

SUMMER READING CORPS

Position Description Requirements

A. General Requirements

Every member must have a member position description. Position descriptions must fully describe the duties assigned to the member and must clearly state that the member is subject to the heightened three-part criminal history check, due to service activities that would give the member recurring access to vulnerable populations.

i. Eligible Service Sites

All organizations receiving Summer Reading Corps support must be one of the following types of public organizations. Members placed at organizations that do not fall into one of these categories will have their service hours at that location disallowed.

- Non-profit organizations (including faith-based organizations) that are not solely focused on lobbying
- State and local governments
- Elementary and secondary schools
- Indian tribes
- Institutions of higher education
- Labor organizations

ii. Position Description Guidelines

Host sites can use the following guidelines to ensure that member position descriptions accurately and adequately describe allowable duties assigned to the member.

1. List service activities that are specific to each member.
 1. Activities in which members engage but which are not included within the position description may be considered noncompliant or unallowable.
 2. Multiple members should not have the same position description unless performing the same activities for the same term.
2. Describe all member activities explicitly to ensure that prohibited activities are not included.
3. Do not include phrases like, “other duties as assigned” or similarly vague statements about member responsibilities.
4. Does not use employment terms such as: “work/job, job description, hired, or employee”. Instead the position description should use appropriate National Service terminology like, “serve/service, position description, enrolled, and member/service participant”.
5. Avoid abbreviations and acronyms – instead spell out the terms at the first usage and then use the acronym or abbreviation later in the document.
6. If a member position description includes member participation in volunteer recruitment, volunteer management or similar activities, a brief description of the potential activities for which the member will be recruiting must be added within the position description itself. For example, “Recruit and manage volunteers to support the afterschool program.”
7. **DO NOT USE THE FOLLOWING WORDS OR PHRASES**
 1. “Other duties as assigned”

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2. Work or job (use serve instead)
3. Assist (describe the specific tasks instead)
4. Manage (describe the specific responsibilities instead)
5. Supervise (describe the specific responsibilities instead)

B. Guidance on Appropriate Service Activities

The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service has established these guidelines to help programs make a determination about whether proposed service activities are appropriate for an AmeriCorps member position. Here are some guidelines to use to determine if proposed activities are eligible for designation as an AmeriCorps service position:

Non duplication or displacement

1. Member activities must not replace staff or community volunteer responsibilities.
2. AmeriCorps is intended to be above-and-beyond what the individual or regular volunteers would “normally” do.
3. Member activities must be;
 1. more expansive
 2. require more time
 3. include additional activities or,
 4. in other ways are outside of the scope of what a staff person or volunteer would “normally” do, this would potentially be an appropriate member service role.

Connection to Program Outcomes

1. Activities must be connected to the Summer Reading Corps design, goals, and performance measures.
2. The prospective member activities must be in alignment with SRC’s identified community need of improving the literacy of Iowan’s through summer programming.
3. For example, a school-based program with a goal of increasing student academic performance couldn’t enroll a member whose activities focused on improving student health and nutrition, unless they could establish a connection between this member’s activities and the program’s overall goals.
4. Similarly, members whose stated role is to provide tutoring activities cannot assign those members to recess duty or to supervise the lunchroom.

Administrative activities are not allowed

1. Members must not serve in a primarily administrative role.
2. For example, if a service site expects its staff to maintain their client files, this responsibility should not be shifted to an AmeriCorps member who starts service at the agency. The member may also be expected to maintain his/her own files, but not those of other staff.

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3. Similarly, agencies may not assign AmeriCorps members to cover the essential duties of a staff member absent temporarily (such as for maternity or medical leave).

Fundraising (cash or in-kind) is generally not allowed

- Members cannot:
 - Raise funds for their living allowance
 - Raise funds for an organization's operating expenses or endowment
 - Raise funds for an organization other than their service site
 - Write a grant application for funding provided by a federal agency including AmeriCorps VISTA, Summer VISTA associates, the Corporation for National and Community Service grant proposals, and AmeriCorps grants
 - Spend more than 10% of their service hours on fundraising activities
 - Solely recruit volunteers to do any of the above
- Fundraising activities might be allowable if:
 - The activities raise cash or in-kind funds directly supporting the member's specific service project

AmeriCorps and Academic requirements

1. The position should be defined by AmeriCorps service expectations and not those established for another school or employment purpose.
2. For example, a program should not simply designate what had been an unpaid internship as an AmeriCorps position, unless the program can demonstrate that (1) the AmeriCorps position requires the individual to complete service hours AND (2) conducts activities providing a benefit to the community beyond the standard internship expectations.

C. Member Service Projects and Policies

While it is allowable for members to have participation/leadership in service projects (outside of the day-to-day service activities) as part of the member position description or service activities, the host site must ensure that the activities completed by the member are in alignment with the program's identified community needs and member activities as outlined in the approved grant application. In addition, the host site must have a way to verify the types of projects in which the members are involved and ensure that they do not include prohibited and/or unallowable activities.

