct agreed upon in the member contract.

Programs must have a disciplinary policy that outlines steps that may be taken when members fail to comply with expectations. Programs should document in the member file whenever disciplinary problems arise and the corresponding action (verbal warning, written warning, etc.) that is

implemented. This must be included in **the Member Service Agreement**.

Suspension for extenuating circumstances

Members may be suspended temporarily for extenuating circumstances, such as an accident or serious illness. Programs should have a suspension policy in place and conditions that justify member suspensions should be outlined in member contracts. The same requirements pertain to suspension as they do for early member exit, for example, members should not be suspended to serve a summer internship, study abroad or take an extended vacation.

Extending/altering a member's term of service

Extending or significantly reducing a member's term of service should not be a common practice, but an exception. Members should always strive to complete hours within the timeframe set in their Member Service Agreement (MSA) and Position Description. If a Program Director has justified cause to extend a member's term of service, please make note of the information below.

- The Program Director must notify their Serve Idaho Program Officer well before the scheduled end date and provide their reasoning for the extension
- If approved, the new end date on the MSA must be documented alongside the original end date and be initialed and dated by the Program Director and the Member. Do not create a 2nd MSA. The new end date must not go past the Program's Grant Period (typically August 31 or September 30)
- Members who extend their service cannot receive additional living allowance. Extensions allow the members to accrue the required number of hours so they can receive an education award. Members must be made aware of this before agreeing to serve past the original end date
 - If a member starts late (i.e., not on the program start date) then an additional living allowance would be allowable if they extend to complete their service term in order to accrue the Segal Education Award. For Example: Member orientation (program start) = Sept 1 (program end) = Aug 31 Late member starts on = September 16, assuming the member does not receive the first living allowance because a pay period is Sept 1-15, AND if the member's end date is extended to Sept 15 of the following year, then they would be able to receive a living allowance for that extension period.

If a member is serving with a new Site Supervisor or in a new site location, the Program Director must:

- Let your Serve Idaho Program Officer know
- Provide Site Supervisor training to the new individual to include prohibited activities, activities allowed through the grant/position description, additional AmeriCorps rules and regulations and training on member timesheets

Member release from service

(CNCS Terms and Conditions-Specific and [45 CFR 2522.230](#))

All members must be exited in MyAmeriCorps Portal, as this is the official system of record for AmeriCorps. Members must be exited within 30 days of their last day of service. Members must also be exited in America Learns.

Education award status and future service

(45 CFR § 2522.230)

AmeriCorps members may be exited from the program because they have successfully completed their term, because they must terminate their service early due to a compelling personal circumstance, or because they terminate their service early for cause. The exit status determines whether the member earns an education award and may affect eligibility for future AmeriCorps service.

Member program completion, education award status and future service

eGrants exit label	Earned award – completed	Earned award – ended service early	Didn't earn award – ended service early	Didn't earn award – ended service early	Didn't earn award – ended service early
Served through MSA end date?	Y	N	Y	N	N
Met min. hour requirement?	Y	N	N	N	N
Performed satisfactorily?	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Exit type	Successful completion	CPC*	Cause	Cause	Cause
Education award eligibility	Eligible	Eligible for partial award**	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible
Future service eligibility***	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible****	Eligible****	Not eligible

* Compelling personal circumstances

** Eligible if the member served at least 15% of the minimum service hours.

*** Subject to term limits

**** Must disclose prior release for cause

Successful completion of service

- Those who serve the entire time as outlined in their Member Service Agreement (MSA) and complete the minimum number of hours and serve satisfactorily are exited from the program with a full education award.
- Members should serve and actively accrue service hours through the end date specified in their executed Member Service Agreement. Members should not exit early when they have completed the required number of hours, except in rare circumstances. Programs may create a policy that states members must reach the end date listed on their MSA to successfully complete the program. Contact your Program Officer if you have any questions.
- Those who complete their minimum number of hours and leave before the end date (greater than two weeks) as agreed upon in the MSA are eligible for the full value of the education

award (if they performed satisfactorily and met the goals of their term of service). Although not encouraged, the member service agreement may be amended to allow such members to exit as successfully completed, if the member and Program Director all agree to the new end date. Site supervisors should be informed once the director knows the member will be exiting early. However, these members will earn only a portion of the living allowance stated in their MSA. This amount will be based on the portion of the service term that was successfully completed. For instance, a member whose MSA says they'll serve 12 months but completes the term of service (with program approval) in 11 months, will receive 11/12 of the living allowance.

Member hours

Programs must ensure all timesheets have been entered and approved, then change the member status in America Learns platform to Exited. The total hours shown on the member's time sheet will be entered into the eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal within 30 days after the members last day of service. The hours entered into the Portal must match the total approved hours in the management platform, always rounded *down* to a whole number.

Early exit types

([45 CFR § 2522.230](#) and CNCS Terms and Conditions-Specific)

There are strict rules that govern the release of a member from participation. Programs may suspend or release members early from participation for two reasons: (a) for compelling personal circumstances (CPC); and (b) for cause. Failure to follow the regulatory requirements (e.g., releasing an individual for CPC when the individual is leaving to go to school) is considered non-compliance with grant requirements and may result in disallowed costs and other remedies for non-compliance.

The exit status of a member determines whether they earn an education award and may affect their eligibility for future AmeriCorps service.

[This video from AmeriCorps](#) walks you through the process of exiting members in eGrants.

Early exit form

When members leave service early, programs are required to complete the Member Early Exit Form. Programs must submit the completed Member Early Exit Form to your Serve Idaho Program Officer within 30 days of the member's last day of service. CPC exits should include supporting documentation in addition to the Early Exit Form.

Compelling personal circumstances (CPC)

([45 CFR § 2522.230\(a\)](#), CNCS Terms and Conditions – Specific)

The program may release a member from the term of service for compelling personal circumstances (CPC) if:

- The member cannot perform the essential functions of his or her position with or without reasonable accommodation due to a disability or medical condition.
- There is a serious injury, illness or death of an immediate family member which makes completing the term unreasonably difficult or impossible for the member.
- The member has military service obligations.

