

VOLUNTEER IOWA

AMERICORPS PROGRAM MANUAL

2024-2025 Program Year



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1.1

INTRODUCTION AND ROLE OF THE IOWA COMMISSION ON VOLUNTEER SERVICE

1. WELCOME

The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service (also referred to as “Volunteer Iowa” or “the Commission”) was established in 1994 to administer Iowa’s AmeriCorps State programs. The Commission grew out of the Iowa Office of Volunteerism, created in 1978 by Executive Order 33 of Governor Robert Ray. The mission of Volunteer Iowa is to improve lives, strengthen communities and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. The vision is to create an Iowa where all citizens are empowered through service to meet community challenges and make lives better. We welcome your program to the Iowa AmeriCorps team.

2. PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM MANUAL

This manual is intended to detail Iowa-specific AmeriCorps State requirements and to provide additional information on effective program management that has been gathered through consultation with AmeriCorps, the Federal Agency (AmeriCorps, formerly Corporation for National and Community Service, CNCS or Corporation), the Office of the Inspector General or other AmeriCorps representatives. This manual does not replace the Regulations, [General Terms and Conditions](#), [Specific Terms and Conditions](#), [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) or other supporting application or grant guidance materials for the applicable grant year, as provided by AmeriCorps and Volunteer Iowa. Many of these documents are incorporated by reference into the AmeriCorps grant agreement issued by Volunteer Iowa. This manual is intended to assist grantees by providing relevant AmeriCorps information and applicable state guidelines in a centralized location. This manual will be updated on an annual basis and will be available electronically. Additions or amendments to materials contained within the manual will be distributed to grantees and discussed during weekly and/or monthly communications from Volunteer Iowa. Grantees are expected to participate in calls/training and review Volunteer Iowa communications and to share with other staff members as appropriate. These communications contain the most up-to-date and pertinent information based on recent updates, monitoring, feedback, etc. Please commit to having all program and financial staff receive the AmeriCorps State Update. A minimum of one staff person should thoroughly review the information from the AmeriCorps State Update and share with others, as appropriate.

If there is a conflict between the contents of this manual and the federal guidance referenced above, the federal documents are the controlling authority (see the Program Management section for more detail on order of precedence of the governing documents). Still, it is expected that AmeriCorps program staff and other relevant staff familiarize themselves with the information contained within this manual and take responsibility for using the manual and related documents to obtain information necessary for the day-to-day operation of their programs.

If any changes to program requirements are made at the federal level during the program year (i.e., updates to the [Terms and Conditions](#) or AmeriCorps guidance), Volunteer Iowa will make a good faith effort to distribute these updates to program staff, discuss them during monthly communications, and

amend the Volunteer Iowa manual accordingly. Again, this is provided as a service to grantees and does not relieve the grantees of the responsibility to operate within the program requirements.

3. BACKGROUND ON THE IOWA COMMISSION ON VOLUNTEER SERVICE

A. COMMISSION

The Commission operates under State of Iowa Executive Order Number 48 and Title 45 of the Public Welfare Regulations, Chapter 25 – Corporation for National and Community Service. The Commission’s role includes development of a comprehensive [State Service Plan](#) establishing statewide funding priorities for AmeriCorps State programs in Iowa, awarding and administering Iowa’s AmeriCorps State grants, monitoring program compliance; providing program development and training to Iowa’s national service programs; promoting and recognizing volunteerism within the state; operating an AmeriCorps VISTA project; and providing volunteer management training opportunities to AmeriCorps programs, non-profits, governmental agencies, schools and other interested organizations. The Commission also administers the federal Volunteer Generation Fund and Senior Demonstration Program grants, the state funds for RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program), and the Iowa Mentoring Partnership.

The Commission is comprised of 15-25 members (commissioners) appointed by the Governor who meet 6-10 times per year. The Commission sets policy and provides direction for the work of the commission staff through development of the State Service Plan, which serves as a three-year strategic plan for volunteerism in Iowa. Commissioners represent many geographical areas of the state and serve up to two 3-year terms. Commissioners are diverse, representing various political, ethnic, and business backgrounds. Commissioner applications are accepted on a rolling basis through the [State’s Boards and Commission’s website](#).

The Commission conducts its work through two standing committees: Programs and Development and Volunteer Engagement. In addition, other ad hoc committees comprised of commissioners and community volunteers are established to conduct Commission business, such as the Grant Review Committee, Public Policy Committee, Diversity Equity Inclusion Committee, etc. AmeriCorps program staff may be invited to serve on an ad hoc committee of the Commission. For more information on the Commission, visit Volunteer Iowa About Us.

B. OTHER PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND INITIATIVES OFFERED BY VOLUNTEER IOWA AND OTHER NATIONAL SERVICE PARTNERS

As part of a 2021 updated branding strategy, AmeriCorps has consolidated all programs under two names, AmeriCorps, and AmeriCorps Seniors, resulting in some program name changes.

C. AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

I. AMERICORPS NCCC

Organizations may apply to host a team of AmeriCorps NCCC members to provide intensive, short-term service on projects in the areas of disaster services, environment, infrastructure improvement, energy conservation and urban and rural development. Projects are normally six to eight weeks in duration but will vary depending on the requirements of the project. Organizations must be capable of utilizing at least one full team of eight to twelve members effectively.

II. AMERICORPS VISTA

Organizations can also apply to become a host site in an existing AmeriCorps VISTA project, or they can directly sponsor their own AmeriCorps VISTA project. In general, AmeriCorps VISTA focuses on anti-poverty, community empowerment, and sustainable solutions by having members provide capacity building services at their host organizations. AmeriCorps VISTA project sponsors must be able to support three or more full-time AmeriCorps VISTA members serving for one-year on an anti-poverty project.

The Volunteer Iowa VISTA project places VISTA members with host sites throughout the state of Iowa, focusing on Education, Economic Opportunity, and Healthy Futures initiatives in close collaboration with the Governor's office to combat poverty in the state of Iowa.

III. AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL

A. *AMERICORPS IOWA*

Iowa AmeriCorps State grants provide funding to help organizations manage an AmeriCorps program, which involves recruiting, training, and supporting a cohort of at least ten AmeriCorps members who serve on a full-time or part-time basis to help the organization address a community need. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to projects that support organizational capacity-building, education, healthy futures, environmental stewardship, veterans and military families, economic opportunities, public safety, disaster preparedness/response, and other identified community issues in Iowa. Successful programs utilize service as a strategy to meet community needs, while supporting the development and growth of the AmeriCorps members serving with the organization.

B. *AMERICORPS NATIONAL*

AmeriCorps National grants provide funding to help organizations manage an AmeriCorps program that operates in more than one state. Some AmeriCorps National grantees act as intermediary organizations and accept applications from organizations wishing to serve as host sites for AmeriCorps member positions. Volunteer Iowa can help agencies connect with existing intermediary programs serving Iowa.

IV. AMERICORPS SENIORS

Each year AmeriCorps Seniors taps the skills, talents, and experience of persons aged 55 and older to meet a wide range of community challenges through three programs: RSVP, the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program. AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers recruit and manage other volunteers, participate in environmental projects, mentor, and tutor children, deliver meals to the homebound and respond to natural disasters, among many other activities. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the Foster Grandparents Program serve one-on-one as tutors and mentors to young people with special or exceptional needs. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the Senior Companions Program help adults maintain independence in their homes. Volunteer Iowa currently administers RSVP and Senior Demonstration Grant programs.

D. OTHER VOLUNTEER IOWA PROGRAMS

I. IOWA MENTOR, THE IOWA MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

Iowa MENTOR promotes, supports, and builds quality mentoring relationships by elevating the capacity of programs, systems, and policies. Local youth-serving program partners of Iowa MENTOR are offered training, consulting, volunteer recognition, advocacy, and marketing campaigns.

II. SERVICE ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE

By achieving the Service Enterprise certification and level of excellence, organizations are uniquely positioned to leverage the time and skills of volunteers and expand program operations and revenues, which also allows the nonprofit or government agency to realize greater programmatic impact and operational effectiveness. Volunteer Iowa facilitates the process for organizations to become certified and gives funding preference to those certified.

III. VOLUNTEER CENTERS OF IOWA

This statewide network allows member volunteer centers to connect, share information, and cross-train on a regular basis. Local volunteer centers can provide training and assist organizations with recruiting and managing community volunteers for their own service needs.

IV. VOLUNTEERIOWA.GOV

The Volunteer Iowa website provides an online volunteer opportunity database, Get Connected, for volunteers and organizations across Iowa to use to connect with one another. Organizations can post volunteer opportunities and quickly reach out and recruit people who are interested in helping them, and volunteers can use filtered search features to find an opportunity that aligns with their interests.

V. VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

The Commission coordinates Iowa's two volunteer recognition programs: the Governor's Volunteer Awards, an easy and low-cost way for Iowa organizations to honor their volunteers; and the Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame, the highest state-level honor volunteers can receive. Nominations for both programs are accepted on an annual cycle. Online and social media recognition programs through Volunteer Iowa include What's Your 50 volunteer spotlights and the National Service Member Spotlight recognition. In conjunction with the Iowa Nonprofit Summit, the Commission helps coordinate the selection of the Iowa Nonprofit Award winners. There are two AmeriCorps-specific Nonprofit Award categories: Outstanding Volunteer or National Service Manager Award, and Outstanding Volunteer or National Service Program Award.

E. COMMISSION PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT

Programs must allow commissioners to attend local activities and events with their AmeriCorps members, particularly orientations and AmeriCorps volunteer projects or activities. It is also recommended that commissioners be added to program or AmeriCorps's mailing and/or email list to receive information about AmeriCorps program activities. All Commission meetings are open

meetings under Iowa law and program staff and/or members are welcome to attend. Meeting notices are posted on the Volunteer Iowa website.

Volunteer Iowa can facilitate the Commissioner-AmeriCorps Program relationship. Volunteer Iowa provides opportunities for commissioners and program staff to interact through site visits and special events. The aim of these activities is to solicit input from program staff on actions that are under consideration by the Commission, as well as increase commissioners' understanding of the responsibilities of program staff and the role of AmeriCorps in local communities. Volunteer Iowa invites AmeriCorps Program Staff feedback on existing engagement activities and input on new methods of sharing information between commissioners and programs.

4. OVERVIEW OF AMERICORPS STATE IN IOWA

Iowa's AmeriCorps programs apply energy and idealism to meet the needs of Iowa communities. The Commission provides financial and programmatic support for the AmeriCorps State programs through the partnership with AmeriCorps. Volunteer Iowa has a dedicated staff team that provides support and oversight for the AmeriCorps State programs. A list of staff is available on the Volunteer Iowa website.

Iowa AmeriCorps State programs enable hundreds of AmeriCorps members to serve Iowa in a variety of ways, which may include tutoring disadvantaged youth, building homes for low-income citizens, rehabilitating parks and trails, weatherizing homes, engaging youth in after-school and summer activities; responding to and recovering from disaster; supporting positive youth development initiatives; building capacity for nonprofits in key areas, such as utilizing volunteers; and increasing access to legal assistance to low-income Iowans. A current list of Iowa's AmeriCorps programs is listed on the [Volunteer Iowa website](#).

1.2

VOLUNTEER IOWA SUPPORT AND MONITORING OF AMERICORPS STATE PROGRAMS

1. INTRODUCTION TO VOLUNTEER IOWA SUPPORT AND MONITORING

Volunteer Iowa utilizes a program support and monitoring system that includes training, technical assistance, and support to strengthen AmeriCorps program operations and to ensure high quality programming targeted at addressing Iowa's needs. This is coupled with a monitoring level system designed to identify opportunities for continuous improvement and ensure compliance with federal and state requirements.

Volunteer Iowa provides focused support in member management, program and grant management, and fiscal management. Programs identified with challenges in specific areas will be required to participate in additional training, use aligned resources, and monitor activities as part of an improvement plan. The system is designed to improve performance quickly – ideally within the grant year. The trainings, resources, and monitoring tools will be made available for all programs as well.

Program management, compliance, and program accomplishments are major factors considered during grant awarding. Volunteer Iowa staff provide regular reports to the Commission related to program successes and challenges. As necessary, Volunteer Iowa will bring significant compliance issues to the attention of the grantee organization's Authorized Representative, Program Representative, or Financial Representative as outlined in the AmeriCorps Grant Agreement.

It should be noted that AmeriCorps, and its contracted associates (auditors, monitors, etc.) will collect monitoring information from the Commission to use in determining sites they will visit during their monitoring of the Commission.

2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING FOR IOWA AMERICORPS PROGRAMS

To offer program support and ensure compliance with regulations, the Commission will provide regular formal and informal training, technical assistance, and support to Iowa's AmeriCorps programs. In some cases, AmeriCorps may require training as part of an improvement plan designed to improve program performance in the areas of grant/program, member, or financial management.

Programs have many opportunities to make their technical assistance and training needs known to the Commission – including, but not limited to, performance measure status reports in IowaGrants, bi-annual monitoring assessment, competency self-assessment, and training evaluations conducted following Volunteer Iowa training events. Based on input provided by program staff, Volunteer Iowa will conduct trainings for Iowa AmeriCorps Program staff and other National Service Program staff (as allowable by AmeriCorps) throughout the year. Volunteer Iowa may offer trainings or events for AmeriCorps members and site supervisors.

A. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

I. VOLUNTEER IOWA AMERICORPS PROGRAM STAFF MANUAL

Programs are expected to familiarize themselves with and reference the Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps Program Manual when a question arises regarding program operations. The manual helps to condense and explain information from AmeriCorps terms and conditions, regulations, AmeriCorps guidance and other sources related to operation of the AmeriCorps programs. This manual also adds and explains any Iowa-specific requirements. The manual is incorporated by reference into the AmeriCorps Grant Agreement and therefore, programs are expected to be aware of and abide by the items outlined in this manual.

II. AMERICORPS STATE UPDATE

Volunteer Iowa staff strives to keep programs updated on important policy and program developments, as well as provide reminders of dates, and share and request information. In support of these goals, Volunteer Iowa communicates through a weekly newsletter message distributed on Fridays, titled the “AmeriCorps State Update”. This contains important and often timely information about AmeriCorps and Volunteer Iowa policy changes, information from AmeriCorps, requests for program input, reminders and registration information for upcoming trainings, due dates for reports and forms, etc. Please commit to having all program and financial staff receive the AmeriCorps State Update. A minimum of one staff person should thoroughly review the information from the AmeriCorps State Update and share with others, as appropriate. To be added to the AmeriCorps State Update email list, please reach out to your program officer.

III. MONTHLY AMERICORPS PROGRAM WEBINARS

Volunteer Iowa conducts monthly meetings via webinar; generally, the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m., to keep program staff informed of current issues and provide on-going technical assistance and training. It is expected that every program will have at least one AmeriCorps program staff (not members) attend monthly. Failure to participate in Volunteer Iowa meetings and calls can result in additional programmatic reporting to verify that programs have the information they need to effectively manage their AmeriCorps grant.

IV. BASECAMP, INCLUDING GRANTEE RESOURCES

Volunteer Iowa will support an online networking and resource sharing group on the Iowa AmeriCorps State Basecamp page. Request access to Basecamp from your program officer. This is an opportunity for Iowa AmeriCorps program staff to access Volunteer Iowa resources, share program resources, connect through conversations, and pose questions to the field. It is also a place where event information, training dates, and other general communications can occur. Volunteer Iowa staff will be a part of the conversations and information sharing; but will not monitor every conversation nor be responsible for compliance issues arising from others’ posts. Volunteer Iowa will also maintain grantee resources as part of Basecamp. Programs should ensure that appropriate staff have access to these resources, including fiscal staff. Resources, divided into folders by topic, can be found in the *Volunteer Iowa Files* section of Basecamp. The most recent Program Manual and calendar will also be available on the Volunteer Iowa [AmeriCorps Grantee Resources](#)

webpage. If you have any questions or need clarification about something posted on Basecamp or the resource page, please contact a Volunteer Iowa program officer.

V. VOLUNTEER IOWA STAFF

Volunteer Iowa staff are available to offer technical assistance to programs. Your first point of contact is your program officer as identified in IowaGrants. Please allow program officers a reasonable amount of time to respond to your issue (generally 24 hours) before reaching out to another staff member. Volunteer Iowa staff make every effort to be responsive to programs, however, if you have not received a response, please re-send the message to your program officer as a reminder.

Order of Contact

When questions or issues arise, contact your program officer first. If it is an urgent matter or your program officer has an out-of-office response indicating that they are not checking messages within the timeframe by which you need a response, you can reach out to any of the following (with a copy to your program officer):

- 1) Compliance Officer
- 2) Senior AmeriCorps Program Officer
- 3) Deputy Director of National Service

The program officer may direct you to other appropriate staff members to address a specific issue. Please always 'reply all' to communication sent from Volunteer Iowa staff.

Check-In Calls

To provide regular and comprehensive feedback to programs, Volunteer Iowa program staff will schedule regular calls with the AmeriCorps lead and key staff to check in about program operations, discuss program monitoring items, and plan for upcoming activities. All staff who are budgeted (federal share or as match) 50% or more of their time are expected to participate in each call. Financial staff should attend, at a minimum, the April check-in call (quarter 3), or portion of the call. If no one on staff is on the grant 50% or more, the person identified on the grant as the lead staff must attend. The frequency of the calls will be based on the program and grant management monitoring level, with an approximate schedule as follows:

Based on monitoring level

- Low monitoring level programs- semi-annual group calls (January and June)
- Moderate monitoring level programs- every other month
- High monitoring level programs- every month

Calls may be added/canceled as needed at the discretion of the program officer. This standard agenda is used for the calls. Programs and/or Volunteer Iowa staff may add items prior to or during the call.

Program/grant administration

- IowaGrants (Start forms, status reports, progress reports)

Member management

- Recruitment and Retention
- Enrollment/Exits (early exits)
- Timekeeping
(High monitoring level member management programs send timekeeping tracking tool sent to PO/CO at least 24 hours prior to check-in for discussion)

Financial management

Other

- Upcoming trainings, weekly AmeriCorps State Update, Program Manual

Volunteer Iowa schedules all check-in calls in advance. Prior to selecting a day and time, program staff are encouraged to look ahead for other commitments that may cause issues for the day/time selected and ensure all staff that should participate on the calls are available. Program staff are responsible for sharing the calendar invite to all appropriate staff. It is the expectation that the check-in call schedule will be a priority for programs. If there is a conflict for a single meeting, Volunteer Iowa requests a minimum of a 48-hour notice to the program officers. Program staff should provide several days/times for rescheduling. Volunteer Iowa may reschedule calls that conflict with holidays, program trainings or similar issues.

VI. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION SUPPORT

Volunteer Iowa will provide specialized support to all programs based on enrollment and/or retention percentages from the previously completed grant year. All groups will be required to attend specific check in calls throughout the program year to meet with Volunteer Iowa and other program staff. Programs will be grouped in three tiers based on their retention and/or enrollment from the last previously completed grant year (placed in the group reflecting their lowest percentage). Programs that require a November budget modification due to low recruitment and/or unfilled FT slots will budget for a contractor to review existing recruitment strategies, materials, and contractor(s), such as alumni, to complete recruitment activities identified in the Recruitment Plan.

When	Activities	Tier 1 85% & Higher	Tier 2 71% - 84%	Tier 3 70% & Lower
Application	Budget for recruitment activities	Required	Required	Required
August 1 st	Submit a recruitment plan	Recommended	Strongly recommended	Required
July 25 th	Have at least 1 staff will attend the	Recommended	Required	Required

	Recruitment Planning webinar			
November 15 TH	Budget modification due for programs with low fall enrollments	Recommended	Recommended	Required
November Budget Modification	Budget for contractor to review existing recruitment strategies and materials	Recommended	Recommended	Required

VII. ON-SITE/PARTICIPATORY

In some cases, on-site assistance is more beneficial, and programs are encouraged to request on-site assistance if needed. In addition, training and technical assistance opportunities are sometimes available at the regional or national level, through AmeriCorps and America’s Service Commissions (ASC).

B. TRAINING

Volunteer Iowa staff work to provide relevant, timely, and practical training to staff (and members, if funding allows) of AmeriCorps programs. In some cases, trainings are open to members and/or staff of other national service programs, depending on federal regulations guiding the use of funds. Staff and members are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities to strengthen their program and make continuous improvements. In some cases, attendance is mandatory for at least one program staff, so please be aware of this information noted below and in announcements. Attendance and participation in all Volunteer Iowa sponsored trainings by program staff, site supervisors, and members is recorded and will be a factor for consideration in evaluating program monitoring, monitoring level assessment, and future funding requests.

I. REQUIRED PROGRAM TRAINING

The Grantee will have at least one staff member attend or complete the following trainings (an AmeriCorps member is not an appropriate representative for these meetings):

- Volunteer Iowa New Program Staff training (for new programs/new staff only). New is defined as two years or less. This training is held in-person prior to the start of the new grant year.
- Volunteer Iowa Program Staff Launch training (a two day in-person event in the first few months of the program year),
- National Service Training Conference (in the spring/summer, may be offered regionally in the US or in one central location, and potentially a virtual option).
- Volunteer Iowa Financial Trainings (virtual trainings are offered at least twice per year, a minimum of one financial training is required each year for fiscal staff; programs with high financial monitoring levels are required to have financial staff participate in all financial trainings).

- Volunteer Iowa Monthly Program Director Webinars (see the Technical Assistance section for details).
- AmeriCorps National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) Annual Training (eCourse offered in Litmos, required annually of **two** staff, see more under National Service Criminal History Checks).
- AmeriCorps' Key Concepts of Financial Grants Management Annual Training (required for financial staff, eCourse offered in Litmos).
- Fraud Awareness Training (required annually for a minimum of one staff person, eCourse offered in Litmos)
- Developing Policies and Procedures Training (required annually for a minimum of one staff person, eCourse offered in Litmos)

A schedule of training events will be provided to the AmeriCorps Programs as far in advance as possible. Please see the Grantee Resource webpage on the Volunteer Iowa website or on Basecamp for a calendar of scheduled trainings and dates. In addition, AmeriCorps requires an annual financial management training which is available on LITMOS. The certificate of completion will be uploaded into IowaGrants. The certificate of completion will be uploaded into specific start forms in IowaGrants. The grantee is responsible for ensuring that someone (or two for NSCHC) in the program has current certification for each of the required training throughout the grant year.

a. Volunteer Iowa New Program Staff Orientation

The Commission will conduct an orientation for new program staff (those with two years or less of program management experience) to train on program and grant management and best practices. The training is mandatory for new program staff with less than two years of experience and optional for others that are interested in attending. This will be provided on an annual basis, generally in the summer. Volunteer Iowa will review the need for ongoing new program staff orientation. Regardless of the training provided by Volunteer Iowa, programs should develop their own staff training to ensure that people new to the AmeriCorps program understand their role and the grant requirements.

b. Program Staff Launch

Volunteer Iowa will provide an annual training for all AmeriCorps program staff to ensure that they are aware of new grant requirements and are familiar with the monitoring process for the coming program year. Program staff integral to AmeriCorps program and member management are required to attend annually. This is generally in a two-day format in the fall and covers a wide range of topics from regulation, policy and terms and conditions changes, reporting systems, best practices, member benefits, etc.

c. National Service Training Events

National Service Training Events are training opportunities for AmeriCorps State, AmeriCorps National, and State Service Commission and AmeriCorps agency staff to come together, typically organized by the Association of State Service Commissions (ASC). All programs are expected to have at least one representative attend the National Service Training, either in-person or virtually, annually. At a minimum, programs are

strongly encouraged to send program staff in person when the trainings are offered in the central region. Programs should consider the tenure of staff to leverage the impact of the NST experience. The dates of the National Service Training conference are in the Iowa AmeriCorps Calendar of Events and Deadlines (section 1.4).

II. OTHER PROGRAM STAFF TRAINING

Other trainings may be offered or required throughout the program year, based on Volunteer Iowa or AmeriCorps monitoring and feedback. When relevant, Volunteer Iowa welcomes the participation of site supervisors, fiscal personnel, or other staff in trainings. Volunteer Iowa staff strives to ensure that training is useful to attendees and will make specific reference to trainings that are open to site supervisors. Several train-the-trainer style presentations have been developed to support programs in consistent site supervisor trainings. Some relevant topics from the past include disability inclusion, volunteer management, mental health first aid, etc.

III. MEMBER EVENTS AND TRAININGS

Programs are expected to promote and support member participation in events and activities sponsored by Volunteer Iowa and AmeriCorps, such as the AmeriCorps Swearing In Ceremony, Volunteer Iowa Day at the Capitol, AmeriCorps Week, Iowa AmeriCorps Member Leadership Council, and National Days of Service.

Attendance at Volunteer Iowa sponsored events and activities should be encouraged; and members should be permitted the time away from their sites to participate. Statewide member events can provide excellent member development opportunities and a way to build a connection to the larger national service network.

C. BUDGETING FOR VOLUNTEER IOWA REQUIRED TRAININGS

Volunteer Iowa requires that all programs budget a minimum dollar amount each grant year to support travel for program staff to attend Volunteer Iowa required training and events (amount is included in the grant application process).

D. NON-ATTENDANCE, LATE REGISTRATIONS AND NON-REGISTERED

Volunteer Iowa reserves the right to request reimbursement from programs for any costs resulting from late registrations, non-attendance by registered participants, or other actions by persons associated with the program's members or staff. All costs relative to these requests for reimbursement must be paid from non-federal sources.

3. COMMUNICATION WITH VOLUNTEER IOWA STAFF

Periodically, Volunteer Iowa will contact program staff for information or input. We ask that programs make every effort to respond to these requests by the deadline. To be responsive to AmeriCorps requests, if you will be out of the office during grant clarifications or resolutions, or for a period of more than a week, please let your program officer know.

A. LEAD STAFF AND AUTHORIZED AGENCY STAFF

In general, communications related to day-to-day operation of the AmeriCorps program will be sent to the designated lead staff. Notices regarding Grant Agreement Amendments or serious concerns about the programmatic or financial management will be sent to the authorized agency representative, Program Representative or Financial Representative as outlined in the AmeriCorps Grant Agreement.

B. ALTERNATE CONTACT

It is recommended that lead staff designate another staff person at the grantee agency who will serve as the alternate contact for the AmeriCorps program when the lead staff is absent or unavailable. The alternate contact could serve as the lead staff's designee on the Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar and should also have enough familiarity with the program to make time-sensitive decisions when the lead staff cannot be reached.

C. VOLUNTEER IOWA STAFF

Volunteer Iowa staff will also make every effort to inform programs of significant absences and to keep our phone and email messages updated to avoid delays in responding to program inquiries. Staff absences are updated regularly and can be found each Friday in the AmeriCorps State Update.

4. PROGRAM RISK ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING ASSESSMENT

Volunteer Iowa will conduct an annual organizational Risk Assessment. Organizational Risk Assessment is a review of the financial management systems, annual income statement, audit type and findings, and overall financial standing. The risk assessment considers financial stability, depth of current financial review, experience with federal grants management of the organization, and its ability to respond to financial penalties or disallowances.

Program monitoring level is assessed twice each year, in June and January. Please note that all new programs (programs are considered new for two years) will be considered high monitoring and high risk under the assessment system. Volunteer Iowa staff will conduct a Program/Grant, Member and Financial Monitoring Assessment for each AmeriCorps program. Within each area, Volunteer Iowa staff will assess factors that render a program more likely to experience compliance issues. When the assessment is completed again, programs will be notified if a change in monitoring level occurs. A copy of the Monitoring Assessment tool can be found on Basecamp, in the Program Manual and Start Up folder. Volunteer Iowa monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the Monitoring Schedule based on program risk and monitoring levels.

Program risk or monitoring levels may be changed at any time at the discretion of Volunteer Iowa based upon changes in program staff, changes in sponsorship, complaints from members or community members, audit findings, poor or late reporting or other indications of challenges in program, member or financial management and written notice will be provided to appropriate personnel if program monitoring or risk levels are changed.

A. ORGANIZATIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT

I. REASONABLE RISK

For organizations designated as reasonable risk, Volunteer Iowa will conduct limited monitoring based on the understanding that organizations with reasonable risk are highly experienced in federal grants management and have the financial resources to weather a significant financial repayment, should one occur due to failure to follow federal requirements. These organizations remain responsible for compliance with 2CFR 200, 45CFR and all other applicable federal requirements, including those outlined in the Grant Agreement, Terms and Conditions, and the Volunteer Iowa Program Manual. As an organization with strong financial management systems and federal grant management experience, these organizations are familiar with the fact that errors or compliance issues may result in disallowance, repayment of federal funds, reduction in grantee share or other consequences. Should monitoring by Volunteer Iowa, AmeriCorps, auditors, or the AmeriCorps Office of Inspector General identify any of these issues, corrective action will be taken.

II. HIGH RISK

For organizations designated as high risk, Volunteer Iowa will conduct monitoring based on the understanding that these organizations have more limited federal grants management experience and/or that the organization's financial resources may not be able to withstand a large financial repayment/penalty without significant negative impact on the organization and its financial standing.

B. MONITORING ASSESSMENT

Based upon review of this information and past program performance, each program will be assigned financial, member, and grant and program management monitoring levels. These levels will be a basis for Volunteer Iowa monitoring. Below are the monitoring and factors identified by Volunteer Iowa staff. Programs should note that the monitoring factors encompass both areas of performance in which programs can strive to improve, as well as aspects of program design which may be unchangeable but for which programs can take steps to mitigate risk.

Items listed below are a sample of actions and activities that are included when Volunteer Iowa review and assess monitoring levels for each of the areas below.

I. GRANT AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

- Insufficient or inconsistent program staffing, including site supervisors
- Poor site management, training, and monitoring
- A lack of commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Rapid program growth
- Weak or inconsistent data collection and management
- Incomplete or non-compliant NSCHC checks for members and staff
- Complicated, unclear, or inconsistent program design
- Failure to address previous issues

- Poor communication among internal staff
- Having the same compliance and continuous improvement issues on an ongoing basis
- Poor host site management, including ongoing site supervisor training, active monitoring, and annual assessments
- Ongoing or unaddressed concerns with site supervisor time as match
- High staff turnover
- Low participation in Volunteer Iowa technical assistance
- Reluctance to recruit volunteers
- Critical need for assistance (e.g., asking the same question(s) repeatedly)
- Lack of understanding/awareness of AmeriCorps regulations, Terms and Conditions, etc.
- Poor responsiveness to Volunteer Iowa
- Lead staff with inadequate understanding of basic budgeting concepts
- Late/inaccurate reporting
- Lead and key program staff, and/or site supervisors' lack of knowledge of national service/AmeriCorps

II. MEMBER MANAGEMENT

- Issues with unmanaged/incorrectly completed member suspensions
- Member service activities that do not align with approved grant or by the nature of the activity have the possibility of drawing unnecessary attention
- Excessive/unnecessary slot conversions
- Poor management of member disciplinary concerns
- Late timesheets/ongoing issues with member timekeeping
- Lack of member professional development plan or opportunities
- Issues with timeliness of enrollment/exits
- Low member recruitment/retention
- Unwillingness to participate in required trainings and use required tools and resources
- Founded complaints from members
- Ability to implement enrollment plan successfully and project reasonable plan updates
- Poor quality position descriptions, including valuable member experiences, Vague or potentially risky member service activities
- Issues with exits/early exits, including CPC exits
- Error/issues with date alignment of all documents/systems

III. FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

- Staff lack key federal grant management accounting knowledge
- Inability to project unexpended funds
Lack of communication from fiscal staff (internal and/or with Volunteer Iowa)
- In-kind site supervisor time counted as match
- Grantee inability to meet budgeted match or other financial issues
- Member payroll errors
- Trend of high amounts of unexpended funds
- Frequent/recent changes in fiscal staff
- Problems with budget development or inaccurate budget
- Lack of fiscal staff attendance at trainings
- Inaccurate documentation or lack of documentation
- Fiscal compliance issues that may result in AmeriCorps/OIG action
- Late/inaccurate reporting

5. MONITORING AND SUPPORT

Volunteer Iowa will use various modes for collecting program data to address the state's needs and to capitalize and build upon the programs' strengths. Much of the program monitoring is conducted remotely. Volunteer Iowa will review files, forms, and information submitted by the programs to evaluate how the program is progressing, provide feedback, and offer assistance. Other program monitoring takes place in person, through meetings with program staff or visits to program service sites. Depending on the type of oversight, Volunteer Iowa monitors may include Volunteer Iowa staff, Volunteer Iowa contractors, commissioners, and other interested and trained individuals, including AmeriCorps staff. Under the terms of the Volunteer Iowa Grant Agreement, programs are expected to make any materials available to Volunteer Iowa or its agents upon request. Volunteer Iowa also expects that programs will make members/site supervisors available, within reasonable parameters, for participation in monitoring activities. Volunteer Iowa staff will report to commissioners on programs that are demonstrating significant financial, program or member management problems. The Commission may direct the Volunteer Iowa staff to pursue corrective action, or the Volunteer Iowa staff may pursue corrective action based on policies. Independent feedback from AmeriCorps, auditors, commissioners, and other stakeholders will also be shared with the programs as part of the feedback process.

A. PRE-AWARD MONITORING

Prior to the issuance of a grant agreement, Volunteer Iowa fiscal and/or program officer may request a Pre-Award Survey of potential AmeriCorps grantees as allowed by state law. This survey will provide Volunteer Iowa with information about the financial management systems and the capacity of the organization to manage the grant funds. The survey may be conducted electronically or in-person. As part of the survey, an auditor from the Office of the Auditor of State may make a visit to the potential site and conduct a review of the systems and procedures in place. Should the survey findings and/or Auditor's Report indicate deficiencies in the financial management systems of the applicant and/or grantee, Volunteer Iowa will either deny funding or work with the applicant/program to ensure appropriate measures are taken to remedy deficiencies.

B. REGULAR MONITORING-- PRELIMINARY REVIEW AND START FORMS

The Volunteer Iowa staff will conduct a review of submitted materials (Program Start Forms) within the 30 days of receipt. This assessment will include a review of materials such as member service agreements, site agreements, grievance policies, program design, program-specific requirements, staff background checks, member orientation training agenda, etc. It will also include the collection of important information such as: financial data, most recent agency audit report, experience with management of AmeriCorps programs/funding, emergency contact information, project site information, organizational insurance information, etc. This information will be reviewed by Volunteer Iowa staff along with prior site visit information (for returning programs), pre-award information and other available data to determine program risk.

C. REGULAR MONITORING: NEW PROGRAMS

Monitoring: New Programs For the purposes of financial and programmatic risk, all new programs are assigned as high monitoring level by Volunteer Iowa and will be monitored as such. Further, all new programs are required to provide additional forms and information, including:

- Program staff job descriptions;
- Disaster Policy; and
- A variety of financial governance policies.

All these items are collected in IowaGrants. In addition to the documents, Volunteer Iowa will make at least one onsite or remote support opportunity available to new programs during the program start-up period to provide financial technical assistance. Additional technical assistance is available at any time.

D. REGULAR MONITORING: PROGRAM PROGRESS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURE REPORTS

Program progress reports are submitted and reviewed electronically in IowaGrants. Progress reports include data on performance measures and narrative descriptions of program accomplishments and challenges. Volunteer Iowa staff will review these reports to make sure programs are making adequate progress towards meeting the targets established in their approved grant applications. Monitoring of the other components of the report will be done to assess the program's performance in meeting other expectations of AmeriCorps grantees in the areas of enrollment and retention, member training, community volunteer recruitment and management, program evaluation, and/or other areas of performance outlined in the grant application and review process.

E. REGULAR MONITORING: FINANCIAL REPORTING

Some financial monitoring, such as review of the Federal Financial Report (FFR) and Unexpended Funds Report, is conducted using the IowaGrants system. In addition, Volunteer Iowa reviews audit reports provided at the time of application and as they are completed and submitted to Volunteer Iowa by programs as required as a condition of the grant agreement. The grant agreement with each program outlines expectations for FFR, Unexpended Funds Report, Audit Letter Report and Management Letter (2 CFR 200.512(e)) submissions. Volunteer Iowa staff will review the FFR and Unexpended Funds Reports for accuracy and completeness and the annual audit for any concerning findings.

F. REGULAR MONITORING: CLOSE OUT

The closeout packet is due to Volunteer Iowa in IowaGrants sixty (60) days following the end of the grant agreement period. The closeout packet has program and financial components, so please view the Financial Management section (section 4) for more information on the financial aspects of closeout. Grantees will be asked to certify and/or provide verification that the following programmatic activities have been completed:

- All members were enrolled in the correct term in eGrants and that term matches the term in OnCorps (or approved timekeeping system)
- All members were assigned to a service site in eGrants

- All members are exited in the eGrants/My AmeriCorps Portal
- A Member Slot/Change form is submitted and approved in IowaGrants for all members that were:
 - Exited early for cause, including members that served their entire term, but didn't complete the minimum hours;
 - Exited early, successfully; or
 - Exited for compelling circumstances (CPC).
- All members that were suspended during the grant year have a reinstatement Member Slot/Change form to bring them out of suspension prior to continuing service or exiting.
- All member timesheets are approved or removed, and all members are exited in OnCorps (or approved timekeeping system).
- Confirm that all MSA have been signed by all parties and they've been uploaded into the approved timekeeping system.
- Any amendments to the Member Service Agreement and the Member Position Description have been completed and uploaded into the approved timekeeping system.
- Ensure that all hours were completed after the start date and before the end date of the term.
- Final approved member hours recorded in OnCorps agree with hours reported in eGrants at exit (any fractional hours must be rounded down).
- All start and end dates of member terms align with start and end dates in eGrants and OnCorps (or approved timekeeping system).
- Any members having an extension to their term of service have an MSA amendment and an approved Member Slot/Change form in IowaGrants.
- Programs that have been approved for an alternate timekeeping system have screenshots of all timesheets opened (prior to unlocking the timesheet) and documentation of the date and reason the timesheet was opened. And have documentation from the site supervisor for any timesheet having to be managed after the member is exited.
- All exited members have a completed End of Term evaluation on file.
- Final progress report has been completed and submitted in IowaGrants.
- All status reports in IowaGrants have been approved or withdrawn as needed.
- All compliance and site visit issues are resolved.

Volunteer Iowa has created a Closeout Checklist for use by programs to ensure all aspects of the process are completed prior to submitting the Closeout Packet. The Closeout Checklist is available on Basecamp.

Self-Certification: Programs that have been designated as low financial risk may be selected to complete the Closeout Self-Certification process. This will require programs to review their own grant documents, attest to the provided certifications and list of actions, report any discrepancies or issues, and complete the closeout process themselves. Programs that are selected to use this closeout method are not required to provide any of the documents generally uploaded into the Closeout Packet. As with the regular closeout process, this certification is due to Volunteer Iowa in IowaGrants within sixty (60) days following the end of the grant agreement period. The Closeout Self-Certification form is available on Basecamp for review prior to program use.

G. GRANT AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT, AND MEMBER MANAGEMENT MONITORING

Volunteer Iowa staff may use any of the following methods to monitor program performance. These methods are in addition to regular monitoring required of all programs (through progress reports, program start forms, closeout, etc.). IowaGrants, OnCorps, Truescreen, and eGrants enable Volunteer Iowa staff to monitor aspects of member management remotely. Examples of items monitored through these systems may include member timesheets, member enrollment and exit timeline, member retention, member enrollment rates, signed member service agreements, position descriptions, member files, NSCHC, program and/or organizational policies, etc. The quantity and frequency for monitoring is based upon the monitoring and risk levels, with higher monitoring level programs receiving more types and higher frequency of monitoring. The monitoring schedule for these items is included on the Monitoring Schedule or see section 1.4 of this document for the month-by-month monitoring schedule. Basecamp has other monitoring checklists, as well as tools and resource programs can use to support their operations and ensure compliance.

Programs with an enrollment and/or retention percentage less than 85% (and new programs) for the previously completed grant year, as reported in eGrants, are required to submit a completed Recruitment Plan. A Recruitment Plan template is available on Basecamp. Program staff should review the resources and trainings about recruitment prior to completing the plan.

In 24-25 all programs that are high monitoring level for member management will be required to attend additional trainings and provide a completed Timekeeping Tracking Tool to Volunteer Iowa staff at least 24 hours prior to each scheduled check-in call. Program staff should not add unapproved hours to the tool and the tool should include hours up to the date the Timekeeping Tracking tool is completed. As a proactive measure, programs are strongly encouraged to include a minimum 10 percent-hour buffer to the minimum weekly hours required in anticipated service schedule to help ensure holiday and reasonable sick and personal leave time off and any hours disallowed will not negatively impact the education award. Additional tools and reports may be required to build the program's capacity to effectively manage AmeriCorps members. Programs with high grant and program management monitoring will be required to attend additional training.

Program officers also schedule calls with program staff, including fiscal staff, based upon the monitoring levels of the program. Low monitoring level programs have quarterly calls, moderate monitoring level calls are scheduled every other month, and high monitoring level calls are scheduled monthly. These calls do not prevent program staff from calling Volunteer Iowa staff with concerns at other times. During these calls program officers will gather all appropriate Volunteer Iowa staff to address any concerns either Volunteer Iowa or the program has at that time.