D. Prohibited Activities

CNCS has a strong emphasis on monitoring for prohibited activities, and the consequences for programs that fail to adhere to these prohibitions can be high-profile and severe. All programs should make note of the prohibited activities and ensure that members, site supervisors, and other staff are well-versed in them. It is required that prohibited activities are covered in the Member and Supervisor Orientations, as well as specifically detailed in the member service agreement and host site agreements.

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 below on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using

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non-CNCS funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo, nor should they identify themselves as AmeriCorps members, while doing so.

E. Suggested Activities

We have found that college students can have meaningful summer service opportunities that can leave a lasting effect on your organization. Below is a list of capacity building interventions, outcomes, and activities that we think are best suited for college students.

Community Engagement

1. Benefits of these activities include
 1. Increased activities to expand awareness of the organization
 2. Increased diversity of partnership arrangements
2. Example activities (activities listed on position descriptions must be specific to the member's project)
 1. Creation of an external website
 2. Procedures to regularly update external website
 3. Regular staff/volunteer contribution to the website's blog
 4. Development of a social media policy
 5. Creation of social media accounts
 6. Regular communication with key stakeholders (e.g., email, newsletter)
 7. Creation of a place for clients/staff/volunteers to download program documents
 8. Ongoing identification of potential partners
 9. Development of brochures, newsletter, marketing materials
 10. Ongoing management of event/client meeting invitations
 11. An established procedure to reserve client or event meeting space
 12. Meeting minutes are regularly recorded and disseminated
 13. Event follow-up communication is regular and consistent

Organization Development

1. Benefits of these activities include
 1. Regular assessments of organization strengths and needs
 2. Regular assessments of external opportunities and risks
2. Example activities (activities listed on position descriptions must be specific to the member's project)
 1. Development of an organization database
 2. Regular maintenance of an organization database
 3. Researching organizational management best-practices
 4. Annual reviews of state/federal regulations
 5. Maintain awareness of state/federal legislation
 6. Researching issue briefs
 7. Regularly reviewing current studies or evaluations
 8. Researching evidence based practices/model programs

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Program Development

1. Benefits of these activities include
 1. Increase the number of clients served
 2. Track types and amounts of program services provided
 3. Obtain client feedback
 4. Track client outcome data
2. Example activities (activities listed on position descriptions must be specific to the member's project)
 1. Organized staff or volunteer training workshops
 2. Development of program training modules
 3. Development of curriculum for new or existing program(s)/event(s)
 4. Creation of an operations manual for new or existing program(s)/event(s)
 5. Development or implementation of a new program(s)/event(s)
 6. Development of a survey to research community need
 7. Regular data analysis performed on research
 8. Established program assessments or evaluation
 9. Regular data collection for tracking/reporting
 10. Evaluating community needs by GIS mapping
 11. Established process to collect oral histories from clients/community members

Volunteer Management

1. Benefits of these activities include
 1. Increased visibility in the community
 2. Increased visibility on local college/university campuses
 3. Volunteer retention after the service project has ended
 4. Improved client services
 5. Increased agency program capacity
 6. Increased campus-community relationships
2. Example Activities (activities listed on position descriptions must be specific to the member's project)
 1. Develop a new or update an existing written volunteer generation plan
 2. Establish formal partnerships for volunteer recruitment
 3. Establishment of a volunteer unit within the program or organization
 4. Creation of volunteer manual/training/curriculum
 5. Regular supervision and communication with volunteers
 6. Liability coverage or insurance protection for volunteers
 7. Screening and matching volunteers to jobs
 8. Regular collection of information on volunteer involvement
 9. Written policies and job descriptions for volunteer involvement
 10. Recognition activities such as award ceremonies for volunteers
 11. Annual measurement of volunteer impact
 12. Training and professional development for volunteers
 13. Training for paid staff in working with volunteers

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F. Position Description Checklist

Use the following checklist to help determine if the written position description meets program requirements.

1. Service Site

- Service site is an eligible Public Organization
- Supervisor name and contact information is listed
- Position Title includes "AmeriCorps"

2. Purpose

- Target beneficiary population is listed
- Includes information on how position will help the organization (1) leverage more or better volunteers and/or (2) better serve local beneficiaries.

3. Intervention

- Intervention aligns with selected outputs/outcomes
- Output/outcome goals are reasonable for the member to reach
- Progress and goals section is clearly described

4. Typical Service Conditions

- Service conditions are reasonable for the member's service site and activities

5. AmeriCorps Tasks and Activities

- Tasks and activities are not:
 - Duplicative or displace existing employees/volunteers efforts
 - Prohibited activities
 - Administrative
 - Disconnected from program outcomes
 - Described using the words "work" or "job"
- Tasks and activities are clearly described
- Tasks and activities are specific to the member's position
- No acronyms or abbreviations are included
- Are generally indirect services

6. Schedule

- Days of the week are listed
- Hours of the day are listed
- Special events are listed, such as;
 - Days of service events
 - Events that will result in the member serving 6+ hours in a day
 - Federal Holidays in which the member will serve
 - Meal breaks