- The member has accepted an opportunity to make the transition from welfare to work.
- 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. An approved objective could be a performance measure and/or it could be reflected in your grant application narrative.
- Pregnancy and/or childbirth could be determined by the grantee to be compelling personal circumstances if the member requests it. The program cannot require a member to justify wanting to leave a term of service for pregnancy. Likewise, a program cannot require that a member leave their term of service due to a pregnancy – that would be an instance of discrimination on the basis of gender in violation of AmeriCorps’ anti-discrimination policy. A full-time member might qualify under the Family Medical Leave Act if the member is covered.
- Or some other unforeseeable circumstance beyond the member’s control that makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for the member to complete the term of service such as a natural disaster, a strike, relocation of a spouse, or the non-renewal or premature closing of a project or the program.

Compelling personal circumstances do not include leaving the program:

- To enroll in school
- To obtain employment, other than in moving from welfare to work or promotion of employment as an approved objective
- Because of dissatisfaction with the program

Serve Idaho procedures for Compelling Personal Circumstances

- If a program believes that a member qualifies for a compelling personal circumstance, the Program Director must contact their Serve Idaho Program Officer via email with a completed CPC form that contains the following information:
 - Name of individual
 - Reason for request
 - The number of hours the member has completed
 - Any supporting documentation
- The exact qualification from the CFR the member meets for a CPC (45 CFR § 2522.230)
- The Program Officer will advise on the CPC scenario and offer guidance for how the Program Director should proceed with the member’s exit from the program.
- Serve Idaho will not make any determinations as to whether someone qualifies for CPC, as this decision is left to the Program Director.
- An AmeriCorps member who has served less than 15% of their hours does not qualify for CPC.
- Repercussion to the program for incorrectly exiting a member for CPC may include repayment of the education award and repayment of living allowance.
- When considering refilling and/or converting slots:

- If the member exits for CPC reasons and accepts a prorated education award, the **now vacant slot cannot be refilled**
- All slot conversions must be requested and approved by your Program Officer
- Please refer to the Serve Idaho CPC and Slot Conversion Form
- Complete and submit to your Serve Idaho Program Officer a completed copy of the Member Early Exit Form.

To determine the likely amount of the prorated education award earned:

(# hours completed / minimum hours required for the position) x maximum value of education award.
For example, if a half-time member serves 230 hours: $230 / 900 \times \$3,172.50 = \$810.75$.

Early termination for cause

Members are released for cause if they do not successfully complete their term of service for any reason that does not qualify as a compelling personal circumstance. This includes 1) dropping out with or without obtaining a written release; 2) the member is convicted of a violent felony or the sale or distribution of a controlled substance; 3) any other serious breach that, in the judgment of the Program Director, would undermine the effectiveness of the program; or 4) if any criminal history checks produce results preventing the member from serving in the program. Members who exit early for cause are not eligible for an education award.

It is possible for a member to be terminated from the program for cause and still receive a satisfactory performance evaluation. In these cases, the member would be eligible for subsequent AmeriCorps term(s) of service, as long as they performed satisfactorily during the term of service from which they were released for cause. Any individual released for cause is required to disclose the release when applying for any subsequent term of service. Failure to disclose past exits for cause will render an individual ineligible to receive the AmeriCorps education award, whether or not that individual successfully completes the subsequent term of service. Members released early from service for disciplinary action are not eligible for future terms of service.

Programs should have a disciplinary policy that outlines program rules about when/how members may be terminated for cause. All rules about termination must be included in the member contract.

Serious member injury or death

(CNCS Terms and Conditions - Specific V.G)

The program should notify its Serve Idaho Program Officer in writing of any serious injury or death occurring to an AmeriCorps member during their service. Written notification is required and should be provided to your Program Officer **within 48 hours** of being informed of the injury or death.

Documentation of early member exit

Full documentation (including but not limited to member resignations or other communications, disciplinary records, medical records, obituaries, etc.) of the reasons for any early exit must be maintained in the member's file using an Early Exit Form. Programs must ensure that member timesheets are up to date and that an End-of-Term Evaluation is completed before the member leaves service.

AmeriCorps member exit survey

When a program enters a member's start date, eGrants defaults to an expected completion date that is one year from the start date. This date cannot be changed. The member exit form in the Portal becomes available 60 days before the expected completion date, and at that time the member exit survey also becomes available to the member through a separate link in the Portal.

This timing does not always work for programs with members serving less than full-time, who may complete their service well before the expected completion date. Whenever possible, these programs should make the exit survey available to members before they complete the exit process. The solution for these programs is to unlock the exit form in the Portal. Unlocking the exit form makes the exit survey link available to the member and sends the member a reminder to complete the survey. Programs do not have to exit their members at this time, but making the exit survey available to them will help increase response rates.

The instructions for unlocking the Member Exit Form and Survey in eGrants can be found on Basecamp.

Members who cannot access the exit form

Often, members will lose their credentials to their MyAmeriCorps account, making it difficult to access their exit form. To resolve this, first have the members call the AmeriCorps Hotline to attempt to update their login information. If this is not possible, the member may provide written authorization for the Program Director to submit the exit form on the member's behalf, with their input on the questionnaire. To access the exit form, click on S&N Workbasket in eGrants, then find the member, click on their name, and the form will populate. Be sure not to select the final certification box stating, "(To be completed program by staff only) I certify that the above-listed member did not certify his/her exit in spite of program due diligence to attain member-certified exit," unless you are attempting to bypass the form without the member-certified exit. Ensure you save the member's authorization in the member file.

Members who leave without completing the exit process

If a member leaves their term of service without completing the eGrants exit form, the program should make several attempts to contact the member to complete the forms and retain documentation of these attempts. Programs should be mindful of the AmeriCorps 30-day requirement for exits as they determine the policies for these situations. Timelines and contacts made with members should allow adequate time to make several contacts and exit the member within the 30-day timeframe.

In cases where it is impossible for the member to complete the exit process resulting from the death of the member or otherwise, the program should exit the member within 30 days of the last day of service. The program should navigate to the exit form in the MyAmeriCorps Portal via the pending exits tab of the workbasket if the required exit date is within the next month. If the exit needs to be unlocked because the expected date is far in the future, the program should pull up the member by searching by name or National Service Participant ID (NSPID) under Manage Members. The unlock icon is available under the member home page.

My AmeriCorps includes an option for the program to bypass the member-certified exit. This is needed when the member is not available to certify their own exit via My AmeriCorps. The member exit certification bypass option is found on the member part of the exit form. Scroll to the bottom of the member portion of the exit to find it. To proceed with this option, the program must document in the member file the reason(s) the member could not complete their portion of the exit form. **The burden**

of proof is on the program. For a member who has died, AmeriCorps does not specify that a death certificate or other evidence is required.