H. FINANCIAL MONITORING LEVEL AND FINANCIAL RISK

Volunteer Iowa representatives may use any of the following methods to monitor financial management and oversight, and financial risk. These methods are in addition to regular monitoring required of all programs (through audit review, claims, FFRs, etc.). The quantity and frequency of

monitoring is based on monitoring and risk level, with higher monitoring level programs receiving more types and higher frequency of monitoring. See the Monitoring, Sample, and Resource Documents section for the specific monitoring schedule for the current program year.

I. REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAM STAFF BASED UPON FINANCIAL MONITORING LEVEL

Requirements for programs with high financial monitoring include participation in quarterly budget-related calls with Volunteer Iowa and participation in all financial trainings. Fiscal staff for programs with low or moderate monitoring levels, are required to attend a minimum of one financial training annually.

II. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REPORTS (CLAIMS)

Based on monitoring level, programs will be required to submit claims monthly (prior approval required to submit quarterly claims) and may be required to provide supporting documentation for the claim. New programs, including planning grants are required to submit monthly claims. Programs that are high monitoring level are required to provide supporting documentation for all claimed costs. Programs that are low or moderate financial monitoring level may attach supporting documentation, however, it may not be reviewed by Volunteer Iowa staff. Information required for each type of claimed cost can be found in the Guidelines for Financial Management resource, available on Basecamp. Potential supporting documentation to be required includes:

- Print out from the accounting system for all program payroll expenses paid with grant funds or used as match (staff and members)
- Member payroll report that details the payments to members by pay period or month
- Print out from the accounting system for benefit expenses (member and staff)
- Copy(ies) of AmeriCorps program staff timesheet(s)
- Copies of receipts/vouchers/invoices for all line items corresponding to the accounting system print-out
- Copy of the match spreadsheet to document in-kind donations (if applicable)
- Copy of supporting documentation for in-kind donations

III. FINANCIAL DESK REVIEW

Volunteer Iowa will request supporting documentation, for both federal and grantee share, for program claims from programs based on monitoring and risk level. The materials will be attached to a status report in IowaGrants. Various documents will be requested depending on program monitoring level and are communicated in the Desk Review status report. Documents are required to be attached to the Desk Review status report form, regardless of whether the documents are attached to the claim. Volunteer Iowa will review the documentation to track expenses from the claim to the financial records to ensure that appropriate documentation exists for expenses. Volunteer Iowa staff will follow up with the program by phone and/or in writing to correct the claim, modify the reporting system and/or address deficiencies in record-keeping. Monitoring desk review requirements are as follows:

- a. Low monitoring level
Print out from the accounting system for staff wages and benefits by grantee and federal share for the corresponding to a program claim period, staff time sheets for this period, and member payroll ledger for AmeriCorps member living allowance and payroll expenses from the start of the grant to the claim month. An income report showing program income received during the review period should be submitted. Actual receipts for expenses are not required as part of the desk review but are required to be maintained to support claimed costs. Programs will be required to provide them upon request.

- b. Moderate monitoring level
Printout from the accounting system for all AmeriCorps expenses (staff and members). The member payroll ledger encompasses the time period from the start of the grant to current claim period; copy(ies) of staff timesheet(s); copies of receipts/vouchers/invoices for cost from the supplies, member and program staff training, and other program operating cost categories; copy of the match spreadsheet to document in-kind donations; copy of supporting documentation for in-kind resources for selected cost categories. An income report showing program income received during the review period should be submitted. Moderate monitoring level programs that qualify for self-certified closeouts may choose to not provide receipts/vouchers/invoices as part of the desk review; however, they are required to maintain to support claimed costs. Programs will be required to provide them upon request.

- c. High monitoring level
Print out from the accounting system for all AmeriCorps payroll expenses (staff and members); Member payroll report that details the payments to members by pay period from the beginning of the grant to the current claim period; print out from the accounting system for benefit expenses (member and staff); copy(ies) of AmeriCorps program staff timesheet(s); copies of receipts/vouchers/invoices for all line items corresponding to the accounting system print-out; copy of the match spreadsheet to document in-kind donations (if applicable); and copy of supporting documentation for in-kind donations. This includes a report showing program income received during the review period.

- d. Fixed Amount grants
Fixed amount grantees are required to submit a payroll ledger from the start of the grant year to the claim period that is current at the time of the desk review. The payroll ledger must show the amount paid each pay period to each member. In addition, the program must provide member timesheets for the same period of time for 10% of enrolled members, with a minimum five members' timesheets to be reviewed. Volunteer Iowa staff will provide fixed amount grantees with the names of members for whom timesheets are needed prior to the due date of the desk review. Desk reviews will be conducted in February for programs with start dates in August/September and in

May for those with a January start date. Desk review information will be submitted in IowaGrants, using the Desk Review status report form.

e. As follow-up to desk review

Volunteer Iowa staff may schedule on-site financial monitoring visit or arrange for additional monitoring through request of additional materials, conference call discussion with fiscal staff of program, or additional desk review.

I. MONITORING: ON-SITE VISITS

The number and extent of site visits will be based upon program monitoring level as established at the beginning of the program year. However, a site visit can be scheduled at any time if the Volunteer Iowa staff determines that one is merited or if the program makes such a request.

If a site visit is merited, the program officer or designee will visit the program's headquarters and/or at least one member service site. Site visits may include meeting program staff, other program sponsor staff, sponsor board members, AmeriCorps members, site supervisors, other service site staff, clients, or impacted community members; reviewing program records; discussing previously identified monitoring issues with program staff; and observing service activities. Therefore, all required original documents must be available for review, such as NSCHC checks, member service agreements, evaluations, etc. The site visit will allow for verification of information received remotely, gathering of information from a wider range of individuals, observation of program management and member service activity, and the creation of stronger relationships with the programs.

J. OTHER MONITORING: REMOTE/DESK MONITORING

Volunteer Iowa will review files, forms and information submitted by the programs on a schedule, based upon monitoring level, to evaluate how the program is progressing, provide feedback and offer assistance. Independent feedback from AmeriCorps, auditors, Commissioners, and other stakeholders will also be shared with the programs as part of the remote feedback process. The following are examples of remote monitoring conducted by Volunteer Iowa:

I. MEMBER REVIEW

IowaGrants, eGrants and OnCorps (or approved alternative timekeeping system) enable Volunteer Iowa staff to monitor several aspects of member management remotely at any given time. Examples of items monitored through these systems may include: member timesheets, member enrollment and exit timeline, member retention, member enrollment rates, signed member service agreements, position descriptions, member files, etc. The monitoring schedule for these items is included in the program risk assessment section of the manual.

II. PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

Program progress reports are submitted and reviewed electronically. Progress reports include data on performance measures and narrative descriptions of program accomplishments.

III. FINANCIAL REPORTING

Some financial monitoring, such as claims and FFR, is conducted using the IowaGrants system. In addition, Volunteer Iowa reviews audit reports.

K. OTHER MONITORING: AS NEEDED

Volunteer Iowa may also request additional information to be reviewed as a part of monitoring (such as: site supervisor training schedules and materials, member training materials, etc.) and will conduct regular review of on-line reporting systems, including IowaGrants, OnCorps, Truescreen, Fieldprint, and eGrants.

L. MONITORING REPORTS

When monitoring yields compliance findings that merit action on behalf of the program, the initial communication from the Volunteer Iowa may be provided via IowaGrants correspondence or via the regular check-in calls between Volunteer Iowa and program staff. However, Volunteer Iowa staff will provide written feedback to the program when questions cannot be resolved by informal communication or when the monitoring yields major compliance concerns.

I. VOLUNTEER IOWA FEEDBACK AND TIMELINE

When possible, Volunteer Iowa will issue a written report of findings to program staff within 30 business days of becoming aware of the compliance issue. In most cases, a written response and supporting documentation will be requested from the program as follow-up. In some cases, a follow-up phone call or visit may be scheduled to discuss the findings and verify program responses. See below for more information on program response.

In cases where serious compliance issues are noted, the report will be sent to the Authorized Representative, Program Representative or Financial Representative as outlined in the approved, signed AmeriCorps Grant Agreement. If a serious compliance issue(s) exists, Volunteer Iowa may request a formal Program Response/Corrective Action Plan from the program related to the compliance and continuous improvement issues. Volunteer Iowa staff are available to provide technical assistance to the program in development and implementation of its response/corrective action plan.

II. PROGRAM RESPONSE TIMELINE

Programs will be expected to respond to compliance or continuous improvement issues that become apparent during monitoring within the timeline established by Volunteer Iowa. Response timelines will be dependent upon the seriousness of the compliance issue, the timeline established by AmeriCorps (in cases where they are requesting the additional

information) or other factors, such as grant end date, which may impact the reporting timeframe. Late responses are a factor in establishing monitoring levels.

III. PROGRAM RESPONSE/CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

If a response/corrective action plan is requested, the program should include the actions the program will take to overcome the identified weaknesses and identify how the program will monitor progress of the response plan. Requested documentation should also be included. Information about program response/corrective action plans that include a financial component can be found in section 4. The program's plan may be presented to the full Commission or one of its committees to demonstrate if requested progress has been made.

IV. FAILURE TO RESPOND/INADEQUATE PROGRESS

Failure to respond and/or comply within the established timeframe may result in corrective actions imposed by Volunteer Iowa, including suspension of payments, and further action up to and including termination of the grant agreement. Results of the monitoring process will be compiled and shared with the Program Development Committee, Executive Committee, and/or the full Commission as appropriate. The results of the site visit will be factored into the grant review process and be considered in the monitoring system.

M. SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS REGARDING PROGRAM OPERATION

If significant concerns at a program or local site become apparent, immediate action by the program may be requested. A conference call, site visit, technical assistance visit, or other means will be used by Volunteer Iowa staff to communicate requirements and to provide additional support and monitoring. In these cases, as much advance notice as possible will be provided to the program. Programs that are not in compliance are subject to suspension, termination, disallowance of costs, or discontinued funding by the Commission according to the Grant Agreement.

N. CRIMINAL ACTIVITY (INCLUDING WASTE, FRAUD OR ABUSE)

If, at any time, the Commission or Volunteer Iowa staff suspects misconduct or malfeasance related to the grant or grantee, including waste, fraud, abuse or any violation of criminal law, the Commission will take appropriate and immediate steps to address these concerns, including suspension, or termination of the grant award, notification to AmeriCorps, Office of the Inspector General, Office of the Auditor, State of Iowa, and/or local law enforcement. The program needs to follow the AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions and Certifications and Assurances for grants. This information is available at [FY2024 General Terms and Conditions](#).

1.3

LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC POLICY

1. GOALS FOR PROGRAM LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC POLICY

As the AmeriCorps program, you have a complex job requiring skills and abilities in multiple areas. Part of being a successful program involves keeping the “big picture” in mind to build your professional experience, your program’s impact, and the strength of the national service field. Your position as program staff gives you the ability to:

- Cultivate leaders and champions of your program, AmeriCorps, and national service.
- Understand federal and state legislation, national governing policy, and policy trends that affect the implementation of national service programs.
- Form positive relationships with local, state, and federal elected officials for the purpose of informing legislators about the work of the AmeriCorps program.

2. UTILIZING RESEARCH AND DATA

All the leadership and public policy goals will come easier to you if you have a high-quality program, and you can communicate its impact.

A. BEST PRACTICES

Program staff must understand the best practices and current research in their area of work. Your professional development is important for this because you need to take time to attend trainings or network with individuals and leaders from other national service programs and other programs addressing similar community needs. You can build partnerships with researchers, students, or other staff who may be the experts in the issue area(s) your program addresses. You should also consider national, state, and local trends to make continuous improvements to your program. Sharing your knowledge and successes with others in the field helps increase the performance of the national service sector.

B. PROGRAM DATA

Tracking, measuring, reporting, and identifying strengths and challenges can make all components of your program better. While some data tracking and reports are required by funders or evaluators, you should also think about data you want to collect to tell the story of your program and its importance. Collecting and analyzing certain data can also help you to improve an aspect of your program that you think could be better. Your role goes beyond just responding to due dates – you should be looking ahead and thinking strategically about how to improve and potentially grow your program.

With AmeriCorps, it is typical for program staff to be managing various portions of three grants at the same time. In the fall, you will be applying for a new grant, starting a current grant, and closing a past grant, so it will be difficult for you to apply the knowledge gained from one program year to future program years unless you have a good plan for doing so. You need to have a firm

understanding of how the member activities connect to the program goals, how you can determine if the program is meeting goals, and how you are going to measure the work.

C. COMMUNICATING IMPACT

It is important that you turn the data you collect into meaningful communications about your program and its role in your community. There are many avenues for communication- external reports to policy makers or media coverage to inform the public, internal reports to your agency board or newsletter stories to share with constituents. You should have a communication plan and take advantage of opportunities to share positive stories about your program with a variety of stakeholders.

3. DEVELOPING PROGRAM LEADERS AND CHAMPIONS

Well-informed programs are best positioned to cultivate champions and other leaders who understand the value of national service and communicate this with others. Both internal and external champions are important. You need to have support inside your agency to position your program to secure organizational resources and to ensure that other agency staff are supportive and helpful to you and your AmeriCorps members. You need support outside of your agency so that community leaders, funders, Volunteer Iowa, AmeriCorps, and elected officials care about your program and do what they can to help ensure its success. Most programs use host sites for all or some of their members, in which case, building champions among your network of host site partners is especially important.

A. INTERNAL SUPPORT

Strengthening the position of your AmeriCorps program within your hosting organization is an important facet of building program champions. Executive leadership, boards of directors and influential stakeholders are some of the individuals and groups that you want to be aware of as you build your program. It is important to position your program as mission-critical and as a strong contributor to helping reach organizational goals and improve the community. Look for opportunities to interact with executive leadership and board members, both formally and informally. Do not be shy about asking to make a presentation to the board or including a story from your program in the board communication packet. Use the data and stories to build the case for your program and to further engage these leaders in ensuring AmeriCorps program success. For any AmeriCorps program, it is important for more than one staff member to have a basic understanding of the program activities and requirements. Sharing responsibilities with other staff, in a purposeful manner, will help distribute your workload and provide you with a colleague who can give a new perspective and insights. In addition, this cross training can build sustainability during absences of program staff or transition.

B. EXTERNAL SUPPORT

As program staff, you are strongly identified with the program and therefore it is important for you to act with professionalism in your interactions with partners. Your competence will reflect on your program. You also should think about all other AmeriCorps program staff, site supervisors, and

members as potential leaders. Encourage members and site supervisors to provide information and presentations within their service locations and at other potential partners. Capitalize on their relationships to expand the circle of support for your program and for National Service more broadly. Providing your members with leadership training and experiences can have a lasting benefit to your program- many former AmeriCorps members go on to work in the same field. Your AmeriCorps members may someday be your co-workers, they may be elected officials, or funders. Take time to regularly assess your progress in developing leaders and champions and reach out to those who have not been included or who haven't made a connection with your program. Do not forget to thank those who have been supportive.

4. UNDERSTANDING AND CONNECTING WITH THE POLICY PROCESS AND POLICY MAKERS

The AmeriCorps program operates in a larger context of state and federal policy. AmeriCorps programs need to be knowledgeable about those policies and should connect with policy makers. Volunteer Iowa does its best to be a source of policy information and technical assistance; program staff should be sure to attend trainings and events where relevant policy issues are explained and otherwise educate themselves fully on policies applicable to their programs. Program staff are the national service professionals who are best positioned to comment on the impact specific policies have on their program and members, so it is important for program staff to take advantage of opportunities to provide feedback or comments on proposed changes to rules and regulations. To subscribe to receive notification of AmeriCorps Public Comment Opportunities, visit the [Federal Register](#) and click on the subscribe button.

Sometimes you may feel that a policy is negatively impacting your program and needs to be changed, or you have an idea for a new policy that could benefit AmeriCorps. These reasons are examples of when it is particularly helpful for programs to have made positive contact with elected officials and agency staff who have the power to develop, change, or interpret policy. Not every legislator will be a champion for national service; but having regular contact with elected officials can help identify friends and make more of them. It is important to maintain ongoing communication with legislators (and/or their staff) and not just contact them when you have a request. Remember too, that agency level decisions about how policies are implemented and applied to programs can be just as important as the decision to enact a law in the first place. Therefore, AmeriCorps programs should maintain positive and professional relationships with AmeriCorps, Volunteer Iowa, and other public agency staff members.

1.4 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

This calendar of events and deadlines tries to capture all due dates based on different grant start dates (August 1, September 1, or January 1). Program staff that are unsure of a deadline, please contact the assigned Volunteer Iowa program officer.

July 2024

Events/Deadlines

- 15 24-25 Program and Fiscal Staff Competency Self-Assessment
- 17 Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar; 9 – 10 am – required of all programs
- 18 Technical Assistance (TA) Webinar, Topic: NSCHC Review; 9-10 am
- 25 Technical Assistance (TA) Webinar, Topic: Recruitment Planning; 9 – 10:30 am – required for programs that have less than 85% enrollment and/or retention in the last complete.
- 31 Signed 2024 – 2025 grant agreement returned to Volunteer Iowa (or earlier) if grant start date is 8/1/2024

August 2024

Events/Deadlines

- 1 Program start date (if approved via grant agreement or pre-award letter)
- 1 Program Start Forms Phase 1 (pre-award) due in IowaGrants (for programs with August/September start dates)
- 8 New Program Staff Orientation, Des Moines
- 15 TA Webinar, Topic: Budget Development; 9 – 10 am
- 21 Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar; 9 – 10 am – required of all programs
- 22 TA Webinar, Topic: Site Supervisor Onboarding and Clarification of Expectations, 9 – 10:30 am
- 31 Signed 2024– 2025 grant agreement returned to Volunteer Iowa (or earlier) if grant start date is 9/1/2024.

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Review Phase 1 Program Start Forms
Moderate	Review Phase 1 Program Start Forms
Low	Review Phase 1 Program Start Forms

September 2024

Events/Deadlines

- 1 Program start date (if approved via grant agreement or pre-award letter)
- 1 Program Start Forms Phase 2 due in IowaGrants (for programs with August/September start dates)
- 11 [National Day of Service and Remembrance](#)
- 12 TA Webinar, Topic: Ongoing Communication and Training of Site Supervisors, 9 – 10:30 am
- 18 Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar; 9 – 10 am – required of all programs
- 25 Monthly claim submitted in IowaGrants (for 08/24), if applicable

26 TA Webinar, Topic: Financial Management Training, 9 – 10 am

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Review Phase 2 Program Start Forms
Moderate	Review Phase 2 Program Start Forms
Low	Review Phase 2 Program Start Forms

October 2024

Events/Deadlines

- 1 Program Start Forms Phase 3 due in IowaGrants (for programs with August/September start dates)
- 5 Tier 3 Recruitment/Retention TA Check-In Call
- 8 TENTATIVE - New Program Staff Pre-Launch Training, Des Moines, 1-4:30 pm
- 9-10 Iowa AmeriCorps Program Staff Launch, Des Moines
- 11 Iowa AmeriCorps Member Swearing-In Event, Virtual
- 25 Monthly Claim submitted in IowaGrants (for 9/24)
- 25 Federal Financial Report (FFR) due in IowaGrants (covering start of grant – 9/30/2024), required for all programs

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Review Phase 3 Program Start Forms, Claim Review, Member Date Alignment Review
Moderate	Review Phase 3 Program Start Forms, Member Date Alignment Review
Low	Review Phase 3 Program Start Forms

November 2024

Events/Deadlines

- 7 Tier 2 Recruitment/Retention TA Check-In Call
- 15 Budget Modification due for Programs in Tier 3 that have unfilled fulltime slots
- 20 Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar; 9-10am – required of all programs
- 25 Monthly Claim submitted in IowaGrants (for 10/24)

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Quarter 1 Enrollment/Budget Check-in, Claim Review
Moderate	Quarter 1 Enrollment/Budget Check-in
Low	Quarter 1 Enrollment/Budget Check-in

December 2024

Events/Deadlines

- 1 Last day to enroll full time (FT) members/slots for fall program start dates (unless pre-approved)
- 2 Program Start Forms Phase 1 (pre-award) due in IowaGrants (for programs with January start date)
- 18 Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar; 9-10am – required of all programs
- 25 Monthly Claim submitted in IowaGrants (for 11/24)

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Member Timekeeping Component Review, Claim Review (if necessary)
Moderate	Member Timekeeping Component Review
Low	Member Date Alignment Review

January 2025

Events/Deadlines

- 1 Program Start Forms Phase 2 due in IowaGrants (for programs with a January start date)
- 9 Tier 1 Recruitment/Retention TA Check-In Call
- 15 Initial Progress Report due IowaGrants (for programs with an August/September start date)
- 15 Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar; 9-10am – required of all programs
- 20 [Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service](#)
- 23 Volunteer Iowa Day at The Capitol Member Training; Noon – 1pm
- 25 Monthly Claim submitted in IowaGrants (for 12/24)
- 25 Quarterly Claim submitted in IowaGrants (for 9/24-12/24)
- 31 Enrollment Plan Chart Update due in IowaGrants

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Review Initial Progress Report, NSCHC Background Check Review, Claim Review (if necessary)
Moderate	Review Initial Progress Report
Low	Review Initial Progress Report, Member Timekeeping Component Review, Financial Desk Review

February 2025

Events/Deadlines

- 5 Volunteer Iowa Day at the Capitol (Tentative), State Capitol, Des Moines
- 6 Tier 3 Recruitment/Retention TA Check-In Call
- 13 Mid-Year New Program Staff Orientation Webinar; 9am-12pm
- 19 Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar; 9-10am – required of all programs
- 25 Monthly Claim submitted in IowaGrants (for 1/25)

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Quarter 2 Performance Measure Check-in, Site Supervisor Interviews, NSCHC Background Check review, Claim Review (if necessary)
Moderate	Quarter 2 Performance Measure Check-in, Site Supervisor Interviews, NSCHC Background Check review
Low	Quarter 2 Performance Measure Check-in, Site Supervisor Interviews

March 2025

Events/Deadlines

- 1 Program Start Forms Phase 3 due in IowaGrants (for programs with January start date)
- 1 Last day to enroll three quarter time (TQT) members/slots for fall start date programs (unless pre- approval)
- 6 Tier 2 Recruitment/Retention TA Check-In Call

- 10-14 AmeriCorps Week, tentative dates
- 19 Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar; 9-10am – required of all programs
- 20 TA Webinar, Topic: Budget Modifications and Unexpended Funds Training; 9-10am
- 25 Monthly Claim submitted in IowaGrants (for 2/25)

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Site Supervisor Interviews, Financial Desk Review, Timekeeping Review, Monitoring Site Visit, Claim Review (if necessary)
Moderate	NSCHC Background Check review, Site Supervisor Interviews, Monitoring Site Visit
Low	Site Supervisor Interviews, NSCHC Background Check review, Monitoring Site Visit

April 2025

Events/Deadlines

- TBD Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame and Excellence in Mentoring Award Ceremony
- 1 Last day to enroll half time (HT) and reduced half time (RHT) members/slots for fall start date programs (unless pre- approval)
- 1 Last day to enroll full time (FT) members/slots for January start date programs (unless pre- approval)
- 3 Tier 3 Recruitment/Retention TA Check-In Call
- 8-10 National Service Training Conference (required), Atlanta, Georgia
- 15 Initial Progress Report due in IowaGrants (for programs with January start dates)
- 21-27 [National Volunteer Week, tentative dates](#)
- 16 Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar; 9-10am – required of all programs
- 25 Monthly Claim submitted in IowaGrants (for 3/25)
- 25 Quarterly Claim submitted in IowaGrants (for 1/25-3/25)
- 25 Federal Financial Report (FFR) due in IowaGrants (covering start of grant – 3/31/2025), required for all programs
- 25 Estimated Unexpended Funds Report due in IowaGrants, required for all programs
- 29 Virtual National Service Training Conference, April 29 – May 1
- 30 Budget Modification Request due in IowaGrants (for programs with August/September start date)
- 30 No-Cost Grant Agreement Extension request submitted in IowaGrants (if needed, for August/September start dates)

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Quarter 3 Budget Modification Check-in, Monitoring Site Visit, Claim Review (if necessary)
Moderate	Quarter 3 Budget Modification Check-in, Monitoring Site Visit, Member Timekeeping Component Review, Financial Desk Review
Low	Quarter 3 Budget Modification Check-in, Monitoring Site Visit

May 2025

Events/Deadlines

- 15 Mid-year Progress Report due in IowaGrants (covering start of grant through – 03/31/25), required for all programs
- 21 Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar; 9-10am – required of all programs
- 25 Monthly Claim submitted in IowaGrants (for 4/25)
- 30 Enrollment Plan Update due in IowaGrants for all programs, including those with January start dates

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Review Mid-year Progress Report, Monitoring Site Visit, Member Timekeeping Component Review, Claim Review (if necessary)
Moderate	Review Mid-year Progress Report, Monitoring Site Visit
Low	Review Mid-year Progress Report, Monitoring Site Visit

June 2025

Events/Deadlines

- TBD Spring/Summer Iowa AmeriCorps Member Swearing-In Event, Virtual
- 1 Last day to enroll three quarter time (TQT) members/slots for January start date programs (unless pre- approval)
- 18 Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar; 9-10am – required of all programs
- 25 Monthly Claim submitted in IowaGrants (for 5/25)

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Monitoring Site Visit, Claim Review (if necessary),
Moderate	Monitoring Site Visit, Date Alignment for summer enrollments
Low	Monitoring Site Visit

July 2025

Events/Deadlines

- TBD Virtual Life After AmeriCorps and Member Recognition Celebration, program collaborative training opportunity
- TBD TA Webinar, Topic: NSCHC Review, 9-10am
- 1 Last day to enroll quarter time (QT), minimum time (MT) and abbreviated time (AT) members/slots for fall start date programs (unless pre-approval)
- 1 Last day to enroll half time (HT) and reduced half time (RHT) members/slots for January start date programs (unless pre-approved)
- 17 Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar; 9-10am – required of all programs
- 25 Monthly Claim submitted in IowaGrants (for 6/25)
- 25 Quarterly Claim submitted in IowaGrants (for 4/25-6/25)
- 31 Budget Modification Request due in IowaGrants (for programs with January start date)
- 31 No-Cost Grant Agreement Extension request submitted in IowaGrants (if needed, for January start date)

- 31 2024-2025 grant agreement ends for programs with a start date of August 1 (all members should be ending their service term and no further grant costs be incurred, unless grant agreement extension was requested and approved)

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Claim Review (if necessary), Member Timekeeping Component Review
Moderate	Member Timekeeping Component Review
Low	Member Timekeeping Component Review

August 2025

Events/Deadlines

- 20 Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar; 9 – 10 am – required of all programs
- 25 Monthly claim submitted in IowaGrants for 7/25 (FINAL claim for grants that ended in July 2025)
- 30 All 2024-2025 members should be exited from the electronic systems for grants ended in July 31 (unless grant agreement extension was requested and approved)
- 31 Final Progress Report due in IowaGrants for programs ended 7/31/2025 (covering start of grant year through end of grant year)
- 31 2024 – 2025 grant agreement ends for programs with a start date of September 1 (all members should be ending their service term and no further grant costs should be incurred, unless grant agreement extension was requested and approved)

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Quarter 4 Closeout Discussion Check-in, Claim Review (if necessary)
Moderate	Quarter 4 Closeout Discussion Check-in
Low	Quarter 4 Closeout Discussion Check-in

September 2025

Events/Deadlines

- 25 Monthly claim submitted in IowaGrants for 8/25 (FINAL claim for grants that ended in August 2025)
- 25 Quarterly claim submitted in IowaGrants for 7/25-8/25(FINAL claim for grants that ended in August 2025)
- 30 All 2024 – 2025 members should be exited from electronic systems for grants ended August 31 (unless grant agreement extension was requested and approved)
- 30 Final Progress Report due in IowaGrants for programs ended 8/31/2025 (covering start of grant year through end of grant year)
- 30 Enrollment plan update due in IowaGrants (if needed) for programs with January start dates
- 30 Closeout packet due in IowaGrants for grants ended 7/31/2025
- 30 Final FFR submitted in IowaGrants for grants ended 7/31/2025

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Member Timekeeping Component Review, Claim Review (if necessary)
Moderate	None anticipated
Low	None anticipated

October 2025

Events/Deadlines

- 1 Last day to enroll quarter time (QT), minimum time (MT), and abbreviated time (AT) members/slots for January start date programs (unless pre-approved)
- 25 FFR submitted to Volunteer Iowa in IowaGrants (covering start of grant year – September 30, 2025) required for all programs
- 30 All 2024 – 2025 members should be exited from electronic systems for grants ended September 30 with a no-cost extension
- 31 Final Progress Report due in IowaGrants for programs ended 9/30/2025 with a no-cost extension (covering start of grant year through end of grant year)
- 31 October Progress report due in IowaGrants for programs that have a closeout date beyond 10/31/25
- 31 Final FFR submitted in IowaGrants for grants ended 8/31/2025
- 31 Closeout packet due in IowaGrants for programs ended 8/31/2025

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Member Timekeeping Component Review for Program Closeout
Moderate	Member Timekeeping Component Review for Program Closeout
Low	Member Timekeeping Component Review for Program Closeout

November 2025

Events/Deadlines

- 30 Last potential day of service for 2024 – 2025 members for programs with an August/September start date (if program was awarded a no-cost grant agreement extension)
- 30 All 2024 – 2025 members should be exited from electronic systems for grants ended October 31 with a no-cost extension
- 30 Final Progress Report due in IowaGrants for programs ended 10/31/2025 with a no-cost extension (covering start of grant year through end of grant year)
- 30 Final FFR submitted in IowaGrants for grants ended 9/30/2025 with a no-cost extension
- 30 Closeout packet due in IowaGrants for grants ended 9/30/2025 with a no-cost extension

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Member Timekeeping Component Review for Program Closeout
Moderate	Member Timekeeping Component Review for Program Closeout
Low	Member Timekeeping Component Review for Program Closeout

December 2025

Events/Deadlines

- 1 Year End Progress Report submitted in IowaGrants (for January 1 start-date programs and programs with an extension through 11/30). If programs have significant activities beyond 11/15, they can request an extension through 12/15.
- 30 All 2024 – 2025 members should be exited from electronic systems for grants ended November 30 with a no-cost extension

- 31 Final Progress Report due in IowaGrants for programs ended 11/30/2025 with a no-cost extension (covering start of grant year through end of grant year)
- 31 Final FFR submitted in IowaGrants for grants ended 10/31/2025 with a no-cost extension
- 31 Closeout packet due in IowaGrants for grants ended 10/31/2025 with a no-cost extension

Monitoring Level Schedule

High	Member Timekeeping Component Review for Program Closeout
Moderate	Member Timekeeping Component Review for Program Closeout
Low	Member Timekeeping Component Review for Program Closeout

Other Events/Dates

- Volunteer Iowa Commission Meeting dates and time can be found on our website at Volunteer Iowa Meetings.
- State holidays when Volunteer Iowa offices are closed can be found on the [State DAS website](#).

Programs may receive no-cost extensions for up-to three months, or as approved by Volunteer Iowa, in Order to allow members to complete their term of service. For 2024-2025 programs that are extended, The following deadlines and activities will apply based upon the grant agreement end date:

Every Month of Extended Grant Agreement

25 Monthly claim submitted in IowaGrants (for the previous month). This includes the final claim of the grant year.

By End Date of Grant Agreement

Varies 2024 – 2025 Grant Agreement Ends
(All members should be done with their service and no further grant costs should be incurred)

15 Days After the End Date of Grant Agreement

Varies Final Program Progress Report submitted in IowaGrants. Data submitted is for period covering the start date of the grant through the end date of the grant (or the extension of the grant).

30 Days After the End Date of Grant Agreement

Varies All members should be exited from electronic systems

60 Days After the End Date of Grant Agreement

Varies Final FFR submitted in IowaGrants
Varies Closeout packet due in IowaGrants

Other Reports Due to Volunteer Iowa as Needed (in IowaGrants)

Program-Related (utilizing Program Officer Notification status report)

- Change in program staff, including authorized representative (within 5 business days of change)
- Changes in project sites (within 5 business days of change)

- Performance measure amendment requests due to Volunteer Iowa program officer as needed
- Other significant program changes (within 5 business days)
- Request to waive enrollment plan form
- Requests to waive deadlines

Member-Related (utilizing the Member/Slot Change Form status report, unless otherwise noted)

- Termination, suspension, or transfer (within 5 business days – do not make change in eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal/OnCorps without prior Volunteer Iowa approval)
- Slot conversion requests (do not make change in eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal/OnCorps without prior Volunteer Iowa approval)
- If a member exits their term successfully more than 2 weeks prior to scheduled end date, submit Program Officer Notification status report
- Member injury requiring worker’s comp notification (within 48 hours of incident), submit Program Officer Notification status report
- Member convicted of a felony during a term of service (within 5 days of conviction), submit Program Officer Notification status report
- Member convicted of sale or distribution of a controlled substance during their term of service (within 5 days of conviction), submit Program Officer Notification status report
- Financial Desk Review upon request with 30-day notice by Volunteer Iowa
- Change in fiscal staff (within 5 business days of change), submit Program Officer Notification status report
- Proposed budget changes (as soon as possible – may take up to two weeks for approval, longer if AmeriCorps approval is required)

Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar Instructions

Our monthly program webinars are typically scheduled the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 9:00 – 10:00 am. In some instances, they may be rescheduled or cancelled with advance notice. Login instructions will be the same each month. We will be using Microsoft Teams to conduct our webinars. No registration is required with this, the link will be same for each month (listed below) and will be included in prior email notification from Volunteer Iowa. A program representative is required attend each monthly webinar. The link to join the Monthly AmeriCorps Program Webinar can be found on the calendar in Basecamp. Volunteer Iowa uses this same link to login/call in each month. Please contact Tawney Schreier at tawney.schreier@volunteeriowa.org with questions or issues.

Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps Grant Application Outline

Each year Volunteer Iowa grants and administers around \$8 million of AmeriCorps State funding in Iowa through a competitive grant process. Programs may be awarded funding at the national level (through competitive funding) or state level (through formula funding). Organizations that wish to operate an AmeriCorps State program solely within Iowa must follow the Volunteer Iowa application procedures. To find out more details, visit [AmeriCorps State Grants](#). A general outline of the process is available below.

Application Materials

- Volunteer Iowa posts its Request for Applications (RFA) for AmeriCorps State on the Volunteer Iowa website AmeriCorps State Grants. This typically happens in late summer or early fall for returning programs and in the winter for new applicants.
- Pre-Application Instructions, Final Application Instructions, and any Volunteer Iowa or AmeriCorps supporting materials will also be posted to the Volunteer Iowa website.
- All applicants, both returning programs and new applicants, are required to submit a pre-application. Pre-application and final application deadlines and requirements are updated and posted each year.
- Volunteer Iowa materials are based on those from AmeriCorps (including the AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity and Application Instructions) but are customized for Iowa-specific requirements, so Iowa applicants must use the Iowa materials.

Application Timeline

- Late summer/early fall (returning applicants) or late winter/early spring (new applicants): Review the Request for Grant Applications (RFA) from the Volunteer Iowa and the corresponding Pre-Application/Final Application Instructions.
- Early to mid-fall: Attend technical assistance webinars offered by Volunteer Iowa for applicants intending to operate in Iowa.
- Mid to late fall (for returning applicants) or on a rolling basis through early spring (for new applicants): Submit grant pre-applications to Volunteer Iowa.
- Following pre-application submission: Pre-applications are reviewed by Volunteer Iowa staff and organizations are given feedback to revise their proposals and re-submit a final application by either a competitive or formula funding deadline.
- Late winter to late spring: Final applications are reviewed and scored, either by AmeriCorps reviewers (for competitive applicants) or locally by a Volunteer Iowa grant review committee (for formula applicants). Reviewers prepare questions for applicants, which may be sent electronically or, for formula applicants, discussed in an in-person appearance before the grant review committee.

Funding Timeline

- Late spring: Competitive funding decisions are announced for those who applied the previous fall/winter.
- Late spring/early summer: Volunteer Iowa announces which applicants will receive funding from our state formula pool. Programs work with Volunteer Iowa staff to resolve any final application requirements.
- August 1/September 1: Typically, is the first day of the program year for AmeriCorps State programs.

2.1 PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

1. APPROVED GRANT AND PROGRAM DESIGN

Every AmeriCorps Program starts with a program design that supports the Theory of Change (TOC) and Logic Model. Program staff should look to the AmeriCorps State Grant Agreement (available in the Grant Reference component of IowaGrants) to understand the community need the program aims to address and how the program will have an impact on that community need. All member activities should be in alignment with the approved program design and logic model and include evidence for the approach and interventions. Beginning in 2023-2024 Volunteer Iowa instituted a Maximum Slot Request Limit policy. This policy encourages organizations to do a critical assessment of requested slots and only request the number of slots the program believes they have the capacity and the likelihood to fill. Programs will be limited based upon the previous year's enrollment rate. This policy has been developed because AmeriCorps has changed the way it manages unexpended funds. The policy can be found in Basecamp. Programs are responsible for knowing their own grant and program objectives as a first step in effective program management.

2. GOVERNING DOCUMENTS FOR AMERICORPS STATE PROGRAMS

A. FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNING MATERIALS AND ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

AmeriCorps State Programs (also referred to as "grantees") are responsible for operating in accordance with both the general and specific AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions, applicable federal statutes, regulations and guidelines and any amendments thereto. In addition, grantees are expected to operate their program in accordance with the grant application, budget and supporting documentation approved by AmeriCorps. The grantees are responsible for assuring that all project sites and grant-supported activities are also in compliance with applicable federal requirements.

The grantee has full fiscal and programmatic responsibility for managing all aspects of the grant and grant-supported activities, subject to the oversight of Volunteer Iowa. The grantee is accountable to Volunteer Iowa for its operation of the Iowa AmeriCorps Program and use of AmeriCorps grant funds. It must expend grant funds in a judicious and reasonable manner. Although grantees are encouraged to seek the advice and opinion of Volunteer Iowa on special situations that may arise, such advice does not diminish the grantee's responsibility for operating decisions.

All Iowa AmeriCorps State Programs (competitive, formula, fixed, education award, planning grants, etc.) receive federal funds as grantees of Volunteer Iowa. Therefore, Volunteer Iowa must ensure that grantees operating under federal awards comply with Assurances and Certifications, Terms and Conditions, Regulations and U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars incorporated into the application process or by reference with the final grant agreement. Volunteer Iowa executes a grant agreement with each grantee on an annual basis. This agreement details the relationship between Volunteer Iowa and the grantee as it relates to the AmeriCorps grant. Grantees are expected to adhere to the obligations described within the grant agreement, which comply with federal and state regulations at the time of issuance.

It is recommended that programs seeking guidance first refer to the Terms and Conditions; then read any relevant information from this manual. Individuals with questions or concerns should consult the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (“Act”) ([42 U.S.C.A. § 12501 Et. seq.](#)), the regulations issued under the Act ([45 CFR § 2500.1 Et. seq.](#)), the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, the AmeriCorps [FY2024 General Grant and Cooperative Agreement Terms and Conditions](#), [2024 AmeriCorps State and National Terms and Conditions](#), the [AmeriCorps FY2024 NOFO website](#), and/or relevant state law. Detailed AmeriCorps Regulations, and Statutes can be found on the AmeriCorps website at [Statutes and Regulations](#) while Terms and Conditions and other resources to manage your grant can be found on the AmeriCorps website at [Manage Your Grant | AmeriCorps](#). Reference the Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps Grant Agreement that outlines the Order of Priority of governing documents. If program staff are unable to locate a specific reference or citation, please reach out to the Volunteer Iowa program officer for assistance.

AmeriCorps programs and members are eligible to utilize the Volunteer Iowa’s appeals process as described within these documents.

B. VOLUNTEER IOWA AND AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE PRIORITIES

I. AMERICORPS STRATEGIC PLAN

AmeriCorps establishes its priorities for national service in its agency strategic plan. The newest AmeriCorps strategic plan includes five goals: (1). Partner with communities to alleviate poverty and advance racial equity, (2). Enhance the experience for AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, (3). Unite Americans by bringing them together in service. (4). Effectively steward federal resources, and (5). Make AmeriCorps one of the best and most equitable places to work in the federal government. Visit the AmeriCorps website to find more information about the [Strategic Plan](#).

II. VOLUNTEER IOWA STATE SERVICE PLAN

The Commission establishes priorities for volunteer and national service in Iowa through a State Service Plan. The current [Volunteer Iowa State Service Plan](#) is available in the “Publications” section of the Volunteer Iowa website. The State Service Plan is drafted by the Commission and approved by the Governor. The current plan is effective from 2023-2025. The goals and priorities in both the AmeriCorps Strategic Plan and Volunteer Iowa State Service Plan can impact new program development and AmeriCorps funding decisions.

3. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Organizations should have the basic governing policies necessary to adequately manage federal funds. This includes policies that cover financial management and internal controls, human resource management, including timekeeping and travel, and policies that cover ethics, code of conduct and whistleblowers. Requirements for the general policies are contained in 2 CFR 200. Volunteer Iowa collects and reviews program policies through IowaGrants. Policies are uploaded into IowaGrants as part of the startup process for all new grantees, using the Financial and Program Policies start form.

Additionally, all programs are required to upload all policies once every three years, even if there have been no updates made since the last submission. Further, if any policy is updated in a year that policies are not required, the updated policy should be added to the Financial and Program Policy start form in the next new program year. Volunteer Iowa may request to review any policy that governs the program at any time. From time to time a new policy is required. All programs are required to submit the new policy during the grant startup process. Here is a list of policies that will be reviewed as part of AmeriCorps grant monitoring.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Management and Internal Controls *Segregation of Duties • Delegation of Authority • *Timekeeping • *Travel • Procurement • Ethics • Code of Conduct • *Document Retention • *+Whistleblower • CEO Pay • *Allocation Policy (if the organization does not have one included in the Financial Management and Internal Controls) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment Policy • Personally Identifiable Information • *Teleservice (updated for 23-24) • *Disaster Service • *National Service Criminal History Check • *Member Suspension, Exit and Payroll Policy • Limited English Proficiency Policy (<i>NEW</i>) • *Cost Allocation Plan <p>If necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Electronic Signature Policy • *Assigned Technology Agreement • Alternative Service • *Tracking of In-Kind Match
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*Template policies available +Policy update will be required in 25-26

Templates for many policies listed above are available for programs to use. For policies that do not have templates many programs are willing to share their policies as examples. Programs may access the sample policies and other available resources on Basecamp. More details about financial policies are in section 4.

4. AMERICORPS-SPECIFIC PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Not every program management situation that arises is covered specifically by AmeriCorps or Volunteer Iowa policy. Programs must develop their own AmeriCorps-specific policies so that they have established methods for dealing with various program situations. Programs must be mindful of any requirements of the sponsor organization related to the creation and implementation of a program policy manual (i.e., board review or approval, consistency with other agency practices and mission, etc.). Programs should ensure that their policies are organized and available to all staff involved with the program. A timeline for regular review of internal program policies should be in place.

Policies that are unique to AmeriCorps are described below in more detail. Please remember that the list of policies mentioned here are not intended to be exhaustive. The program should develop policies that are necessary to effectively implement their program within their organization.

A. NATIONAL SERVICE CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK POLICY (NSCHC POLICY AND PROCEDURES)

Programs must have a policy and procedure that covers member and staff National Service Criminal History Checks. Checks that are incomplete or done late may result in disallowed costs. More about the NSCHC requirements is covered in section 2.2 of this manual.

B. MEMBER EXIT, SUSPENSION, AND PAYROLL POLICIES

Programs are required to have a policy that details how member living allowance is distributed, how member bonus or supports are paid, and includes what constitutes unallowable living allowance payments. Members are to be paid in accordance with a signed Member Service Agreement (MSA) that aligns with the approved grant agreement. This information may be contained in more than one policy. Member payroll information should include details about how living allowance is managed for members who are suspended and exited prior to the end date of the term of service, and details about how payroll is managed in cases where members serve partial pay periods at the beginning or end of their service. As a best practice, programs are encouraged not to prorate living allowance payments. A template as well as Volunteer Iowa's Living Allowance Distribution Policy is available in Basecamp.

C. ORGANIZATION TIMEKEEPING POLICY

Organization's timekeeping policies should be updated to include language requiring members who submit and staff that approve AmeriCorps timesheets to attest the time is accurate and complete. Timesheets should contain a clause for both members and staff indicating that payment related to the timesheet is provided under a federal grant. Language is available from Volunteer Iowa upon request.

D. MEMBER BONUS AND RETENTION POLICIES

Programs that plan on awarding bonuses must have a policy that outlines the requirements for members to receive retention, completion and/or recruitment bonuses. Volunteer Iowa has a list of items that should be considered when developing a policy of this type and outlines how the bonuses should be included in the budget and in what other AmeriCorps documents the bonuses should be included. The Member Bonus Checklist can be found on Basecamp.

E. PROVIDING MEMBERS WITH HOUSING SUPPORT

Volunteer Iowa understands organizations are working to attract the best people to their program by providing incentives such as offering housing or a housing stipend. In these cases, the program is required to develop a policy that outlines the process of determining which members are eligible for this support and how that support is provided. Guidance and examples of other program's policies are available to assist with the development of this policy. Please contact your program officer for assistance.

F. COMPELLING PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES EXIT/SUSPENSION (TEMPORARY LEAVE) POLICY ([45 CFR § 2522.230](#))

In general, programs may approve a compelling personal circumstance exit/suspension for members in situations where conditions beyond a member's control make it unreasonably difficult or impossible to complete the term of service (for exit), or to complete service hours for a specified period of time (for suspension/temporary leave). All programs should establish a policy that outlines how member requests for Compelling Personal Circumstance (CPC) suspensions and exits will be managed, including how member living allowance payments may or may not be impacted. The policy should outline the review process, the expectations for communication and documentation from the member, the types of documentation needed to support a CPC suspension/exit, what happens when independent documentation is not available or not provided, and the expectation of

confidentiality from the program. The policy should ensure that CPC requests are handled consistently. Third party documentation of the compelling circumstances is preferred. Volunteer Iowa has a sample policy available for program review.

G. DOCUMENT RETENTION

Programs are required to have a records retention policy that complies with the records maintenance requirements indicated within the grant agreement, section 6.6 Records Retention. This section requires that all records, including financial records, supporting documentation, statistical records, evaluation and program performance data, member information and personnel records, related to this agreement be retained for a period of three years following the date of submission of Volunteer Iowa's final FFR or three years following completion of any required audit and resolution of any findings, whichever is later. Programs should note that documentation of a confidential nature should be retained and disposed of appropriately. Volunteer Iowa provides notice of these disposal dates on the Volunteer Iowa website, or you may contact AmeriCorps@volunteeriowa.org to confirm disposal dates.

H. DISASTER POLICY

Programs are required to have a policy that covers disaster training, and member service during local, state, and national disasters. The policy should outline where and when members can participate in disaster response and outline allowable disaster-related service activities. Programs offering to respond to national disasters should indicate this by signing the AmeriCorps Disaster Report Team (ADRT) agreement, which is included as a component in the program grant agreement. See Section 8 for more information. Programs must ensure that liability insurance covers members if deployed to disasters out of state.

I. BREACH OF PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION ([42 U.S. CODE 2000EE-2](#))

Programs must ensure that they have procedures in place to prepare for and respond to any potential breaches of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and notify their Volunteer Iowa program officer immediately in the event of a breach. Personally Identifiable Information is defined by OMB as any information about an individual, including, but not limited to, education, financial transactions, medical history, and criminal or employment history and information which can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as their name, social security number, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, biometric records, etc., including any other personal information which is linked or linkable to an individual.

J. AMERICORPS MEMBER TELESERVICE POLICY ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

AmeriCorps has issued updated guidance related to member teleservice. AmeriCorps recognizes the COVID-19 pandemic changed the landscape of work and service in our communities across the country in a permanent manner; however, they also recognize that adapting to the changing nature of work/service is necessary as the program moves forward, while it maintains and upholds its program's place-based element of service and limits risk. The updated guidance clarifies that remote service is NOT permitted. Remote service is defined as an arrangement in which an AmeriCorps member is not located within the commuting area of the geographic community where the service is to occur and is not expected to be physically present at the service site and/or community events.

Additionally, virtual service sites are not permitted in the AmeriCorps State and National program. Virtual service sites are defined as a location or organization that does not physical location.

AmeriCorps member teleservice must only be performed in agreement with a program-specific policy that must address:

- Written authorization of teleservice in advance
- Expectations of the communication requirements between supervisors and teleserving members
- Mitigation of the increased risk of time and attendance abuse
- Appropriate supervision including validation of the activities to be performed, and
- Verification of hours claimed.

Volunteer Iowa reminds programs that teleservice refers to an arrangement in which the member performs his/her duties and responsibilities from an appropriate alternative service site other than the location from which he/she would otherwise serve. This includes weekend service performed at a site other than the assigned location, or service completed in conjunction with specific activity included in the member position description. Regular weekend service must be included in the anticipated service schedule. Teleservice does not refer to service performed while on authorized travel status, while commuting, or mobile service at customer/client-designated sites, as opposed to the grantee service site (i.e., for a member serving in a summer meals program, the member's time on-site at a park where meals are served would not be considered teleservice, but the member might request authorization for teleservice for time spent developing outreach materials to promote the program to neighborhood families).

Only certain activities are suitable for teleservice, so programs should consider factors such as the portability of the activities, the ability to easily quantify/evaluate what was accomplished, the availability of needed technology and equipment, the importance of face-to-face contact with other members and program staff or clients, and how the member's teleservice will affect the workload and performance of other members. Further, programs should consider updating their insurance coverage to address legal liability attribution (for the program or teleserving member) for incidents that occur during teleservice.

Volunteer Iowa's timekeeping monitoring may include special inquiry into any identified cases of teleservice to ensure that it was conducted appropriately and according to program policy.

Volunteer Iowa has a sample teleservice policy located on Basecamp. U.S. General Services Administration and Iowa Department of Administrative Services also have telework policies, which may be good resources to use in designing the program policy.

Note: Members requesting teleservice arrangements as a means of reasonable accommodation of a disability are excluded from this policy, as those requests are covered under other laws and policies. Remote service is not an eligible reasonable accommodation.

K. ALTERNATIVE SERVICE

All programs are expected to outline an anticipated regular service schedule for AmeriCorps members as part of the Member Position Description. Volunteer Iowa and AmeriCorps expect that

programs will design member terms such that each member has a reasonable expectation of completing his/her term of service by the end of the program's project period by complying with his/her expected service schedule.

Programs should establish policies that govern both anticipated and unanticipated member service that incorporates more than eight or nine continuous hours, requires more than five consecutive days of service, or requires service during the evening. Such extended or unusual shifts are often subject to additional scrutiny by AmeriCorps and therefore will be given extra attention as part of Volunteer Iowa monitoring.

Some factors that Volunteer Iowa encourages programs to consider when developing such policies include the following:

I. ON-CALL SERVICE

How are restrictions placed on the individual's personal activities and movement while on-call? Commonly, time spent on-site or actually responding is considered service time and time when the individual is waiting to be called is not counted as service time.

II. NON-SERVICE PERIODS

Periods of non-service such as rest and sleep, are commonly excluded from hours served when a member is required to be on duty for 24 hours or more (such as when helping to coordinate an overnight youth camp or summer program).

iii. TRAVEL TIME

Member travel time is not counted when it involves the regular commute a member makes between home and his/her service site(s), but travel time to another location for a special assignment or for training may be allowable in accordance with organizational policies.

It is in the program's best interest to draft a detailed policy regarding the total amount of alternative service that can be performed and how to obtain permission and document hours served during this time. Alternative service approvals by the program should be reasonable and equitable for all members (e.g., a program should refrain from approving alternative hours for a member who is behind in hours but not allow that same opportunity to someone who is on track to complete). All alternative service is subject to the rules on prohibited activities. When a member is providing alternative service that is not related to their program but counted towards their term of service, the member must wear their AmeriCorps service gear.

Resources for designing policies on extended or unusual service hours can be found on the websites of Iowa Workforce Development's Division of Labor and the U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division. Volunteer Iowa has developed sample policies that may be used by programs. Sample policies are available on Basecamp. Please consult with the program officer when working to develop these policies.

L. ASSIGNED TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT

Programs that use federal funds to purchase electronics, including tablets and laptops, items used for member connectivity, like hot spots and cell phone, and other ancillary items should develop a policy that covers the purchase, usage, and management of these items. All items purchased with

grant funds must be used 100% on grant-related activities. If programs plan to hold a member responsible for damage or items that are not returned, this must be detailed in the policy and included in the Member Service Agreement. A sample policy is available on Basecamp.

5. INTERNAL STAFFING

A. ADEQUATE STAFFING

Grantees must ensure adequate staffing levels for their AmeriCorps grant. Every grantee must designate a lead contact for Volunteer Iowa regarding all aspects of AmeriCorps operations, and an alternate contact. Volunteer Iowa expects all new programs, including planning grants, provide for a full-time lead staff or equivalent as the responsibilities for grant/program and member management are very rigorous. Most successful programs make use of a team-based management model, with additional staff (who may be full-time or part-time on the grant) specializing in areas such as member management, data tracking and reporting, host site recruitment and support, and/or member records management.

Volunteer Iowa has a Program Management Segregation of Duties form to ensure all responsibilities are assigned and the program and commission have a shared understanding of grant staffing. Programs with an August/September start date will be asked to submit the completed form by August 1. The form is due by December 15th for programs with a January start date. This form will be discussed with the program during the first scheduled check-in call.

B. STAFFING AT ORGANIZATIONS WITH MULTIPLE AMERICORPS GRANTS

Grantees with multiple AmeriCorps grants often share staff across these grants but should ensure that no single individual is allocated for more than 1 full-time equivalent (FTE). Volunteer Iowa understands that programs with multiple grants may have efficiencies that allow for a slightly lower staffing level. If program staff are shared, program monitoring level assessment and program monitoring activities may be conducted jointly for the programs. If a single organization has multiple AmeriCorps grants but those are managed by different people, the monitoring may occur separately.

C. COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Many grantees will allocate aspects of the AmeriCorps program management to multiple staff members in addition to the lead staff (others commonly involved include administrative assistants, financial/accounting staff, and human resources specialists). Additionally, site supervisors (who may be internal or external staff) have a crucial role in supervising AmeriCorps members. Grantees should develop processes for training and ongoing coordination of activity for all staff and contractors involved with the AmeriCorps program. Any organization staff with responsibilities for the program should be well-versed in its purposes, goals and value and understand program requirements, and restrictions, reporting timelines, strategic considerations, and policy issues. The program has responsibility for training site supervisors, including those from outside organizations who may serve as contractors under the Host Site Agreement.

D. ONBOARDING AND TRAINING NEW PROGRAM STAFF

Programs are responsible for the onboarding and training of new staff responsible for the AmeriCorps program. As part of the onboarding process, organizations should develop a plan to ensure any new staff understand AmeriCorps and the program outlined in the approved grant. While Volunteer Iowa can provide guidance, resources, and support, we are unable to walk new staff through program processes. Multiple trainings and other resources, including a Grantee Staff Transition Checklist, are available on Basecamp. These items can be used to help new program staff get up to speed. Volunteer Iowa strongly suggests that programs develop and document standard procedures to enhance the continuity of operations of the AmeriCorps grant. A Standard Operating Procedures template and sample are available in Basecamp. Programs should use the Program Staff Segregation of Duties chart for a list of actions that may need to be documented. While Volunteer Iowa staff is willing to respond to questions and/or schedule additional time with new program staff, they are not responsible for training individual program staff members.

6. NOTIFICATIONS TO VOLUNTEER IOWA

In addition to regular reporting and communication requirements, program management situations may arise which will require notification to Volunteer Iowa, or prior approval from Volunteer Iowa (and sometimes AmeriCorps). As a grantee of Volunteer Iowa, the Volunteer Iowa program officer is the primary contact for all Iowa programs, not AmeriCorps. Therefore, if a program receives direct communication from AmeriCorps, this information should be shared with Volunteer Iowa. This helps to ensure that guidance provided to all Iowa programs is clear and consistent with AmeriCorps expectations and allows Volunteer Iowa to provide direction, support, and guidance to programs in responding to AmeriCorps.

The grantee must obtain prior written approval from Volunteer Iowa before making the following changes in the approved program (changes in italics below also require AmeriCorps approval, which will be handled by the Volunteer Iowa program officer).

A. *SCOPE OR GOALS OF THE PROGRAM*

Changes in the scope or goals of the program, regardless of whether they involve budgetary changes.

B. *PERFORMANCE MEASURES*

Changes to the approved program performance measures.

C. KEY PERSONNEL

Changes in key personnel identified in the application or award document (this includes all staff listed on the budget under federal share or match). Specifically changes in the authorized representative, fiscal representative, program representative and/or lead staff should be communicated to the Volunteer Iowa within five (5) business days of the organization's awareness using the Program Staff Update status report form in IowaGrants. Completing this status report will include an updated Program Staff Segregation of Duties chart.

D. REDUCTION OR ABSENCE OF LEAD STAFF

The absence for more than three months, or a 25% reduction in time devoted to the project, by the approved lead staff; programs must have an interim staff identified and available during extended absences. No program can operate without lead staff.

E. *CHANGES IN MEMBER SUPERVISION*

Substantial changes in the level of member supervision, including a change in site supervision, or the addition or loss of host sites.

F. *CONTRACTING OR SUB-GRANTING AMERICORPS ACTIVITIES*

Entering into sub-grants or contracting out any Iowa AmeriCorps program activities funded by the grant and not specifically identified in the approved application.

G. *CHANGE IN PROGRAM DESIGN*

Including the following changes (using the Member/Slot Change form in IowaGrants). Actions must be approved by the program officer prior to making the change:

- Converting full-time slots to other types of slots and vice versa;
- Changing an enrolled member's status from full-time to less than full-time or vice versa;
- Early termination of a member;
- Refill of member slot.

H. *SUSPENDING A MEMBER AND REINSTATING A MEMBER FOLLOWING SUSPENSION*

Suspending or reinstating a member for disciplinary reasons or for compelling personal circumstance requires notification to Volunteer Iowa within five (5) business days using the Member/Slot Change Form in IowaGrants.

I. EXCEPTIONS TO POLICIES (INCLUDING TO DEADLINES/DUE DATES)

Exceptions must be requested in writing from the Volunteer Iowa program officer. Volunteer Iowa may withhold payments or take other actions as outlined in the Grant Agreement if program reports or forms are late, inaccurate or out-of-compliance (i.e., matching requirements not met).

J. NATIONAL SERVICE CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK (NSCHC) SELF-REPORT

If a program discovers that a serving member was ineligible to serve related to NSCHC or that the name on the check was incorrect, the program must notify Volunteer Iowa immediately. More about the NSCHC requirements is covered in section 2.2 of this manual.

K. *OTHER PROGRAM-RELATED CHANGES/NOTICES*

Such as changes in host sites, changes in program partners, staff criminal offense notification, etc.

L. OTHER MEMBER-RELATED NOTICES

Such as member death or injury requiring worker's compensation, member grievance received, Member criminal offense notification, etc.

M. REPORTING MEMBERS ENROLLED IN eGRANTS WHO NEVER SERVED HOURS

If the program enrolled a member in eGrants but the individual was exited prior to serving any hours, and was not paid with grant funds, please provide the individual's name to Volunteer Iowa.

This will help during monitoring and closeout. Please communicate information regarding situations like this to the program officer, preferably via Program Officer Notification in IowaGrants.

N. MEMBERS ENROLLED IN EGRANTS WITH NAMES THAT DIFFER FROM THAT WHICH APPEAR IN OTHER SYSTEMS OR DOCUMENTS

Please provide information that would help link the name that appears in eGrants with the name that appears in the timekeeping system, IowaGrants and/or other official documents and systems. This will help during monitoring and closeout.

O. OTHER BUDGET-RELATED CHANGES

Such as change in audit company, change in payroll schedule, budget modification request, etc.

7. STATEWIDE AMERICORPS PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Days of Service: To increase statewide awareness of AmeriCorps and to increase participation in community activities, all AmeriCorps programs are encouraged to participate in a National Day of Service event. Potential days of service include: Martin Luther King (MLK) Day of Service, September 11th Day of Service and Remembrance, Make a Difference Day, Global Youth Service Day, and AmeriCorps Week. Programs will receive more information and resources on these activities throughout the year. If a program or members participate in a Day of Service, please send a notice via email to your program officer. As a reminder, programs should adhere to the AmeriCorps branding requirements when issuing public information of any sort about program and member service.

8. AMERICORPS PROGRAM ACTIVITIES IN DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY

Volunteer Iowa has pledged to assist with statewide preparedness for, response to and recovery from disasters. Volunteer Iowa is also the designated state agency responsible for managing unaffiliated volunteers during times of disaster in Iowa. In addition to disaster volunteer management, Volunteer Iowa will provide disaster assistance utilizing the network of national service resources in Iowa, as needed, and when called upon by the local, state, and federal emergency management officials.

AmeriCorps programs play an integral role in helping prepare for and respond to disasters. Iowa AmeriCorps programs may be expected to participate in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery activities as appropriate to their program design. To that end, grantees must develop policies to outline member disaster services expectations, both within Iowa and nationally, in the event one occurs. It is acceptable for members to receive hours towards their term of service for participating in local, state, and national level disaster deployments and training opportunities, based on their program's approved disaster policy. All requests for AmeriCorps members to provide disaster services must be coordinated through Volunteer Iowa and program staff must notify Volunteer Iowa in advance of internally reassigning any members to participate in disaster activities. Depending on the severity of the disaster event, requests may come through county emergency operations centers, the state emergency operations center or through our federal partners, FEMA and/or AmeriCorps.

A. LOCAL DISASTER RESPONSE

AmeriCorps programs have the option to respond to a local disaster as it fits their program design. If the approved application included disaster activities, such as response and recovery, in its program design, the program may respond to a local or state disaster according to that design, upon notification to and approval from Volunteer Iowa. All disaster deployments (outside of the approved program design) must be coordinated by Volunteer Iowa. If a program receives a request for disaster response/assistance directly from a local contact or County Emergency Management Official, please contact the program officer for additional instructions.

B. STATE EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION AND/OR STATE-DECLARED ASSISTANCE

AmeriCorps programs may be asked to serve in some capacity, as appropriate, in the event of a disaster that significantly impacts an area(s) of the state. During state declared emergencies and disasters, Volunteer Iowa will work closely with the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to determine the necessity of deploying AmeriCorps members for disaster assistance. Requests coming through the SEOC may allow AmeriCorps members to be relieved of their regular program duties to respond to a disaster. Volunteer Iowa will work with programs to coordinate deployment of members to areas that are impacted by a disaster. Members should not report to disaster-impacted areas without approval/instructions from the Volunteer Iowa.

C. IOWA AMERICORPS DISASTER RESPONSE TEAM

The Iowa AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team (Iowa A-DRT) is a composite team of AmeriCorps programs that allow members to be deployed for disaster operations, both nationally and within Iowa. The Iowa A-DRT is a trained group of members who provide services that will include, but not be limited to, disaster volunteer coordination, debris removal, disaster damage assessment, and disaster preparedness activities such as sandbagging. Iowa AmeriCorps programs may opt into the Iowa A-DRT by signing an agreement with Volunteer Iowa. The agreement is sent to all programs within the Grant Agreement, but programs can join the Iowa A-DRT at any time by contacting the program officer. Volunteer Iowa facilitates training to A-DRT programs annually. The Iowa A-DRT will be deployable through the Disaster Response Cooperative Agreement between Volunteer Iowa and AmeriCorps under the [AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team program](#).

D. FEDERAL DISASTER RECOVERY COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT (DRCA)

During times of federal declared disaster, Volunteer Iowa will work with AmeriCorps and FEMA to ready Iowa AmeriCorps programs to respond to disaster under a mission assignment. Iowa AmeriCorps programs participating in the Iowa A-DRT that have members/program staff who have been adequately trained in disaster response and recovery may be deployed to national disaster relief operations. As with any disaster, programs must have prior approval from Volunteer Iowa program officers for members to deploy for a national disaster, whether in Iowa or another state.

9. PROGRAM RECORD KEEPING

Lead staff and other relevant key staff should have knowledge of and access to the grant documents, including any kept in secure locations. The Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps Grant Agreement requires that all records, including financial records, supporting documentation, statistical records, evaluation and program performance data, member information and personnel records, related to this grant agreement be retained for a period of a minimum of three (3) years from the submission of the final aggregate Federal Financial Report (FFR) for Volunteer Iowa's AmeriCorps grant under which the Subrecipient is funded. In the event there is an audit in progress or an unresolved audit discrepancy at the end of such retention period, the records must be retained three years past the final audit resolution. Volunteer Iowa will provide notification of the retention periods. The current version is available on the Volunteer Iowa website.

A program may choose to store program records electronically if the program can ensure that the validity and integrity of the record is not compromised. All current grant terms and conditions regarding paper records, including access restrictions, security, privacy, and retention, also apply to electronic records. Programs that meet this requirement and store documents electronically are exempt from retaining hard copies of the same documents. However, programs must have policies and procedures in place to ensure that original documents are the source for stored electronic documents.

Volunteer Iowa will allow electronically stored records when the electronic storage procedures and system provide for safe-keeping and security of the records, including all the following:

- Sufficient prevention of unauthorized alterations or erasures of records;
- Effective security measures to ensure that only authorized persons have access to records;
- Adequate measures designed to prevent physical damage to records;
- A system providing for back-up and recovery of records; and
- The electronic storage procedures and system provide for the easy retrieval of records in a timely fashion, including:
 - Storage of the records in a physically accessible location;
 - Clear and accurate labeling of all records; and
 - Storage of the records in a usable, readable format;
 - During monitoring, Volunteer Iowa/AmeriCorps must have access to electronically stored files.

10. PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

As a program that is part of the AmeriCorps National Service Network and Iowa's AmeriCorps, the program is required to verify that all digital properties, media materials, and other relevant items reflect the association with AmeriCorps. The organization agrees to identify its program as an Iowa AmeriCorps Program and participants as Iowa AmeriCorps members in the following ways (in addition to meeting the federal requirements regarding affiliation with the AmeriCorps national service network).

AmeriCorps communications and branding guidance are available in the Iowa AmeriCorps State Basecamp resource files. Volunteer Iowa developed a condensed version of the AmeriCorps Branding Guidelines.

A. AMERICORPS NAME AND LOGO

AmeriCorps is a registered service mark of AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps provides a camera-ready logo available for download. AmeriCorps programs should prominently display the AmeriCorps logo on its websites, most notably on the home page and the "About Us" sections (most programs have agreed to do this as a component of their grant application and therefore should be sure to follow through). The program should use the AmeriCorps name and logo on service gear and public materials such as stationary, application forms, recruitment brochures, on-line position postings, advertisements for AmeriCorps positions or other recruitment materials, as well as orientation materials, member curriculum materials, signs, banners, websites, social media, press releases, and publications related to the AmeriCorps program in, accordance with AmeriCorps requirements.

The grantee may not alter the AmeriCorps or the Iowa AmeriCorps logo and should individualize the logo with their program name only in accordance with AmeriCorps graphic standards. It is the preference that Iowa programs use the AmeriCorps Iowa logo. Programs must obtain the written permission of AmeriCorps, through Volunteer Iowa, before using the AmeriCorps name or logo on materials that will be sold. High quality downloads of the logos are available on the AmeriCorps website.

Donors to local programs may not use the AmeriCorps or Iowa AmeriCorps name or logo in advertising or other promotional materials without the express written permission of AmeriCorps, obtained through Volunteer Iowa. Permission may be withheld if recognition of the donor is inconsistent with Volunteer Iowa's and AmeriCorps' policies.

B. MEMBER SERVICE GEAR

Members should always wear some type of AmeriCorps identification during their service hours (for example, in addition to member uniforms, an AmeriCorps pin, nametag with the logo or AmeriCorps patch or lanyard would be acceptable forms of identification). It is an Iowa requirement that the program provide each of their AmeriCorps members with basic AmeriCorps service gear that must be worn by members at all official AmeriCorps and Iowa AmeriCorps events, as designated by Volunteer Iowa and AmeriCorps, and may be worn at other times consistent with this grant.

Programs may design and provide program-specific member gear and include this in the program's budget; however, AmeriCorps funds can only be used for the production or purchase of gear containing the AmeriCorps logo, or for safety gear. Programs' T-shirts and jackets (but not caps, pants, or other items) must include the AmeriCorps logo or the word "AmeriCorps," which may be followed by the slogan "Getting Things Done for Iowa."

C. SITE SIGNAGE

Iowa program sites are strongly encouraged to place signs that include the AmeriCorps name and logo at service sites and may use the slogan "AmeriCorps Serving Here." This is noted in the Terms and Conditions, as stated in Section III, Recognition of AmeriCorps Support. In addition, the Terms and Conditions now state that all locations where members serve should post a list of the prohibited activities.

D. MEDIA INQUIRIES

Program representatives should provide information only on their local AmeriCorps program. Media inquiries pertaining to other Iowa AmeriCorps programs, Volunteer Iowa, AmeriCorps, statewide initiative areas, statewide performance measures or other statewide statistics/information, etc. should be directed to the Volunteer Iowa Communications and Engagement Officer.

During media responses, the programs should use the following language regarding Volunteer Iowa and its role/relationship to the state's AmeriCorps programs: "Volunteer Iowa is the state service commission responsible for distribution of funds, grant funding, technical assistance, training, support, and oversight of Iowa's AmeriCorps programs. Additional information on Volunteer Iowa or Iowa's AmeriCorps programs can be found on Volunteer Iowa's website or by calling 1-800-308-5987." Programs are encouraged to share local media coverage of their AmeriCorps programs, members and/or program staff and with your program officer.

E. MEMBER PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

In all official program communication, including press or promotional marketing, AmeriCorps members should be identified as such. It would be appropriate to mention both the sponsoring agency and the fact that the member is supported through AmeriCorps – for example, Susie Smith, AmeriCorps member with ABC Non-Profit Agency. AmeriCorps members should state that they are AmeriCorps members during speaking opportunities.

F. USE OF TERMS

I. AMERICORPS

The names "AmeriCorps" and "Iowa AmeriCorps" may only be used by official AmeriCorps and Iowa AmeriCorps programs as designated by and with the permission of Volunteer Iowa and the federal agency known as AmeriCorps. All AmeriCorps programs receiving funding from Volunteer Iowa must have the word, "AmeriCorps" within the project name that is used for public information purposes. For example, a project at Washington School could be Washington School AmeriCorps or a program hosted by ABC agency would have its AmeriCorps project called, ABC AmeriCorps or some other name, such as AmeriCorps Farming Project. Similarly, the word AmeriCorps should not be removed from the title of the project in public events or web-based communications, such as websites, Facebook pages, etc.

II. AMERICORPS MEMBERS

The designation "Iowa AmeriCorps Member" is reserved for individuals who serve in Iowa AmeriCorps programs and are eligible to receive either an educational award from the National Service Trust or post-service benefit upon completion of a term of service. Members should not be referred to as volunteers, corps members, or by their specific service title alone (i.e., construction manager or reading tutor would not be acceptable, but AmeriCorps construction manager or AmeriCorps reading tutor could be used).

III. AMERICORPS ALUMNI

The designation "AmeriCorps Alum" is reserved for individuals who complete a term of AmeriCorps service. AmeriCorps Alums (the group) is a community of engaged citizens and civic leaders that gets things done for America. It is the only national network that connects

the more than one million alumni of all AmeriCorps programs who have served since 1994 (including an estimated 75,000 new alumni each year) to the people, ideas, and resources that support their commitment to a lifetime of service. [Learn more about alumni programs here.](#)

REFERENCES

1. AmeriCorps State and National (ASN) [2024 AmeriCorps State and National Program-Specific Terms and Conditions](#)
2. Uniform Administrative Requirements (2 CFR 200)
[eCFR :: 2 CFR Part 200 -- Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#)
3. AmeriCorps [2024 General Terms and Conditions](#)
4. GAO Internal Control Standards for the Federal Government
<https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-14-704g.pdf>
5. AmeriCorps State and National (ASN) Regulations
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-B/chapter-XII>
6. FY2024 AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity Website
<https://www.americorps.gov/funding-opportunity/fy-2024-ameri-corps-state-national-native-nations-grants#app-instructions>

2.2

NATIONAL SERVICE CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS

AmeriCorps has strictly prescribed requirements for criminal history checks for individuals associated with their programs, which are referred to as National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC). The requirements, which are found in [45 CFR 2522](#) and [45 CFR 2540](#), include specific repositories, timelines, documentation, review, permissions, and other elements that make it highly unlikely that any background checks that an organization undertakes for other risk management purposes will meet AmeriCorps's requirements.

Program staff should review the [AmeriCorps NSCHC Resources](#) website. At least two staff must complete the required NSCHC Training eCourse, on Litmos, annually and submit their certificate of completion in IowaGrants.

Volunteer Iowa also encourages programs to seek specific guidance from their program officer as they conduct their first checks and to follow-up with their program officer if they come across any unusual situations. Penalties for discrepancies in the criminal history check process can be costly and having to re-run checks can be time consuming and costly, too.

Organizations may conduct additional criminal or other background checks on members or grant staff in accordance with organizational policy. In some cases, costs of additional checks may be eligible grant costs if program policy dictates that criminal history results need to be reviewed by the program as part of member selection and these results are not provided through the mandatory NSCHC process.

1. NATIONAL SERVICE CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS (REGULATIONS [45 CFR PARTS 2522 AND 2540](#))

Programs must conduct and document a National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) on individuals selected to work or serve in an NSCHC-required grant. NSCHC-required grants include those with individuals who serve as AmeriCorps State and National members and with individuals who work in a position in which they will receive a salary under a cost reimbursement grant. AmeriCorps refers to these individuals as "covered" individuals, meaning they are subject to the NSCHC. The requirement for an NSCHC applies when an individual is paid wholly from federal share, wholly from matching dollars, or from a mixture of federal and non-federal funds.

NSCHC requirements do not apply to staff of fixed-amount grants. Fixed Amount programs should contact their Volunteer Iowa program officer with questions.

A. THREE-PART CHECK

All individuals starting work or service in an NSCHC-required grant must complete a three-part check. The NSCHC must be conducted, reviewed, and an eligibility determination made by the program based on the results of the NSCHC no later than the day before the individual begins to work or serve on an NSCHC-required grant. Work or service hours include AmeriCorps funded orientation and training activities. The three parts are:

- A nationwide name-based check of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) at www.NSOPW.gov; AND
- A name- or fingerprint-based search of the state criminal history record repository or agency-designated alternative for the individual's state of residence and state of service/work; AND
- A fingerprint-based check of the FBI criminal history record database through the state criminal history record repository or agency-approved vendor.

B. INDIVIDUALS EXEMPT FROM NSCHC:

The following individuals are exempt from NSCHC:

- Individuals who are under the age of 18 on the first day of work or service.
 - If an individual is serving a consecutive term and turns 18 before the start of the subsequent term of service, NSCHC must be conducted prior to the subsequent term (when they will be 18).
- Individuals whose activity is entirely included in the grant recipient's indirect cost rate or cost allocation policy or plan.
- Staff on fixed-amount grants. However, grant recipients are strongly encouraged to incorporate suitability screening and institute a holistic framework for safeguarding beneficiaries of service.

In most cases, contractors are not considered covered individuals for NSCHC. AmeriCorps applies the NSCHC requirements based on the legal distinctions between subawards (also known as subgrants) and contracts as defined in the [Uniform Administrative Requirements](#), [Cost Principles](#), and [Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#). Organizations may colloquially refer to subawards as contracts. However, the two are legally distinct and the NSCHC requirements apply to subawards, not contracts. Guidance on how to determine whether you have entered into a subaward or a contract with another entity is available at [2 CFR § 200.331](#) Subrecipient and contractor determinations.

C. NSCHC WAIVERS AND PRE-APPROVED NSCHC WAIVERS

Details for the Pre-Approved "Use of Truescreen for NSOPW and/or State Checks," "National Fingerprint File States" and "Disability Accommodation Exemption for FBI Fingerprint Checks" can be found in Appendix A of the AmeriCorps [NSCHC Manual](#). If a program is unable to abide by the NSCHC rule, AmeriCorps can waive requirements for good cause or any other lawful basis. Please email Ashley Tenney (ashley.tenney@volunteerioda.org) to initiate the request. Note that waivers are granted on an individual or time-limited basis, and waivers are not retroactive. Programs are expected to evaluate and implement methods for completing all check components prior to the day an individual begins work or service. This includes incorporating check processing times and anticipating possible delays of up to 30 days.

AmeriCorps has a few pre-approved NSCHC Waivers that impact the NSCHC requirements listed above. Programs can use these to comply with AmeriCorps requirements without additional written approval from Volunteer Iowa and AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps may add or remove pre-approved Waivers at any time and maintaining awareness of current pre-approved Waivers is the responsibility of programs. The use of pre-approved NSCHC Waivers should be clearly described

within the program’s NSCHC policies and procedures. When a pre-approved Waiver is revoked, the Waiver does not apply to any individuals in covered positions who begin work or service after the expiration date of the pre-approved Waiver. Volunteer Iowa also monitors changes in AmeriCorps Waivers and will notify programs as soon as possible. At the time of publication of this manual, AmeriCorps has pre-approved Waivers in place related to the following situations (see the Appendix A of the [NSCHC Manual](#)):

I. USE OF TRUESCREEN FOR NSOPW AND/OR STATE CHECKS

This AmeriCorps NSCHC Waiver allows programs to utilize the Truescreen vendor for NSOPW and/or State Checks. Programs must complete Truescreen checks for individuals in covered positions before the start of work or service. A complete Truescreen check is defined as a check that is adjudicated by the grantee. Individuals may not begin work or service until the day after the Truescreen checks are complete.

Truescreen does not provide information for certain states and territories (see list below) and so programs using Truescreen will not be required to get a check from an unavailable state/territory for individuals in a covered position if they have 1) obtained an NSOPW check from Truescreen, 2) obtained any required state checks that are available from Truescreen, and 3) conducted a fingerprint-based FBI check.

Results from these state and territories are not provided by Truescreen*

California	Delaware	Guam
Louisiana	Massachusetts	Mississippi
Nevada	New Hampshire	New Mexico
Northern Mariana Islands	Puerto Rico	Virginia

*As of 6/1/2024

II. NATIONAL FINGERPRINT FILE (NFF) STATES

AmeriCorps has an NSCHC Waiver that exempts Iowa and other states (listed here) from the State Check requirement if an FBI check is completed because the state participates in the National Fingerprint File (NFF) program with the FBI. This means that the State shares its criminal history records with the FBI and those state results should be included in the FBI results received.

National Fingerprint File (NFF) States Exempted by Waiver*

Arizona	Colorado	Connecticut	Delaware	Florida
Georgia	Hawaii	Idaho	Iowa	Kansas
Maryland	Michigan	Minnesota	Missouri	Montana
North Carolina	New Jersey	New York	Ohio	Oklahoma
Oregon	Tennessee	Utah	Vermont	West Virginia
Wyoming				

*As of 6/1/2024

III. DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION FOR FBI FINGERPRINT CHECKS

AmeriCorps will exempt the fingerprint FBI check requirement for individuals in covered positions if conducting a fingerprint check is a physical impossibility because of disability,

such as the absence of limbs. The grantee is still required to conduct NSOPW and name-based state check(s) on the individual.

D. NAME AND IDENTIFICATION USED FOR CHECKS

Programs must run all components of the check undertaking reasonable due diligence to determine the current first and last name(s) of the individual to conduct the name-based checks. Documents used to verify an individual's identity must be consistent with sources described in the program's NSCHC policies and procedures (sources may include but are not limited to government issued photo IDs and federally issued income statements like a social security income statement for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, etc.).

If the format of the individual's first and/or last name(s) on their identification documentation is not consistent with the member's signature, is different on their social security card, or otherwise varies, the program should use the name as determined through the program's identity and name verification policies and procedures. (For example, if the member signs their name "O'Toole", but "OTOOLE" is on their ID, the program may use OTOOLE for NSCHC, or if the name is "McGowan" on their Social Security Card, but ID says "MC GOWAN", the program may check an additional ID to determine and document which version of the name to use to run the checks.) Because the member may type in their own name for some checks, it is the program's responsibility to verify the name in the system and if it does not exactly match the first and last name(s) and ID as determined by the program policies, the program should run the check again with the preferred spelling. Checks that are misspelled or do not match the program policy on identification may result in disallowance in accordance with Awardee Guide to NSCHC Enforcement of Cost-Based Disallowance (AmeriCorps NSCHC website).

While official AmeriCorps member records (such as National Service Criminal History Checks) must use the documented name and gender of the AmeriCorps applicants/members, programs should give applicants/members the opportunity to identify the name/pronouns they will use in the program (such as offering a space on the application and/or member service agreement for individuals to list their name/pronouns used, in addition to their legal name/gender). Volunteer Iowa also reminds programs that the Iowa Civil Rights Act protects against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Entering a middle name or initial in the NSOPW website search has the potential to change the results and/or can limit results and should not be used in the same search. Adding information beyond the first and last name(s) may result in a noncompliant check for which you may face financial consequences.

E. TIMING OF CHECKS AND DEFINITIONS OF STEPS

All NSCHC components must be conducted, reviewed, and adjudicated, no later than the day BEFORE a person begins to work or serve on an NSCHC-required grant. Work or service hours include AmeriCorps funded orientation and training activities.

For three-part checks, it is required that the NSOPW, state, and FBI checks are completed and adjudicated no later than the day before service/work begins.

- **Completion** means the full results for a specific component of the check are available for a program official to adjudicate to ensure the results do not preclude the prospective member/staff from serving/working in the program.
- **Adjudicate** means to review the results or summary information and consider those results in selecting a person to serve or work in the program. Programs are required to develop a written policy about how criminal history check results will be adjudicated at their agency based upon program design.