Next, the program will complete the program part of the exit process. For a member who has died, the member would exit the program for compelling personal circumstances. If the member is younger than 55, the member could also be exited for cause since no award could be accessed by a designated transferee. The same documentation would be used to support the compelling personal circumstances exit as would be used to support the member exit certification bypass.

The program should complete the end-of-term evaluation even though no subsequent service will be completed by the member. The program should explain in the file why other elements of the program's exit process (such as member survey, if applicable) are not able to be followed.

Member end date

Under no circumstances should members continue serving beyond the program's grant agreement period. This is for the protection of both the members and the program. Members serving beyond the program's 12-month grant agreement period will not be covered by a member contract (and are technically not members) and therefore raise many liability and safety issues for members, the public, and the program. Hours served outside of a fully executed member contract and/or grant agreement can be disallowed in case of audit, resulting in repayment of federal funds.

In limited circumstances, a member may serve after the date in their MSA, provided that they do not serve after the end of the program's grant agreement period. This must be discussed with the Serve Idaho Program Officer **at least 30 days** before the expected last day of service for that particular member. Please see Extending a Member's Term of Service for additional information.

Modifying end date

Exit information can be modified using the "Correct" link during the 30-day period from the Effective End Date. To make any corrections after 30 days, please contact your Program Officer and the AmeriCorps Hotline at 703-206-7276. This is allowable until education awards are made or scheduled to be made.

Suspension and exit

If a suspended member with the intention of returning does not return, the service end date in eGrants should be the date the member informs the program that they are not returning to service. Therefore, while the total hours served will be the last date hours are logged on the timesheet, that date will not be their actual exit date. The member must be exited within 30 days of their resignation.

Suspension and exit from service must also be documented in the eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal within 30 days of the event. If a member is made to exit past 30 days of the event for reasons entirely beyond the program's control, please provide your assigned Serve Idaho Program Officer with an explanation and documentation. To determine compliance with the 30-day exit requirements, use the Exit Approval Cycle Time Reports, which is available from the Reports menu in the eGrants Portal.

Member performance evaluations

(CNCS Terms and Conditions - Specific V.E, [45 CFR 2522.220\[c\]](#), [45 CFR 2526.15](#))

All full-time, three-quarter time, and half-time members must have a mid-term and end-of-term written

evaluation. Mid-term evaluations are not required for members who exit before the midpoint of their terms, or for members serving less than half-time. **All members, regardless of the term of service or successful completion, must have a written end-of-term evaluation.** Member evaluations should contain both the member's and supervisor's signatures and be dated by both parties.

At minimum, the end-of-term evaluation must include: the number of hours completed; whether the member has completed the required number of hours; whether the member has satisfactorily completed assignments; and whether the member has met other performance criteria that were clearly communicated at the beginning of the term of service. The member and the staff responsible must sign and date the completed evaluation. Under AmeriCorps regulations end-of-term evaluations are the key piece in determining a member's eligibility for additional terms of service.

Evaluations for members who exit early

All members who exit early must have a member end-of-term evaluation completed at the time of their exit and the evaluation must be maintained in the member file. Completing the exit form in the eGrants/My AmeriCorps Portal is not sufficient to meet the evaluation requirement. If a member is unavailable to sign the end of term evaluation, Program Directors should make a note of attempts to contact the member, sign, and date the document.

Refilling and converting member slots

When members leave early in their term of service or slots go unfilled, programs may be able to refill or convert those slots which enable them to enroll additional members.

The allowable slot types and associated FTEs are listed in the table below.

Service term	Service hours	Member Service Years (MSY)
Full time (FT)	1,700	1
Three-quarter time (TQT)	1,200	0.7
Half time (HT)	900	.5
Quarter time (QT)	450	0.26455027
Minimum time (MT)	300	0.21164022

Refilling member slots

The following conditions, established by AmeriCorps, must be adhered to by all AmeriCorps programs regarding refilling of member positions vacated by members who exit early:

- Programs may replace any member who terminates service before completing 30% of their term, provided that the member who terminates is not eligible for and does not receive a prorated education award.
- Only fully enrolled member service categories (slot types) may be refilled. For example, you may only refill a full-time position if all of your other full-time positions are filled.
- Programs may not refill the same position more than once.

Refill eligibility depends on several factors, and not all slots are eligible to be refilled. It depends on whether the exiting member is eligible to receive an education award and the percentage of time the

original member was in that slot. Programs may not fill the same member position more than once. The information provided in the chart below can be used as a quick reference to see if the slot may be eligible for refill.

When refilling a slot, a program should consider whether the new member would have enough time to complete their service term. It is best to determine whether a slot can and will be refilled before the current member leaves to give the program the best chance of filling the slot. The program may be able to convert slots to lesser type slots.

There may come a point when AmeriCorps restricts slot refilling nationally to ensure that AmeriCorps resources are available. At that time, AmeriCorps will not permit refilling if either (1) the total national AmeriCorps program enrollment reaches 97% of the awarded slots; or (2) the number of refills reaches 5% of the awarded slots. These restrictions apply to AmeriCorps programs as a whole. Unless otherwise notified, individual programs should strive to keep 100% enrollment and will be notified if the AmeriCorps restrictions are activated.

If the member has completed....	AND...	then...
less than 15% of their term	exits due to compelling personal circumstances (CPC)	their slot can be refilled
more than 15% of their term	exits due to (CPC)	their slot cannot be refilled if this member receives a partial education award
more than 15% of their term	exits due to (CPC)	their slot can be refilled if this member does not take a partial education award
Less than 30% of their term	exits for reasons that <u>do not qualify</u> as CPC	Their slot can be refilled
more than 30% of their term	exits for reasons that <u>do not qualify</u> as CPC	Their slot cannot be refilled

Converting slots

When a program has unfilled member slots they may consider converting them. For example, the program may want to convert 1 full-time slot to 2 half time slots or a combination of reduced half, quarter, or minimum time slots.

Programs must receive approval for conversion of slots from their Serve Idaho Program Officer prior to conversion. Use the Slot Conversion Calculator on Basecamp to help you determine allowable slot conversions. Programs should submit the following to their Program Officer in order to receive approval:

1. The Slot Conversion Request Form found on Basecamp.

2. Member Positions Description

3. Updated Living Allowance Pay Schedule

All conversions must be Trust-neutral, are subject to availability of funds in the Trust, and must comply with all assumptions on which Trust prudence and continued solvency are predicated. The total number of MSYs and education award amounts in the grant may not increase because of the slot conversion.