F. PRIOR AUTHORIZATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PROGRAM SELECTION PROCESS

The NSOPW is a free, public, name-based check and therefore programs are not required to obtain permission from covered individuals prior to running that component of the NSCHC. However, for the State and FBI components of the check the program must obtain prior authorization/consent from the covered individual to conduct the check. Agency-approved vendors incorporate their required authorization/consent language into their systems, but other repositories (such as the Iowa Department of Public Safety Division of Criminal Investigation) may have their own required forms.

In addition to securing prior authorization required for each specific check component, programs must require individuals to sign an acknowledgment form that gives the program authority to conduct the NSCHC and documents the individual's understanding that final selection into the program is made following the program's review of the NSCHC results in accordance with its selection policies. Required components of this acknowledgment form are that the covered individual:

- Has been informed of the national service criminal history check to be conducted,
- Gives permission for the program to conduct the check,
- Was informed of the program policy on adjudication of criminal history findings,
- Is aware that participation is contingent upon criminal history review and that they have the opportunity to challenge the results. Challenges may be based on the assertion that there are errors within the report, but not on the program's decision about whether the individual's record disqualifies him/her from service/work in the program.

Programs must follow organizational policies that describe how the criminal history records are considered as part of member/staff selection. Program policies must describe how the program will evaluate individuals who have findings on their background check, to determine whether they will serve/work within the program. In cases in which the individual has a finding on any check, a best practice is to ensure that each finding has a notation by it demonstrating that program staff reviewed and considered this finding. The type of notation can be defined by the program within their NSCHC Procedures and Policies. Furthermore, Volunteer Iowa recommends that each page of NSCHC results have a staff member signature or initials and the date for documentation purposes. Again, the program should define their suitability criteria within their NSCHC Policies and Procedures. In doing so, the program must safeguard the results of the checks and the personal information they contain.

In developing their policy, programs should be mindful of their requirements under Civil Rights law and related guidance from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) on avoiding discrimination when considering the criminal record for purposes of employment or national

service. Programs should consider that arrests alone are mere allegations, and that actual criminal convictions or evidence of conduct underlying an arrest, are the relevant indicators of an individual's fitness. Additionally, the EEOC suggests that policies consider:

- The nature and gravity of the offense or conduct;
- The time that has passed since the offense, conduct and/or completion of the sentence; and
- The nature of the position held or sought.

Programs must notify individuals in the case of non-selection for NSCHC reasons. The individual may challenge the factual accuracy of the results. The process for challenging is driven by the AmeriCorps-vendor or by organizational policies.

G. INELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS

In addition to the eligibility criteria that each program establishes, AmeriCorps policies explicitly exclude prospective members/staff from service/work on an NSCHC-required grant for the following reasons. If the prospective individual:

- Is registered, or required to be registered, on a state sex offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry;
- Has been convicted of murder as defined in 18 U.S.C. 1111;
- Refuses to consent to the National Service Criminal History Check, or
- Makes a false statement in connection with a program's inquiry concerning the individual's criminal history. (Further guidance from the Agency on what is considered a "false statement" is available in the Agency NSCHC Manual.)

H. FREQUENCY OF NSCHC

If a person serves consecutive terms of service with the same organization and does not have a break in service longer than 180 calendar days, then it is not necessary to redo the NSCHC as long as the check is compliant with the current NSCHC rule. NSCHC results cannot be transferred to another grantee, so individuals that move to an NSCHC-required program with another organization are subject to a new NSCHC. If a member or staff legally changes their name during their service or employment and there is no break in service or work, there is no requirement to recheck the NSCHC.

I. DOCUMENTATION OF CHECKS

Programs must use the applicable Volunteer Iowa National Service Criminal History Check Documentation Checklist (or an alternative checklist that is approved by Volunteer Iowa) to show that all necessary steps in this process are completed on time and as required. For individuals under the age of 18 before the start of work or service, the program must certify the applicant's age. The program may use the NSCHC Under 18 Memo, available on Basecamp, to document that NSCHC is not required in lieu of a NSCHC Documentation Checklist. Any variance from the required procedures requires Volunteer Iowa and AmeriCorps approval of a NSCHC Waiver.

Programs must maintain documentation for covered individuals in the member or employee's file, or electronically, as appropriate. Volunteer Iowa requires that NSCHCs are managed and

documented through the organization or program headquarters and not through the sites. NSCHC results must be maintained confidentially. For programs using Truescreen and Fieldprint, the program must run a “CNCS Monitoring Report” at the end of each program year showing all checks that were completed. The program will keep this spreadsheet in each year’s closeout documents.

For members continuing service with a break of less than 180 days, the program will not re-run the checks, however, the NSCHC files will be transferred to the most recent member file. To do so, the program staff will simply move all NSCHC documentation into the most recent member file and complete a new NSCHC Documentation Checklist for the subsequent term. In addition, the program will include a memo to the prior year’s file where the NSCHC documentation was removed. The memo should indicate that the individual continued service or work and that their NSCHC documentation has been moved to the most recent program year file. For staff continuing on the AmeriCorps grant from one program year to the next with a break of work less than 180 days, the program will not re-run checks, do not need to update the NSCHC documentation checklist annually, and should not make any changes to the staff’s original NSCHC Documentation Checklist.

Programs must retain copies of the results of NSCHC. However, pursuant to [Iowa Code Chapter 692.2](#), the program may not disseminate the results of criminal history checks conducted by the Division of Criminal Investigation. Only the Department of Public Safety may disseminate criminal history data maintained by the department to persons who are not criminal or juvenile justice agencies. Therefore, the program should never send state or FBI criminal history results to any other entity, even Volunteer Iowa or AmeriCorps. State law allows Volunteer Iowa and other oversight entities to view the results, but not to make copies or otherwise disseminate the results. If a program ever receives a request to copy or send DCI background check results, they should cite Iowa Code 692.2 as the reason the results cannot be released. Contact the assigned program officer for assistance, if needed.

J. MONITORING OF NSCHC

Volunteer Iowa will conduct regular monitoring on NSCHC for members and covered staff, based upon program risk and monitoring level, to ensure compliance. Monitoring processes and timeline documents can be found on Basecamp. In case of monitoring, the actual NSCHC check results and adjudication documentation must be available for review by Volunteer Iowa staff or our agents. Volunteer Iowa will monitor that the program is following its own policies and procedures.

AmeriCorps provides enforcement guidance in the AmeriCorps NSCHC Manual document that describes National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) noncompliance, potential administrative consequences for noncompliance, and how and when AmeriCorps will implement specific administrative corrective action or enforcement for NSCHC noncompliance. Volunteer Iowa will follow the enforcement actions and remedies outlined in the AmeriCorps NSCHC Manual issued by AmeriCorps when monitoring programs in relation to their NSCHCs or provide advance notification to programs of any variances. If a program determines that a currently serving member is ineligible based on the results of their NSCHC or if the program discovers the name of the check was not run accurately, this must be immediately reported to Volunteer Iowa.

The Monitoring and Enforcement section of the AmeriCorps NSCHC Manual outlines several enforcement steps that will or may be taken based upon the nature of the noncompliance, such actions include:

- I. COST-BASED DISALLOWANCE
Refers to the disallowance of costs associated with an eligible individual's work or service during the period of noncompliance, including salary/stipend/living allowances (as applicable) and FICA. Where costs were paid with matching funds, the disallowance of those matching costs may also result in disallowance of the related Federal funds. Cost-based disallowance will not include disallowance of AmeriCorps member hours.
- II. GRANT SUSPENSION
Hold on all grant activities, including member service.
- III. GRANT TERMINATION
Ending of the grant award, in whole or in part.
- IV. MANUAL HOLD
Required review of documentation prior to future payments or restriction of access to AmeriCorps funding.
- V. REQUIRING USE OF AGENCY-APPROVED VENDORS
Truescreen and Fieldprint mandated to be used for re-checks and/or for the remainder of the grant period.
- VI. CORRECTIVE ACTION TO CURE DEFICIENCY
Conduct and adjudicate all improper checks.
- VII. OTHER ACTIONS
As determined by Volunteer Iowa or AmeriCorps to strengthen compliance with NSCHC requirements.

K. SUMMARY OF REQUIRED NSCHC PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTATION

Required Procedures in Conducting NSCHC Checks:	More Detail Available At:	Required Documentation to be Maintained:
1. Verify the individual's identity and name according to program policy	Name and Identification for Checks	Document verification of identity by following your program policy and procedures.
2. Obtain prior, written authorization from the individual for the State registry check, for the FBI criminal history check, and for the appropriate sharing of the results of the checks within the program. Prior written authorization from the individual is not required to conduct the nationwide NSOPW check;	Prior Authorization and Acknowledgement of Program Selection Process	Document written authorization to conduct the check(s).
3. Document the individual's understanding that selection into the program is contingent upon the organization's review of the individual's NSCHC component results, if any;	Prior Authorization and Acknowledgement of Program Selection Process	Document the individual's understanding that selection into the program is contingent upon the organization's review of the individual's NSCHC component results, if any.
4. Properly conduct the required checks;		Document that you conducted the required checks for the NSCHC required grant.
5. Ensure that screening practices comply with federal civil rights laws, including Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (and AmeriCorps's implementing regulations under Title VI);	Prior Authorization and Acknowledgement of Program Selection Process	Document in writing that an authorized grantee representative considered the results of the NSCHC in selecting the individual.
6. Provide a reasonable opportunity for the individual to review and challenge the factual accuracy of a result before action is taken to exclude the individual from the position;	Prior Authorization and Acknowledgement of Program Selection Process	Document that you provided this opportunity if a member is found to be ineligible or unsuitable according to program policies.
7. Provide safeguards to ensure the confidentiality of any information relating to the criminal history check, consistent with authorization provided by the applicant; and	Documentation of Checks	Maintain the results, or a results summary issued by a State or Federal government body, of the NSOPW check and the other components of each NSCHC.
8. Unless specifically approved by AmeriCorps, you may not charge an individual for the cost of any component of a NSCHC.		

2. IOWA PROGRAM NSCHC CHECKS

AmeriCorps has agreements with national vendors, Truescreen and Fieldprint to conduct the three components of the NSCHC. To accommodate use of AmeriCorps-approved vendors, Volunteer Iowa programs will follow one of two tracks. These tracks are based on the current AmeriCorps requirements. Programs are expected to conduct checks based on the monitoring level and NSCHC policies and procedures. Programs may use a combination of approved NSCHC sources, regardless of monitoring level, when the source becomes unavailable and/or the check component is delayed to the point it would impact a member/staff start date.

If AmeriCorps makes changes to the requirements, Volunteer Iowa will notify programs of the impact on NSCHC options allowed by Iowa.

A. HIGH PROGRAM MONITORING LEVEL AND NEW GRANTEES

Use of the vendors is required for all new grantees and programs that are considered High Monitoring Level for grant/member management. Truescreen and Fieldprint must be used for NSOPW, State and FBI Checks. Please reference the NSCHC Using Fieldprint and Truescreen Manual for more details on setting up accounts and conducting the checks. See chart below for more information on conducting checks using AmeriCorps vendors. Volunteer Iowa may approve the use of another AmeriCorps-approved vendor, state repository or use of the NSOPW.gov website directly if the vendors change or become temporarily unavailable. New programs may have an informal NSCHC monitoring review by Volunteer Iowa of initial staff or member checks after members are enrolled.

B. MODERATE OR LOW PROGRAM MONITORING LEVEL GRANTEE

Programs that are Moderate or Low Program Monitoring Level for grant/member management have the option to use AmeriCorps-approved vendors, DCI/State Repositories or a combination thereof. Programs must choose either vendors or DCI for each component of the NSCHC process by selecting it on the NSCHC Policy, Procedures and Associated Information form in IowaGrants. Once selected, the program must use this method for all checks unless they request approval from Volunteer Iowa to make a change using the Program Officer Notification form in IowaGrants. Programs will not be allowed to change back-and-forth based on individual member situations. Therefore, the program is encouraged to thoroughly review the new NSCHC materials that are available on the AmeriCorps website as they evaluate which method is best for their program.

3. HIGH PROGRAM MONITORING LEVEL AND NEW GRANTEES

USING AGENCY VENDORS FOR NSCHC IN IOWA REQUIRED FOR: High Monitoring Level and New Grantees

Under AmeriCorps vendor requirements, individuals may not start until the day after their NSOPW and Truescreen checks are complete, IDs are verified, and checks are adjudicated in the Truescreen system.

Three Part Check

1. National Sex Offender Public Website check completed in Truescreen no later than the day before start of service or work

AND

2. Statewide criminal history registry check through Truescreen completed no later than the day before start of service or work

*State of residence at time of application, if different from Iowa

AND

3. FBI nationwide fingerprint-based check completed through Fieldprint no later than the day before the start of service or work

**Under the three-part requirement, an Iowa state check is not required due to the NFF Waiver.*

A. VENDORS

I. ACCOUNT SET UP FOR AGENCY VENDORS

Create AmeriCorps-specific accounts in Fieldprint and Truescreen. Using Fieldprint and Truescreen for NSOPW, State and FBI Checks Guide is available on the AmeriCorps NSCHC website to help programs with this process, answer questions about the systems and provide instructions on the steps needed to comply with AmeriCorps requirements. National Direct programs that do not create separate accounts for their Iowa-specific grant will be asked for additional documentation to allow Volunteer Iowa monitoring. Please read the guide in advance to gather required documents and materials to expedite the account set up process and to understand the program responsibilities in the process.

II. USING AMERICORPS VENDORS

AmeriCorps-approved vendors require members/staff to complete information electronically, including providing their signature in a field and the option to upload their government-issued identification into the web-based Truescreen/Fieldprint systems. It is important that programs provide clear instructions and follow up to ensure that the checks are completed in a timely manner. A key element is that the individual enters their name as it appears on their government-issued identification or as verified by the program according to program policies and procedures. If they do not spell or enter their name correctly, the check is not valid and must be run again at a cost to the program. Individuals can use their smart phone, tablet, computer, or other device to complete the process on-line.

Many of the NSCHC required documentation steps are handled automatically within the Fieldprint and Truescreen systems. Therefore, if programs conduct the checks and adjudication/reviews properly within the systems, it increases the likelihood that the

program will comply with AmeriCorps requirements, and it requires less documentation collection on the part of the program.

B. NSCHC STEPS – HIGHLIGHTING STEPS CONTAINED IN THE VENDOR SYSTEMS

The NSCHC procedure must include the following steps, which must be clearly documented in the member or staff person's file/record. In some cases, records may be stored electronically, and this should be included in the organization's procedures. Volunteer Iowa will review the program's NSCHC procedure to ensure that it includes the required elements. Items italicized below are steps that are contained within the Fieldprint/Truescreen system.

1. Complete the applicable Volunteer Iowa National Service Criminal History Check Documentation Checklist.
2. Verify the individual's identity by examining the individual's government-issued identification or other identification document(s), such as a driver's license, and *document that you verified identity*; (while the identification is uploaded into the system, the program has responsibility for verifying the identification in the system).
3. *Obtain prior, written consent from the individual for conducting the State criminal registry and/or FBI check.*
4. *Document the individual's understanding that selection into the program is contingent upon the organization's review of the individual's criminal history, if any.*
5. Determine the necessary checks to run and utilize Truescreen and Fieldprint to conduct the required checks.
6. *Utilize Truescreen to complete and adjudicate/review the NSOPW no later than the day before service begins for all members and before grant work begins for covered staff. Individuals cannot start until the day after the NSOPW is completed. The "NSOPW Only" selection in the drop-down menu is alphabetized among the list of states and not at the top, like you might expect.*
7. *Utilize Truescreen to complete and adjudicate/review the State Check(s) no later than the day before service or work begins for covered individuals. Refer to the NFF Waiver that exempts Iowa and certain other states from the State Check requirement when an FBI check is completed because their state participates in the National Fingerprint File (NFF) program with the FBI. Please note that State Checks from states on the NFF list (including Iowa) are not required when an FBI check is completed. Refer to the NSCHC Pre-Approved Waivers.*
8. *Utilize Fieldprint to complete and adjudicate the FBI check.* The program will communicate with the individual to have their fingerprints checked. There are two options for collecting fingerprints in the Fieldprint process: (a) Livescan and (b) Cards. Livescan is highly recommended because results are available within 48 hours. In order to participate, the individual must go online and schedule their appointment with a Livescan location. If a Livescan location is >30 miles away, the program may request fingerprint cards from Fieldprint and arrange to have the fingerprints run locally. The FBI cards with prints will be sent to the FBI and it may take 4-6 weeks to obtain the results.
9. *Review the recommendation from Fieldprint and Truescreen and indicate program's adjudication decision in the system.* Fieldprint and Truescreen will adjudicate any convictions according to AmeriCorps eligibility criteria and then issue an adjudication recommendation of Cleared or Not Cleared. When results are returned in Truescreen and Fieldprint, the program must review the results and enter a final adjudication decision into the system. Not Cleared indicates that more

information is needed before the organization makes a final determination as to the fitness of the individual. The program must maintain documentation of the additional information used to verify eligibility.

10. Fieldprint and Truescreen will provide reasonable opportunity for the individual to review and challenge the factual accuracy of a result before action is taken to exclude the individual from the position. The individual must contact the program within 45 days to challenge the results. If an individual contacts the program, the expectation is that the program will work with the individual to explain and assist with the next steps.
11. *Maintain the results of State and NSOPW Checks in Truescreen.* Provide safeguards to ensure the confidentiality of any information relating to the criminal history check, consistent with authorization provided by the applicant. Truescreen will maintain the results for seven years which will generally meet AmeriCorps' document retention period. In the rare circumstance that an extension to the retention period is necessary, programs will be notified by Volunteer Iowa.
12. Fieldprint results must be maintained according to the organization's NSCHC procedures. Fieldprint will store the results for seven years, which will generally meet AmeriCorps documentation retention requirements. Volunteer Iowa will notify programs if an extension to the retention period is necessary due to monitoring.
13. *Conduct regular monitoring of NSOPW and State checks in Truescreen to ensure compliance.* Truescreen provides a monitoring report in the system that can be used to ensure that all components of the NSOPW and State Checks are completed in a timely fashion. Review the NSCHC and Check Your Check presentation on Basecamp to understand how to self-monitor your checks. Volunteer Iowa may also access this report as a monitoring and technical assistance tool.
14. Conduct regular monitoring of FBI results in Fieldprint and in the member/staff files as required for record retention period.

4. MODERATE OR LOW PROGRAM MONITORING LEVEL GRANTEE

Moderate or Low monitoring level programs may use a combination of vendor and non-vendor sources but must specify the source that will be used for each component and use it consistently. The program must meet the requirements and documentation standards based on the source of the check. Programs should refer to AmeriCorps materials (or the Vendor Check section of this manual) for requirements and documentation standards for Vendor Checks and to the Agency materials and information below for NSOPW.gov and State Repositories Checks.

NSOPW	State of Service Checks	State of Residence Checks	FBI Checks
www.nspow.gov	Official state repository	Official state repository	Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI)
OR	OR	OR	OR
Truescreen (vendor)	Truescreen (vendor)	Truescreen (vendor)	Fieldprint (vendor)

USING NSOPW.GOV and STATE REPOSITORIES FOR NSCHC IN IOWA

OPTION FOR: Moderate and Low Monitoring Level Grantees

Three Part Check

- National Sex Offender Public Website check **completed** no later than the day before start **AND**
- *Statewide criminal history registry check(s) **completed** no later than the day before the start of service or work

- State of residence at time of application

Must use AmeriCorps-designated statewide repositories or obtain approval for Waiver

AND

- FBI nationwide fingerprint-based check **completed** no later than day before the start of service or work
 - FBI check conducted through Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation (state repository)

**Under the three-part requirement, an Iowa state check is not required due to the NFF Waiver.*

The criminal history check procedure includes the following steps, which must be clearly documented. If programs are using AmeriCorps vendors for any components, please see the Vendor Check language in this section for more information on the documentation that is maintained within the systems. If the program uses Truescreen or Fieldprint, the documentation will be maintained within the system. If programs are using www.NSOPW.gov or DCI, the documentation will need to be printed and maintained in the member or staff person's file (or appropriate location based on organizational procedures).

Volunteer Iowa recommends keeping a paper record of any adjudication in the member's file.

- Verify the individual's identity by examining the individual's government-issued identification card or other document(s) as specified in program policy, such as a driver's license, and document that you verified identity;
- Obtain prior, written consent from the individual for conducting the State criminal registry and/or FBI check and sharing the results of that check, as appropriate, within the program (not required for the NSOPW check);
- Document the individual's understanding that selection into the program is contingent upon the organization's review of the individual's criminal history, if any;
- Determine the necessary checks to run and identify the appropriate sources of those checks (i.e., approved state repository as identified by AmeriCorps, etc.);
- Perform the NSOPW no later than the day before service begins for all members and before grant work begins for covered staff.
- Complete additional required check components (state and/or FBI check) no later than the day before candidate begins work/service;
- When results are returned, review them to determine eligibility. Document that findings of the check were considered, according to the program's consideration policy, when making final selection of the individual (if an individual is found to be ineligible, contact the Volunteer Iowa program officer for guidance). Include the date on which results are received and reviewed in the member/staff file.

- Provide a reasonable opportunity for the individual to review and challenge the factual accuracy of a result before action is taken to exclude the individual from the position; document this opportunity was provided.
- Maintain the results while providing safeguards to ensure the confidentiality of any information relating to the criminal history check, consistent with authorization provided by the applicant.

Volunteer Iowa requires that programs use a Volunteer Iowa National Service Criminal History Check Documentation Checklist (or an alternative checklist that is approved by Volunteer Iowa) to show that all necessary steps in this process are completed on time and as required. Any variance from the required procedures requires Volunteer Iowa and AmeriCorps approval of an Alternate Search Procedure Waiver. Programs wishing to use a Waiver should contact their Volunteer Iowa program officer for details on how to apply. For programs with returning members/staff who have a gap in service of less than 180 days, the NSCHC process does not need to be repeated for the subsequent term. Detailed descriptions of the components and steps for conducting a NSCHC are outlined below; helpful resources on all aspects of the NSCHC can be found on the AmeriCorps NSCHC website.

A. NATIONAL SEX OFFENDER PUBLIC WEBSITE CHECK

There is no cost to conduct these checks. Programs must use the [NSOPW website](#) to conduct these checks on the person's current legal name (as determined by program policy) and should maintain the website printout of results for inclusion in member files. Entering a middle name or initial has the potential to change the results and/or can limit NSOPW results and should not be used in the same search. Adding information beyond the first and last name may result in a noncompliant check for which you may face financial consequences.

The printout should include the date and time stamp. If there is an exact name match with someone on the registry, the program should open the matching record and determine whether the individual with the same name is or is not the applicant; this should be documented by printing out the record with the same name and noting what criteria was reviewed (photograph, date of birth, etc.) to show that the recorded individual is not the applicant. If a similar name(s) appears on the check, make a notation indicating program staff has reviewed it, and sign and date noting confirmation that the hits are not for the individual enrolling into the program. The program is required to document on the printout that the record was considered prior to the member or staff person's placement, even if the check was clear. The NSOPW check must be completed no later than the day before the member's first day of service or the staff person's first day of work on the grant.

If a jurisdiction is not reporting (or is "down") when program staff run the check before the first day, print the dated search from the NSOPW website (with missing jurisdictions) for the individual's file and continue to attempt to obtain a complete check through the NSOPW site (often the missing jurisdiction is available again in a few minutes). Alternately, the program may visit the authorized sex offender registry of the missing jurisdiction and search for the individual there, following similar guidance as above regarding required documentation to be printed and annotated. Please note that many state sex offender sites do not contain the same level of detail on the results as the NSOPW site, so program staff should be prepared to add necessary details when they review the results, such as the name, date, and time the check was conducted and sign and date. To the extent possible, programs should include a screenshot to document the name of the individual, and other

details, if applicable, on whom the check is run. If programs have questions on a state sex offender check, contact the program officer. A complete NSOPW check using one of these methods must be completed, printed, and adjudicated prior to the individual's start date.

B. STATE CRIMINAL REGISTRY CHECK

AmeriCorps maintains a list of [designated state repositories and alternatives](#) in the NSOPW and State Repositories Manual to conduct compliant state criminal registry checks in each state and territory. In Iowa, this is a check through the [Iowa Department of Public Safety's Division of Criminal Investigation](#) (DCI). Programs should contact DCI to establish an account that will allow for quick turn-around time on background checks (generally 72 hours). Through Volunteer Iowa, programs may establish an account with as little as a \$250 deposit.

In addition to the Iowa checks, members, or staff whose residence is in another state at the time of application to an Iowa AmeriCorps program must have a criminal records check run through that state's AmeriCorps-approved criminal records repository. When conducting an FBI check, programs do not need to conduct state checks in states with National Fingerprint File (NFF) agreements, including Iowa, due to the pre-approved Waiver.

Other program staff or Volunteer Iowa program officers can be a helpful resource about non-Iowa checks. All state checks must be adjudicated no later than the day before the member's first day of service or the staff person's first day of work on the grant. Programs must maintain documentation of the date that the check was adjudicated on the NSCHC Documentation Checklist.

C. FINGERPRINT-BASED FBI CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD CHECK

To conduct fingerprint-based FBI checks, programs must contact DCI and complete a qualified entity application and an Iowa User Agreement. When DCI receives the completed forms, they will send a packet related to the FBI/National background checks, including: blank fingerprint cards (FD-258), instructions for State and National Criminal History Record Checks, a billing form, and a waiver agreement. The average timeline for response on FBI fingerprint background checks is approximately four (4) weeks. FBI background check results obtained through DCI are provided to the program according to the user agreement. DCI conducts regular audits of organizations receiving FBI records through them, so programs should ensure they thoroughly read and understand the user agreement, complete the training, and implement its terms and contact DCI with any questions. Note: As of the printing of this manual, DCI is transitioning to use of Fieldprint for fingerprinting services. We are unsure of the impact of this change on the ability to be trained in fingerprinting, use of DCI paper fingerprint cards, timeline for results, and other factors. Volunteer Iowa will share information as it becomes available.

Based on the NFF Waiver referenced above, to meet the standards for a three-part check for an Iowa resident, the program must conduct only NSOPW and FBI checks. Individuals can obtain the fingerprints themselves, such as through a local law enforcement agency, or programs may be trained to take fingerprints through DCI. Programs should contact their Volunteer Iowa program officer if they are interested in this training. The FBI check must be completed no later than the day before the member's first day of service or the staff person's first day of work on the grant.

REFERENCES

1. AmeriCorps NSCHC webpage <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check>
2. NSCHC Federal Regulations <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-B/chapter-XXV/part-2540/subpart-B>
3. NSCHC Rule Summary effective May 1, 2021 <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check>
4. Awardee Guide to NSCHC Enforcement of Cost-Based Disallowance <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check>
5. Recommendations for Effective NSCHC Policy & Procedures <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check>
6. NSCHC Frequently Asked Questions <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check>
7. Using AmeriCorps Approved Vendors Truescreen and Fieldprint Manual <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check>
8. Using NSOPW and State Repositories for NSOPW, State and FBI Checks <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check>

2.3

PERFORMANCE MEASURES, PROGRESS REPORTING, AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

1. THEORY OF CHANGE AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES (45 CFR [2522.550](#) - [2522.650](#))

All AmeriCorps programs must establish, track, and assess performance measures that relate to their grant's Theory of Change. Programs are responsible for ensuring that performance measure tracking plans are established and that all members, site supervisors, and other partners receive clear instruction about their role in tracking and reporting progress on the performance measures.

A. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

All programs will develop, implement, and report on at least one set of aligned performance measures related to one of their program's primary service activities. Programs can choose from National Performance Measures or design their own program-identified measures. Volunteer Iowa may limit applicants to a single aligned performance measure. All performance measures are entered in eGrants and are approved as part of the grant application process. An aligned performance measure includes at least one output and one intermediate outcome, and possibly an end outcome related to the same primary activity. While every member must fall under a focus area and objective in the eGrants system, it is not required that every member in the program contribute to the eGrants performance measure.

For example, if a program provides tutoring as its primary service activity, the program's performance measure would be related to tutoring, and it would report an output and intermediate outcome on the result of the activities conducted by the AmeriCorps members who provide tutoring services. The same program may also have members who provide afterschool enrichment activities. These members would be noted as falling under the education focus area and may contribute to the K-12 success objective, but since they do not provide the tutoring intervention, they would not have a role in contributing to the eGrants performance measure. It is likely that your program will want to measure the impact of these non-tutoring members but if so, you will do so through your own processes that are not formally reported to Volunteer Iowa or AmeriCorps.

I. NATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

AmeriCorps has developed National Performance Measures (NPM) in several categories: Capacity Building, Disaster Services, Education, Healthy Futures, Economic Opportunity, Environmental Stewardship and Veterans and Military Families. The [2024 AmeriCorps Performance Measures Instructions](#) and definitions of terms within the Measures were posted as additional guidance during the grant application and review process. AmeriCorps Performance Measure Instructions outline performance measure selection rules, including that NPM outputs, can be paired with program-identified outcomes.

Programs should pay close attention to the definitions and terms associated with any National Performance Measures to ensure that the selected measures align with a primary service activity and that the tools and data being collected allow the program to accurately report in accordance with the NPM requirements and their approved grant. For example, the NPM may say “beneficiary demonstrates improved academic performance.” The program may intend to measure this by using students’ grades or teacher reports, however, the NPM instructions may provide guidance that the measure for improved academic performance must be a standardized test result. If the program is not following the detailed guidance, their results would not be reportable under the NPM.

II. PROGRAM-IDENTIFIED PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Programs that have goals that do not align with the national performance measures will have an aligned Program-Identified Measure related to a primary service activity of their program. Programs may also have selected a program-identified outcome to pair with a National Performance Measure.

B. DATA COLLECTION AND DATA MANAGEMENT POLICIES

It is important that programs carefully review their measures at the beginning of the year to ensure that their data collection process and tools will allow them to comply with the NPM requirements, and that members, site supervisors, and program staff are trained on definitions of key terms and how to calculate/measure/collect data. Any concerns or questions should be immediately brought to the attention of the program officer. Grantees will be expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are providing Volunteer Iowa and AmeriCorps with high quality performance measure data. Volunteer Iowa has a sample Data Collection Plan and a Data Collection resource to help programs create their own plan. These resources are available on Basecamp. At a minimum, Grantees should have policies and practices which address the following five aspects of data quality:

- Validity: related to the program goals and collecting the information included in the grant application;
- Completeness: enough information to represent an activity;
- Consistency: use the same procedures and definitions across sites over time;
- Accuracy: free from significant errors; and
- Verifiability: identify, mitigate, and rectify weaknesses in data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Volunteer Iowa may review data collection, aggregation, and reporting practices as part of the monitoring process. For example, at the beginning of the program year staff may review performance measure tracking tools and data collection plans. Later in the program year, programs are required to provide data collection reports as part of required program progress reports. Volunteer Iowa may review completed data collection tools and reports during on-site visits. Programs must also be prepared to demonstrate how the numbers reported in progress reports were gathered, verified, and compiled for reporting purposes. Reporting and monitoring requirements for data collection and management may be conducted on an as needed basis related to risk level in this area of program management. Volunteer Iowa may waive some or all the

requirements for the data collection status report, based upon previous information and implementation. Programs that do not meet their performance measure targets in the most recently completed grant year are required to take the AmeriCorps Data Collection Trainings I and II in LITMOS. The training should be completed 30 days prior to the start of the new grant year. Completion certificates should be uploaded in IowaGrants, using the Program Officer Notification form.

C. MAKING CHANGES TO APPROVED PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND/OR TARGETS

The best time to modify performance measures is annually when programs submit new grant applications. In limited circumstances, even competitive programs in continuation status may be able to make a case to modify their measures within their three-year grant cycle and these requests are generally better received than making modifications to measures that are already approved. Therefore, programs are encouraged to carefully review their performance measures during each application period to ensure that the measure continues to reflect the program's goals and data collection capabilities.

In recent years, AmeriCorps has required continuation applicants to update their performance measures with each year's funding request to comply with any updated Performance Measure Instructions.

I. CHANGING PERFORMANCE MEASURES AT PROGRAM'S REQUEST

The general rule is that programs may only change performance measures for the purpose of improving them. This could mean improving the measure itself or the program's overall approach to performance measurement. Some improvements to performance measures could include, although are not limited to creating or revising performance measures to more accurately reflect the program's theory of change, bringing a performance measure into alignment with National Performance Measure Instructions, providing clearer definitions of key terms, and adjusting interventions/data collection plans/instruments to be more robust. Programs should contact their Volunteer Iowa program officer if they meet the general rule outlined above and desire to change their approved performance measures. If a program realizes a need to modify measures due to poor performance, a corrective action plan may also be needed.

II. MODIFYING PERFORMANCE MEASURES AT AMERICORPS REQUEST

Occasionally, AmeriCorps staff may identify questions or concerns with how a program is conducting its performance measurement and may suggest changes, particularly to better align program practices with AmeriCorps National Performance Measure requirements. Typically, this happens during clarification and resolution periods before a grant is awarded. However, if a need is identified at another time, programs are expected to work with Volunteer Iowa to meet AmeriCorps expectations or to modify the measures to correspond with program activities.

2. PROGRAM REPORTING**

This Program Manual includes required forms and reporting instructions for the program. All Iowa AmeriCorps programs will use IowaGrants for program and financial reporting as instructed by Volunteer Iowa. Programs should retain copies of supporting documentation related to these reports, to be reviewed in case of audit or site visit. Extensions to report due dates may be considered on a case-by-case basis and should be made prior to the due date. Programs that need to request for alternative due date should submit a Program Officer Notification status report in IowaGrants. Requests not made prior to the due date are generally considered late.

**Form	System/Format for Submission	**Date Due
Program Start Forms	Status reports or grant forms in IowaGrants	<p>See Start Form Checklist for exact due dates</p> <p>Pre-Work: May 15 and July 15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Service Agreement and Host Site Agreement templates (returning programs) • Host Site Orientation Agenda and Training Plan • Program and Fiscal Staff Competency Self-Assessment <p>Phase 1: August 1/December 1 or 15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Award Financial Form (new and re-competing programs) • Recruitment Plan (programs with <85% recruitment or retention in previous year) • Enrollment Plan • Performance Measure and Enrollment/Retention Goals • Program Management Segregation of Duties • NSCHC Checklist, Policies, Procedures and Training Certifications <p>Phase 2: September 1/January or February 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Survey • Annual Audit Form • Member Orientation Agenda (new and re-competing programs) • Member Service Agreement and Host Site Agreement templates (new programs) • Host Site Orientation Agenda and Training Plan (new programs) • Certificate of Insurance (new and re-competing programs) <p>Phase 3: October 1/March 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial and Program Policies • Data Collection Plan and Process • Tutoring Certification (as applicable)

**Form	System/Format for Submission	**Date Due
Performance Measure – Corrective Action Plan (may include amendment request)	Program Officer Notification in IowaGrants	As needed throughout the program year
Initial Progress Report	Status Report in IowaGrants	January 15 (Due April 15 for programs with a January start date)
Enrollment Plan Updates	Status Report in IowaGrants	January 30 and May 31/May 31 and September 30
Federal Financial Report (FFR)	Status Report in IowaGrants	April 25 (for costs through March 31) October 25 (for costs through September 30)
Unexpended Funds Report	Status Report in IowaGrants	April 25 (all programs)
Budget Modification Requests N/A for Fixed Grants	Status Report in IowaGrants	Required on November 15 for programs in Tier 3 with unfilled fulltime slots. Required on April 30 for formula reimbursement programs reporting >10% unexpended federal funds. Optional on April 30 for competitive reimbursement programs reporting >10% unexpended federal funds. As needed throughout the program year.
Mid-Year Progress Report- includes performance measure reports	Status Report in IowaGrants	May 15 (all programs, covers grant start through 3/31/24)
Final Progress Report	Status Report in IowaGrants	15 days following the conclusion of the grant period
October Progress Report (if applicable)	Status Report in IowaGrants	October 31 - Programs with a Final Progress Report due after Oct. 31 (i.e., those whose grants end in November or later) would have a October Report due in advance of their Final Report in order to meet AmeriCorps deadlines.
Monitoring Report Program Response or Response Plan	IowaGrants correspondence	By the deadline established by Volunteer Iowa.
Change in program staff as noted in Grant Agreement	Program Officer Notification in IowaGrants	Within 5 days of the person's first or last day of work or as soon as possible.
Grant Agreement Extension Request	Program Officer Notification in IowaGrants	By April 30 annually
Program Evaluation Plan or Report	IowaGrants status reports and/or application	Progress updates due in Mid-Year Performance Measure Report. Full report/plan deadline varies: With re-competing application for competitive programs.

Other Significant Program Changes	Program Officer Notification in IowaGrants	Within 5 days of awareness of the need to make the change or as soon as possible.
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**Note: Planning grant and Summer-Only programs have their own reporting schedule and forms which will be provided as part of their grant agreement.

3. PROGRESS REPORTS (45 CFR [2522.530](#) - 45 CFR [2522.650](#))

The Progress Reports are used to report AmeriCorps achievements during the program year, focusing on required demographics, the approved program performance measures, and narrative responses. Copies of the performance measurement tools, and the data collection plan the program intends to use in tracking program performance may also be required to be submitted in IowaGrants so that Volunteer Iowa can help ensure the program is collecting the data required to complete its reports. Failure to submit the information by the due date can result in punitive action, such as suspension of grant payments. In addition, program progress, reporting and timeliness are factors for consideration during grant review.

Progress reports are due in IowaGrants as listed in the grant agreement, the above chart and on the Calendar of Events and Deadlines. If a due date needs to be adjusted, Volunteer Iowa will announce the change via communication to programs. The reports should be completed for the dates assigned in IowaGrants and found in the Events and Deadlines calendar. Of note, programs whose Final Progress Report due date is after October 31 must complete an October Progress Report in IowaGrants by October 31 (for example, this applies to grants extended through November 30 and for most grants with a January 1 start date) and will complete a Final Progress Report as well.

Demographic data and performance measure collection points and corresponding definitions are not provided by AmeriCorps at the time of grant award; therefore, they may change during the grant year. If they do, Volunteer Iowa will inform programs as soon as possible and programs will be expected to report on the revised measures to the best of their ability. The most recent program progress status reports collected the following information:

A. AMERICORPS DEMOGRAPHICS/PERFORMANCE DATA ELEMENTS (REPORTED ANNUALLY FOR PERIOD OF 10/1 - 9/30)

I. AGENCY REQUIRED INFORMATION

AmeriCorps requires collection and reporting of the following information. Since this data aligns with the Agency’s strategic emphasis areas, it is recommended that programs collect this information to the extent possible and reasonable within the program design. Programs collect and report this data during the time period of 10/1 - 9/30, regardless of the member cohort or program year to which the data are connected. The following data is required for all grantees:

- Number of individuals who applied to be AmeriCorps members
- Number of volunteers recruited or managed
- Dollar amount of resources leveraged by the program
- Number of hours served by recruited or managed volunteers

II. OTHER AMERICORPS INFORMATION

The following elements are required for all grantees for whom the indicator is relevant to their program model (“relevant” refers to something that is a significant part of a grantee’s program design and Theory of Change).

- Number of individuals affected by disaster served
- Number of individuals assisted in preparing for disasters
- Number of children and youth served
- Number of individuals receiving job training or placement
- Dollar amount of resources leveraged by national service participants
- Number of acres of public land supported

III. OPTIONAL INFORMATION

The following elements are optional for all grantees. Volunteer Iowa does not collect this information because there are no Iowa programs with these activities as primary goals of their program. If you feel these measures are applicable to your program, please contact your program officer. If these measures become relevant, Volunteer Iowa will add them.

- Number of AmeriCorps members receiving opioid/drug intervention services
- Number of previously unemployed AmeriCorps members who gain employment
- Number of individuals receiving independent living services
- Number of veterans served
- Number of veterans family members served
- Number of military family members served
- Number of active-duty military members served
- Number of veterans serving as AmeriCorps members who gain employment
- Number of AmeriCorps members who earn a high-school diploma or GED
- Number of AmeriCorps members who remain in the education field post-service

B. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Programs must report on the aligned measures as approved in eGrants. In addition to reporting numerical data, narrative responses are required for any output or outcome measure for which one or more of the following is true:

- The actual is lower than the target value;
- The actual greatly exceeds the target value (by 400% or more);
- Program activities and/or data collection are still ongoing for this measure, even if targets have already been met; and/or
- Data from the previous grant year that were not reported on the previous year’s final progress report and have been included in the reported actual.

I. INITIAL, MID-YEAR, OCTOBER, AND FINAL PROGRESS REPORTS

Programs will report on progress towards their established National Performance Measure and Program-Identified Measure targets at least twice during the program year. Programs also indicate in their initial progress report if they expect they are on-track or significantly off track to meet their measures.

II. DATA COLLECTION PLAN AND PROCESS (FORMERLY THE PERFORMANCE MEASURES TRACKING TOOLS)

As part of the program start forms, Volunteer Iowa may request templates used by the program for collection of performance measure data as well as a description of the overall data collection plan. In the mid-year progress report, Volunteer Iowa will request data collection reports for review. Volunteer Iowa may request completed data collection tools to review as part of the progress report or during other monitoring. A sample data collection plan and data collection plan resource are available on Basecamp.

C. NARRATIVES

I. SUCCESS AND CHALLENGES

Programs highlight successes and challenges that have occurred during the reporting period of the grant.