For example:

- 1 full-time member position (1 MSY) may be converted into 2 half-time slots ($2 \times .5$ members = 1 MSY).
- 1 full-time member position may not be converted into 4 quarter-time positions as the education awards would total more than the original ($4 \times .2646$); in this example, the maximum number of allowable quarter-time positions would be 3.

Depending on the conversion, a budget amendment may need to be initiated in America Learns to move Living Allowance into the correct line.

Your Serve Idaho Program Officer will review the submission and provide approval or denial within 7 business days. Serve Idaho will make the conversion within the week of the proposed start date. Prior to making the conversion, your Serve Idaho Program Officer will confirm the number of slots with the Program Director to ensure the maximization of MSY based on recruitment numbers. After confirmation, the Program Officer will make the conversion in eGrants and notify you when completed.

Programs may not request a transfer of currently enrolled members to a lesser-term status simply to provide a prorated education award if the member would otherwise be released for cause. It is also not allowed to request to convert a slot to a lesser-term slot at the end of a member's term of service

in order to award a prorated education award when the member has not completed the hours required by their original term.

Changing less than full-time members into a greater slot type is discouraged because it is very difficult to manage, unless done very early in the member's term of service. Serve Idaho may approve such changes only in extenuating circumstances if the program's current budget can accommodate such changes. The program must request the slot conversion in writing. Keep in mind that a member's minimum hours must be completed within 12 months of the member's original start date.

Slot conversions may be delayed in instances where the program is delinquent in Serve Idaho required actions.

Chapter eleven: Member benefits

(NOFO, CNCS Terms and Conditions, and [45 CFR 2522.240](#), [45 CFR 2522.250](#))

All members are to be informed of their eligibility for AmeriCorps benefits such as the living allowance, health care, student loan forbearance, and childcare. Information about member benefits is included in the Member Service Agreement (MSA). If any member waives a program benefit, the program must maintain proper documentation of the waiver in the member file.

Living allowance

(CNCS Terms and Conditions - Specific VIII. A, B, C and [45 CFR 2522.240](#))

All full-time AmeriCorps members must be provided with a living allowance (member stipend). Though not required, programs have the option to provide an allowance to part-time members. Living allowances must be provided within the minimums and maximums which are stipulated in each year's application instructions and must align with the budget outlined in your approved grant agreement. If your program is a professional corps or education award-only program, it is important that you understand the specific regulations that guide those unique programs. For more information about the living allowance, please review the AmeriCorps FAQ and/or contact Serve Idaho prior to the beginning of the program year.

Segal education award

Members who successfully complete their terms of service are eligible for an education award; members who exit early for compelling personal circumstances may be eligible for a prorated education award if they complete at least 15% of their term of service. The amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award is tied to the maximum amount of the U.S. Department of Education's Pell Grant, as well as the member's service hours. Since the maximum amount for Pell grants can change from year to year, so can the dollar amount of education awards. Programs should check the NOFO/RFP that applied to that program year for corresponding education award amounts.

FY25-26 Segal AmeriCorps Education Award Amounts

Full time	\$7,395.00
Three-quarter time	\$5,176.50
Half-time	\$3,697.50
Reduced half-time	\$2,817.14
Quarter-time	\$1,956.35
Minimum-time	\$1,565.08
Abbreviated time	\$416.17

** Please note these values change annually.*

Education award and term limits

[\(42 U.S.C. 12601-12604, 12606 PART 2526 – Eligibility for an Education Award\)](#)

Members may not receive more than an amount equal to the aggregate value of two full-time education awards. The “value” of an education award received is calculated based on its proportion to the full education award in the year the award was approved. An individual who, based upon the aggregate value of education awards previously received, is not eligible to receive the entire award amount offered for a term of service, will instead receive the portion of the education award that he or she is eligible to receive.

Individuals who have received a transferred education award must count the value of that education award when determining the education award amount, they are eligible to earn through their own service (i.e. a member whose grandmother transferred to them a 0.5 value education award can only earn up to 1.5 education awards through their own service). See Transferability ([42 U.S.C. 12601-12604, 12606 PART 2530 – Transfer of Education Awards](#)) for more information.

Members may serve the number of terms needed to attain the aggregate value of two full-time education awards or four terms, **whichever is longer**. Each term of service for which an individual earns an education award counts as one term of service in computing the term limitations. This includes terms for which a member earns a full-time, half-time, and any other type of part-time or prorated education award. Outside of ASN, members may serve three terms in AmeriCorps VISTA (including VISTA Summer Associates), and two terms in AmeriCorps NCCC.

Using the education award

The education award can be used to pay education costs at qualified institutions of higher education (i.e. tuition, fees, etc.), to pay for educational training (i.e. non-degree programs such as technical or vocational training), and to repay qualified student loans (generally federal student loans, NOT private loans). Members can make payments from their award in full or in part and can take up to seven years after their term of service has ended to use their award. Individuals who receive a transferred award ten years from the date on which the transferring individual earned the award to use it. Members will manage their education awards through the eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal.

Some institutions will match the education award if it is redeemed at their school but claiming the education award up front may also affect a member’s eligibility for other financial assistance. Members should research the best option for their individual circumstances.

Tips for Members on Using the Education Award

- **Split payments are normal** - When paying for tuition, schools often receive two disbursements: half at the beginning of the term and half midway through. This is standard and may appear as partial payment at first—don’t panic!
- **Allow time for processing** - Processing can take up to 4-6 weeks, so start early — before tuition due dates.
- **Withdrawals and refunds** - If the student withdraws from school after funds are applied, the school may refund the Trust — not to the student. That refunded amount is returned to the award balance and must be used before your seven-year deadline

If members are having difficulty navigating their MyAmeriCorps Portal to request education awards,

please share the [How to Access the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award instructions](#) found in Basecamp under Docs & Files > Members > Member Benefits.

Taxes on the education award

AmeriCorps Segal Education Award payments (interest and award disbursements) are taxable as federal income in the year they are redeemed. State taxes may also apply. Members should anticipate this when choosing when and how much of their education award to redeem.

Transferability of the education award

[\(42 U.S.C. 12601-12604, 12606 PART 2530 – Transfer of Education Awards\)](#)

A member may transfer an education award if the member was age 55 or older on the day the member enrolled in the AmeriCorps State and National position; the award the individual is requesting to transfer has not expired; and the individual designated to receive the transferred award (a) is the transferring individual's child, grandchild, or foster child; (b) is a citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States; and (c) has not already utilized the equivalent value of two full-time education awards. The person considering the transfer to another party should verify any additional requirements or stipulations by contacting the National Service Trust prior to attempting to make a transfer.

A transferred education award may be used for the same purposes as an earned education award. Members can initiate a transfer request through the eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal. Individuals receiving a transferred award have 10 years from the receipt of award to redeem it.

Schools of national service

Many colleges and universities will match the education award or provide special scholarships and incentives to AmeriCorps alumni. Find out more at [AmeriCorps Schools of National Service](#).

Some perks provided by Schools of National Service may include but are not limited to:

- Tuition matching for the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award
- Scholarship or fellowship to AmeriCorps alumni
- Priority points for admission consideration for AmeriCorps alumni
- In-state tuition for AmeriCorps alumni
- Cover expenses like books and supplies, room and board, or other personal costs like transportation for AmeriCorps alumni
- One-year enrollment deferrals for individuals to serve in AmeriCorps
- Academic credit for AmeriCorps experience

Student loan deferment and forbearance

Individuals who are serving in a term of service in an approved AmeriCorps position may be eligible to have the repayment of their qualified student loans temporarily postponed while they are serving. This is through an action called forbearance. While an individual's loan is in forbearance, the member is not required to make payments. Interest may continue to accrue but if the member successfully completes the term of service and the loan is a qualified student loan, the National Service Trust will pay all or a

portion of the interest that accrued during the service period.

If a loan is eligible for forbearance based upon AmeriCorps service, the member can request the loan holder give forbearance during the service period. (A "loan holder" is the entity that holds the loan promissory note and has the right to collect from the borrower). Members can easily and quickly request forbearance online through the [MyAmeriCorps portal](#).

Program Directors should be cautious about promising these benefits to members because lending institutions have latitude in deciding whether they will grant these statuses depending on the type of loan, whether it has been consolidated, and a number of other factors. Loans already in forbearance cannot be switched to forbearance due to AmeriCorps service and are not eligible for the interest accrual payment option. If there are questions, the member should work directly with the lending institution to determine qualifications.

For more information, please visit the AmeriCorps website.

Healthcare (CNCS Terms and Conditions - Specific VIII.D)

Programs must provide, or make available, healthcare insurance to members serving a 1,700-hour full-time term who are not otherwise covered by a healthcare policy at the time the member begins the term of service. The program must also provide, or make available, healthcare insurance to full-time members who lose coverage during their term of service. The plan must meet the AmeriCorps healthcare standards detailed in the [CNCS Terms and Conditions](#). AmeriCorps will not cover healthcare costs for dependent coverage.

Full-time members (and less than full-time members serving in a full-time capacity and receiving healthcare at the option of the program) must complete a Healthcare and Childcare Acknowledgement Form. This form documents their choice to receive healthcare benefits from the program or certify their current healthcare coverage.

AmeriCorps 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 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:

1. On the date they begin their service terms; and
2. 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 30 days from the triggering event to select a plan. Coverage effective date is prospective based on the date of plan selection. For instructions on how to activate the special enrollment period, [view a copy of the HHS Notice](#).

Members can also visit [healthcare](#) for additional information about special enrollment periods.

Documentation of waiver for healthcare coverage

Within the member file for each eligible member, the program shall maintain either a copy of the member's health care enrollment or a signed form certifying that the member has alternate coverage and is declining health care coverage.

Childcare

(CNCS Terms and Conditions and [45 CFR 2522.250](#))

The grantee must ensure that childcare assistance is made available to those full-time members who need such assistance to participate. This benefit is provided by the Corporation, meaning it does not come out of the program's budget. Members are eligible if, at the time of acceptance into the program, the member is not currently receiving childcare assistance from another source, including a parent or guardian, which would continue to be provided while the participant serves in the program. Please refer to [45 CFR 2522.250](#) for more information regarding eligibility to receive childcare. Programs whose members are income eligible and have qualified dependents may access childcare by working directly with the Corporation's national childcare provider, GAP Solutions Inc. (GAPSI), without prior Corporation approval.

Find more information on the [AmeriCorps Childcare Benefits Program website](#).

AmeriCorps will not cover childcare costs for members who served on a less than full-time basis for a sustained period of time, or who have ceased serving or who are serving in a Professional Corps program. Programs may provide childcare benefits to less-than-full-time members serving in a full-time capacity, but they are not required to do so.

Documentation of waiver of childcare

If a member decides to utilize this benefit, the program must maintain all documentation in the member's file. All full-time members must sign a waiver of this benefit if they decide not to utilize it. A copy of this enrollment or waiver acknowledgement must be included in each full-time member's file. Utilize the Healthcare and Childcare Acknowledgment Form.

Eligibility for other federal government benefits

Whether an AmeriCorps benefit counts as income in determining eligibility for other federal government benefits depends upon the federal benefits program in question. The National and Community Service Act of 1990 (NCSA) provides that allowances, earnings, and payments to participants in AmeriCorps programs "shall not be considered income for the purposes of determining eligibility for and the amount of income transfer and in-kind aid furnished under any federal or federally assisted program based on need, other than as provided under the Social Security Act."

HUD, SNAP, VA benefits

If the benefits program is federally funded and is based on need and is not provided under the Social Security Act (other than SSI), AmeriCorps State and National benefits should not affect an AmeriCorps member's eligibility for such assistance. Examples include Food Stamps (SNAP), Pell Grants, HUD housing programs, and VA benefits.

Partnering with Idaho Hunger Relief Alliance for SNAP Support

AmeriCorps programs in Idaho can collaborate with the Idaho Hunger Relief Alliance to help members

navigate SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) by:

3. Referring members to the SNAP-ARK Call Center (1-833-762-7275, Mon & Fri 10 a.m.–6 p.m.): staff assist with eligibility screening, online applications, follow-ups, and case status checks—with Spanish-language support available
4. Hosting a “SNAP Matters” workshop: interactive 30-minute sessions that introduce members (and staff) to SNAP basics, clear misconceptions, and outline application steps.
5. Scheduling SNAP Outreach Training for staff/volunteers: 2-hour training that equips program leaders to guide members through eligibility questions, paperwork, and potential local employment & training requirements

Other federal programs

If the benefits program is not federally funded, not need-based, or is provided under the Social Security Act (other than SSI); the member’s eligibility for those benefits might be affected. The member should contact the relevant state or federal agency responsible for the program in question, or the state commission, to get a determination. Examples of benefits that might be affected by AmeriCorps benefits are Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, Medicare, and SSDI.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a block grant program provided under the SSA. Because TANF is under the SSA, the AmeriCorps State and National living allowance may be considered income for the purpose of determining eligibility for and the amount of aid under TANF.