II. TRAINING UPDATE (MID-YEAR REPORT ONLY)

All AmeriCorps programs are required to provide certain trainings to AmeriCorps members and track member attendance and completion of required trainings. As part of the progress reports, programs may be required to upload training agendas, sign in sheets and/or verify they are providing required trainings.

III. EVALUATION UPDATE

Programs should give an update on required and optional evaluation activities that are planned or in progress.

IV. DATA QUALITY (MID-YEAR REPORT ONLY)

Reference your data collection plan and performance measure tracking tools to ensure that you are following the approved data collection plan. Programs will be asked to confirm that they address the following five aspects of data quality: validity, completeness, consistency, accuracy, and verifiability.

V. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Describe how you have used the data you have collected about your processes or outcomes (including performance measurement and evaluation data) during the reporting period to improve your program. Based on the data you have collected, what has worked well in your program during the reporting period, and what changes will you make in the coming year to improve processes and/or outcomes to better address identified community needs and/or to provide a higher quality member experience?

VI. COMMUNITY AND MEMBER IMPACT

This section provides an example of the positive impact your program has had on the community you serve and on the members who participate in the program. Each example should be one or two paragraphs and should be something that stands out as notable or is an accomplishment that you are proud to highlight, especially if it came about because of intentional actions you have taken to improve your service activities and member experience. Do not provide a summary of program activities, partners, or general

descriptions. Please focus on specific examples and the qualities that make the experience or relationship significant.

D. RECRUITMENT, ENROLLMENT, AND RETENTION

I. RECRUITMENT UPDATES (INITIAL REPORT ONLY)

Program will provide an update on their recruitment to date, especially of any FT member slots.

II. MEMBER INCENTIVES (INITIAL REPORT ONLY)

Programs will provide an update on incentives being offered to support recruitment/retention and data collected on the impact of these efforts.

III. ENROLLMENT APPROVAL CYCLE AND ENROLLMENT RATE EXPLANATIONS (FINAL REPORT ONLY)

Programs will note any late enrollments and provide explanations for them. Programs will note whether they met the 100% recruitment target and any reasons for lower enrollment.

IV. EXIT APPROVAL CYCLE AND RETENTION RATE EXPLANATIONS (FINAL REPORT ONLY)

Programs will note any late exits and provide explanations for them. Programs will note whether they met the 85% retention target and any reasons for lower retention.

E. MEMBER AND HOST SITE MANAGEMENT ATTACHMENTS

I. MEMBER PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS AND HOST SITE MONITORING PLAN (INITIAL REPORT ONLY)

Programs must provide a copy of the forms they will use to conduct their required evaluations of member performance. See Ch. 3.1 for details about member evaluation requirements (in general, all members must receive an end-of-term evaluation, but only certain members are required to have a midterm evaluation). Programs will also submit a copy of their host site monitoring plan and associated tools.

II. MEMBER SERVICE AGREEMENTS AND HOST SITE AGREEMENTS, HOST SITE ORIENTATION AGENDA, AND HOST SITE TRAINING PLAN (MID-YEAR ONLY)

Existing programs that anticipate continued funding in the next grant year are required to submit draft member service and host site agreements, host site orientation agenda, and host site training plan for review and approval as part of the Mid-Year Progress Report. Updated member service and host site agreement templates are provided by Volunteer Iowa prior to the due date and are available on Basecamp. The goal of this timeline is for programs to have approved member service and host site materials prior to the start of the next grant year.

4. EVALUATION ([45 CFR 2522.500- 2522.540 AND 45 CFR 2522.700- 2522.810, FAQs](#))

In addition to annual performance measure reporting, AmeriCorps programs must complete evaluations to show the larger impacts of their programs in the community. Measuring programs regularly offers

increased accountability to stakeholders and improves the value of programs for participants and those served. Assessment tools include logic models, outcome measurement, and online and paper surveys. See the AmeriCorps Evaluation Resources or search for evaluation resources under the State Subgrantees area on the [AmeriCorps website](#) for more detail.

A. REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPETITIVELY FUNDED AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL PROGRAMS

- I. \$500,000 OR MORE IN AMERICORPS FUNDING (LARGE GRANTEES)
All programs receiving \$500,000 or more in AmeriCorps funding must arrange for an independent evaluation and submit the evaluation results with their application for re-compete funding. AmeriCorps considers programs receiving \$500,000 to be “large grantees” and requires an impact evaluation, with more detailed guidance available in the [AmeriCorps Evaluation FAQs](#) regarding definitions and expectations for impact evaluations.
- II. LESS THAN \$500,000 IN AMERICORPS FUNDING (SMALL GRANTEES)
Programs receiving less than \$500,000 in AmeriCorps funds are required to conduct an internal evaluation; but may conduct an independent evaluation if they prefer. The evaluation (internal or independent) must cover a minimum of one (1) year; but may cover longer periods.
- III. ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION APPROACH
Competitive programs may have certain evaluation requirements waived if they qualify for an Alternative Evaluation Approach (AEA). Currently, Alternative Evaluation Approaches are allowed based on the structure of their program making it too difficult or not timely to conduct an impact evaluation, because they have previously conducted an impact evaluation, if they are replicating an evidence-based intervention with fidelity in a new setting, because of timing issues, or due to meeting a funding threshold of \$1 million in AmeriCorps funding per year. Additional details can be found in the [Alternative Evaluation Approach Guidance](#). Programs interested in pursuing an Alternative Evaluation Approach should work with their assigned program officer and/or the Volunteer Iowa program development officer. They will be expected to complete a [fillable request form](#). Volunteer Iowa submits any AEA requests to AmeriCorps on the program’s behalf.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR FORMULA FUNDED AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL PROGRAMS

In Iowa, formula funded programs are not required to complete an evaluation although Volunteer Iowa encourages them to conduct an evaluation that meets their needs or at least begin planning for competitive evaluation requirements.

C. EVALUATION PERIOD AND TIMELINE

Evaluations for competitively funded AmeriCorps programs must cover a minimum of one year of the three-year project period. For Iowa formula-funded programs who choose to conduct an evaluation, the recommended minimum is also one year. It is allowable (and often recommended) to conduct an evaluation over a longer period.

AmeriCorps competitive grantees must (1) submit an evaluation plan when they re compete for funding subsequent to their initial three-year grant award; (2) conduct an evaluation during the period of their second (and future) three-year grant award; and (3) submit a report of the findings from the evaluation when they re compete for funding. Therefore, in order to report on evaluation findings in time for their second re compete applications, grantees should complete the evaluation within five years of their initial competitive grant award.

First time applicants for AmeriCorps competitive funding are not required to submit an evaluation plan with their application and grantees are not required to conduct an evaluation during their initial three-year competitive grant period. However, it is highly recommended that grantees begin the evaluation planning process during their initial grant period so that they have a strong evaluation plan and are prepared to conduct a high-quality evaluation if selected for funding during a subsequent grant award period.

Grantees who continue to re compete for competitive funding beyond their second three-year grant award should continue to submit evaluation plans for the next grant period, as well as evaluation reports of their past evaluation efforts, with their re compete applications.

For many competitive programs with a required evaluation, the first year of the three-year cycle is spent securing AmeriCorps agency approval of the plan, the second year is spent on data collection, and in the third year the data is analyzed, and a report is written. The report and a new evaluation plan are due with the competitive re compete application, which is due only partway into the third year of the cycle. However, applicants may submit an initial report if they are still working to complete the final report.

If you are applying for...	The following evaluation requirements apply:
Your first three-year competitive AmeriCorps grant	You are not required to submit an evaluation plan with your application or conduct an evaluation during the three-year period. However, if you are planning to re compete for funding, it is highly recommended that you begin the evaluation planning process during the first three-year grant period.
Your second three-year competitive AmeriCorps grant	You must submit an evaluation plan with your application and are required to complete the evaluation during the second three-year grant period.
Your third three-year competitive AmeriCorps grant	You are required to submit a report detailing the results of the evaluation conducted during the second grant period with your application. You should also submit an evaluation plan for the third three-year grant period that will build on the results of the evaluation from the second three-year grant period.
An AmeriCorps grant beyond your third three-year competitive grant award	You must continue to submit an evaluation plan for each successive three-year grant period and a report with findings from evaluations conducted in previous grant periods with your application.

D. AMERICORPS APPROVAL OF EVALUATION PLANS

AmeriCorps will review and approve evaluation plans for competitive grantees. Evaluation plans submitted with the application must follow the [AmeriCorps Evaluation Plan template](#). Programs with evaluation plans that are not approved at the time of grant award will be required to have their Evaluation Plan approved by AmeriCorps within a specified timeline. These programs have access to technical assistance from AmeriCorps (or its contracted TA provider) and, programs are highly encouraged to utilize this TA for required edits to the evaluation plans. Failure to obtain AmeriCorps approval of an evaluation plan by the established deadline can result in a manual hold by AmeriCorps, which means that program documentation will be scrutinized; and payments may be suspended. Programs are expected to notify Volunteer Iowa of any requested changes to an approved evaluation plan. Staff will then work with the program to submit any required updates to the AmeriCorps agency.

E. REPORTING ON EVALUATION

All competitively funded programs are required to submit an evaluation plan or evaluation progress-to-date report within their annual funding applications as outlined in the Request for Application and grant application instructions. Programs are asked for narrative updates about their evaluations in the interim between due dates.

REFERENCES

1. Performance Measures Requirements and Procedures, (45 CFR 2522.550-2522.650)
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-B/chapter-XXV/part-2522/subpart-E>
2. AmeriCorps State and National 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity webpage, [FY 2024 AmeriCorps State and National Grants | AmeriCorps](#)
3. [Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps State Request for Applications 2024 Request for Applications](#)

2.4

HOST SITE AND SITE SUPERVISOR MANAGEMENT

1. SITE MANAGEMENT ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

Whether an AmeriCorps program places all members internally or coordinates with external partners for some or all its positions, every AmeriCorps program director will likely work with multiple host site supervisors who provide much of the day-to-day oversight of the AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps members are placed at host sites to provide direct service to the community. Regardless of the program design, communication between the AmeriCorps program and the host sites will be key. The program staff will need to be successful in communicating with all site supervisors – regardless of the placement. AmeriCorps programs that utilize external host sites for placement of AmeriCorps members should ensure that they are effectively managing these partnerships through written agreements that support overall program goals, quality member experiences, and performance measures. Even programs with only internal placements should make use of an agreement to outline site supervisor roles and responsibilities. Iowa AmeriCorps programs are expected to monitor all site placements for compliance and to provide technical assistance and support to continuously improve host site management. There are checklists and samples of tools and forms available on Basecamp that can be used to assist programs in this process.

A. WRITTEN SITE AGREEMENT

All programs must have a written host site agreement in which both parties attest to their roles and responsibilities in the partnership. At a minimum, the agreement should cover the responsibilities of the site supervisor related to program identification, member oversight, evaluation and training, the member activities that are prohibited, the disciplinary procedures and the role of the supervisor in member discipline and termination, and financial obligations on the part of the site (including when and under what circumstances these obligations would terminate or be reduced). Programs should also collect a list of physical service site addresses as part of each Host Site Agreement (HSA). Host site supervisors that are staff of other organizations are contractors. Their roles and responsibilities should be detailed as such in the host site agreement. These agreements will be reviewed and reissued on at least an annual basis and revised as needed. As part of renewal process programs could add “program performance and review criteria” to allow for past performance, and input from staff that worked with the site to be considered. Depending on the scope and nature of the project additional items may be covered in the written site agreement. Programs are required to submit a copy of their written HSA to Volunteer Iowa. The Host Site Agreement template is available on Basecamp. Please use this form to ensure that the program’s site agreement contains the necessary information.

B. SITE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION ([45 CFR §2522.475](#) AND [45 CFR §2522.450](#))

AmeriCorps programs should seek member host sites that allow them to achieve the program performance measures, to give AmeriCorps members a transformative service experience, and to carry out the activities described in the approved grant application. Iowa AmeriCorps programs are

encouraged to utilize a competitive site selection process. Programs must ensure that site selection incorporates the criteria required by regulations (quality, innovation, sustainability, quality of leadership, past performance, and community involvement). In alignment with agreements with surrounding state Commissions, service sites must be no more than 40 miles (into another state) from the Iowa boarder. If a program is considering an out-of-state host site or service site, please discuss with Volunteer Iowa prior to moving forward with grant activities, including member recruitment and selection. After host sites are selected, programs are required to enter them, including their physical addresses, into eGrants within 30 days of member enrollment.

C. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

At a minimum, AmeriCorps programs must provide all site supervisors with an initial orientation and annual training. The orientation for new sites must cover:

- Overview of AmeriCorps and Volunteer Iowa
- Member Rights and Responsibilities
- Review of the Host Site Agreement Highlights for Site Supervisor and Member Service Agreement
- Sexual Harassment and non-discrimination
- AmeriCorps prohibited activities,
- Nonduplication/Non-displacement,
- Branding and Media inquires
- Member timekeeping system (i.e., OnCorps) and supervisor role,
- Plan for collecting performance measure and other data from the site and the site's role in collecting that data,
- Site performance and program feedback and evaluation opportunities
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Creating a welcoming environment)

Programs will also need to cover relevant issues related to the financial agreement between the site and program, such as requirements for documenting site supervisor time as match to the AmeriCorps grant. Ideally, this training should be conducted before the members' start date; however, sometimes this is not possible. These topics should be covered as quickly as possible to ensure the grant year gets off to a strong start. Volunteer Iowa has developed orientation and training plan ideas and resources are available on Basecamp.

It is common for staff at the host site who review and agree to the terms outlined in the Host Site Agreement to differ from the staff that oversee and manage members during the service term. To assist in helping site supervisors in understanding the role, Volunteer Iowa has developed the Host Site Agreement Highlights for Site Supervisors, this is available on Basecamp. This resource should be updated to reflect the program's individual Host Site Agreement requirements and then used as a training resource and provided as support to each supervisor.

Host sites will play a major role in the program achieving its performance measures. It is essential that the AmeriCorps program staff focus on the program's performance measures during the site supervisor orientation/training to make sure that site supervisors know what the desired program

outcomes are in the approved grant application, what the site's role is in data collection for those outcomes, and how to know if the program is on track to accomplish outcomes. Additionally, site supervisors should know their responsibility in ensuring that AmeriCorps members know their role in both achieving performance measures and collecting data for reporting on the outcomes and cover these topics during the members' orientation and training.

Each year, training should be provided to cover updates to federal, state, and program processes and requirements. Program staff should also be available to provide technical assistance on an ongoing basis, as needed. A best practice for programs is to build from program experience and site feedback to develop and implement an ongoing training plan for the host sites and have regular communication with each site.

D. MANAGING SITE SUPERVISOR AND CONTRACTOR TIME

Programs using site supervisor and/or contractor time as match or that are supporting time with federal funds need to provide training to site supervisors/contractors. Training should include how to document time and explanation of appropriate activities that can be counted toward the grant. Site supervisors, employed by the program's organization, should use the organization's timekeeping system. Contractors, site supervisors who are employed by another organization, should create an invoice that includes the date and the number of hours worked and the activities that time was spent on for the AmeriCorps project for each pay period. If a generic spreadsheet or other document is used to communicate time spent, signatures are required. Timekeeping in OnCorps is also an option. In addition to the time sheets, programs using contractor time should collect the salary and benefit cost for each person annually. This document should be updated if there is a new salary or budget amount during the grant year. From this information programs can determine an hourly rate. The total number of hours would be multiplied by their hourly rate to calculate the total amount included on each claim.

Training on time charged to the grant should be based upon these concepts:

- Unless a site supervisor is providing a day-long training, there is no reason why a site supervisor should spend 8 hours/day supervising a member(s).
- In general, site supervisors should not spend more than 10-15% of their time providing supervision to member(s).
- If a site supervisor is expending more than 10-15% of their time supervising members, the program should evaluate the situation to determine if the member is the right fit for that site or if the site supervisor is inaccurately reporting time.
- Hours in which the site supervisor is doing their work alongside the member(s) does not count as site supervision. Only time in which the supervisor is providing instruction, guidance, feedback, recruiting/interviewing potential members, data collection, or reporting directly to or related to the member should be counted.

E. SITE MONITORING AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEEDBACK

For continuous improvement and to maximize the mutually beneficial relationship between the organization and its sites, AmeriCorps programs are required to conduct regular site monitoring.

Monitoring is also required to ensure that host sites are upholding the standards required of any Iowa AmeriCorps State program, such as being accessible to individuals with disabilities and providing members with a quality member experience.

Volunteer Iowa strongly suggests programs monitor and assess each host site annually. On-site monitoring also provides the program the opportunity to see the AmeriCorps members' service first-hand, to learn about successes and challenges, and to be able to look at the service partners in the big picture. Some goals for on-site monitoring include ensuring members are doing the activities the host site has agreed to, as well as providing needed support and guidance to sites that may need timely support. Different monitoring processes may work well for different program designs but may include interviews or focus groups with members and site supervisors, gathering feedback from community partners, review of site performance and progress towards goals, review of member recruitment and retention at the site, and/or in-person site visits. While any of these processes may be used, in-person visits do offer the program a chance to get a feel for the member experience at the host site and the community the program is serving. Host sites should also be frequently given the opportunity to provide feedback to the program regarding successes and challenges with the host site-grantee relationship. Volunteer Iowa has a Host Site Monitoring and Performance Assessment tool on Basecamp to assist in this process. The tool is flexible and can be adjusted to meet the needs of the program.

REFERENCES

1. AmeriCorps Minimum Requirements and Program Types, <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-B/chapter-XXV/part-2522/subpart-A>
2. AmeriCorps [2024 General Grant and Cooperative Agreement Terms and Conditions](#)

3.1

MEMBER HUMAN RESOURCES

1. PROGRAM DESIGN – MEMBER SLOTS, TERM LENGTH, AND ACTIVITIES ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

A. RELATION OF PROGRAM DESIGN TO LOGIC MODEL, MEMBER SLOTS, TERM LENGTH, AND ACTIVITIES

In the approved grant application, grantees outline a program design including a logic model and budget which indicate the member slots to be included as well as the general activities that members will undertake. At the beginning of each grant year, programs must provide additional specificity on the member term lengths and position descriptions. In general, AmeriCorps service must provide a direct benefit to the community where it is performed, and programs must develop service opportunities that are appropriate to the skill levels of the participants that demonstrate a benefit to the community. However, some programs also engage members in capacity-building activities that meet local needs by increasing organization efficiency or effectiveness ([45 CFR § 2520.20](#)). When these activities are building capacity of nonprofits or communities to meet local needs and are included in the approved grant, they are allowable AmeriCorps State member activities.

Some programs also engage members in special service activities that are primarily designed to build the member's skills and leadership capacity, such as having members develop and lead a community service project related to their AmeriCorps program focus. For programs that engage members in this way, such service activities should be incorporated into the Days of Service/Special Projects Policy or Alternative Service policy. Programs that choose to allow these types of service hours must incorporate it into a policy or, if necessary, include situations in a Teleservice policy (see Program Specific Policies and Procedures) as well. These hours may be counted towards the member's term of service if they do not interfere with their normal service hours or conflict with prohibited activities.

Programs will submit an Enrollment Plan form to Volunteer Iowa electronically in the IowaGrants system as part of the Program Start Forms. This plan outlines the program's plan for member start and end dates, and should be developed with input from host site, consideration for the service and should align with the payroll start dates. Programs should not start members at end of pay period. This puts members behind before they even get started. If, for some reason a member start date has been pushed back to end of the pay period, programs should wait to start the member in the next pay period. The Enrollment Plan form will classify members and detail the number of members serving for each slot type, length of term in weeks, and member start dates. The form will auto-calculate the end dates and average number of hours the member would need to serve to meet the minimum number of hours required for the term. The Enrollment Plan form also requires programs to include the number of hours the member should serve weekly to meet the anticipated service schedule. For example, programs may indicate they have ten (10) full-time Community Youth

Development members serving 52-week terms and five (5) full-time School-Based Tutoring members serving 43-week terms (the length of term and classification will vary by program). The form should align with the logic model submitted as part of the eGrants application. Programs may request a waiver from completing the Enrollment Plan form by submitting a request to their program officer.

The Enrollment Plan has many uses. This plan should be used as the anchor for programs' recruiting plan. This plan also can help programs manage unfilled slots. Volunteer Iowa has seen a reduction in the number of late exits in eGrants since the Enrollment Plan was initiated. Further, Volunteer Iowa uses the information in the Enrollment Plan when reviewing budget modifications, unexpended funds reports, and when approving no cost extensions. If you have questions about how to complete the Enrollment Plan or the required updates, please talk with your program officer.

Position slot types and term lengths should be the same or similar for members who are providing the same or similar service activities. Differences should be based primarily on community need and recruitment plan, not on individual member availability. In the example above, this would mean that the program should not enroll four (4) School-Based Tutoring members in 43-week terms and one (1) School-Based Tutoring member in a 39-week term unless the program could establish that the tutoring activities or the sites' needs differed among the members and these differences required different term lengths.

Additionally, service activities should be unique for each slot type. This differentiation may be achieved through unique dosage and/or duration detail when the service activities are not distinctive. Programs are encouraged to thoroughly consider which service activities will be performed by members and consider removing activities the member will not consistently be doing. Additionally, seasonal considerations are also a good way to distinguish between member position descriptions. Using the Position Description Breakout Template is a good way to ensure member position descriptions are unique.

Programs will be expected to enroll members as proposed in their submitted Enrollment Plan form and this will be monitored by Volunteer Iowa through site visits and/or desk reviews as part of the regular monitoring process. Enrollment Plan updates are due in IowaGrants on January 30 and May 1 for programs with an August or September start date. To better assist members in their schedule and hour requirement planning, Volunteer Iowa suggests using the Benchmark tool in OnCorps. This can be used to plan out hours, schedules, etc. since preloading hours in member timesheets is not allowed.

- B. MODIFICATION OF PROGRAM DESIGN/ENROLLMENT PLAN – CONVERSION OF UNFILLED SLOTS
- It is sometimes necessary for programs to request to modify their Enrollment Plan. Modifications made before the planned recruitment/enrollment period should be based primarily on community needs and not on individual member recruitment or other extraneous factors. For example, if an environmental program determines based on changing weather conditions, that members need to spend more time on controlled burns than invasive species removal and this impacts the member positions needed, a request could be submitted to convert slots before they are filled. If initial

recruitment goals are not met, slot conversions may also be made to ensure the program makes a best effort to meet the original program goals for both performance measures and enrollment. For example, if a program intended to place a full-time member for a year long term but could not recruit someone for an individual site by the full-time recruitment deadline, they may then request a conversion to recruit a three-quarter-time or half-time slot to fill that need for a shorter period. Program design modifications are accomplished through slot conversion and require prior approval from a program officer. Significant changes in program design may also require AmeriCorps approval.

Programs should notify their Volunteer Iowa program officer of any proposed slot conversions as soon as the need is identified. Programs should not convert slots until there is a need, for example members have been recruited or a host site requests a specific slot type. All requests for slot conversions (of unfilled slots) must be approved by Volunteer Iowa. Programs must request and receive Volunteer Iowa approval for proposed conversions by submitting a member/slot change status report in IowaGrants. In conjunction with the slot conversion, Volunteer Iowa may request a revised Enrollment Form from the program, as appropriate.

Programs may request to combine or divide unfilled slots as appropriate for their program design. In all cases, programs are required to maximize their slot conversion; however, the total number of MSYs and education award amounts in the grant may not increase because of the slot conversion. See the MSY and Education Award by Slot chart for guidance on these calculations. All conversions must be Trust neutral and are subject to availability of funds in the Trust and will comply with all assumptions on which Trust prudence and continued solvency are predicated. If your program is consistently unable to fill the slots in the original program design, you should consider a redesign of your program and enrollment plan. Fixed Amount grantees may also do slot conversions; however, the unused or unusable portions of MSY that result from the conversion will reduce the amount of funds available to the program. A Slot Conversion Chart used to help ensure changes to slot types and/or numbers of slots is available on Basecamp. For guidance on conversions of filled/enrolled member slots, see the section on Member Timekeeping, Discipline, and Term Management.

C. ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Programs are expected to fill all awarded member positions every grant year, this concept is known as 100% recruitment or enrollment. Therefore, Volunteer Iowa expects that all programs actively manage their member slots and communicate to their program officer if they identify experience recruitment challenges. Programs should notify Volunteer Iowa when they become aware that they will not be able to fill their awarded member positions in any category (FT, HT, etc.). This should communicate with Volunteer Iowa as soon as possible, at a minimum through the completion of the Enrollment Plan Update in January and May.

Volunteer Iowa can work with programs on a modified program design that maximizes enrollment (for example, converting larger unfilled slots down into summer-only positions). On a short-term basis this is the preferable option to leaving slots unfilled. Slot conversions should only be done when programs have members to enroll, not just as a step in managing unfilled slots.

Volunteer Iowa may seek to move unfilled member slots to another program(s) in order to achieve the fullest enrollment possible for our state portfolio. In the case that member positions are transferred to another program, associated cost/MSY resources may also be moved to the other program (for formula programs). If Volunteer Iowa cannot identify another program to which the slots can be transferred, the program with the unfilled slots will be required to retain them in their program, which will result in lower member recruitment rates. This is a factor for continued funding.

Programs with ongoing unfilled slots should consider updating their program design and/or right sizing their program at the time of application. Continued unfilled slots are a consideration in future funding decisions. In addition, failure to notify Volunteer Iowa of unfilled positions can be a factor for consideration of continued funding.

D. MSY AND EDUCATION AWARD BY SLOT TYPE*

SEGAL EDUCATION AWARD AMOUNTS for 2024-2025 Program Year			
Slot Type	Minimum # of Hours	MSY	Amount
Full-Time	1700	1.0	\$7,395.00
Three Quarter-Time	1200	0.7	\$5,176.50
Half-Time	900	0.5	\$3,697.50
Reduced Half-Time	675	0.38095240	\$2,817.14
Quarter-Time	450	0.26455027	\$1,956.35
Minimum-Time	300	0.21164022	\$1,565.08
Abbreviated-Time	100	0.05627705	\$416.17

*Education Award amounts **WILL NOT CHANGE** during the program year. Do not seek updated information from the AmeriCorps website during the grant year.

E. CALCULATING CONVERSIONS

Any member or slot conversions must be trust neutral (meaning you cannot increase the MSY or exceed the total education award value) while also maximizing the available MSY (meaning you cannot leave unfilled MSY if there is enough left over from a conversion to constitute at least an AT slot). One (1) full-time member may be converted into 2 half-time slots because the conversion is MSY-neutral (2 HT members x 0.5 = 1 MSY) and the total education award amount is Trust neutral (equal to the original amount). One (1) full-time member position may not be converted into 4 quarter-time positions because the conversion is not MSY or Trust neutral, since it increases the total MSY and the amount of the total education award. If a program converts multiple slots at once, the requirements are based on the cumulative MSY value. If a program completed earlier slot conversions that left it with some partial MSY remaining, those will also be factored in for future conversions. A Slot Conversion Chart is available in Basecamp to assist programs with determining appropriate MSY use.

Some allowable conversions for a single FT, TQT, or HT Slot are (but not limited to) below*

1 FT Slot =	1 TQT Slot =	1 HT Slot =
1 TQT + 1MT + 1 AT	1 HT + 3 AT	1 RHT + 2 AT
2 HT	1 RHT + 1 QT	1 QT + 1 MT
2 RHT + 1 MT	2 QT + 3 AT	2 MT + 1 AT
3 QT + 3 AT	3 MT + 1 AT	8 AT
4 MT + 2 AT	12 AT	

*eGrants will only allow refill slots to be converted after all standard Slots of that slot type have been utilized.

F. CHANGES THAT REQUIRE AMERICORPS APPROVAL ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

The following changes require written approval from AmeriCorps’s Office of Grants Management as well as written approval and concurrence from the State Commission:

- A change in the number of member service year (MSY) positions in the award; and/or
- A change in the funding level of the award.

2. MEMBER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

A. MEMBER RECRUITMENT

Programs are responsible for recruiting their own AmeriCorps members. Host sites may be assigned the responsibility for all or part of member recruitment. Programs must outline the expectations for recruitment in the Host Site Agreement and provide host sites with training and resources to successfully recruit members. The program should establish its own recruitment plan, outlining roles and responsibilities for the program staff as well as for host site supervisors and staff. Programs with enrollment and/or retention less than 85% (and new programs) for the previously completed grant year, as reported in eGrants, are required to complete, and submit a Recruitment Plan as a part of their start forms. Volunteer Iowa has a recorded three-part recruitment training available on Basecamp. Successful recruitment depends upon having a combination of raising the profile of the AmeriCorps program to increase the general understanding of national service and engaging potential candidates in a way that encourages them to consider AmeriCorps as an option. This includes a well thought out program design, accurate, detailed position descriptions that state the minimum qualifications for membership in the program and communicating the benefits of serving. These efforts could be targeted toward the audiences the program most desires to reach and may necessitate more than one version of recruitment materials (e.g., high school students, college-aged students, people taking a gap year, parents, etc.) Programs should endeavor to recruit individuals from the local communities being served; which may be a factor in funding consideration.

AmeriCorps requires programs post member listings/position descriptions by creating Service Opportunity Listings in the My AmeriCorps Portal. There are resources outlining requirements and tips for listing, as well as a template to draft your listing, available on Basecamp. Programs may specify their own application requirements in addition to or in place of the AmeriCorps application. However, if programs use their own application, they must still ensure that members meet eligibility

requirements and that all required information is collected from members and entered into eGrants at the time of enrollment.

The program is responsible for making the application process accessible to individuals with disabilities. The program must also be sure that it avoids discriminatory or illegal interview questions, recruitment, or screening practices. Programs should remember that applicants for the AmeriCorps program are eligible to use the grievance process to dispute program actions. Programs should also track the number of applications they receive, as this data is required in program progress reports.

Application and Other Fees: Charging an application or other fee to a prospective member to apply to serve as an AmeriCorps member is not allowed. Programs may charge application fees to prospective members who are applying to their educational institution or participating in their academic program if such fees are required of all applicants, but not for applying to serve as an AmeriCorps member. For National Service Criminal History Checks, AmeriCorps has allowed grant recipients to have applicants front the cost as long as applicants are reimbursed for the expense. This is for both applicants that are selected and those that are not, because NSCHC costs cannot be passed on to the applicant.

B. MEMBER SELECTION

The program is responsible for selecting members that meet its requirements and assigning members to projects that are appropriate to their skill level. The program 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 need for childcare, without displacing paid employees or community volunteers, and in accordance with its approved application. The program is encouraged to select members who possess a commitment to the goals of AmeriCorps. See Non-Discrimination Responsibilities for additional information on selection of members and staff.

The timeline for member recruitment and selection should account for the time that applicants may need to decide about the offer, the time the program needs to verify eligibility of the member before the service start date (including citizenship verification and completion of the National Service Criminal History Checks) and Volunteer Iowa deadlines for enrollment of various slot types.

C. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS [[TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#) AND [45 CFR 2522.100\(H\)](#)]

Programs are required to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified candidates and members with disabilities. Qualified candidates and members may request an accommodation at any time during their consideration and/or term of service. An offer of the availability of reasonable accommodations 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 his/her 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 trainings throughout their term of service.
- When the nature of conversation regarding a member’s performance warrants the provision of reasonable accommodations as a solution to the performance issue.

Most reasonable accommodations are low to no cost. To address the occasional cases when an accommodation is high cost, programs are encouraged to budget 1% of their total project funds to be used for providing reasonable accommodations for qualified candidates/members with disabilities. AmeriCorps also has funds set aside for this purpose and programs can request reimbursement for the costs of reasonable accommodations that have been provided.

Prior to denying any accommodation request, program staff should consult with the program officer for assistance in determining whether providing the accommodation presents an undue hardship on the program and in making a final determination as to whether an accommodation is reasonable or not. Volunteer Iowa will provide inclusion training as funding allows, which will include information specific to disclosure and reasonable accommodations.

3. ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT OF MEMBERS ([45 CFR 2522.200 AND 2522.210](#))

A. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

The program is responsible for following AmeriCorps’ eligibility requirements for members, namely that they must: (1) Be at least 17 years of age at the commencement of service OR be an out-of-school youth of at least 16 years of age participating in a youth corps-type program [[42 U.S.C. § 12572 \(a\)\(2\)](#)] OR an out-of-school youth of at least 16 years of age enrolled in a program for economically disadvantaged youth (as defined in the [Act 42 U.S.C. §12572\(a\)\(9\)](#)); (2) Have a high school diploma or its equivalent, agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent (unless this requirement is waived based on an individual education assessment conducted by the program) and the individual did not drop out of an elementary or secondary school to enroll in the program, or is enrolled in an institution of higher education on an ability to benefit basis and is considered eligible for funds under [20 U.S.C. § 1091](#); and (3) Be a citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States. Individuals who do not meet these criteria are not eligible to serve and should not be enrolled or considered as a member.

B. IDENTIFICATION AND MEMBER AGE ELIGIBILITY DOCUMENTATION

For the purposes of AmeriCorps eligibility, the identification of the member must be verified by the program at the time of member enrollment using a government-issued form of identification, such as a driver’s license or passport. The program’s policies should outline acceptable and preferred forms of identification. The identification provides documentation of member eligibility in terms of age requirements. Checking the individual’s government-issued identification also helps you to ensure that the individual is who she/he claims to be and that you run the required criminal history checks using the correct name, date of birth, etc. (see more under National Service Criminal History Checks, section 2.2 of this manual). A copy of this document must be retained by the program in the

member's file or electronically (in a manner that meets the AmeriCorps' electronic storage requirements).

C. PRIOR SERVICE - TERM LIMITS, SERVICE, AND EDUCATION AWARD ELIGIBILITY (SEE ALSO MEMBER BENEFITS) ([CFR 45 CFR 2522.230](#))

Individuals may serve multiple terms of AmeriCorps service, but members who have served prior terms in AmeriCorps State and National (ASN) must meet certain performance and disclosure requirements to be eligible for subsequent terms. If an applicant was exited for cause from a prior term, he/she must disclose this fact at the time of application to serve a subsequent term. The member must have received a satisfactory performance review from any prior terms or service; if not, he/she is not eligible to serve again. The MyAmeriCorps Portal does not automatically notify programs of members who have previously received unsatisfactory performance reviews, nor does it disqualify them from applying for future terms of service. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the program to take reasonable steps to determine the status of the member's exit from a previous program so that it does not select someone who is ineligible for continued service. For members who have served multiple prior terms of service, programs do not only need to check the most recently completed term of service for satisfactory completion; but are encouraged to contact the additional prior service sites.

Each branch of AmeriCorps does have term limits. Members may serve up to four (4) terms in AmeriCorps State and National. However, they may only earn up to the value of two (2) full-time education awards from any national service branch. Members who have already earned the maximum education award value (through AmeriCorps State and National or through the other branches of AmeriCorps), but who have not served the maximum number of terms may still enroll in subsequent terms of service with AmeriCorps State and National; however, the end of service benefit they earn will have no value (i.e., the education award they can earn is worth \$0). Programs should consult with members on how many previous AmeriCorps State and National terms they have served to ensure they do not exceed the limits for AmeriCorps State and National. Members that exit a term of service early for reasons other than misconduct prior to completing 15% of a term of service will not have that service term counted towards their term limit. Programs and members will see the aggregate value of an individual member's education awards earned to date in the eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal. Members eligible for only a partial education award must acknowledge this in the Portal before they may be enrolled.

D. MEMBERS WITHOUT A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR GED ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

To participate in AmeriCorps, an individual must meet certain education requirements. If members self-certify 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 ensure that the person did not drop out of school to enroll in the AmeriCorps program. The program must obtain the member's written agreement to obtain a high school

diploma or its equivalent before using the education award unless this requirement is waived based on an individual education assessment conducted by the program (see next paragraph).

If the member has been determined to be incapable of obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent, the program must request a waiver from the AmeriCorps to the diploma/GED requirement. The program must provide an independent evaluation demonstrating the member's inability to meet this requirement as part of its waiver request. The program must retain a copy of the approved waiver and the supporting independent evaluation.

Or, if the applicant does not fall into any of the above categories, he/she 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).

E. CITIZENSHIP ELIGIBILITY DOCUMENTATION AND SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER VERIFICATION ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#) AND REGULATIONS [45 CFR 2522.200](#))

Program staff should pay special attention to the requirement that members are citizens, nationals or lawful permanent residents of the United States and have a valid social security number associated with the same member name. Members must have citizenship and SSN verifications, or manual verifications dated on or before the member's enrollment start date; therefore, programs should review their enrollment timelines and processes to allow for collection and review of these documents.

AmeriCorps utilizes an automatic, electronic verification process to satisfy this requirement. The process begins at the time the member completes and submits their AmeriCorps member enrollment form in the Portal. Therefore, it is VERY important that the prospective member enter their social security number accurately and use their name as it appears on their social security card. If there are discrepancies as to how the name is listed on various forms of identification, Volunteer Iowa has found that using the name as listed on the social security card may be preferable.

Upon submission of the member enrollment form, the prospective member's citizenship information will be sent electronically to the Social Security Administration and the Department of Homeland Security for verification. This process means that members must also have a valid social security number. Upon successful verification, the individual's citizenship status will appear as "verified" in the Portal and will be visible to both the member and the program staff. Members who have served previous terms, prior to the enactment of the automatic verification, will appear as "previously served" or display the previously verified/manually verified date. Further action may be required by the program even if the member's citizenship status is listed as previously served. No further action should be required by the program if the member's citizenship status is listed as verified/manually verified for a previous term.

If the individual's information cannot be automatically verified, AmeriCorps will contact the program by email to request that additional documentation to support the member's social security and/or

citizenship status be submitted to AmeriCorps via electronic file transfer for review and verification as soon as possible. The individual's status will appear as "returned" in the Portal. The email will contain information about the documentation to be submitted. In general, the program should be prepared to provide a copy of a social security card, and one of the following forms of documentation: a) a legal permanent resident card (also known as a green card), b) a U.S. birth certificate, c) a U.S. Passport (expired or current), or d) a U.S. citizen certificate. The program must maintain copies, in the member's file, of any citizenship verification documentation that was obtained, submitted, and reviewed by AmeriCorps. Programs must save a copy/screenshot of the member record from eGrants showing the status as verified and keep the documentation in the member's file.

The program will not be able to complete the enrollment process in eGrants until the citizenship documentation and social security number is verified by AmeriCorps. Programs may allow members to start while their verification is in its "returned" status, as long as the program is confident they have the documentation needed to verify eligibility. Once the citizenship status or social security number is manually verified, the manual verification effective date will be the same date that the status was returned to the program and then the enrollment process can be completed in eGrants. Programs should still plan pre-enrollment steps to occur in a timeframe that will allow programs to enroll members within eight (8) days of their start date. Costs for members that are not eligible are subject to disallowance and repayment.

F. ENROLLMENT DOCUMENTATION ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

Programs must be able to document that every member is eligible to enroll in AmeriCorps, ensure members have adequate time to complete their terms of service, and receive in-service and post-service benefits. Programs must enroll and exit members with a completely electronic process managed in the Portal. All member files must contain a hard copy or screenshot of verification of the member's electronic enrollment from the eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal. eGrants is the access point to the Portal for program staff and this is the official system of record for AmeriCorps. Member enrollment data must be entered into the My AmeriCorps Portal ("Portal") within 8 days of the member's service start date.

All enrolled members must also be assigned to a service location with the eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal. This must be completed within 30 days of their enrollment. All service locations should be described by name, full address and/or ZIP code plus four. Members serving at multiple sites should be assigned to the location where they serve a plurality of their hours.

Programs are required to certify completion of certain National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) components in eGrants as part of the enrollment process. As part of enrollment, the program must certify that: 1) the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) has been completed and reviewed prior to the member's start date and 2) that they have completed the necessary state(s) and FBI checks as appropriate. This certification has a date box in the eGrants enrollment form, and the date entered must be no later than the day before the member's start date. Keep in mind that information entered into eGrants is considered part of a federal award and falsification of information in this system can result in civil or criminal penalties.

Programs that identify ineligible members during the NSCHC process should report these cases to Volunteer Iowa immediately.

G. MEMBER ENROLLMENT DEADLINE

Programs must document in the eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal a member's enrollment in a term of service within 8 days of the date of that event. Suspension, completion, and release from service must be documented in the eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal within 30 days of the event. Member enrollment beyond 8 days is considered noncompliant and the program must document the reason for the late enrollment. Time prior to the official eGrants enrollment will be disallowed as service and federal funds will not be eligible for reimbursement. AmeriCorps will consider changes in the member start date if the program can document a failure of AmeriCorps' technology platforms that prevented timely social security or citizenship verification or if the program can demonstrate other circumstances that prevented timely verification, such as a legal name change, natural disaster, or unintentional program staff error. Requests for administrative review will require supporting documentation, ideally including ticket numbers for any associated eGrants helpdesk communications. If a program desires administrative review, please contact the program officer.