Unemployment

(A.C.A. 11-10-210(a)(4) of the Idaho Employment Security Law)

In Idaho, AmeriCorps members are not considered employees for the purposes of unemployment insurance coverage, thus programs will not report AmeriCorps member living allowance to the Department of Workforce Services and will not pay unemployment insurance on its AmeriCorps members. Therefore, members should not be listed on the agency/organization quarterly employee listing for the purposes of unemployment insurance coverage. If you do include the members in your unemployment report, you run the risk of losing an unemployment ruling and being forced to pay the former member. Federal funds cannot be used for member unemployment claims.

Workers’ compensation

(CNCS Terms and Conditions – Specific VIII.C.4)

Although under federal law members are not considered employees for purposes of the program, federal law provides an exception for workers’ compensation purposes. Idaho requires that all AmeriCorps members be covered by the agency workers’ compensation plan for service-related injuries. The costs incurred providing workers’ compensation for members is an allowable cost to the grant.

Member travel reimbursement/relocation expenses

Programs may establish a travel reimbursement policy for members provided the approved grant budget includes an associated member travel cost category (budget line item). Costs for members to travel outside their service location or between sites, such as bus passes to local sites or mileage reimbursement for use of a car, are allowable if the program can justify the cost as reasonable, allocable, and necessary (see “Finances” section of this handbook). Programs may not provide travel

reimbursement/expenses for a member's regular commute to and from their service site location.

Where applicable, Programs should utilize the current standard reimbursement rate(s) of the organizational for mileage.

Additionally, Programs may establish a relocation benefit to members who relocate to serve. Relocation assistance is not an approved budget expense and therefore must be provided outside of federal assistance or match funds. Relocation assistance is financial support to help with the cost associated with moving to a new community for AmeriCorps service. Programs are advised to notify members that relocation assistance may not cover all expenses or alleviate all inconveniences associated with a member's move. When drafting a relocation assistance policy, programs should consider:

- Eligibility and amount
- Data collection
- Payment method

Programs are advised to keep equity in mind when establishing policies, including alternative methods of payment for members who cannot incur costs upfront for reimbursement.

Jury duty

(CNCS Terms and Conditions- Specific)

If a member is called to jury duty, the program must allow the member to serve on a jury without being penalized for doing so. During the time AmeriCorps members serve as jurors, they should continue to receive credit for the hours they would have normally accrued had they not been called to jury duty, a living allowance, healthcare coverage and, if applicable, childcare coverage regardless of any reimbursements for incidental expenses received from the court. The members may not wear AmeriCorps gear while serving on the jury. The members must provide documentation of their jury duty.

Chapter twelve: Site management

AmeriCorps programs that utilize external service sites for placement of AmeriCorps Members should ensure that they are effectively managing those partnerships to support overall program goals, AmeriCorps compliance, and quality member experiences. Serve Idaho AmeriCorps programs are expected to monitor sites and provide technical assistance and support to Site Supervisors to continuously improve the program.

Service site selection

Service sites must have legal status as a state or local government, an Indian Tribe, a non-profit organization (religious organizations are permissible), or an educational institution and provide one or more types of eligible programs as defined in [CFR §2522.110](#).

For-Profit organizations and organizations that focus solely on advocacy and lobbying are not eligible.

Programs should consult with their Serve Idaho Program Officer before bringing on new service sites not defined in the grant application or in the event of a service site closure. Proposed service sites located outside of the service areas listed on the approved grant application will require a grant amendment in eGrants.

Serve Idaho AmeriCorps programs are required to utilize a written site selection process and selection criteria based on:

6. Grant requirements and program goals
7. Adequate service site capacity (ability to recruit, train, and supervise members)
8. An alignment between the service site organization's mission and the identified community need
9. Past performance (if applicable)

Programs must have a documented method for selecting service sites based on established service site selection criteria ([45 CFR §2522.450](#) and [45 CFR §2522.475](#)).

Assigning members to service locations

All operating sites and service locations must be entered in the My AmeriCorps Portal for all members within eight (8) calendar days of members starting a term of service. This includes the name of the organization and the full address or zip plus-four of the service locations where each member will be serving. If a member is serving at multiple service locations, the program must select as the site where the member serves the majority of their hours as the member's primary assignment. However, all service locations must be listed in the Portal.

Memorandum of Understanding

All programs will have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with external service sites, in which both parties attest to their roles and responsibilities in the partnership. At a minimum, the agreement should cover:

- Program and AmeriCorps Member goals.
- Responsibilities of the site and Site Supervisor related to member recruitment, supervision,

training, and evaluation.

- Responsibilities of the service site relating to branding and posting of AmeriCorps signage.
- CNCS Prohibited member activities.
- Unallowable member activities and appropriate member duties.
- Disciplinary procedures and the role of the supervisor in member discipline and termination.
- Financial and performance obligations on the part of the site.
- Consequences for non-compliance with AmeriCorps rules, provisions, and guidelines at the federal, state and program level.
- Other program-specific requirements.

These agreements should be reviewed and reassessed on at least an annual basis and revised as needed. Depending on the scope and nature of the project, additional items may be covered in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Service site orientation and support

Serve Idaho AmeriCorps Programs must develop and implement a plan to effectively orient and train service sites and Site Supervisors, so that they may adequately support and engage members. The plan must include conducting a Site Supervisor orientation and providing ongoing training and support to service sites. Please see the Serve Idaho Member and Site Supervisor Training Policy for more details on these requirements.

Site Supervisor training

Site supervisor orientation should be conducted yearly for all Site Supervisors, regardless of how long they have supervised AmeriCorps Members. At a minimum, all Site Supervisors should be provided with a refresher orientation. Programs should maintain copies of agendas and sign-in sheets. PowerPoint slides and online attendance tracking are permissible. The orientation should take place before the beginning of the program year and cover at a minimum:

- CNCS prohibited activities and the requirement to post a prohibited activities sign at service sites
- Member position descriptions, allowable and unallowable activities.
- The Member Service Agreement, to include member rights and responsibilities, disciplinary, suspension, and termination rules, and grievance procedures.
- The role of the Site Supervisor and working with AmeriCorps members.
- The history and background context of AmeriCorps National Service programs.
- The AmeriCorps program's structure and goals (including performance measures).
- Familiarity with Serve Idaho.

Training and support for sites and Site Supervisors should be ongoing throughout the program year. This could include conference calls, email updates, or additional in-person meetings and training.

Programs must ensure that service sites demonstrate an understanding of national service requirements

and priorities through the following activities:

- Supporting member participation in AmeriCorps trainings, events, and service days.
- Ensuring members wear AmeriCorps gear during service hours.
- Prominently posting at the site:
 - Serve Idaho AmeriCorps Serving Here sign.
 - Prohibited activities sign.
 - Drug-free workplace notice.
- Using the AmeriCorps logo on program recruitment materials, recruitment ads, and other program materials.
- Using required non-discrimination language on program materials.

Site-specific orientation

Members should also be given a site-specific orientation for their service site, which includes an overview of the placement site, introduction of key contacts, policies and procedures for the placement site, roles, duties, tasks, etc.

Service site supervision and monitoring

Serve Idaho AmeriCorps programs must establish and implement a documented plan to ensure that service sites comply with all applicable AmeriCorps rules, provisions, and guidelines established at the federal, state, and sub-grantee levels. The program should conduct a formal compliance visit to each service site at least once per program year. Informal compliance visits should be conducted as needed.

Documentation of the visit(s) must be maintained in program files.

The program must create and carry out, as applicable, a written procedure for addressing service site non-compliance and must provide evidence that compliance issues have been addressed, as applicable. Additional oversight considerations include:

- Working with service sites to develop an effective method of tracking and reporting program activities, outputs, outcomes, and "Great Stories."
- Ensuring that service sites institute safeguards as necessary and appropriate to ensure the safety of members.
- Establishing a process to ensure it receives timely notifications from service sites regarding any serious injuries or death sustained by members in the performance of their service responsibilities.
- Establishing and maintaining a procedure for the filing and adjudication of grievances from service sites and other individuals concerning the program.

Check Site management checklist	
☐	Written service site selection criteria and documented method for selecting service sites
☐	Written and signed MOU for each service site (submitted to Serve Idaho)
☐	Written service site orientation and training plan
☐	Written service site monitoring and oversight plan
☐	Written procedure for addressing service site noncompliance

Chapter thirteen: Branding and marketing

Every year, thousands of stories about AmeriCorps Seniors and AmeriCorps appear in the media – almost all generated by local project staff and volunteers. Publicizing your program is a means of building support for your program and increasing your likelihood of success. Taking the time to communicate with the public helps attract resources from your community, including volunteers, sponsors, and funding, and helps educate people about your program. Communications and marketing resources are available at [AmeriCorps Communication Resources](#).

Presentations and published material

Per the [AmeriCorps general terms and conditions](#), when marketing your AmeriCorps program, it must be acknowledged that it is funded in part by Serve Idaho and AmeriCorps. All agreements with subrecipients, operating sites, or service locations related to the AmeriCorps program must explicitly state that the program is an AmeriCorps program. Similarly, recipients and subrecipients shall identify all national service members serving in their programs as AmeriCorps members.

Publications required verbiage

Publications created by members or grant-funded staff are consistent with the purposes of the grant. The AmeriCorps logo is included in such documents. The program assures that the following acknowledgment and disclaimer appear in any external report or publication of material based upon work supported by this grant. "This material is based upon work supported by AmeriCorps under AmeriCorps Grant No. Opinions or points of view expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of, or a position that is endorsed by, AmeriCorps."

AmeriCorps signage

All sites hosting an AmeriCorps member must have signage showing that a member is serving in the location and displaying all prohibited member activities. Signage is provided by Serve Idaho, but it is the responsibility of the program to ensure each site has the signage prominently displayed.

AmeriCorps logo

The AmeriCorps logo shall be included in publications related to an award of AmeriCorps assistance or resources including the programs website. The AmeriCorps Idaho logo can be found on Basecamp in General Grants Management Folder under Docs & Files.

Programs may not alter the AmeriCorps logos or other AmeriCorps branding and must obtain written permission from AmeriCorps before using the AmeriCorps name or logo on materials that will be sold. Programs must also obtain written permission from AmeriCorps before permitting donors to use the AmeriCorps name or logo in promotional materials.

Program may not use or display the AmeriCorps logo or name in connection with any activity prohibited by statute or regulation.

AmeriCorps programs must follow brand guidelines when utilizing the AmeriCorps logo. The [AmeriCorps brand guidelines](#) provide the color palette, tints, shades, co-branding requirements, and messaging requirements.

Photographs

Each subgrantee is requested to take several high-quality digital pictures of AmeriCorps members “in action” wearing their AmeriCorps gear. Programs are expected to send any quality photos along with stories or captions that describe the activity to Serve Idaho to share and highlight member achievements on a regular basis through social media and with AmeriCorps, or in publications. Some of the opportunities for programs to share their photos with Serve Idaho can be with progress reports, or when members or programs are featured in local news.

1. Member informed consent

During the enrollment of members, programs need to obtain member informed consents to ensure they are aware of this expectation. Members will agree to the use of their photo and/or voice recording by signing their member service agreement, or in some cases, programs may elect to have members sign a separate consent form.

2. Client informed consent

Some of the best action photos of members are those in which members are performing service with their clients or students. Programs are advised to receive consent from individuals who appear in photos or videos. Programs should keep the completed forms on file when taking and sending photos to Serve Idaho.

Key terms and definitions

America's Service Commissions (ASC): ASC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit representing and promoting state service commissions across the United States and territories. They are committed to working on national representation and advocacy of national service and volunteerism, and peer-to-peer support. Through this network, voluntary service, in all its forms, is strengthened and enhanced by mobilizing the expertise of these individuals to represent all streams of national and community service.

AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps agency: The federal agency that helps more than 5 million Americans improve the lives of their fellow citizens through service with AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps Seniors, and other national service initiatives. Working hand in hand with local partners, AmeriCorps invests funds into nonprofit, community-based, and faith-based organizations that are making a difference in local communities.