H. MEMBER ENROLLMENT PERIODS AND VOLUNTEER IOWA DEADLINES

Programs establish a member enrollment period in the eGrants/MyAmeriCorps portal, which may begin no earlier than the grant award date and may last up to one year. If programs do not have any members enrolled within 60 days of the program start date, Volunteer Iowa may move to suspend or end the grant agreement. Enrollment deadlines for various member slot types are based on the amount of time such a member may reasonably need to complete his/her term and how that relates to the program's project period. No individual member service agreement may exceed twelve (12) months, and all Iowa members (including FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT) must complete their terms of service within the Volunteer Iowa Grant Agreement project period. Members may also be enrolled only during the program's enrollment period. Volunteer Iowa Grant Agreements cover an initial 12-month period with the possibility to extend for up to an additional three months to allow members to complete their service; therefore, a Grant Agreement extension (No Cost Extension) would be required for any member activities/terms that are planned to continue beyond the initial grant end date. Any member costs incurred after fifteen (15) months from the Volunteer Iowa Grant Agreement start date may not be reimbursed by Volunteer Iowa (Programs with a January start date may have an adjusted timeline and possibly fewer options for extensions-questions can be addressed to the Volunteer Iowa program officer). Programs with August and September start dates may enroll members under the assumption of a three-month extension; however, an official grant agreement extension request must be submitted to Volunteer Iowa by the dates noted in the Program Calendar. Should the member or members that were planned to serve into the extension period exit the program early, Volunteer Iowa may select to move the grant closeout date.

To maximize resources, effectively manage programs and allow members adequate time to complete their service term, enrollment deadlines have been established for all member classifications.

Slot Type	Enrollment Deadline for Aug/Sept Start Dates	Enrollment Deadlines for January Start Dates
FT	12/1	4/1
TQT	3/1	6/1
HT	4/1	7/1
RHT	4/1	7/1
QT	7/1	10/1
MT	7/1	10/1
AT	7/1	10/1

While these deadlines are based on what would be reasonable for most programs and positions, there are times when a program may wish to enroll a member or group of members after the deadline and can demonstrate that the requirements of the position can be reasonably met within the allowable timeframe. The program can submit a request for a waiver to the deadline using the Program Officer Notification status report in IowaGrants. Any exceptions to these enrollment deadlines must be approved in advance by the Volunteer Iowa program officer, in writing.

4. NATIONAL SERVICE CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS (REGULATIONS [42 U.S.C. 12645\(G\)](#) AND [45 CFR-2540.200 - 2540.207](#) AND [45 CFR 2520](#))

Programs should carefully review section 2.2 of this manual to understand the Iowa National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) requirements. AmeriCorps has approved vendors available for NSOPW, State, and FBI Checks and some Iowa AmeriCorps State programs are required to use the approved vendors; others may use alternate approved sources. NSCHC requirements include pre-approved waivers and a process for individual programs to request NSCHC waivers to the requirements.

Operational AmeriCorps State programs must conduct and document a National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) on the following individuals, who serve or work under their grant: AmeriCorps members serving in ASN programs and individuals in positions in which they will receive a salary, directly or reflected as match, under a cost reimbursement grant. An individual in a covered position may be paid wholly from federal share, wholly from matching dollars, or from a mixture of federal and non-federal funds. The source of funds has no impact on the status of a position as covered or not covered. For fixed cost grants, with no line-item budgets, the NSCHC requirements apply only to the AmeriCorps members. For AmeriCorps planning grants, the NSCHC requirements do not apply. Volunteer Iowa does encourage planning and fixed amount grantees to utilize practices to ensure safety within their programs even though the NSCHC is not required for staff on those grants. Additionally, the following individuals are exempt from NSCHC: individuals who are under the age of 18 on the first day of work or service who serve on an NSCHC required grant and individuals whose activity is entirely included in the grant recipient's indirect cost rate or cost allocation plan.

All Iowa AmeriCorps program members and staff required to comply with NSCHC requirements must receive, a three-part check that consists of:

- A nationwide name-based check of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) which consists of a web-based check of a centralized system that identifies individuals who are registered as sex offenders in States, territories, or with many federally recognized Tribes; AND

- 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 individual will serve or work; AND
- A fingerprint-based FBI check.

Checks must be completed no later than the day before the individual's start date. Please see section 2, Effective Grant and Program Management, for further details and full guidance for the NSCHC process to ensure programs are following all state and federal requirements.

5. MEMBER SERVICE AGREEMENTS AND POSITION DESCRIPTIONS ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBER SERVICE AGREEMENTS

All members must be covered by a member service agreement that is fully executed and in effect during their entire term of service. This means that the agreement must be signed and dated by both the member (and a parent/guardian for those under 18) and program representative on or before the member's first day of service. Parent/guardian signatures must be on or after the member signature date, and before the program representative's signature date. Programs should be consistent about who signs the member service agreement on behalf of the program. Volunteer Iowa requires that it be someone from the grantee organization's administrative team and not the site supervisor. If a program desires the site to be represented in the member service agreement, the site supervisor or other host site representative can be an additional signer.

Programs that provide opportunities for increases in living allowance through team leader or mentor roles, incentives, housing support or professional development allowances should include the specifics about them, including the amount of increase and any additional requirements to qualify for the funds. Providing these types of member support must be consistently applied, be included in the approved budget, and the program must have a policy that supports the expenditure(s). Volunteer Iowa has a resource to help programs plan and budget for increases to the member living allowance. It's available in Basecamp in the Financial Resources and Tools folder.

All member service agreements should include the items listed in the Volunteer Iowa Member Service Agreement Directions, which is available on Basecamp, in the Member Management folder. A Member Service Agreement template with additional details and directions is available for customization by the program.

To receive the full living allowance and Segal Education Award, the member must satisfy both the minimum number of hours served and the dates of service as stated in the member service agreement. Programs must have a fully executed member service agreement for each member as outlined above. If there is not a completed member service agreement all expenses must be repaid.

B. CHANGES/AMENDMENTS/EXTENSIONS TO MEMBER SERVICE AGREEMENTS

Any amendments to the Member Service Agreement must be conveyed in writing, signed, and dated by the member (and parent/guardian for members under age 18) and program representative and

attached to the original Member Service Agreement. The site supervisor may also sign any adjustment to an official document; however, they cannot be the only signature beyond the member's and the program must be consistent in its application of site supervisor signatures. The member must also be given a copy of the amendment for their records. Volunteer Iowa provides a Member Service Agreement Template on Basecamp.

Any minor changes to the member service agreement should have a line striking through the deleted language and new information written/typed in and signed and initialed by both parties to the agreement. White out or correction tape should not be used in a member service agreement. Minor changes, such as the site supervisor name may be updated using this method. As a reminder, no one, including program staff, host site staff or the member should change or alter an official AmeriCorps document without engaging all parties. This would include member service agreements, amendments to the member service agreement, host site agreements, and timesheets. This list is not exhaustive.

Only in the case of compelling personal circumstances may a member's service agreement be extended beyond the original end date, via a written and signed member service agreement extension. The program must issue a member service agreement amendment to ensure that the member is covered by a service agreement that is in effect, but the extended service period must be no longer than 12 months. The compelling personal circumstances must be documented in the member file in a timely fashion.

C. STORAGE OF MEMBER SERVICE AGREEMENTS

Member service agreements should be located within the member files and maintained at the "headquarters" of the program, not at the site where the member is serving. The original service agreement with all original signatures (not a photocopy or faxed version) must be easily accessible on-site if stored in a separate human resources file. All member service agreements must be available for review by Volunteer Iowa or AmeriCorps staff during site monitoring and/or audit visits. If the program is signing and storing documents electronically, organizational policies should support this process and storage processes should ensure document retention and Personally Identifiable Information (PII) safety.

D. UPLOADING MEMBER SERVICE AGREEMENTS AND POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Member service agreements and the incorporated position descriptions for each member should be attached electronically in OnCorps or approved alternative timekeeping system within 30 days of member start date. The program may arrange with Volunteer Iowa to upload the document(s) into the IowaGrants Correspondence component within 30 days of the member start date.

E. REQUIRED COMPONENTS OF MEMBER SERVICE AGREEMENTS:

- Member name, program name, sponsor/grantee organization name
- Member position title, service location, site supervisor name and site supervisor phone/email
- Member start date and end date

- Term type member is serving, minimum required service hours to successfully complete term and be eligible for the education award.
- Expectations outlining service from start date through end date and completing minimum hours in term
- Anticipated service schedule language
- Requirements (as developed by the grantee) necessary to be eligible for additional terms of service
- NSCHC: Acknowledgement that service is contingent upon the review of the listed checks and applicant may be ineligible based upon findings.
- Living allowance amount and language that it must be paid from the start of service (start date) until the member ends service (end date) and in accordance with the program's Member Payroll and Exit Policy
- Living allowance is paid in equal increments while members are serving.
- The member is prohibited from accepting other forms of compensation for their service. This does not include program approved incentives.
- Member leadership or mentoring role requirements
- Program provided incentives member is eligible to receive.
- Living allowance is taxable; taxes will be deducted prior to payment.
- Member standing for the purpose of the Fair Labor Standards Act and eligibility for unemployment.
- Member benefits (health care, member assistance program, childcare, loan forbearance /PSLF)
- Education award amount for the term of service in which the individual is enrolling.
- High school diploma or equivalent certification
- Member must disclose previous service that may make them ineligible for future service and/or education award. Includes both release for cause and number of prior terms served.
- Information on the impact of an exit for compelling personal circumstance on the education award
- Member responsibility to the program as it pertains to the Drug-Free Workplace policy.
- Loan forbearance and Public Student Loan Forgiveness information.
- Prohibited Activities
- Code of conduct (standards developed by the grantee) and disciplinary policy.
- Nonduplication language (program responsibility) and Non displacement language (program responsibility).
- Suspension and Temporary Leave from Service
- Member Exit and Release, including the specific terms under which a member may be released for cause.
- Informed consent/Media/publicity/information release
- Civil Rights and Non-Harassment/Non-Discrimination Policy
- Grievance Procedures – overview (see Grievance policy and form)
- Reasonable accommodations- overview (see policy and form)
- Member signature along with date of signature (signed prior to commencement of service). Please note, if the member is under 18 years of age, the agreement must be signed and dated by the member's parent or legal guardian.

- Program representative signature and date.
- Amendments to the agreement, with their own signatures or initials and dates

Attachments:

- Position description incorporated by reference. Items required to be included in the Member Position Description (MPD)
- Grievance Policy and Form
- Drug-Free Workplace Policy
- Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Form

Programs should also add a technology/equipment use policy to the member service agreement if they intend to provide portable technological equipment (laptop, tablet, phone, hotspot, etc.). A technology/equipment agreement should be instituted if a program intends to withhold living allowance, withhold the education award, or issue a fine if technology is not returned or damaged beyond regular wear and tear. If the technology was purchased with AmeriCorps grant funds or funds used as match, members must agree to only use that equipment for AmeriCorps-related activities.

F. GRIEVANCE POLICY ([45 CFR § 2540.230](#))

The member service agreement should contain the grievance policy to be used by individuals who wish to resolve disputes related to the program. Specific requirements and an example for this policy are outlined in the member service agreement monitoring checklist and template from Volunteer Iowa. Members must be suspended while grievances related to enrollments and exits are settled, please see Suspensions Related to Grievance for more information.

See the Volunteer Iowa Member Service Agreement monitoring checklist and template for a detailed list of grievance procedure requirements. Volunteer Iowa suggests that programs develop a form for members/applicants to use when submitting a grievance, in order to ensure that all necessary information relevant to the program decision being grieved is collected. The form must be in compliance with AmeriCorps requirements for grievance policies. A sample form is provided as part of the Volunteer Iowa Member Service Agreement template.

Programs should notify their Volunteer Iowa program officer in writing of any pending grievance. This notice should be provided to the program officer within five (5) business days of the notification to the program. Programs must maintain documentation of grievances filed and the program's response.

G. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBER POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Every member service agreement must incorporate a member position description (by reference or within the body of the member service agreement) specific to the member. Position descriptions must fully describe the duties assigned to the member. If the member position description is not incorporated into the member service agreement, then the position description must also be signed and dated by both the member and the program representative. The recipient must develop member positions that provide for meaningful service activities, appropriate training necessary for member to be successful in the position, and performance criteria that are appropriate to the skill level of members.

The recipient is responsible for ensuring that the positions do not include or put the AmeriCorps member in a situation in which the member is at risk for engaging in any prohibited activity (see [45 CFR § 2520.65](#)), activity that would violate the non-duplication and non-displacement requirements (see [45 CFR § 2540.100](#)) or exceed the limitations on allowable fundraising activity (see [45 CFR §§ 2520.40-45](#)). The program, working with the host site, must accurately and completely describe the activities to be performed by each member in a position description. Position descriptions must be provided to AmeriCorps upon request. Programs must ensure that each member has sufficient service to complete the required number of hours to qualify for an education award. In planning for the member's term of service, the program must account for sick leave, potential weather events, holidays, and other time off and must provide each member with sufficient opportunity to make up missed hours. Volunteer Iowa strongly suggests adding 10% to the number of hours necessary to complete the term successfully.

H. CREATING COMPLIANT MEMBER POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Member Position Descriptions are the tool programs use to transfer the vision in the grant into action. Ensure position descriptions align with approved program design. Each Position Description should include these components:

- Member name
- Position title
- Program name and address
- Service location
- Position purpose
- Minimum qualifications that the program has established
- Term of service – full time, half time, etc.
- Indicates that vacation, sick and holiday leave does not count toward the total hours needed to successfully complete the term of service.
- Includes the list of federal holidays (and other times host site will not be open) when members cannot serve.
- Anticipated service schedule – this should be specific both in hours and in days members are expected to serve, e.g., M-F 8:30AM-1:30PM and minimum hours per week (not a range of hours). The minimum number of hours must equal or exceed the minimum number of hours to exit successfully. Programs should consider time that members will not be serving, for example school breaks and holidays.
- Training completion requirements – participation in program orientation, site orientation, etc.
- Benefits – would include the tangible benefits like the education award, but also things like personal growth, learning new skills, etc.
- Evaluations – midterm and end of term evaluations – or other evaluation schedule
- Description of Duties
 - Separated into program service activities and host site service activities.
 - List service activities that are specific to each member. Understand that activities in which members engage but were not included within the position description may be considered noncompliant or unallowable. Multiple members should not have the same position description unless performing the same activities for the same

slot type. If multiple members are expected to do the same service activities at one site, programs should consider whether it is realistic for all members to carry out the same activities, or if those activities should be split among all members serving in that position. For example, is it realistic for eight members to all develop relationships with clubs on campus or develop a community outreach plan.

- Describe all member activities explicitly to ensure that prohibited activities are not included.
- Include metrics (how many of an activity), timeline (when should the activity be completed), frequency (how often should the activity be completed or how long should each activity take), and XX for each activity. Ensure the member, host site and program have a shared understanding of what success looks like for each activity.
- Include training(s) that will be provided to ensure the member will be able to successfully complete the service activities.
- Do not include phrases like, “other duties as assigned” or similarly vague statements about member responsibilities (see Member Position Description checklist for sample language). For example, do not use the phrase, “assist Site Supervisor” or “assist employees” without additional detail. Instead break down the project or program to specify the portion of the activity for which the member will be responsible.
- Do 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.”
- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms – Instead, spell out the terms at the first usage and then use the acronym or abbreviation later in the document only as needed.
- 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.”
- Consider how each service activity might be altered if a member needed a reasonable accommodation.
- Avoid listing expected behaviors as service activities, for example, “Provide a drug-free, educational, nurturing, safe, and supervised environment for youth.”

I. GUIDANCE ON APPROPRIATE SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Volunteer Iowa has established these guidelines to help programs determine whether proposed service activities are appropriate for an AmeriCorps State member position.

I. MEMBER ACTIVITIES

Member activities must not replace staff or community volunteer responsibilities.

AmeriCorps is intended to be above-and-beyond what the individual or regular volunteers would “normally” do. For example, if the prospective member already volunteers for the same activities, this is not a member position for that person. However, if the activities are

more expansive, require more time, include additional activities or in other ways are outside of the scope of what they would “normally” do, this could potentially be an appropriate member service role.

II. MEMBER POSITION DESCRIPTIONS AND SLOT TYPES

Member position descriptions for each slot type must align with the approved grant activities. Programs must include details that will distinguish responsibilities between slot types. This can be done by adding dosage and/or duration, considering seasonal difference, and determining if all slot types will be responsible for all service activities. The Position Description Breakout template can assist programs in determining whether position descriptions are unique enough to show clear differences.

III. AMERICORPS SERVICE EXPECTATIONS DEFINED

The position should be defined by AmeriCorps service expectations and not solely those established for another school or educational purpose (such as an internship or practicum). An educational institution may determine that the service also meets its own requirements for an internship or credit, but those would be defined by the other entity for its purposes. Programs are encouraged to look for opportunities in which their members’ service may provide them with certifications or credits, or to provide member training opportunities that would also provide formal recognition of skills attained. However, these activities should also be aligned with the overall goals and requirements of the AmeriCorps program.

IV. SERVICE ACTIVITIES CONNECTION TO APPROVED GRANT

Activities must be connected to the program’s design, goals, and performance measures. Volunteer Iowa supports programs that use a collective impact model or otherwise use a multidisciplinary approach to meet community needs. However, this aspect of the design must be clear in the approved grant application so that any prospective member activities can be shown to be in alignment with the program’s identified community needs and goals. For example, a school-based program with a goal of increasing student academic performance could not 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. Similarly, members whose stated role is to provide tutoring activities with no mention of other student enrichment support cannot assign those members to be involved with extracurricular activities.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

Members should not serve in a primarily administrative role. For example, if a program expects its staff to set up and clean up rooms used for client trainings or prepare for board meetings, this responsibility should not be shifted to an AmeriCorps member who starts service at the organization. The member may be expected to set up and clean up rooms they use to deliver trainings themselves, but not those of other staff. 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).

VI. MEANINGFUL SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Service activities should provide positive opportunities for member growth and skill development and help develop civically engaged citizens. In addition, service activities

should lead to sustainable actions for the organization. Finally, evidence of community impact should be an outcome of member service activities.

J. MEMBER SERVICE PROJECTS AND POLICIES

As noted in the Program Design section of the manual, while it is allowable for members to participate/lead service projects (outside of the day-to-day service activities) as part of the member position description or service activities, the program 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 program must have a way to verify the types of projects in which the members are involved and ensure they do not include prohibited and/or unallowable activities. Generally, this will require a program policy (Days of Service/Special Projects Policy or Alternative Service policy) that includes review/approval of member service project plans and review of member service project reports. A program may approve occasional volunteer activities for a member, so long as the volunteering is occasional and related to the position, such as a one-time volunteer project. This could be considered as an authorized activity under a Teleservice policy.

K. PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#) AND [SERVE AMERICA ACT](#))

AmeriCorps 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 be covered in the member and site supervisor orientation, as well as specifically detailed in the Member Service Agreement and Host Site Agreement. Additionally, the prohibited activities should be posted at member service 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 below. 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 non-AmeriCorps funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo, nor should they identify themselves as AmeriCorps members, while doing so.

The prohibited activities include:

- i. Attempting to influence legislation;
- ii. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- iii. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
- iv. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- v. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;

- vi. 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;
- vii. 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;
- viii. Providing a direct benefit to –
 - a. a business organized for profit;
 - b. a labor union;
 - c. a partisan political organization;
 - d. a nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
 - e. an organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph vii of this section, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
- ix. AmeriCorps members may not:
 - a. Raise funds for living allowances or for an organization's general (as opposed to project) operating expenses or endowment;
 - b. Write a grant application to the Corporation or to any other Federal agency.
- x. Conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
- xi. *Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
- xii. Other such activities as AmeriCorps/Volunteer Iowa are prohibited. These include:
 - a. Census activities
 - b. Political activities

**Providing Abortion Services is defined by AmeriCorps as:*

- i. Performing abortions.
- ii. Being present in the room during an abortion in support of the woman or the procedure.
- iii. Obtaining or providing medications to induce a medical abortion.

Referrals to Abortion Services is defined by AmeriCorps as:

- i. Scheduling or arranging for an abortion-related appointment, including any pre-procedure appointment required by law to obtain an abortion.
- ii. Providing or organizing transportation for patients to obtain an abortion when the AmeriCorps member or assigning staff member has actual prior knowledge that the purpose of the visit is to obtain an abortion.

- iii. Accompanying or providing translation services for patients obtaining an abortion.
- iv. Providing counseling or support before or during the procedure, including explaining what the procedure will be like, explaining what is required to obtain an abortion in a given state, explaining or obtaining signed abortion consent forms from clients interested in abortions, negotiating fees or insurance coverage for a particular abortion, or other activity that promotes or encourages abortion.
- v. Providing information such as the name, address, website, telephone number, or other relevant factual information (such as whether the provider accepts Medicaid, etc.) about an abortion provider.
- vi. Promoting or encouraging use of abortion as a method of family planning.

AmeriCorps has provided the following language on additional prohibited activities:

- i. **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.
- ii. **Political or Election/Polling Activities.** Using AmeriCorps resources (funds, match, or service participants) for political activities to influence the outcome of any local, state, or federal election is strictly prohibited. This means your organization should never engage in prohibited political activities (1) using federal funds or matching funds, (2) charging staff time to the grant directly or as match, (3) through service or training hours for national service participants, or (4) by directing or allowing national service participants to do so. In sum, AmeriCorps resources (funds or service participants) should never be used for electoral purposes. Prohibited political activities include, but are not limited to:
 - a. organizing or attending political events, demonstrations, protests, petitions, rallies, etc.;
 - b. participating in, endorsing, or advocating for or against political parties, platforms, groups, or candidates;
 - c. conducting voter registration or other get-out-the-vote activity; or
 - d. posting election-oriented messages on social media (using AmeriCorps resources or referencing AmeriCorps programs).

Individuals are always free to exercise their rights as private citizens to participate in political activities (1) on their own initiative and personal time; (2) not affiliated with AmeriCorps programs or supported by AmeriCorps resources; and (3) not wearing any program insignia, logos, or uniforms. Reminder that the goal is not just to follow the law, but to avoid any perception that federal resources are being misused.

L. MEMBER FUNDRAISING ([45 CFR§ 2520.40](#))

The following language on member fundraising must be part of the member service agreement:

AmeriCorps members may raise resources directly in support of AmeriCorps program's service activities. Examples of fundraising activities AmeriCorps members may perform include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Seeking donations of books from companies and individuals for a program in which volunteers teach children to read;
- ii. Writing a grant proposal to a foundation to secure resources to support the training of volunteers;
- iii. Securing supplies and equipment from the community to enable volunteers to help build houses for low-income individuals;
- iv. Seeking donations of books from companies and individuals for a program in which volunteers teach children to read;
- v. Securing financial resources from the community to assist in launching or expanding a program that provides social services to the members of the community and is delivered, in whole or in part, through the members of a community-based organization;
- vi. Seeking donations from alumni of the program for specific service projects being performed by current members.

An AmeriCorps Member may spend no more than ten (10) percent of his or her originally agreed-upon term of service, as reflected in the member enrollment in the National Service Trust, performing fundraising activities.

M. NON-DUPLICATION/NON-DISPLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS [[45 CFR 2540.100\(E\) -\(F\)](#)]

The following language on nonduplication/non-displacement must be part of the member service agreement:

(e) Nonduplication. Corporation assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program. And, unless the requirements of paragraph (f) of this section are met, Corporation assistance will not be provided to a private nonprofit entity to conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities provided by a State or local government agency in which such entity resides.

(f) Non-displacement. (1) An employer may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the use by such employer of a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance. (2) An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance. (3) A service opportunity will not be created under this section that will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual. (4) A participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance may not perform any services or duties or engage in activities that would otherwise be performed by an employee as part of the assigned duties of such employee. (5) A participant in any program receiving assistance under this section may not perform any services or duties, or engage in activities, that - (i) Will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or (ii) Are services, duties, or activities with respect to which an individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures. (6) A participant in any

program receiving assistance under this section may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any -(i) Presently employed worker; (ii) Employee who recently resigned or was discharged; (iii) Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures; (iv) Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick); or(v) Employee who is on strike or who is being locked out.

N. MEMBER TELESERVICE

AmeriCorps Specific Terms and Condition included an updated policy on member teleservice. It indicates that teleservice is only appropriate when the activity can be meaningfully supervised, and the hours verified independently. The program must have a policy that requires written authorization of teleservice in advance. Furthermore, members may not serve remotely (defined as outside of the commuting area of the service site) and may not serve at virtual service sites (defined as organizations that have no physical location). See Section 2.1 of the manual for more details on teleservice policy requirements.

6. MEMBER BENEFITS ([NOFO](#), [TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#) AND ([45 CFR 2522.240-2522.250](#)))

All members are required to be informed of their eligibility for AmeriCorps benefits such as living allowance, health care, student loan forbearance, and childcare. We encourage programs to also notify members of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. Programs should document that members are informed about these program benefits. Volunteer Iowa has several resources for members, two of which specifically outline member benefit resources. One contains information about public benefits and how those benefits may interact with AmeriCorps member benefits. The other outlines AmeriCorps member benefits, generally available to all members (AmeriCorps State Member Available Benefits). They are posted in Basecamp in the Member Management folder.

For AmeriCorps benefit purposes, AmeriCorps has previously indicated that programs may define what it means to serve in a full-time capacity (in a policy that typically would align with employee requirements) but has also shared with Volunteer Iowa that programs may use a benchmark of 32.5 hours/week as an average service schedule that would be considered fulltime service; programs should note that the eligibility for certain benefits such as child care assistance may be lower, based on the requirements for Iowa Department of Human Services Child Care Assistance. Further questions should be directed to the program officer.

A. LIVING ALLOWANCE ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#) AND [45 CFR 2522.240](#))

Programs must provide members with a living allowance that falls within the minimum and maximum amounts established each program year and announced in the federal Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

2024-2025 Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance Amounts as originally noted in the AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Slot Type	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-Time	1700	\$18,700	\$37,400
Three Quarter-Time	1200	n/a	\$26,180
Half-Time	900	n/a	\$18,700
Reduced Half-Time	675	n/a	\$14,212
Quarter-Time	450	n/a	\$9,724
Minimum-Time	300	n/a	\$7,854
Abbreviated-Time	100	n/a	\$2,112

I. MEMBER LIVING ALLOWANCE AMOUNT

In general, Volunteer Iowa expects programs to establish living allowance amounts at the beginning of the grant year. The amount of living allowance should not increase based upon the program’s anticipated unexpended funds. A program may pay differing amounts of living allowance, but those differences should be based upon specific criteria and the program should have justification. For example, for members with leadership/team lead responsibilities or for positions that are unique and require additional skills, knowledge, and abilities, programs may pay a higher living allowance, but this amount should be included in the approved budget. The member position descriptions should clearly demonstrate the increased or enhanced service activities. Programs wishing to use leadership or team leader member slots should be sure to review the requirements in the [Terms and Conditions](#). Programs may pay member recruitment or retention bonuses according to a schedule outside of the regular living allowance distribution. Programs must have an approved policy in place before awarding or paying any bonuses. Volunteer Iowa has guidance about providing member bonuses on Basecamp. The amount of living allowance for members who start later in the grant year or for the summer program should not be increased simply to use up the program’s anticipated unexpended funds. Programs should plan living allowances accordingly. Volunteer Iowa has a resource in Basecamp to help programs plan and properly budget for different living allowance amounts as well as approved bonuses.

II. DISTRIBUTION

Member living allowances are distributed to members evenly throughout their term based on the program design. Unless expressly approved by Volunteer Iowa, a member’s living allowance should not increase or decrease during their term of service. All member living allowance payments must be recorded in the sponsoring organization’s financial records. Therefore, it is not allowable for members to receive an additional stipend or living allowance payment directly from a site.

III. PAYMENT AMOUNTS FOR THE SAME POSITION

Member living allowances are to be consistent and based on the cost of living, not individual circumstances such as one program site having more money to pay members than another. Programs should pay a larger living allowance amount only based on increased living expenses such as food or housing and keep documentation of the reasons for variance in

living allowance rates within member files. It is also allowable to provide an increased living allowance to returning members (from local funds), however, these living allowance increases may only occur at the beginning of a service agreement period and all returning members across that position description must receive the same living allowance. If members serving the same terms of service receive varying living allowance amounts, the program must document the rationale behind this variance and this documentation should be retained in the member file. Additionally, members doing the same service activities within the same slot type should receive the same living allowance. It is not allowable to pay members different living allowance amounts for the same service position. Additional guidance on living allowance and payroll, including data related to garnishments, jury duty and National Guard service can be located in section 4.

IV. FEDERAL WORK STUDY

Federal work study (FWS) may be used to pay eligible AmeriCorps members. Department of Education and AmeriCorps support the use of federal work study funds as match on the grant. FWS requirements; however, state that the living allowance amount for the slot type must be reduced by the amount of FWS for which the member is eligible. Programs wishing to use FWS to pay members and to use as match should discuss this plan with their program officer. While this is allowable, tracking and documenting payments requires additional diligence and should be supported by a policy and a plan to ensure that requirements from both the Department of Education and AmeriCorps are met.

V. NO HOURS SERVED IN A PAY PERIOD

Members and programs should avoid situations in which members serve no hours during a pay period. If the member is not performing service for that period, the program should evaluate whether the member should be suspended for compelling personal circumstances or disciplinary reasons. All rules regarding member suspensions apply. If a program has a situation where a member needs to be absent for a significant period of time, they should contact their program officer as soon as possible to discuss the situation and establish a course of action.

Unless a member's term of service is suspended, they should receive their living allowance payment regardless of the number of hours served in that pay period. Programs can withhold member living allowance for a pay period with no submitted timesheet if all the following conditions are met:

1. The program has a policy to support the withholding of living allowance.
2. If there is language in the Member Service Agreement that outlines this potential, and
3. The living allowance payment is made to the member within 2 business days after the completion of the timesheet.

If the program is unable to comply with any of these conditions, they may not withhold living allowance for unsubmitted/missing timesheets. Programs are encouraged to follow up with the member and site supervisor to ensure the member is still serving if a timesheet is not submitted as required.

VI. TAXES

The living allowance is taxable as income both in Iowa and at the federal level. Unless the recipient obtains a ruling from the Social Security Administration or the Internal Revenue Service that specifically exempts its AmeriCorps members from FICA requirements, the recipient must pay FICA for any member receiving a living allowance. The recipient also must withhold 7.65% from the member's living allowance. The recipient must withhold Federal personal income taxes from member living allowances, requiring each member to complete a W-4 form at the beginning of the term of service and providing a W-2 form at the close of the tax year. The recipient must comply with any applicable state or local tax requirements.

B. WORKER'S COMPENSATION AND SERIOUS MEMBER INJURY OR DEATH ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

In general, Volunteer Iowa requires that all AmeriCorps members be covered by the organization's worker's compensation plan for service-related injuries. With prior approval from the Volunteer Iowa, programs may provide Occupational Accidental Death and Dismemberment coverage in lieu of worker's compensation coverage for education award only members. A copy of a memorandum from the State of Iowa Attorney General's office, clarifying that Iowa AmeriCorps members qualify as employees for the purposes of workers' compensation is available in Basecamp.

Programs should submit notice to their Volunteer Iowa program officer any time a member files a worker's compensation claim. The program should notify their program officer in writing of any serious injury (whether or not it requires a worker's compensation report) or death occurring to an AmeriCorps member during the term of service. An electronic notification is preferred and should be provided to the program officer in IowaGrants within 48 hours of the injury/death.

C. LIABILITY INSURANCE COVERAGE

The program is responsible for ensuring adequate general liability coverage for the organization, employees, and members, including coverage of members engaged in on- and off-site project activities.

D. UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

According to the State of Iowa's Attorney General's Office, AmeriCorps members are not considered employees for the purposes of unemployment insurance coverage. Therefore, members should not be listed on the agency/organization quarterly employee listing for the purposes of unemployment insurance coverage. A copy of this ruling is available on Basecamp or upon request. If members are included on the unemployment report, programs run the risk of losing an unemployment ruling and being forced to pay unemployment to a former member. Federal funds cannot be used for any member unemployment claims.

E. AMERICORPS HEALTH CARE POLICY ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

Except for Education Award Only and Professional Corps programs, AmeriCorps programs must provide, or make available, health insurance to full-time members who are not otherwise covered

by a healthcare policy at the start of their service, as well as those who lose coverage during the term, due to their service or through no deliberate act of their own.

Programs have various options for meeting the healthcare requirement, but all AmeriCorps programs must offer a healthcare plan that meets Minimum Essential Coverage standards of the Affordable Care Act. Programs may choose any health care vendor they like to provide this coverage, provided it meets AmeriCorps requirements. Volunteer Iowa does not endorse any health insurance company or provider. Programs that learn of vendors offering AmeriCorps-specific health plans are encouraged to share this information with Volunteer Iowa and we will share this information with all programs.

I. REIMBURSEMENT METHOD OF HEALTHCARE DISALLOWED IN IOWA

Volunteer Iowa does not allow Iowa AmeriCorps State programs to fulfill their healthcare requirements via member reimbursements for Federal Health Insurance Marketplace plans.

II. ALLOWABLE HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Programs may use any health care coverage vendors, but they must ensure that the coverage meets the AmeriCorps requirements. For assistance in determining whether a plan meets AmeriCorps requirements, contact the Volunteer Iowa program officer.

Volunteer Iowa is a member of The Corps Network, an association of conservation-focused service programs that offers an AmeriCorps member-specific health insurance plan. This is the plan we are aware of most Iowa AmeriCorps programs utilizing. Because Volunteer Iowa is a member of The Corps Network, Iowa AmeriCorps State programs can participate in this member health insurance plan without becoming individual members of the network. See more at [Health Insurance – The Corps Network](#).

III. DOCUMENTATION OF HEALTH CARE COVERAGE

Summary of Benefits and Coverage for Tax Purposes: The health care provider chosen by the program will be responsible for providing a Summary of Benefits and Coverage to members covered by the plan to use for documentation when filing their taxes. Questions about this form should be directed to the health care vendor.

IV. MEMBERS SERVING IN A FULL-TIME CAPACITY AND HEALTHCARE BENEFITS

Members serving in less than full time slot types that are consistently serving in a full-time capacity (generally, a minimum of 32 hours/week) for an extended period of time are eligible for health care benefits paid by AmeriCorps funds. It is at the program's discretion to determine full-time capacity and to provide this benefit supported by the grantee's policies. For the purposes of this provision, a member is serving in a full-time capacity when his/her regular term of service will involve performing service on a normal full-time schedule. It may not be practical to offer members serving in shorter slot types health care benefits. A

member may be serving in a full-time capacity without regard to whether his/her agreed term of service will result in a full-time Segal AmeriCorps Education Award.

V. TEMPORARY LEAVE AND HEALTHCARE BENEFITS

If temporary leave is appropriate, grantees have the flexibility to determine the duration of the absence and may choose to continue providing health or other benefits to the member during the period of absence. The member may be suspended (via compelling personal circumstances) during the period of temporary leave. If suspended, the member may not receive a living allowance. Healthcare may be provided during the period of suspension. More information on member suspension and healthcare can be found in *Member Suspension and Temporary Leave* in this section.

VI. SPECIAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD FOR HEALTH CARE MARKETPLACE

Members in the AmeriCorps State and National programs and their dependents in the Federally facilitated Marketplace are eligible to enroll in Marketplace coverage when they experience the following triggering events: on the date they begin their service terms; and on the date they lose any coverage offered through their program after their service term ends. (Source: [45 CFR § 155.420\(d\)\(9\)](#)).

Members have 60 days from the triggering event to select a plan. Coverage effective date is prospective based on the date of plan selection. Individuals should contact the Marketplace call center at 1-800-318-2596 to activate the special enrollment period. They should inform the Marketplace call center that they are beginning or concluding service with AmeriCorps State and National, VISTA, or NCCC. Once determined eligible for the special enrollment period, the individual can then view all plans available to them and continue the enrollment process over the phone or online by creating an account on healthcare.gov or logging into their existing account.

F. MEMBER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Programs are required to provide members access to an assistance program. These programs generally provide mental health care and support, as well as other daily living support. America's Service Commission (ASC) makes available a member assistance program (MAP) to programs that pay the membership fee. ASC's MAP has three levels of programming. The charge is based on the total slots awarded. Both the ASC membership fee and the per member MAP cost are eligible grant expenses. Programs may choose to provide members an equivalent assistance program.

G. CHILDCARE ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#) AND [45 C.F.R. §2522.250](#))

The Program must ensure that childcare assistance is made available to those qualified, active full-time members who need such assistance in order to participate (members serving in EAPs, Professional Corps, or Partnership Challenge programs are not eligible for the childcare benefit). Members are not eligible to receive childcare benefits from AmeriCorps while they are receiving childcare subsidies from another source for the same period of AmeriCorps service. AmeriCorps childcare benefits are paid directly by AmeriCorps to the provider; therefore, programs do not need

to budget for this from their grant funds. Programs whose members are income eligible and have qualified dependents may access childcare by working directly with the AmeriCorps' national childcare provider, GAP Solutions, Inc. Visit the [AmeriCorps childcare webpage](#) for more information on how to access this assistance. The Iowa Department of Human Service (state agency responsible for state childcare benefits) requires that members access benefits available through GAP Solutions, Inc. before obtaining state benefits (referred to as "Child Care Assistance" and administered at the County level). Payments or reimbursement for childcare benefits can be made only to qualified providers, from the date childcare need was established after service began. The amount of childcare allowance may not exceed the applicable payment rate established by the Iowa Department of Human Service Child Care Assistance program. No payments or reimbursements will be made in the event the AmeriCorps member was ineligible, or if the provider was not qualified under the state guidelines.

Programs may provide childcare benefits to less-than-full-time members, but they are not required to do so. For less-than full-time members who are not serving in a full-time capacity, the program may provide this benefit out of their own non-AmeriCorps funding sources by working directly with GAP Solutions, Inc. Less than full-time members who are serving in a full-time capacity (such as full-time summer members) may be eligible for childcare assistance provided out of AmeriCorps funds.

Programs must notify the childcare assistance provider if a member is eligible for benefits at the start of his/her term, and must immediately notify the childcare assistance provider and other relevant AmeriCorps contacts when:

- A member's status changes such that he/she is no longer eligible for the assistance (i.e., conversion of member term/schedule to less-than full-time, release for cause, suspensions, increase in family income, etc.).
- New or existing members become eligible for childcare benefits;
- A member wishes to change childcare providers, or a childcare provider will no longer provide childcare services; or
- A member is absent for excessive periods of time (defined by AmeriCorps as five or more days in a month, including for sick or maternity leave).

Costs incurred due to the program's failure to keep the AmeriCorps childcare provider immediately informed of changes in a member's status may be charged to the program. Volunteer Iowa also strongly recommends that programs inform their program officer of any of their members who will be applying for childcare assistance, so that Volunteer Iowa can help provide guidance and answer questions about eligibility, payments, etc. In addition, if a member experiences challenges with enrolling with GAP or with taking leave, please contact your program officer.

H. STUDENT LOAN DEFERMENT AND FORBEARANCE FOR QUALIFIED LOANS

National service members have options for how to deal with their qualifying student loan payments during service. Members requesting forbearance and/or deferment should do so through the eGrants/My AmeriCorps Portal. Programs should be cautious about promising these benefits to members because lending institutions have latitude in whether they will grant these statuses, depending on the type of loan, whether it has been consolidated and other factors. Most often

privately held student loans will not qualify for any of these benefits. If there are questions, the member should work directly with his/her lending institution to determine whether he/she qualifies.

Volunteer Iowa strongly suggests that programs also provide information about Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) and Income-Based Repayment (IBR) to members and recruits early on, so that they can decide whether forbearance or IBR is the best option for them.

I. NATIONAL SERVICE LOAN FORBEARANCE AND INTEREST REPAYMENT

Under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, borrowers serving in approved national service positions qualify for mandatory forbearance of qualified loans during their terms of service. This mandatory forbearance allows borrowers to delay payments temporarily. During the time members are serving in a national service position, interest will continue to accrue on their loan(s). Upon successful completion of their national service term, AmeriCorps will pay all or a portion of the interest that accrued on the qualified loans during the time period served. If members leave for reasons other than compelling personal circumstances, they will be responsible for payment of interest and, if not paid, it may be capitalized depending on the type of loan.

Mandatory forbearance for approved national service positions is available for the following educational loans: Federal Family Education Loans [Subsidized and Unsubsidized Stafford Loans, Supplemental Loans To Students (SLS), Consolidation Loans], William D. Ford Federal Direct Student Loans (Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Stafford/Ford Loans, and Direct Consolidation Loans), Federally Insured Student Loans (FISL), Health Education Assistance Loans (HEAL), Health Professions Student Loans (HPSL), Loans for Disadvantaged Students (LDS), Nursing Student Loans (NSL), and Primary Care Loans (PCL).

II. ECONOMIC HARDSHIP LOAN DEFERMENT

Less commonly, national service members may be eligible for deferment on student loans for reasons of economic hardship during the member's term of service. For subsidized Stafford loans, interest does not accrue during deferment. For unsubsidized loans (including unsubsidized Stafford, Graduate PLUS, and Parent PLUS), the interest accrues and is capitalized at certain times, and the loan holder is responsible for paying it. Many members meet their lenders' requirements for deferments based on economic hardship, regardless of whether their loans are federally approved or not. However, interest may still accrue on loans in deferment, especially those that are unsubsidized. Additionally, some lenders may set limits on the number/length of time that loans may be placed in deferment. For private student loans, deferment eligibility is based on loan type. Members should contact their lending institution to determine whether they may qualify for this type of deferment.

I. PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS (PSLF) AND INCOME-BASED REPAYMENT (IBR)

As an alternative to putting qualified student loans into forbearance, members serving in a full-time AmeriCorps position may be eligible to apply the regular student loan payments made during their service toward the PSLF program. Members may elect to participate in the income-based repayment

plan in order to make their loan payments more affordable during service. Under income-based repayment, loan payments may be as low as \$0 per month. Additionally, loan payments made using the Segal Education Award may count toward PSLF, even if the loan(s) are put into deferment or forbearance during service. The PSLF program allows an exception for AmeriCorps alums to make a lump sum payment using the AmeriCorps Segal Education Award and receive credit for up to 12 qualifying payments for PSLF. The number of payments for which a member will receive credit is determined by dividing the amount of the lump sum payment by the scheduled full monthly payment amount, (but members may not receive credit for more than 12 monthly payments toward the PSLF payment requirement). See the [Public Service Loan Forgiveness FAQ](#) for reference. Recent waivers and simplifications to PSLF may allow for receipt of PSLF after having made payments into other repayment plans, among other flexibilities so the most updated guidance from the U.S. Department of Education should be referenced (see [Fact Sheet: Public Service Loan Forgiveness \(PSLF\) Program Overhaul | U.S. Department of Education](#)). Volunteer Iowa also has a Public Service Loan Forgiveness resource in Basecamp. Programs can complete the PSLF form for alumni, based upon the information in eGrants. If the information is incomplete or the program no longer exists, the forms can be completed by Volunteer Iowa when we can verify service in eGrants.

J. SEGAL AMERICORPS EDUCATION AWARD

I. AWARD BASICS AND AMOUNT

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 pro-rated education award. The amount of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award is tied to the maximum amount of the U.S. Department of Education's Pell Grant in the year in which the national service position was awarded. Full-time members can earn the maximum award amount and the education award value for less than full-time members is pro-rated according to their term of service. Since the maximum amount of Pell grants can change from year to year, so can the value of education awards, however **the amount of the education award does not change during the grant year**. Programs should check Volunteer Iowa's grantee resource page for the current program year's education award amounts. See Studentaid.gov for more resources and information.

II. 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 him a 0.5

value education award can only earn up to 1.5 education awards through his own service). See Transferability for more.

Members may serve additional terms of service even if they have reached the limit of two full-time education awards. Members may serve up to four terms in AmeriCorps State and National (ASN), five terms in AmeriCorps VISTA (including VISTA Summer Associates), or two terms in AmeriCorps NCCC. Members who serve a successful term in an ASN program after already having earned two full education awards should be exited under the “successful completion- with full education award” status (the eGrants system will recognize that the member is eligible for \$0 in education award value).

III. USING THE EDUCATION AWARD

The education award can be used to cover current educational expenses at eligible institutions or to repay qualified student loans.

Eligible schools are Title IV schools or GI Education Bill Programs. Higher educational institutions, both domestic and foreign, that currently participate in the Department of Education’s Title IV student aid programs are referred to as "Title IV schools." This category includes most post-secondary colleges, universities, and technical schools. If the school offers students federal student aid such as Stafford Loans, William D. Ford Federal Direct Loans, Federal Perkins Loans, Stafford Loans, and Public Health Service Loans, it means the institution participates in the Title IV program and is a "Title IV school".

GI Education Bill Programs: The award can also be used for educational expenses associated with enrollment in programs of education, apprenticeships, or job trainings approved for educational benefits under the Montgomery G.I. Bill and the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill. Regarding the education award, such programs are referred to as "GI Bill approved programs".

If the GI-Bill approved program is offered by a Title IV school, the award can pay for current education expenses by virtue of it falling under the category of being a Title IV school. If the [GI-Bill approved program](#) is NOT offered by a Title IV school, it is referred to as a "GI-Only Program" and special rules apply. The Serve America Act allows veterans to use the AmeriCorps award for education, apprenticeship, and on-the job training at institutions that accept the G.I. Bill. This greatly expands the opportunities for use of the award beyond the [Title IV](#) list. The rules for using the education award at GI-Only Programs are based upon the date the award was certified (approved) by an authorized AmeriCorps program staff, and whether the AmeriCorps alum is a veteran.

- A Segal AmeriCorps Education Award certified on or after December 23, 2011, can be used if the member is a veteran.
- An award certified between October 1, 2009, and December 22, 2011, can be used by both veterans and non-veterans.
- No award certified prior to October 1, 2009, can be used for GI-Only programs, even if the alum is a veteran.

Education expenses are considered “current” if they were incurred on or after the date the member began his or her term of AmeriCorps service. Eligible educational expenses are based on:

- The Cost of Attendance (COA) for a degree or certificate-granting program at a Title IV school.
- Educational expenses for non-degree courses, such as continuing education courses offered by Title IV schools.
- Educational expenses for enrollment in G.I. Bill approved courses or programs.

The Segal AmeriCorps Education Award can only be used to repay the qualified student loans listed below:

- Loans backed by the federal government under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (except PLUS Loans to parents of students)
- Loans under Titles VII or VIII of the Public Service Health Act
- Loans made by a state agency, including state institutions of higher education

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 have 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. More information about the range of options for utilizing the award and tips for maximizing the education award value can be found by in the Maximizing your AmeriCorps Education Benefit resource in Basecamp. AmeriCorps provides [Guidelines and Uses for the Education Award](#) for more details.

See more at [Segal AmeriCorps Education Award | AmeriCorps](#)

IV. TAXES AND THE EDUCATION AWARD

Note that Volunteer Iowa is not a qualified tax preparer, and the following guidance is not official tax advice: AmeriCorps Segal Education Award payments (interest and award disbursements) are taxable as federal income in the year they are redeemed. Members should anticipate this when choosing when and how much of their education award to redeem.

According to [Iowa Law](#), AmeriCorps Segal Education award payments are not taxed as individual state income in Iowa. This can make a significant difference in the amount of taxes members owe, but since Iowa is one of few states that currently offer this exemption many tax preparers and tax preparation programs may not recognize this. Programs should educate members about this exemption and encourage them to properly document AmeriCorps Segal Education Award payments on their individual Iowa State Income Tax forms.

These instructions reference 2020 tax forms, specifically the [IA 1040 Iowa Individual Income Tax Form](#). We expect the process to be similar in future years.

1. Step 5, Gross Income: Your Segal AmeriCorps Education Award payment was included in your federal taxable income, so it will be included in your Iowa taxable income in Step 5.
2. Step 6, Adjustments to Income: You must enter the amount of your Segal AmeriCorps Education Award payments (including interest) on **LINE 24: "Other Adjustments."** This will result in these payments being deducted from your taxable income.

V. TRANSFERABILITY ([42 U.S.C. 12601-12604](#), [12606](#), [45 CFR § PART 2530](#) – TRANSFER OF EDUCATION AWARDS)

Under certain limited circumstances, AmeriCorps State and National (ASN) members may be able to transfer the education award they earn to their child, grandchild, or foster child. A member may transfer an education award if the member was age 55 or older on the day he/she enrolled in the ASN 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 ten years from the receipt of award to redeem it. Transferred awards count toward the limit of AmeriCorps service terms for those who go on to enroll in an AmeriCorps term on their own; individuals are only able to receive two awards total, whether transferred or earned directly.

K. OTHER MEMBER BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES

I. MEMBER TRAVEL/TRAINING REIMBURSEMENTS

Programs should follow their organizational policies for providing members with reimbursement for service-related travel or training expenses. Programs may not provide members with reimbursement for regular commuting expenses associated with travel between the member's residence and their assigned service site. See section 4 for more detail about allowable reimbursements.

II. MEMBER INCENTIVES

Programs may consider member incentives to recruit and retain members. Generally, incentives should be applied consistently; however, a benefit, such as housing, could be provided at the site level (see below).

Programs cannot provide gift cards or cash incentives of any kind to members. Additionally, host sites cannot provide gift cards, cash incentives, or additional living allowance for members serving at their sites. Please contact the designated program officer with questions about other member incentives.

As noted previously, Volunteer Iowa is not a qualified tax preparer, but some member incentives may come with additional tax burdens that members should be made aware of in advance. Programs and members are encouraged to speak with a financial advisor to understand the impact of benefits on taxes.

Below are some examples of other member incentives:

- As a part the program design, programs can plan to pay returning members a higher living allowance to retain them for another term. In these cases, the member must have additional responsibilities, such as training or leadership roles. This practice should be documented in program policies and outlined in the member service agreement.
- Programs can design retention/completion incentives to be paid to the members after they have completed their term or to incentivize members to return for a second term. Bonuses of any kind should be worked into the program budget and the program should develop a written policy about how the bonus will be used, who will receive the bonus(es), when and how the member will receive the bonus, what criteria will be used to measure eligibility and how much the bonus(es) will be.
- Programs may provide housing-related benefits. Housing or a housing stipend can be provided, with limitations. Programs should notify their program officer if they will be providing member housing to ensure that they are doing so in a way that meets requirements.
- Programs may also offer additional professional development, beyond regular training, to members. Professional certifications or other professional development can be a great way to recruit or retain members.
- Also consider other local options that could benefit members such as mass transit passes for the purposes of travel between service sites, free or reduced cost access to gyms or local bike rentals.

Programs are required to have policies covering the use of bonuses, housing, or transportation support. Volunteer Iowa must review and approve the policy prior to any use of these incentives. If programs are using any incentive, including defined/specific professional development, programs are expected to collect data from members on the effectiveness of those incentives on recruitment and/or retention.

7. MEMBER TIMEKEEPING, DISCIPLINE, AND TERM MANAGEMENT

A. MEMBER TIMEKEEPING SYSTEM AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

Volunteer Iowa requires that all programs use OnCorps Reports, an electronic timekeeping system, as the official timekeeping system for members, unless an exception is granted. Programs will be billed a Volunteer Iowa member management fee, which includes the cost of using the OnCorps Reports system, on a per-member basis (based upon the number of members awarded in the originally approved grant in eGrants).

Programs proposing to use an alternate electronic timekeeping system (other than OnCorps Reports) must submit a request annually to Volunteer Iowa in writing as part of the grant acceptance process, specifying the alternate timekeeping system to be used and documenting its

compliance with AmeriCorps requirements. Programs with high monitoring level member management are required to use OnCorps. Requests from programs with moderate and low-level member management will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Volunteer Iowa program staff will provide the program written notice of a decision about whether the request is accepted. Programs will be charged a member management fee (which has typically been at a higher amount than OnCorps to account for additional staff time required to monitor an outside system) and will be expected to provide reports from the timekeeping system to Volunteer Iowa for monitoring purposes. Programs approved to use an alternative timekeeping system must adhere to all Volunteer Iowa timekeeping requirements. Approval for alternate timekeeping systems may be revoked if management of program timekeeping becomes an ongoing concern for Volunteer Iowa.

Timekeeping systems should be set up each year at least one week prior to enrolling any members. Programs must create member accounts in the OnCorps timekeeping system within eight (8) days of their enrollment. All programs, including those approved to use an alternative timekeeping system, must use the site supervisor and member timesheet certification language. This language outlines the responsibilities when submitting and approving member timesheets and potential penalties for submitting or approving inaccurate or fraudulent time. This language is available in Basecamp in the Member Management folder>Member Timekeeping Resources. In order to identify and minimize enrollment errors in eGrants and for other monitoring or technical assistance, Volunteer Iowa may contact members using their OnCorps registration information. OnCorps logs must be entered and approved in OnCorps on at least a monthly basis, or more frequently as needed to correspond to the program's payroll schedule for members. Members should be listed as exited from the OnCorps timekeeping system within 30 days of member exit.

More detailed instructions about using OnCorps are available in the help section on the OnCorps system. Program management staff must set up OnCorps. Programs will be able to select from three different time sheet layouts – standard, enhanced and hybrid. Standard includes just the basic service, training and fundraising categories-minimal subcategories and all time is counted. Enhanced tracks time in and time out, has 5 main categories with up to 20 subcategories and other detailed time tracking, like travel time. The hybrid option is similar to the enhanced but allows recording total hours using the enhanced system. Programs will be responsible for instructing members on the correct method of tracking time, regardless of the time sheet they select. Members must maintain their own timekeeping account and password and enter their hours directly. Site supervisors must also have an OnCorps account so that the supervisor or supervisors directly overseeing the member's service can approve the timesheets in OnCorps. If the person approving the timesheets is not co-located with the member or is not typically on site when the member is serving, a process should be developed to ensure member time is documented and reviewed prior to timesheet approval. The OnCorps system does provide several online tutorials for both members and site supervisors on how to use the system, as well as a supportive helpdesk should specific troubleshooting be necessary. OnCorps training videos are also available on YouTube for program staff, site supervisors and members.

The bulk of member hours will be recorded as direct service. For programs in which capacity building is a major member service activity, these capacity building service hours are also tracked under the "direct service" category. Members should enter hours that are spent in service, training, or fundraising activities. If programs are using the enhanced time sheets, there may be additional

service categories from which to select. Members are not allowed paid time off for lunch, sick and personal leave; therefore, time spent off-duty, cannot be listed on member timesheets, unless the timesheet design specifically tracks lunch as time off. Members should not serve any hours on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Members may not add small amounts of time on the weekend for checking email, completing a timesheet or self-directed training. Weekend service should be limited to time that's regularly scheduled, a documented special event, a Day of Service, or service that's supported by a teleservice agreement. Specific service may be allowed if the program has a planned event and they have received prior approval from Volunteer Iowa. Service on other federal holidays is at the discretion of the program. Mealtimes are required to be taken as time off. Members who are serving more than 5 hours consecutively should have time off for a meal. The amount of time is determined by the host site or grantee policy. Members who engage in service activities during the mealtime(s) must be given alternative time off to eat a meal. Member time sheets should reflect this break. If the program is using the basic time in/time out version, the meal break should be deducted from the total hours served that day, for example, 8:00AM – 3:00PM is 7 hours, minus the 30-minute mealtime, the member would enter 6.5 hours for the day.

Volunteer Iowa suggests member service hour limits of 12 hours/day, 120 hours/per 2 weeks, 200 hours/month. Individual programs may adjust these limits, within reason, based upon their service activities and program design. Situations in which a member serves zero hours during a pay period should be rare and the member should be suspended in OnCorps, or the approved timekeeping system, if there are periods in which no service is performed due to compelling personal circumstances or for disciplinary reasons. Programs cannot withhold living allowance for zero hour time sheets unless the member is in suspended status. Programs may withhold payment for missing timesheets, in alignment with the language in the member service agreement and program policy. The withheld payment should be processed within 2 business days once the timesheet has been approved.

- B. MEMBER FUNDRAISING LIMITS AND TRACKING ([45 CFR 2520.40 -45](#))
AmeriCorps members may raise resources directly in support of a program's service activities; however, they are excluded from raising funds for their living allowance or for an organization's operating expenses or endowment, and from writing grant applications for AmeriCorps or any other federal grants. All programs are required to ensure that individual members limit their time spent fundraising to not more than 10 percent of their term. Further, programs are required to identify fundraising, training, and service hours separately on the member time records. Members who do not engage in fundraising activities should indicate "0" hours on their time records in the "fundraising" area.
- C. MEMBER TRAINING LIMITS AND TRACKING ([45 CFR 2520.50](#))
Members are required to receive certain trainings (see the Member Training Section). Since all members are required to receive training, members with zero (0) training hours listed will raise concerns in member monitoring. However, members should aim to spend no more than 20 percent of their service terms receiving training because programs are limited to having no more than 20% of aggregate member hours spent in training. Members may not count class time as training hours, unless the class is part of the program design and has been approved by Volunteer Iowa. This

includes classes (not individual trainings) that are incorporated as part of the program's professional development, for example a non-profit management certification. Member may not count time spent doing homework on their AmeriCorps timesheet. If a program has a member position that may require more than 20% training time, please contact the Volunteer Iowa program officer to discuss.

D. TOOLS FOR MANAGING AND MONITORING TIMESHEETS

Timesheet monitoring is the responsibility of everyone in the program. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) has continued to communicate that member timesheets are identified source of waste, fraud, and abuse, and as such, the OIG will continue to concentrate on reviewing timesheets. The things the OIG has identified as risky includes:

- Service that consistently occurs outside of the anticipated service schedule, including weekend and evening hours.
- Consecutive days of service
- Long hours, more than 12 hours in a day. In situations like this, members must remove time for meal break(s). If the member has responsibility for monitoring mealtime during a camp, for example, the member must be provided separate time(s) to eat their own meal(s).
- Consecutive long days of service, particularly without a clear explanation. For example, if a member's anticipated service schedule indicates longer hours of service during the county fair, that would clearly be supported.
- Hours on days when the host site is closed, particularly when there is no approved teleservice documentation.
- Elevated hours at the end of the term of service to end successfully, especially if those hours are outside of the anticipated service schedule time.
- Excessive or unusual corrections to timesheets

Monitoring occurs on several levels. Program management staff have access to several member timekeeping reports in OnCorps that can be used as a tool for self-monitoring compliance with timekeeping requirements. Three of the most useful reports for monitoring are the Missing Member Timesheet report, Timesheet Compliance report and Timesheet Export. Volunteer Iowa provides several timekeeping resources, including Member Timekeeping Component Review, AmeriCorps Timesheet Check Process, Member Timekeeping Tool, and Member Time Served Milestones. There is an additional tool that helps to ensure member timekeeping and documents associated with enrollment and exits are aligned correctly. This is the Date Alignment Tool. All the mentioned tools and resources are available on Basecamp. Volunteer Iowa will also use/view these reports periodically to make sure that member timesheets are entered and approved in a timely fashion, that members are on track with their hours, and that limits on training and fundraising hours are met. Program staff can set up email and system reminders for site supervisors by using the widgets under Tools>Website and Resources Page in OnCorps. In a survey of program staff, it appears that most site supervisors struggle with:

- Accessing the correct OnCorps link - <https://ia.oncorpsreports.com/>
- Finding their program from the list of programs,
- Clicking on the right link within the program list, and
- Forgetting the login and password.

To help troubleshoot issues with site supervisors Volunteer Iowa suggests that the program create a test site supervisor account so that the program management staff has access to the site supervisor's view.

OnCorps seems to be intuitive for most members; however, if they do have difficulties, it's generally with the same types of things in which the site supervisors struggle. When training members, programs should remind them of several things:

- When hours are entered into the timesheet, please only use quarter of an hour increments, such as .25 (for 15 minutes), .5 (for 30 minutes) and .75 (for 45 minutes). If programs are using OnCorps for timekeeping they can set the system to limit these options.
- Hours served should align with the anticipated service schedule outlined in the member position description. If that schedule needs to be updated, then changes should be discussed with the program officer and updates should be uploaded in OnCorps or IowaGrants correspondence.
- Hours should never be added in timekeeping prior to the hours being served. Timesheets are not to be used as a planning document for member time, please use another document, spreadsheet, etc. for this purpose if needed. Site supervisors should not approve timesheets until after members have completed service for that time period.

As with the site supervisor account, program management staff are encouraged to create a member test account in order to provide assistance to members, if needed. The OnCorps system meets AmeriCorps requirements for member electronic timesheet documentation, but it is up to the program to ensure that members and supervisors are using the system correctly.

E. FIXED AMOUNT GRANTS AND TIMEKEEPING MONITORING

Fixed Amount Grantees that are low member management monitoring level are responsible for monitoring their own member timekeeping in alignment with federal grant requirements and maintaining timekeeping records for audit purposes. Fixed Amount Grantees that are moderate or high member management are subject timekeeping monitoring.

F. UNLOCKING TIME SHEETS

It is a responsibility of the program to ensure that members have adequate time to complete their service and it is a shared responsibility of the program staff, site supervisor and the member to stay on top of the member service hours and to ensure that accurate time is entered and approved in the timekeeping system. Members and site supervisors should be trained to properly record and track their hours so that they receive credit for hours served and that they are not recording ineligible or inaccurate hours. This means that supervisors and the programs should be regularly monitoring the time sheets, not just approving them carte blanche. Members and site supervisors should regularly check timesheets to ensure that all served hours are included on the timesheet and recorded in the correct category. Most members require a mid-term evaluation; this would be the time to review member progress toward term completion and remind members of the importance of accurately recording the hours that they serve. If members are behind on hours or they are anticipating a vacation prior to exit, the mid-term evaluation should also be used to review their plan for ensuring they complete adequate hours by the end of their term to earn their education award.

It is a best practice to monitor member time sheets on a monthly basis and alert members if they are behind on their service to ensure that they serve the hours necessary to meet their service obligation and to identify if they are incorrectly entering their hours or omitting service hours for some reason. Volunteer Iowa has developed a Timekeeping Tracking Tool to support programs in this effort. As a courtesy, we also notify programs during our time sheet review and at site visits of concerns with member timekeeping. However, it is the program's responsibility to monitor and request modifications to timesheets within the 90-day timeframe described below. Failure to do so can result in disallowed hours and loss of the education award.

Volunteer Iowa limits the timeframe in which a program can request to re-open member time sheets to 90-days from the end date of the time sheet. Our goal is to increase accuracy and strengthen program management in supporting members and supervisors to enter and approve time sheets accurately and consistently. Time sheets beyond the 90-day period will not be reopened, except in limited circumstances, such as member suspension. Therefore, programs are encouraged to train members to enter accurate and timely hours to avoid the need for correction and to train supervisors to carefully review to ensure accurate reporting from the members. In addition, the program should review timesheets regularly to identify inconsistencies or potential errors so they can be corrected (use of the Timekeeping Tracking Tool is highly recommended for this purpose). The 90-day time frame also applies to programs using an alternative timekeeping system.

When requesting to have member timesheets unlocked, contact the compliance officer, and include at a minimum, the name of the member, dates and timesheets that need to be unlocked, what hours will be changed along with the rationale, and grant year (if applicable). Opening timesheets multiple times is discouraged. Programs, site supervisors, and members should have a shared understanding of the changes necessary before they are opened. Programs should alert members that timesheets will be opened and ask that they not resubmit them right away, in cases where a change in site supervisor is needed. While programs using an alternative timekeeping system do not need prior approval to unlock timesheets, they do need provide a screenshot of the original timesheet, member name, timesheet dates and reason for unlocking the timesheet to the Volunteer Iowa compliance officer. At no time should the program unilaterally make adjustments to timesheets for a member still in service.

G. MANAGING TIME SHEETS AFTER MEMBER DEPARTURE

Members are required to have a submitted and approved time sheet for each pay period covered by their term of service. Programs should make an effort to encourage members to complete missing time sheet(s). If a member(s) leave service and will not or cannot enter time and submit missing time sheet(s), program staff will need to be responsible for them. Programs can manage missing time sheet(s) by working with the site supervisor to get the time served by date and type of service (training, direct or fundraising). This information should be forwarded from the site supervisor to the Volunteer Iowa compliance officer. The compliance officer will enter or correct member time and submit the missing time sheet(s). The site supervisor then approves the time sheet(s) as typically done. Volunteer Iowa then uploads the documented time in IowaGrants as support for the time sheet adjustment(s). Programs using an alternative timekeeping system are required to follow the same process to manage timesheets when a member leaves unexpectedly as outlined above. If

it becomes necessary for the program to manage member timesheets, they are required to provide documentation from the site supervisor and the information supporting the need to manage the timesheet(s) to the Volunteer Iowa compliance officer.

H. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND MEMBER DISCIPLINARY POLICY ([45 CFR 2540.310](#))

All AmeriCorps State programs must develop standards of conduct that are communicated to members within the member service agreement and Member Orientation. These standards inform members of the expectations that programs have of them (such as that members will complete duties as assigned, submit reports on time, follow service site dress code, etc.).

To address behavioral, attendance, or other disciplinary problems that may arise when members do not adhere to the program's standards of conduct, Volunteer Iowa requires all programs to develop a written member disciplinary policy. Members should be advised of the procedure and potential disciplinary actions within their member service agreements. Disciplinary policies should outline the steps that may be taken and the authority (site supervisor, program staff) responsible to document and/or order such steps. Possible disciplinary actions may include verbal and written warnings, fines, temporary suspensions, or termination. Programs that wish to institute a policy for fining members should first check with their program officer to make sure their policy is in compliance with all other AmeriCorps regulations (i.e., fines cannot be calculated on an hourly basis, must be from that portion of the living allowance paid by non-Federal funds).

Any disciplinary actions taken must be fully documented in the member file. Programs should document in the member file whenever disciplinary problems arise and the corresponding action (verbal warning, written warning, etc.) that is implemented.

I. MEMBER PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS ([45 CFR § 2522.220](#) AND [TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

All full-time, three quarter-time, and half-time members must have both a written midterm and end of term evaluation. Volunteer Iowa requires that any less-than HT members (RHT, QT, MT, AT) that serve over a period time of nine (9) months or more in cost-reimbursement or Fixed Amount programs must also have both a midterm and end of term evaluation. All members must have a written end of term evaluation, regardless of program type, length, term of service, or type of exit. See below for evaluation requirements.

I. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The midterm and end of term evaluations are used in conjunction with the member exit form to indicate whether members exit successfully, for compelling personal circumstances, or for cause. Evaluations must include these items:

- Signature and date of the member and a program representative
- Assessment of whether the member has completed the required number of hours (or is on track to complete the required number of hours),
- Assessment of whether the member has satisfactorily completed assignments, tasks, or projects, (or for midterm evaluations or for those participants released from service early, whether the participant made a satisfactory effort to complete those assignments, tasks, or projects that the participant could reasonably have addressed in the time the participant has served); and

- Assessment of whether the member has met other performance criteria that were clearly communicated at the beginning of the term of service.

According to the [Terms and Conditions](#), failure of the program to complete an end of term evaluation can result in the member being unable to serve a subsequent term of service and may require the program to repay costs associated with a subsequent term served if there is no end-term evaluation for the prior term. Programs are encouraged to add their own evaluation questions and criteria, as long as the minimum requirements are in place.

When a midterm evaluation identifies concerns that could prevent a member from exiting successfully (on time with an education award) the program should develop a corrective action plan in conjunction with the member and supervisor, to address the identified issues. Certification within eGrants of a member’s eligibility for an education award/subsequent term of service should be based on the results of the member evaluation, especially in regard to whether or not the member performed satisfactorily.

II. EVALUATIONS FOR MEMBERS WHO EXIT EARLY

Members who are terminated early must have a member end of term evaluation completed by the program at the time of their termination and maintained in their file; but may not be required to have a midterm evaluation (if they exited before a midterm evaluation would reasonably have been completed).

III. DOCUMENTATION OF MEMBER END OF TERM EVALUATIONS

These records must be maintained, in hard copy or electronically, as applicable. The documentation must show that the member received the evaluations by including the member signature, or for members who exit early and do not participate in the final evaluation, by documenting program efforts to contact the member to obtain such signature. Completing the exit form in the eGrants/My AmeriCorps Portal (“Portal”) is not sufficient to meet the member evaluation requirement. In addition, programs are reminded that a “Member/Slot Change Form” must be submitted to Volunteer Iowa for approval prior to exiting the member in the Portal and that member terminations should be approved in the Portal within 30 days of the event.

IV. REVIEWING EVALUATIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEMBER TERMS

It is important to ensure that a member who served previously is eligible to serve again, and programs should make a reasonable effort to confirm eligibility. If the member received an education award, it is reasonable to assume the member served satisfactorily in the previous term. If the member was released for cause without receiving an education award, Iowa programs should check with the previous service organization to verify eligibility. Failure to verify member eligibility in relation to previous service may result some or all the costs associated with that member can be disallowed. The My AmeriCorps Portal includes evidence of members’ past service.

J. CONSECUTIVE MEMBER TERMS IN THE SAME PROGRAM YEAR

A less-than-full-time member may serve consecutive terms in the same or another AmeriCorps State program during the same program year (the total MSY served during the program year may be required to be less than or equal to 1.0 MSY). If the second term will involve the same or similar

activities as the first term, then the member should fill all expectations to complete Term A before being enrolled in Term B. For example, if a member completes the minimum hours but has not reached the exit date of Term A, she may not exit that term early to start accruing hours for Term B. The member must independently meet the requirements for both Term A and Term B. Programs considering enrolling a member in consecutive terms within the same program year should notify their program officer to confirm the allowability and ensure that member timekeeping is set up correctly.

K. CONCURRENT MEMBER TERMS

Under certain circumstances, a less-than-full-time member may be allowed to serve concurrently in two separate AmeriCorps programs during the same program year. Programs considering enrolling a member under this circumstance should contact their program officer to discuss the allowability of the proposed concurrent service, proper timekeeping set up, and other documentation that may be required to demonstrate compliance with AmeriCorps requirements.

In general, concurrent service within the same program year is only allowed when:

- The total value of the MSY (or MSY+FTE) being served (or served and worked) is less than or equal to 1.0;
- The duties and schedule for the concurrent terms can be clearly distinguished;
- The member independently meets requirements for each position;
- If the member started one position before the second position is added, the member has been performing satisfactorily in the first position;
- The positions are in two different programs;
- Other requirements established by AmeriCorps/Volunteer Iowa are met.

L. SERVICE AND WORK WITH THE SAME ORGANIZATION IN THE SAME PROGRAM YEAR

Program staff should talk with their program officer if they have a member considering this arrangement. Members may be allowed to serve and work at the same organization/sponsor in the same program year as long as they meet the following criteria:

- The duties of the service and work must be clearly distinguished. The program must provide the position description for the job to Volunteer Iowa for review prior to allowing both service and work for the same organization.
- The service and work hours should be defined so that there is no confusion about what the member is counting as service hours.
- The service and work commitments should not exceed 40 hours per week.
- If the wages for the job are paid with federal funds (i.e., federal work study) other actions or restrictions may be necessary.

M. CHANGE IN MEMBER TERM TYPE AFTER ENROLLMENT / CONVERTING FILLED MEMBER SLOTS

Slot conversions for enrolled (filled) member slots are expected to be rare and programs may not change an enrolled member's term of service without prior authorization from Volunteer Iowa, requested using the Member/Slot Change Form in IowaGrants.

When considering changing a member term from a larger term type to a lesser term type, Volunteer Iowa will consider several factors, such as the impact on program quality (including the ability to

meet expected performance measure targets), the timing of the request in the member's term, whether there has been a significant change in availability of service activities during member's anticipated service schedule, and confirmation the member understands the impact of the term change (i.e., reduced living allowance, reduced education award, potential ineligibility of other benefits). It is not allowed to convert down a filled slot simply to provide an education award to a member who has not met their hour requirements and Volunteer Iowa will not approve requests made on member's behalf because the member fell behind in hours during their term.

AmeriCorps discourages converting filled slots up to a larger term of service. Conversions of filled slots are typically approved by Volunteer Iowa only when they occur very early in the term of service and usually due to a compelling personal circumstance.

If approved in IowaGrants, the program officer also needs to approve the change in eGrants. The form and, if appropriate, a revised Enrollment Plan Update Status Report must be submitted to the appropriate program officer within five (5) business days from the program's awareness of the situation prompting an interest in converting the slot. Programs must immediately notify the AmeriCorps-designated childcare and healthcare providers, in writing, when a member's status changes in a manner that affects their eligibility for childcare or healthcare.

N. MEMBER TRANSFERS WITHIN A PROGRAM YEAR

Volunteer Iowa may approve member transfers among AmeriCorps State and National programs for compelling personal reasons. Specific requirements must be met by the member, the transferring program, and the receiving program. Any Iowa AmeriCorps State program should contact Volunteer Iowa as soon as possible if they have a situation in which they may wish to transfer a member or receive a transferred member. The transfer of a currently serving member may have different criteria and allowability than the transfer of unfilled slots.

O. Member Suspension and Temporary Leave ([45 CFR 2522.230](#); [45 CFR 2540.230](#); [TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

Definitions and policies: Suspension of service is defined as an extended period during which the member is not serving, nor accumulating service hours or receiving AmeriCorps benefits. Members should not be suspended for regular short-term absences. Members may also be offered temporary leave (with or without a suspension) for extended absences for compelling personal circumstances. Programs must have a suspension policy in place and terms related to suspensions should be outlined in member service agreements. The following are circumstances that may require suspension or temporary leave (with or without a suspension):

I. SUSPENSION FOR CRIMINAL CHARGES AND CONVICTION

Programs must suspend members facing official charges for violent felonies, for selling or distributing controlled substances, and members convicted of possession of controlled substances. Members suspended for these reasons may not receive a living allowance or other benefits during their suspension. Reinstatement of members suspended for these reasons is only allowed under specific circumstances outlined in the AmeriCorps regulations. Please contact the program officer if this situation occurs.

II. SUSPENSION FOR DISCIPLINARY REASONS

Members may be suspended for programmatic disciplinary reasons, for failing to uphold the service requirements and standards of conduct agreed upon in the member service agreement. In these cases, the program should specify the terms of the suspension, including the length of suspension and action steps that the member must take to be reinstated.

III. SUSPENSIONS RELATED TO GRIEVANCE

If a grievance is filed regarding a proposed enrollment of a member in a program, such enrollment must not be made unless it is consistent with the resolution of the grievance, and the enrollment is considered suspended while the grievance is pending. Also, if a member grieves a program's decision to exit them for cause, then their service must be suspended pending the resolution of the grievance. For this type of grievance, the member suspension and exit will be treated the same as any other suspension (i.e., no service hours during suspension, no living allowance payments during suspension, etc.) unless the program has other written approval from the AmeriCorps agency.

IV. SUSPENSIONS OR TEMPORARY LEAVE FOR COMPELLING PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

If temporary leave is appropriate (such as an accident or serious illness, death of a family member, or childbirth), programs have the flexibility to determine the duration of the absence and may choose to continue providing health or other benefits to the member during the period of absence (however, the program should confirm that child care benefits can be continued, if applicable). The member may be suspended (via compelling personal circumstances) during the period of temporary leave. If suspended, the member may not receive a living allowance. Alternatively, members may be offered temporary leave for compelling personal circumstances without being put into suspension status. This may be appropriate in situations such as maternity leave if a program wants to continue providing the member with a living allowance during the temporary leave period. The length of a suspension or leave in this case must be balanced by the individual circumstances and the impact of the absence on the overall program and the member experience. If the anticipated leave may seriously compromise the member's experience or the overall program quality, the program should consider offering the member the option of exiting for compelling personal reasons. Generally, members should not be suspended for more than three months, and those situations should be discussed with your program officer. The Family and Medical Leave Act may apply for members and organizations who meet other requirements. The Federal Family Medical Leave Act, (FMLA) applies to full-time staff and members that have served for more than 12 months and at least 1,250 hours when the grantee has 50 or more employees/members at a work/service site per [29 USC§2611](#). See [42 USC§12631](#); [45 CFR § 2540.220](#).

V. TEMPORARY LEAVE OR SERVICE EXTENSIONS FOR ANTICIPATED ABSENCES

Programs should confirm candidates' availability to serve the entire term of service prior to enrollment. If someone indicates plans that will require a long-term absence, such as a pre-planned vacation, internship, or short-term study abroad, the program must contact the Volunteer Iowa program officer as soon as possible, preferably prior to enrollment. Ideally for anticipated absences, programs will work with Volunteer Iowa and the member to plan

in advance to accommodate the absence via temporary leave without an adjustment to the service term. When programs are requesting to extend a member service term, they should be prepared to discuss the following with the Volunteer Iowa program officer:

- Is the member in good standing with the program? (program-defined)
- Is there a plan for the member to complete her/his hours and activities following the absence?
- Is the member on track with hours and required reporting prior the start of a scheduled absence?
- How long is the long-term absence and how much time is left in the member's term?

VI. DOCUMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT OF SUSPENSIONS

Programs are required to report any intent to suspend a member to their program officer in IowaGrants within five days of awareness of the intended suspension. The reason for the suspension must be documented in the member file and communicated to Volunteer Iowa. If programs know they will be suspending a member, they should notify Volunteer Iowa of the suspension by using the Member Slot/Change status report form in IowaGrants. If the program does not know specifics of the reason for leave or is unsure about the length of time needed, they should use the Program Officer Notification status report form in IowaGrants to notify Volunteer Iowa of a potential issue. If the program does later move to suspend the member, the date of the Program Officer Notification can be used as the start date of the suspension. All members who are deemed to be suspended need to be noted as suspended in IowaGrants, eGrants, and the program timekeeping system. Only members suspended properly will be considered officially suspended and eligible for a term extension. Programs must indicate under what circumstances they desire to suspend a member. Regardless of the sensitivity of the issue, programs are required to maintain acceptable supporting documentation of this information in the member files (which should be secured and confidential).

Volunteer Iowa does not typically allow programs to suspend members for a period of more than three months. If the time off required for the member to return to service exceeds three months, the program should consider potential alternatives, including an exit for Compelling Personal Circumstances. Approval for a suspension that exceeds three months may be given in limited situations. Programs must provide a timeline and reasonable schedule for service after the suspension has been completed. Suspensions lasting more than two weeks require weekly check-ins with the member. Programs must also provide updates to Volunteer Iowa by using the Member Slot/Change form for suspensions that continue beyond the originally approved time. Updates may also be required for longer-term suspensions. This will be determined by the program officer.

Programs are required to notify Volunteer Iowa within five days when a member returns to service following a suspension (for any reason). Volunteer Iowa should be notified using the Member/Slot Change Form. Members should not be reinstated until they receive written approval from Volunteer Iowa. The program officer will review and upon approval, members' suspensions and returns must be recorded in eGrants within 30-days of the effective dates.

VII. LIVING ALLOWANCE, BENEFITS, AND SERVICE EXTENSIONS FOR SUSPENSIONS

Suspended members are not eligible to receive any living allowance while in suspension. Members suspended for compelling personal circumstances criteria may be eligible for continued benefits. Members given temporary leave (without a suspension) may continue receiving the living allowance. Under no circumstances may any members under suspension receive hours toward their term of service. Once service has resumed, member timesheets should be submitted with all 0-hours for the time period the member was suspended. During an audit the time sheet will show it had been in suspended status. If a member is not in an approved suspension status and submits a 0-hour timesheet, the program cannot withhold the living allowance payment from the member. Note that the time spent in suspended status does not count toward the 12-month limit during which members must complete their term of service. Members who are suspended and then return may be eligible for an extension to their term of service, up to the same length of time for which they were suspended, in order to have more time to complete the expectations of their position (minimum hours, assigned service activities, etc.). During the extension they are able to receive the living allowance that they were not afforded during their suspension. Members may not receive a lump sum payment in order to make up for living allowance not received while suspended.

P. Member Service Credit/Time Off for Special Circumstances ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

Members should refer to the Terms and Conditions for certain special circumstances that dictate how member time should be treated in relation to jury duty and service in the Armed Forces Reserves/National Guard. The AmeriCorps Specific Terms and Conditions dictate service credits that members must receive (for jury duty) and should receive (for reserve service). The Terms and Conditions and Section 4 of this manual provide information about member pay/benefits during these special circumstances.

8. EXITING OR RELEASING MEMBERS AND REFILLING SLOTS ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#) AND [45 CFR 2522.230](#))

- A. MEMBER EXITS – EDUCATION AWARD STATUS AND FUTURE SERVICE ([45 CFR § 2522.230](#))
AmeriCorps members may be exited from the program because they: 1) have successfully completed their term, 2) must be released from their service early due to a compelling personal circumstance, or 3) were released from their service early for cause. The exit status of a member determines whether he or she earns an education award and affects his/her eligibility for future AmeriCorps service. Note that once a member is exited with a partial education award, the remaining portion of that education award is not available for use by the program through a refill slot. For any member that is suspended/reinstated or is released from service early for cause/compelling personal circumstance, the program is required to submit a Member Slot Change Form in IowaGrants. The form title should include the member's name and brief description (i.e., Member First and Last Name – Exit for cause).

Members are required to complete all programmatic documents (including evaluations, timesheets, exit forms, etc.) to achieve a successful completion of a term of service, including exits for compelling personal circumstances. Members who do not complete the documents in a timely manner can be denied a Segal Education Award. Programs cannot complete the Exit Form on behalf of a member. It is recommended that programs inform members of this at the beginning of their term to encourage timely submission of forms from members.

Did the member serve through the service agreement end date?	Did the member meet the minimum hours requirement?	Did the member perform satisfactorily?	Exit Type	Eli Segal Education Award Eligibility	Future Service Eligibility (Subject to Term Limits)
Yes	Yes	Yes	Successful Completion	Eligible for Entire Ed. Award	Eligible
No*- but exits minimally early with agreement of member, supervisor, and program	Yes	Yes	Successful Completion- Ahead of Schedule	Eligible for Entire Ed. Award	Eligible
No	No	Yes	Compelling Personal Circumstances	Eligible for Partial Ed. Award*	Eligible
Yes	No	Yes	Cause	Not Eligible for Ed Award (member did not complete service requirements)	Eligible- Must Disclose Prior Release for Cause
No	No	Yes	Cause	Not Eligible for Ed Award (member did not complete service requirements)	Eligible- Must Disclose Prior Release for Cause
No	No	**No	Cause	Not Eligible for Ed. Award (member dismissed for misconduct)	Not Eligible
No*- but due to program errors with enrollment in eGrants	No – unable to due to loss of hours because of enrollment date in eGrants	Yes	Compelling Personal Circumstances	Eligible for Partial Ed. Award	Eligible

* Eligible if the member served at least 15% of the minimum service hours and meets other program exit requirements.