AmeriCorps Member/Volunteer: An individual who is completing a term of service for an AmeriCorps program. They are referred to as members or AmeriCorps Volunteers at the discretion of the program. and not workers, to enforce the service aspect of the program.

AmeriCorps State and National: AmeriCorps State focuses on direct service to meet underserved community needs. AmeriCorps State funds stay within one state and are funneled through a state commission to nonprofits, government entities, faith-based organizations or colleges/universities who then oversee the programming and AmeriCorps members.

Idaho Department of Labor (IDOL): This is the state agency under which Serve Idaho is housed. IDOL's mission is to connect job seekers with employment opportunities, support workers through career and life transitions, and administer state labor laws.

Idaho Service Commission - Serve Idaho: Also known as the Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism or, the Commission, is the state entity that distributes and manages AmeriCorps State funding and programs in Idaho. Commissions are overseen by AmeriCorps and are required if a state receives AmeriCorps State funding. Commission refers to both the staff who work at the commission and the Governor-appointed body that oversees the staff and funding approval process.

Serve Idaho seeks to empower communities through service. In addition to managing the State AmeriCorps sub-grant program, the office works to build collaboration across federal and state agencies, community-based organizations, and national streams of service programs, improving lives and strengthening communities. The office goals are set forth in the Idaho State Service Plan.

Authorized Grant Signatory: This is the individual who is authorized by the board of directors or other governing authority to sign the sub-grant on behalf of the sub-recipient. Please notify your Program Officer to update this information in eGrants if there is turnover.

Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS): The legal name for AmeriCorps. Both CNCS and AmeriCorps Agency will be used throughout this handbook.

eGrants/My AmeriCorps Portal/the Portal: Programs must utilize the Portal to enroll, manage, and exit members, apply for funding, and communicate with AmeriCorps. Programs must utilize this AmeriCorps sponsored website to recruit AmeriCorps Members. eGrants is also referred to as the AmeriCorps' Grants Management System.

Federal Financial Report (FFR): Twice a year, Serve Idaho submits an FFR to AmeriCorps Agency to

note the amount of federal funding used, federal funds used as match, and program income.

Governor’s Commission on Service and Volunteerism (GCSV): The Commission is a bi-partisan commission made up of passionate commissioners who believe that volunteers are vital to

creating strong, vibrant communities. Each commissioner is appointed by the Governor and together they assist Serve Idaho with determining community needs, setting policy and program priorities, ensuring national service funds are used effectively, supporting national days of service, and promoting national service and volunteering throughout their communities.

Grant Application Review Process (GARP): This is the process in which AmeriCorps State funding is reviewed and approved by a State Service Commission. It encompasses outreach to potential program organizations, the creation of the AmeriCorps State applications based on AmeriCorps guidance and regulations, the review of said applications and the subsequent awards process.

Program Progress Report (PPR): Serve Idaho AmeriCorps Programs submit a PPR to Serve Idaho four times a year. This report tracks progress on performance measures, member activities, and overall progress toward meeting grant objectives. These are also referred to as the Quarterly Progress Report.

Key personnel: Employees and contractors that are identified by name or position in the Federal award or as determined by the program. Changes to staff listed in the award require prior approval from Engage.

Member Service Year (MSY): One MSY is equivalent to one full-time member. AmeriCorps funds are contingent on the number of MSYs requested by the program. There are 7 types of AmeriCorps member terms or slots; full time (1700), three-quarter-time (1200), half time (900), reduced half time (675), quarter time (450), minimum time (300), and abbreviated time (100). The total MSYs a program requests depends on the number and type of slots/members positions included in a particular program design.

National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC): The NSCHC is a screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. The requirements apply to anyone receiving a salary, stipend, living allowance or education award through an AmeriCorps grant.

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): This is the public notice Serve Idaho sends out when AmeriCorps State funding is available.

Periodic Expense Report (PER): Periodic Expense Report. This is the form used to document funds drawn by programs. It is reviewed by Serve Idaho for approval so funds can be reimbursed to the program for AmeriCorps (CNCS) expenses incurred.

Prime grantee: A prime grantee is a direct recipient of an AmeriCorps grant from AmeriCorps Agency; prime grantees include state commissions, national/multi-state programs, and tribal programs.

Program Director: This refers to the primary individual responsible for the AmeriCorps program. They are the main point of contact for the program.

Scope of Work: This refers to the approved set of program activities and responsibilities outlined in the program’s official documents, including the AmeriCorps grant application, approved budget, subrecipient agreement, and any applicable amendments. These documents collectively define the allowable service activities, performance measures, member roles, and operational expectations for the program. Any significant changes to the scope of work must be submitted for approval.

Service: Serve Idaho refers to “service” in this handbook when referencing AmeriCorps member’s duties. AmeriCorps members “serve,” they do not work or volunteer at their site. Service is considered the action of helping others in a structured program. AmeriCorps members may receive a living allowance in exchange for their service, but it is not considered a wage or based on the number of hours they serve.

Service site: This is a group or organization that acts as a project sponsor and is responsible for the actual location where a project is to be performed. This entity may provide task-specific training, technical assistance, supervision, or other services as agreed to in a Memorandum of Understanding between the program and the service site. Also referred to as Operational Site.

Streams of service: There are three types of AmeriCorps programs under the AmeriCorps umbrella, AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps State/National and AmeriCorps NCCC. Serve Idaho manages AmeriCorps State programs. Each stream of services has its own specific regulations and goals. Types of AmeriCorps programs include AmeriCorps State and National, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), AmeriCorps Seniors (RSVP, Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions), and National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), including FEMA Corps.

Subgrantee/ Subrecipient: An organization that receives AmeriCorps grant funds or member positions from a prime grantee of AmeriCorps Agency. In Idaho, Serve Idaho AmeriCorps Programs are subgrantees.

Training and Technical Assistance (TTA): The support and assistance provided to AmeriCorps programs to strengthen program operations. Serve Idaho provides TTA to Serve Idaho AmeriCorps Programs, similarly, programs provide TTA to service sites and members.

Volunteer: An individual who gives their time without monetary compensation for a community organization or cause. This person may or may not be in a structured program, but they do not receive a living stipend and are not under contract.

Vulnerable populations: Includes children aged 17 or younger, persons aged 60 and older, and/or individuals with disabilities. “Individuals with disabilities” has the same meaning given to the term in the Rehabilitation Act in 29 U.S.C. § 705(20)(B) and includes any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.