** Only members who do not perform satisfactorily are INELIGIBLE for a subsequent AmeriCorps term. Exiting early for cause does not preclude them from serving again later if they are given a satisfactory performance rating and meet other thresholds.

B. MEMBER END DATE AND SERVICE HOURS COMPLETION

Under no circumstances should members continue serving beyond their member service agreement period or the program's grant agreement period. This is for the protection of both the member and the program. Members serving beyond the program's project period will not be covered by a member service agreement (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 service agreement and/or grant agreement will be disallowed in case of audit, which may result in repayment of federal funds.

When recording service hours completed as part of the exit process in eGrants, record the hours as they are entered and approved in the timekeeping component. All hours should be rounded down to the nearest whole number (for example: If OnCorps timekeeping has a total of 1705.5 hours served, the exit form would be recorded with 1705 hours served not 1706). Therefore, programs should be aware that rounding issues may result in members falling short of the minimum requirements and not being eligible for an education award. For example, a full-time member with 1699.75 hours must be reported as 1699 in eGrants and would not be eligible for an education award. The program needs to ensure no hours are recorded or counted prior to the service start date or after the service end date. The exit process should never be completed by the program until all member time sheets are submitted by the member, approved by the site supervisor, confirmed as accurate by the program, and entered into eGrants based on approved hours in the program's timekeeping system. Hours that are not approved in the timekeeping system cannot be entered into eGrants and are therefore not considered as earned hours toward an education award. If a member (regardless of successful or compelling personal circumstance exit) does not complete all required timesheets during their term of service, the member will not be eligible for an education award until all timesheets are completed satisfactorily. Programs also cannot claim member costs (i.e., living allowance) on the grant unless supported by a submitted and approved timesheet.

C. MEMBER EXIT – SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION

Members agree to serve for a certain time period AND to complete a minimum number of hours during that time period. Members who fulfill these requirements, meet other expectations of the service term, and provide satisfactory service, are exited from the program with a full education award.

Members who complete the term of service satisfactorily but who have already earned the value of two full-time education awards should still be exited successfully in eGrants with the status of "Eligible for Full Award." In these circumstances, the members earned a \$0 education award.

Any individual who makes a materially false statement or representation in connection with the approval or disbursement of an education award or other payment from the National Service Trust may be liable for the recovery of funds and subject to civil and criminal sanctions (See the [Terms and Conditions](#)).

D. MEMBER EXIT – SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

Programs may have members who complete assignments and reach the service agreement hours requirement in advance of the originally agreed upon service end date (i.e., in less time than proscribed in the approved enrollment plan submitted to the Volunteer Iowa at the beginning of the grant year). Although not encouraged, programs may amend the member service agreement to allow such members to exit as successfully completed, but slightly in advance of the original service end date, if the member, site supervisor, program and Volunteer Iowa all agree to the new end date. Amended end dates for members should be reasonably close to the original end date, and proportional to the original term and length of service (i.e., exiting a full-time member two weeks early from a 52-week term could be reasonable but exiting a minimum-time member two weeks early from an 8-week term is not). This is because the program should have designed the term of service such that if members served in their expected service schedule, they will be able to complete program tasks and meet minimum hour requirements over the course of the original term. If a program seems many/repeated instances where members are wishing to exit ahead of schedule this may be a reason to review member training to remind members of their full-service commitment and/or to reconsider the program design to see whether a shorter service term or less intense service schedule are appropriate.

Volunteer Iowa staff must review any requests to exit members more than two weeks or one pay period ahead of the original end date (see more in the documentation section below). These members will earn a portion of the living allowance based on the portion of the service term that was successfully completed and how that aligns with the program's pay periods. For instance, if a program that has a 48-week program design and pays members every two weeks has a member that completes the term of service (with program approval) in 46 weeks, then the program will provide the member 46/48 of the living allowance (paid for 23/24 pay periods). The member is eligible for the full value of the education award (assuming he/she performed satisfactorily and met all other goals of his/her term of service).

E. APPROVAL AND DOCUMENTATION OF SUCCESSFUL MEMBER EXIT (SEE MEMBER RECORDS FOR MORE DETAIL)

Members must receive an end of term evaluation certifying that they meet the requirements for a successful exit with a full award. Programs must change the member status to Exited in OnCorps and need to exit the member in the eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal within the 30-day deadline. No prior approval from Volunteer Iowa is required to exit members who successfully complete their term – meaning both the timeframe and hourly requirement. Members who complete their hours early may be successfully exited with approval from Volunteer Iowa. Please see below.

F. APPROVAL AND DOCUMENTATION OF SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION AHEAD OF SCHEDULE
Programs must notify Volunteer Iowa of circumstances in which they plan to exit a member successfully, but in advance of the end date agreed upon in the Member Service Agreement. This is required for any member who is exiting successfully, but more than 2 weeks ahead of the scheduled exit date. Notification is sent to Volunteer Iowa using the Member/Slot Change Form in IowaGrants. All other standard exit steps should then be completed.

G. MEMBERS SERVING <15% OF THE TERM AND IMMEDIATE EXITS
Members who serve less than 15% of their term must be exited for cause and, except in cases of misconduct, such service does not count towards the term limit. So, members who enroll and never show up for service, or those who only attend orientation or serve for a day and determine that national service is not for them are exited for cause. Programs can complete a Program Officer Notification status report form for members who never show up for service and do not have an approved timesheet. If a timesheet account has been created for a member that has shown up, the Compliance Officer can remove it. A member who has served a day or two before determining that he/she/they does not want to continue should be paid for those hours. Be sure to follow the program's Member Exit and Payroll Policy. A time sheet must be completed and approved if the program is claiming the member living allowance as a grant expense. Programs also must have a signed and dated Member Service Agreement in place. Another option for handling this might include paying this expense with funds from another source (non-grant funds); then a timesheet and Member Service Agreement would not be needed. A Member Slot/Change status report form should be completed to seek approval from the program officer for the immediate member exit.

H. EARLY TERMINATION FOR COMPELLING PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES (CPC)
Members may be released early from their term of service if the program determines that the member cannot complete his/her term due to compelling personal circumstances beyond the member's control. See the AmeriCorps regulations for specific examples of what does and what does not constitute a compelling personal circumstance.

Compelling Personal Circumstance for Pregnancy/Childbirth: 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 the program could suspend the member so that the member can return some time in the future to complete their term of service.

Members released for compelling personal circumstances qualify for a pro-rated education award if they have served at least 15% of the service term and have been performing satisfactorily. Members must also clearly communicate with the program regarding the circumstances necessitating an exit for compelling personal reasons and must follow up with program requests for documentation and completion of other exit procedures. Members must successfully complete all exit forms and provide documentation of the compelling circumstance to qualify for any portion of an education

award for which they may be eligible. Early termination must be approved by Volunteer Iowa, in advance of the exit in eGrants, using the Member/Slot Change Form in IowaGrants.

I. COMPELLING PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCE EXIT FOR WELFARE TO WORK OR MEMBER EMPLOYMENT

Welfare to Work - In general, members leaving a service term for employment prior to completing all the requirements would be an exit for cause but there are exceptions. One of the reasons a Compelling Personal Circumstance (CPC) exit is allowed for in the AmeriCorps regulations is due to a member transitioning from welfare to work. Programs wanting to offer this as an option to members who are exiting early from their term of service need to ensure they have documentation in the member file to support this determination. For a member to be released for CPC for this reason, the program would need to determine that the individual was receiving welfare prior to becoming a member and had obtained employment as part of an effort to become self-sufficient. The employment must be enough to meaningfully reduce their utilization of federal assistance program(s). Welfare/federal assistance programs include: TANF/SNAP, WIC, HUD housing programs including Section 8, SSI/SSDI, cash assistance (FIP and RCA), Medicaid, Medicare, Hawk-I/S-CHIP, Unemployment Insurance, Childcare Assistance, and other Federal Need-Based Assistance.

Promotion of AmeriCorps Member Employment - Additionally, the AmeriCorps regulations allow members to be given a CPC exit if they exit to accept an employment opportunity after having served in a program that includes in its approved objectives the promotion of AmeriCorps member employment. Currently, AmeriCorps does not allow for programs to choose member-focused performance measures for their approved grant application and therefore Volunteer Iowa will use other methods to determine if a program is meeting the threshold of promoting member employment as an approved objective. These could include:

- Program narratives that demonstrate that the program will meet employment-related funding priorities such as by creating workforce pathways for AmeriCorps members, including deliberate training, certifications, and hiring preferences or support;
- Programs that articulate significant member employment-related goals in alignment with Volunteer Iowa priorities application form.

To be eligible for this type of CPC exit, the program must have a policy supporting CPC exit for employment based on intentional program activities and specific member criteria. For example, the program must demonstrate that its efforts to promote member employment go beyond the standard training and professional development that all AmeriCorps programs are expected to provide to members. Additionally, the members considered for such exits must have served for a sufficient period of time to attribute their successful offer of employment to skills and opportunities gained through their AmeriCorps service. The criteria for exiting a member successfully for employment, including the amount of time to be served and the trainings/certifications to be completed, should be established in the program's Member Exit and Payroll Policy. Programs wishing to incorporate this type of CPC exit should consult with their program officer in developing their policy. Prior approval of the policy must be received in advance of any CPC exits for employment.

J. EARLY TERMINATION / UNSUCCESSFUL COMPLETION 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. Disciplinary reasons for termination are determined at the program level and outlined in the member service agreement. All members who complete less than 15% of their term of service must be released for cause in eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal.

An important distinction for members who are released for cause relates to how the programs answers the question “Did the member perform satisfactorily (complete all assignments, tasks, and projects)?” Members who are exited for cause but with satisfactory performance according to this question are eligible to serve in AmeriCorps again. However, if a program indicates that a member did not perform satisfactorily, then the member is not eligible for future service. Therefore, it is important for programs to have clearly defined criteria regarding how they will evaluate whether a member performed satisfactorily or not, and to consistently apply those criteria.

Any individual released for cause, for any reason, 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, regardless of whether that individual successfully completes the subsequent term of service.

K. APPROVAL AND DOCUMENTATION OF EXITS FOR COMPELLING PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, EXITS FOR CAUSE, OR EARLY MEMBER EXITS (SEE MEMBER RECORDS FOR MORE DETAIL)

All programs that have members terminate for compelling personal circumstances, or two weeks or more prior to the expected end date for any reason, must notify their Volunteer Iowa program officer for approval and submit the Member/Slot Change Form in IowaGrants. The form must be submitted to the program officer within five (5) business days from the program’s awareness of the termination. The form includes basic information and requires that programs inform the Commission of the reason for the termination, whether the member is eligible for a pro-rated education award, and whether the program intends to refill the slot (if applicable). When completing the Member Slot/Change form, the program must include the member’s member name in the title of the status report form prior to submitting the form, or the status report will be returned unapproved. Full documentation of the reasons for the early exit must be maintained in the member’s file.

The program must not terminate the member in the eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal until the program officer has approved the status report in IowaGrants. If there are concerns regarding the circumstances of the termination, this will allow corrections to the Exit Form to be made prior to the form being downloaded from the eGrants/MyAmeriCorps Portal to the Educational Trust/SPAN.

Members must not be terminated early for compelling personal circumstances unless they have cooperated with the program during their term and they continue to meet program requirements for a successful exit (i.e., submitting final timesheets, participating in a final evaluation, providing CPC documentation, and completing other program exit procedures). Members exiting early for

cause, for any reason, should also be given the opportunity to participate in the program exit process.

L. MEMBER EXITS –MY AMERICORPS PORTAL/EGRANTS

All members must be exited electronically in the Portal as this is the official system of record for AmeriCorps. As the program is managing the member exit process, they should be mindful of AmeriCorps' 30-day exit requirement between the member's exit date and the completion of the eGrants exit process and allow adequate time to collect information and record it in the Portal (as needed). Prior to exiting a member, it is recommended that programs ensure that all required documents are included in the member's file. That will enable the program staff to attempt to obtain any missing documents prior to exiting the member.

I. FAILURE TO COMPLETE – REPERCUSSIONS ON PROGRAM

The program should be aware that failure to fully complete the member exit form may result in education award costs being questioned and recouped from the program during audit. Therefore, programs should make every effort to have a signed member exit form (electronic signature in eGrants is acceptable) for all members, particularly those who receive an education award, including those that completed their service successfully and those who departed for compelling personal circumstances.

II. FAILURE TO COMPLETE – REPERCUSSIONS ON MEMBER

All members must complete the program's exit process. A member who does not fully complete the exit process will be deemed not to have met program requirements and will, therefore, be ineligible for an AmeriCorps Education Award (even if they complete all other aspects of the program successfully).

III. MEMBERS THAT LEAVE WITHOUT COMPLETING EXIT PROCESS

If a member leaves their term of service without completing the appropriate electronic exit forms, the program should make several attempts to contact the member to complete the forms. 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.

M. EXIT PAPERWORK

Programs are required to attempt to obtain exit paperwork from members. The communication to the member should provide instructions on completing the exit and provide a specific timeline in which the member should complete the exit. Volunteer Iowa recommends that at least three (3) attempts are made to contact members and at least one of the contacts should be through the mail (US postal service, UPS or other carrier). All these attempts should be documented in the member file – for example, copies of email messages, copies of letters/memos, copies of certified mail return receipts, and written notes documenting phone or text messages are examples of appropriate documentation for this purpose. If, despite these attempts, the program is unable to obtain the

completed exit form, the program will need to exit them in the Portal. They should attach documentation of their contact attempts to the paper exit and make a written notation on the exit form itself saying, "The program was unable to obtain a completed exit from the member." This message should be signed and dated by program staff and all these documents should be maintained in the member's file.

N. CONFIDENTIALITY OF MEMBER EARLY EXIT RATIONALE

Information in the member records, especially related to reasons why members must be exited early from their program, may be sensitive and confidential. Volunteer Iowa staff and contractors are aware of this requirement and will maintain confidentiality by not disclosing information except to another authorized person as allowable under federal and state law.

O. AMERICORPS REFILL CONDITIONS

The following conditions, established by the Corporation, must be adhered to by all AmeriCorps programs regarding refill of member slots vacated by members who exit early. Programs must note that once a member is exited with a partial education award, the remaining portion of that award is not available for use.

- Programs may replace any member who terminates service before completing 30% of his/her term provided that the member who terminates is not eligible for and does not receive a pro-rated education award.
- Only fully enrolled member service categories may be refilled. For example, programs may only use a refill slot of a full-time slot if all other full-time slots are filled.
- Programs may not refill the same slot more than once.

P. REFILL DEADLINES

Full Time Members within 90 days of Program Start:

- If a full-time member terminates within 90 days of the program start-date, the refill must occur prior to December 1. Programs with a January start date should discuss the timeline for reporting with the Volunteer Iowa program officer.
- If a full-time member terminates after 90 days, a slot conversion request must accompany the termination request.

Less than Full Time Members and Full Time after 90 Days of Program Start:

- For all part-time members and for any full-time members that terminate after 90 days of the program start-date, the refill must occur in time to allow for the member to complete their term of service within 90 days of the program's original grant agreement end date.

Program officers may approve waivers to these deadlines when the program demonstrates good cause and that the extended due date would still meet requirements for allowing the member to reasonably fulfill the term (hours and length) within the allowable grant end date.

Q. SUSPENSION OF ABILITY TO REFILL BY AMERICORPS

AmeriCorps will suspend refilling for all AmeriCorps programs nationwide if either:

- Total AmeriCorps enrollment reaches 97% of awarded slots.
- The number of refills reaches 5% of awarded slots.

If refills are suspended, this typically occurs near the end of the Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps program year. For example, in August 2011, we received this notification from AmeriCorps suspending refills for 2010-2011 programs.

R. ORGANIZATIONS INELIGIBLE TO REFILL

Programs that have special grant conditions under [2 CFR §§ 200.208](#) or [200.339](#) are not eligible to refill slots. (These are programs that have a history of poor performance, are financially instable, have inadequate management systems, have not complied with previous grant awards and/or not otherwise responsible.)

Organizations will be subject to evaluation for qualification to refill by AmeriCorps based on the results of outcomes of Inspector General Audits, site visits and oversight by AmeriCorps program and grants offices.

9. MEMBER RECORDS SUMMARY ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS, 45 CFR 2522.820](#))

All Iowa AmeriCorps programs will use the reporting systems or forms for member management and recordkeeping as instructed by Volunteer Iowa and/or AmeriCorps. Programs must complete and submit member-related records to Volunteer Iowa or AmeriCorps in accordance with this manual, reporting instructions, grant agreement, and [Terms and Conditions](#). Programs should retain copies of these records, forms, and messages [electronically (as allowable under the AmeriCorps electronic records retention policy) or in hard copy] for review in case of audit or site visit. If required forms are not included in the member records, AmeriCorps or Volunteer Iowa could recapture member costs from the program.

A. CONFIDENTIAL MEMBER INFORMATION ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

The program must maintain the confidentiality of information regarding individual members. Programs may release aggregate and other non-identifying information and are required to release member information to Volunteer Iowa and AmeriCorps, and its designated contractors. The program must permit a member who submits a written request for access to review records which pertain to the member and were created pursuant to the grant.

B. USE OF LEGAL VERSUS PREFERRED NAME

Official AmeriCorps member records (such as National Service Criminal History Checks, eGrants/My AmeriCorps enrollment and exit, IRS tax forms, etc.) must use the name and gender as shown on the member's government-issued identification. If a member legally changes their name during their term, the member/program will need to contact the eGrants helpdesk to request the change in the eGrants system. The helpdesk will require the program/member to provide a signed copy of the member's new social security card and one of the following documents to show the proof of name change: marriage license or certification, divorce decree, court petition, or U.S. passport. Programs will also submit a status report in IowaGrants notifying Volunteer Iowa of the name change for monitoring purposes.

Programs should give applicants/members the opportunity to identify the name/pronouns they will use in the program (such as offering a space on the application and/or member service agreement for individuals to list their name/pronouns used, in addition to their legal name/gender). Volunteer Iowa also reminds programs that the Iowa Civil Rights Act protects against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

C. DOCUMENTATION FORMS AND FORMATS

Volunteer Iowa and Iowa AmeriCorps programs will use the following systems for various reporting/records requirements; more details follow the chart.

Required Documentation Form/Item	Format for Submission and Record Keeping	Date Due
Member Application Form (programs can have member complete the application on-line as first step or can use the invitation process)	My AmeriCorps Portal or program-specific system	Enrollments (of successful applicants) must be completed and submitted in the eGrants Portal within 8 days of member enrollment date
National Service Electronic Enrollment Form – member enrollment form	Electronically Online in eGrants	Online enrollment entered and completed in eGrants Portal within 8 days of member enrollment date
Member added to OnCorps or approved alternative timekeeping system	Electronically in OnCorps Reports or other preapproved timekeeping system.	Member must be added to the timekeeping system within 8 days of the enrollment date
National Service Criminal History Check Certification	Electronically completed in eGrants enrollment form, with actual NSCHC results maintained in the member file	Online certification dated no later than the day before the member enrollment date.
Member Citizenship Verification/ Member Citizenship Manual Verification Documentation (as needed)	Electronically online in eGrants Portal Copy of documents sent to AmeriCorps and manually verified in member file	Verified or manually verified on or before the member’s start date
National Service Electronic Exit Form and Verification of Member Hours – member exit form	Electronically online in eGrants Portal	Exit completed and submitted in eGrants within 30 days of the member exit date
Member/Slot Change Form (Suspensions, Exits and Conversions)	IowaGrants status report and written justification in member file; approved changes in eGrants Portal	In IowaGrants within 5 days of becoming aware of need for change. In eGrants within 30 days of the member change of status

Required Documentation Form/Item	Format for Submission and Record Keeping	Date Due
Member Service Locations (should be updated in the system when changes to the location or supervisor occur)	eGrants Portal	Member service locations must be entered in the eGrants Portal within 30 days of the member's enrollment.
Member Time Sheet	Electronically in approved timekeeping system.	Member timesheet submitted by the Member by due date established by Program in timekeeping system. Supervisor approval before the end of the next pay period.
Member Service Agreement	Fully authorized original hard copy in member file, copy to member, and uploaded to OnCorps or IowaGrants correspondence. Programs with electronic records management should follow the directions in the aligned policy	Member should sign on or before the start date of the term of service. The program representative signature should be dated after the member signature date, but before the start of service. Attached in OnCorps or IowaGrants within 30 days of the member enrollment date.
Member Position Description	Fully authorized original hard copy(ies) in member file and copy(ies) to member. Programs with electronic records management should follow the directions in the aligned policy.	Attached in OnCorps or IowaGrants within 30 days of the amendment.
Member National Service Criminal History Check(s)	Volunteer Iowa provided or approved alternate documentation checklist. Hard copy of results and review (including notation that findings were considered prior to member placement) in member file (**or if in an alternate secure location, this should be noted in the member file).	Adjudicated no later than the before the member start date. See NSCHC section for additional information. Checklist and results must be maintained in member file or at alternate secure site at program headquarters.

Required Documentation Form/Item	Format for Submission and Record Keeping	Date Due
Member convicted of a felony, or sale or distribution of a controlled substance, during term of service- requiring suspension or termination	Supporting documentation in member file and notification to Volunteer Iowa program officer in IowaGrants and change in status in eGrants	In IowaGrants within 5 days of conviction. In eGrants/Portal within 30 days of change of member status.
Member Midterm Evaluation	Copy in member file	Within 30 days of the halfway point of service for FT, TQT and HT members and all other members (RHT, QT, MT) serving nine months or more in their term.
Member End of Term Evaluation	Copy in member file	Within 30 days of the end of service for all members.
Health Care, Child Care Enrollment	Copy of enrollment forms and supporting materials	Within 30 days of member enrollment or change in status resulting in changes to benefits availability.
Change in member status affecting healthcare/ childcare eligibility	Copy of documentation related to change in member status	Within 30 days of member enrollment or change in status resulting in changes to benefits availability.
Injury Incident Report	Notify in IowaGrants via Program Officer Notification status report	Within 48 hours of injury during service requiring worker's compensation claim.
Ineligible Member Report (NSCHC related)	Notify in IowaGrants via Program Officer Notification status report	Within 48 hours of program receiving documentation of disqualifying NSCHCS result.
Last day to fill Full time positions (FT). Programs may request a later date by completing a Program Officer Notification status report	Electronic in IowaGrants via Member/Slot Change form, approved changes in eGrants portal	December 1*
Last day to fill Three Quarter time slots. Programs may request a later date by completing a Program Officer Notification status report	Electronic in IowaGrants via Member/Slot Change form, approved changes in eGrants portal	March 1*
Last day to fill Half-time (HT) and Reduced Half-time (RHT) slots. Programs may request a later date by completing a Program Officer Notification status report	Electronic in IowaGrants via Member/Slot Change form, approved changes in eGrants portal	April 1*

Required Documentation Form/Item	Format for Submission and Record Keeping	Date Due
Last day to fill Quarter-time (QT), Minimum-time (MT), and Abbreviated-time (AT) slots. Programs may request a later date by completing a Program Officer Notification status report	Electronic in IowaGrants via Member/Slot Change form, approved changes in eGrants portal	July 1*
Member/Applicant Grievance	Electronic notification in IowaGrants via Program Officer Notification status report	Within 5 business days of notification to the program.
Member Orientation and Training Completion	Copy of training agenda and sign in/out sheets or other proof of attendance for all members	Following completion of each training with all required trainings completed on/before the last day of service

*This date will be adjusted for programs with a January start date. Talk with the Volunteer Iowa program officer to determine due dates.

REFERENCES

1. AmeriCorps State and National (ASN) 2024 General Terms and Conditions [AmeriCorps General Grant and Cooperative Agreement Terms and Conditions](#)
2. 2024 Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Programs, [2024 AmeriCorps State and National Program-Specific Terms and Conditions](#)
3. AmeriCorps State and National (ASN) Regulations <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-B/chapter-XXV>
4. AmeriCorps State and National (ASN) Statute [F:\COMP\NCSA90\NCSA90 \(americorps.gov\)](F:\COMP\NCSA90\NCSA90 (americorps.gov))
5. [ASN Enrollment and Enrollment Date Change Policy, ASN 011 ASN Enrollment and Enrollment Date Change Policy 19-04 corrected](#) (americorps.gov)
6. Member Service Agreement (MSA) Outline
[2020_02_28 Member Service Agreement Outline Outline PDF ASN.pdf](#) (americorps.gov)
7. [National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by P.L. 111-13](#) (NCSA)
8. ASN Position Description Outline, ASN 019
https://dev.americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/2020_02_28 Member Position Description Outline PDF ASN.pdf
9. Prohibited Activities: Additional Guidance, ASN 008
[2017.03 ASN Prohibited Activities Further Guidance.pdf](#) (americorps.gov)
10. ASN Guidance on Census Activities, ASN 012
https://www.americorps.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2019.05_CNCS_Guidance_on_Census_Activities.pdf
11. Childcare Eligibility Benefits <http://www.americorpschildcare.com/>
<https://www.americorps.gov/members-volunteers/your-benefits>
12. Member Timesheet Outline ASN 001
<https://www.americorps.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ASN%20001%20Member-Timesheet-Outline.pdf>
13. AmeriCorps Application Instructions and other materials
<https://americorps.gov/funding-opportunity/fy-2023-americorps-state-national-grants>

3.2

MEMBER SUPPORT

1. MEMBER TRAINING ([45 CFR § 2520.50](#) AND [2522.100](#))

Any questions or requests for clarification regarding the information below, ongoing programmatic training, and technical assistance may be directed to the assigned Volunteer Iowa program officer.

A. REQUIRED TRAINING TOPICS FOR ALL MEMBERS ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

I. MEMBER ORIENTATION

Programs must conduct a member orientation designed to enhance member sensitivity to the community and comply with any pre-service orientation or training required by AmeriCorps. Members should attend orientation after they have been fully enrolled. Volunteer Iowa understands there may be situations in which members may be required to complete pre-service/enrollment paperwork prior to the member start date. This activity should be limited to items that are required to complete enrollment and typically requires one hour or less. Required trainings (either by AmeriCorps or as a program requirement) must happen after the member is enrolled. Candidates that have not been enrolled may be offered optional officer hours to ask questions or interaction with Alumni or current members as a way to keep the candidate engaged prior to the start date. Member Orientation should include, at a minimum, these items should be covered during orientation and **explicitly** listed on the member orientation agenda:

- Member rights and responsibilities, including the Program's code of conduct,
- Prohibited activities and AmeriCorps Non-displacement/Nonduplication guidance (including those specified in the regulations). Please Note: There is an increased emphasis on ensuring that all members are trained on prohibited activities, so be sure that adequate time is devoted to this topic on the orientation agenda.
- Requirements under the Drug-Free Workplace Act (41 U.S.C.701 et seq),
- Suspension and termination from service,
- Grievance procedures,
- Sexual harassment, other non-discrimination issues,
- National Service history, AmeriCorps, and Volunteer Iowa

Volunteer Iowa has an updated Member Orientation resource on Basecamp, which provides a sample agenda, training topic ideas and links to useful resources, YouTube links and handouts to support the training.

II. TRAINING FOR ASSIGNED SERVICE DUTIES

Programs must provide participants in the program with the training, skills, and knowledge necessary to perform the tasks required in their respective projects, including, if appropriate, specific training in a particular field and background information on the community, including why the service projects are needed.

III. LIFE AFTER AMERICORPS

Life after AmeriCorps training can be accessed through a variety of means: AmeriCorps Alums, National Service Resources, a college/university career center, etc. Several Iowa programs have collaborated on a joint Life After AmeriCorps training in recent years.

B. OTHER MEMBER TRAINING

Training and service activities should be well designed to sustain and promote a lifelong ethic of service and civic responsibility. Training topics and suggested ideas are covered below. Training should also include structured opportunities for members to reflect on and learn from their service. The topics listed below are recommendations that programs could cover in the member training and support plan.

I. CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship training may include a session facilitated by a college/university office of civic engagement, relevant government, or nonprofit agency, etc. In addition, all programs must encourage every participant who is eligible to vote to register prior to completing a term of service.

II. COMMUNICATION

Communication training topics could include personality styles; diversity, equity, and inclusion; conflict resolution; public speaking; effective meetings; customer service; team building; leadership; etc.

III. VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Volunteer management training is most often accessed through the Volunteer Centers of Iowa or through local United Ways, volunteer centers or community colleges. Volunteer Generation Fund grantees may also be available for this topic. Volunteer Iowa grantee organizations are also encouraged to pursue Service Enterprise certification.

IV. DISASTER RESPONSE

Examples of disaster preparedness training could include CPR/AED/First Aid training, Volunteer Reception Center/Emergency Volunteer Center training, Iowa AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team training, etc.

C. DOCUMENTATION OF TRAINING

When the mid-year Progress Report is submitted, programs may need to certify completion of trainings or plans to provide required trainings. When requesting reimbursement for training costs programs may also need to attach samples of training material with agendas.

Programs should always maintain a file containing a training agenda and a dated sign-in sheet with signatures of members who attended orientation and training sessions with as much detail as necessary for auditing purposes. Volunteer Iowa will document member attendance at our trainings and provide copies of that documentation to relevant program staff for file as requested.

Programs should use sign-in sheets, webinar attendance logs, or other methods to document member attendance at and completion of program-provided member trainings. If a member attends an outside training to fulfill specific AmeriCorps program requirements, they should turn in an agenda or confirmation notice signed and dated by the training facilitator to the program for

retention in the member file. In instances of virtual trainings, a member should print a screenshot to sign and date for documentation, or print/sign/date the post-training follow-up notice and materials.

D. SITE SPECIFIC TRAINING

Members should be provided the benefit of additional training and education opportunities relevant to their service and personal development, at the discretion of the program; however, programs should ensure that members do not spend more than 20% of their service hours receiving education or training (while technically this limit applies to member hours in the aggregate, Volunteer Iowa asks programs to track on an individual basis). As with fundraising, programs are required to identify training hours separately on the member time records.

E. TRAINING PROVIDERS

Volunteer Iowa recommends programs not create and conduct every required training from scratch; we encourage programs to connect with local experts in the field or other AmeriCorps programs for shared resources and collaboration on training. Seeking skilled trainers to provide training on required or program-necessary topics may be a source of in-kind match if they are willing to provide the training fee or at a reduced cost. Another resource for training and technical assistance is to reference the America's Service Commissions (ASC) (See: [TTA Directory](#))

F. TRAINING COLLABORATION AND CONNECTION TO OTHER NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

Programs are encouraged to open required trainings, service projects, and other general formal or informal gatherings to members from other programs in the area in order to facilitate a local network of service and support. Time will be set aside at each program staff TEAMS webinar to share this information and collaboration opportunities can be included in the weekly AmeriCorps State Updates or posted in Basecamp. AmeriCorps' Litmos platform also has a wide variety of training. Programs are encouraged to look for ongoing ways to connect their members to other national service programs and participants. Volunteer Iowa has a directory of all Iowa AmeriCorps State programs on our website, and we can also help programs connect with AmeriCorps VISTA and AmeriCorps Seniors programs. Members benefit from understanding how their service connects them to the larger national service network.

2. VOLUNTEER IOWA MEMBER SUPPORT

A. AMERICORPS MEMBER EMERGENCY/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUND

As it has funds available, Volunteer Iowa will offer emergency financial assistance to eligible Iowa AmeriCorps members. The specific eligibility requirements and other terms and conditions for receipt of the funds may vary depending on the funding source utilized. When such financial assistance is available, members are typically limited to receiving a maximum of \$500 per program year. Volunteer Iowa will announce available funding and application requirements to programs and program staff are expected to communicate this information to all members.

3. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

A. DEVELOPING A PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION FOR MEMBERS

Volunteer Iowa encourages programs to establish a process that will ensure each member will have performance expectations developed for them prior to the start of their service. These expectations should be developed in partnership with the site supervisor and should be reviewed with each member at the beginning of the service term. This should start with a clear member position description that includes metrics, frequency, timelines, and the program, host site and member having a joint understanding of member service goals. Any questions and concerns members have about service activities can be discussed. The performance expectations should then be used as the basis for the mid-term and end-of-term evaluations. If changes and/or additions need to be made, those should be documented on the form and noted by both the site supervisor and the member. If the member struggles later with behavioral issues or with site-specific tasks, this document could be used to set short-term goals as part of a corrective action plan. How to Set Clear Expectations:

I. BE CLEAR ON THE OUTCOME

What is the desired result of the work? Make sure the member or team have the proper materials or equipment to get the job done! Provide a timeline or deadline if there is one for specific components. Write them down for later reference.

II. ASK CLARIFYING QUESTIONS AND GIVE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR QUESTIONS UP FRONT

Ask some questions like, "Are there any concerns?" Create the opportunity for the member to think about the service activity and then ask questions may come to mind. Be open to questions that the member thinks of at a later date. Make sure the member and site supervisor and/or program staff have a mutual understanding before everyone leaves.

III. ASSIST IN REMOVING ROADBLOCKS AND OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

As program staff, or potentially, the site supervisor, the best way to assist members in growing in their positions is to help them by removing those administrative roadblocks. Typically, the roadblock would be paperwork that needs to be managed in a timely fashion. Help them by talking to them about the importance of paperwork and ensuring they have it in advance, so it can be completed and submitted on time. Whatever the roadblock or obstacle is, member(s) will appreciate program staff looking out for them and providing them with that guidance.

IV. MANAGE THE OUTCOME

In the end, think about what is important in the project. Regardless of the outcome, remember the project result and the members are still our responsibility. If the program or site supervisors do not see progress in the project, it is the program leadership's responsibility to step in. Do not lay the responsibility at the feet of the members. However, when the project goes well and is recognized, share the kudos with the members; they deserve gratitude as well!

B. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF MEMBERS

Volunteer Iowa encourages programs to create a professional development program for members, which is supported by grant funds. Member professional development must be supported by funding outlined in the budget. Generally, the funds are budgeted on a per member basis and amounts are

based upon term type. Members should be included in the creation of their professional development plans. Member training is required and is focused on learning processes to enable members to be successful during their terms of service. Professional development strongly encouraged and is focused on the future, helping members prepare for future goals.

C. PROVIDING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK TO MEMBERS

Volunteer Iowa encourages programs to provide members feedback both formally and informally on a regular basis. Here are some basic rules of feedback:

- Whenever possible, feedback should be given face-to-face. Just as in other types of communication, the receiver likes to be able to read the non-verbal communication as well as being able to hear the words being communicated during the important exchange.
- Feedback should be immediate. While immediacy is not always possible, the message should be delivered as soon as possible, particularly while the event(s) is still fresh in everyone's minds.
- The content is critical as well. It is important that feedback is direct, but balanced – both positive and negative, and includes things that can be improved upon. Mixed messages look or sound like this – “Jane, you did a good job on the agenda, BUT the packets for the training were awful.” Jane did not hear the positives that were mentioned; she was only concentrating on the negative things. Another form of feedback to avoid is the “need to” phrase, “Jane, you need to concentrate on improving the quality of the material in the training packets.” This form of feedback sounds more like an accusation and implies that something did not go well but lacks detail about what specifically needs improvement.
- When giving negative feedback, the goal should be to build an awareness that will lead to corrective action and improvement. Approach the conversation with a truly negative tone and the member will likely not make the transition to improved performance without additional effort on everyone's part, “Jane, I am concerned about your ability to manage your current workflow, even though we have taken steps to reduce it over the last three weeks.”
- For positive situations, express appreciation, “Jane, the way you handled the situation with the angry customer was wonderful! I was truly impressed with your ability to defuse his anger. Good job!”
- Be prepared with specifics to back up feedback, particularly negative feedback. Ensure the feedback is accurate, be prepared to show the member specific examples, data, or information that highlights concerns and offer corrective actions the member can take.
- Feedback should be given regularly. For some members, this may be their first experience in a structured work setting. They will seek affirmation that what they are doing is aligned with the service the program would like them to complete and they are doing it well. Let members know they are doing a great job throughout their term of service – not just at evaluation time.

D. ESTABLISH REGULAR COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS

One of the greatest ways to provide ongoing member support is to utilize effective communication. While that seems simple, actual two-way communication takes time and effort. In many AmeriCorps programs, members are not co-located with their program and may not have other program members near to them. This can make program communication much more important, meaningful,

and potentially difficult. Additionally, not everyone has the same learning style, so some members appreciate receiving phone calls, while others would prefer texts. Still others want everything in writing so they can refer to the message later. Programs should ask their members which form of communication is preferred and then use that method to reach out to their members individually. This may also hold true with frequency of communication. Members should also understand there will be times when a group email to all members, with written information, will be necessary.

Take time to communicate with members on a regular basis, sharing required information, such as important dates and reminders, etc., as well as celebrating achievements, birthdays, and milestones. Programs should consider term type and term length while communicating with members. A monthly call may be the best option for members serving longer full-time terms; however, for summer minimum time members that may not be frequent enough to touch base and address any questions or concerns. Establishing a strong connection with members through frequent communication, even with those not onsite, will pay dividends, both in terms of member retention and overall member performance. Understanding how best to communicate with members will help the program reach members more quickly and help them access the information more rapidly.

E. TEAM DEVELOPMENT

When individuals join to form a group or team, they take on a life of their own, each forming a unique personality and energy level. One common factor in groups is the developmental stages they experience, comparable to stages of individual growth: infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Each stage has its own characteristics and requirements; each stage builds on the previous ones.

F. MEMBER REFLECTION

Part of any learning experience is being able to look back at a service activity, volunteer event, or daily occurrence and consider how it might have impacted the individual providing the service, others, or the world. Reflection in service offers members a way to look back at complex problems through a new lens. Using reflection, members examine their experiences, evaluate them, and apply new insights to future experiences. Members build skills necessary for analyzing and solving problems and developing creative solutions.

Leading members in opportunities designed to deepen their civic engagement and add meaning to the member service experiences they are having will improve their overall AmeriCorps term. Well-developed activities do not need to be time-consuming; they can be done in groups or in private as individual member reflections.

While member reflections are not required by Volunteer Iowa, it is suggested in the AmeriCorps regulations as it is a valuable and worthwhile activity for members to participate in and should be incorporated in the member service experience.

G. ENSURING MEMBERS HAVE ADEQUATE TRAINING FOR SUCCESS DURING THEIR TERM OF SERVICE ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

Programs should be thinking beyond the required AmeriCorps training topics to determine what training members within their program need to be prepared and successful during their term of service with the organization or host site. For some programs it is easier because there is a specific, written curriculum. For other programs, they will need to determine what training to provide in partnership with host sites. In some cases, the program should provide the training, while in others, it may make more sense for the host site to provide the training. It is the program staff responsibility to ensure that members have the training they need to be successful and prepared for their service. This includes ensuring that the members have internalized the training skills to confidently apply them in a real-world setting. If members are not all co-located, the program will depend on communication methods, supervisors, and feedback from others. In the end, this all impacts the program's ability to meet the performance measurements set out in the grant.

As part of a program's continuous improvement plan, the program should evaluate the training to ensure that it is meeting the program's goals. Several processes may be employed, for example:

- Observation – observing changed behavior in members based upon training
- Pre and post testing – offered in conjunction with member training
- Focus groups – meeting with members and talking about their work processes after training has taken place (best led by someone outside the organization or not known by members)
- One-on-one interview with members – to see how their behaviors have changed and skills have improved since training
- Surveys – questioning members about outcomes of changed behaviors and skills

In most cases, program staff will want to employ more than one of these techniques to ensure they have a well-rounded and accurate training plan.

H. ENSURING MEMBERS HAVE ADEQUATE MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

As with discovering whether the training plan is adequate, the quickest way to find out whether members have adequate materials and equipment is to ask them directly. While most often members will report that they have indeed had what they needed during the term, there have been cases where members have been purchasing basic supplies out-of-pocket and not seeking reimbursement for them.

I. MEMBER SAFETY

Member safety should be one of the top considerations as the program design and service activities are developed. Whether it is the location of the service site, the equipment the member uses or the types of service activities a member engages in during their term, nearly every member faces some type of safety concern. Some things to consider include:

I. PERSONAL SAFETY TRAINING:

- a. Prevent Sexual Harassment;
- b. Safe passage, safe areas, and escorts, if necessary, to and from the service site;
- c. Assignments of participants in pairs or groups.

II. SAFETY AWARENESS TRAINING:

Adequate training is of great importance. Training should provide clear guidance for member safety as well as procedures to help ensure safety. Volunteer Iowa suggests that safety awareness training should occur during member orientation and reinforced during service, as determined by specific service activities. The training should also include sessions on:

- a. Procedures for obtaining immediate assistance in the event of an emergency, including explicit guidelines for reacting to dangerous or threatening situations;
- b. Becoming familiar with the community (this would be particularly necessary for members relocating to the area);
- c. Safe handling of equipment and tools (as appropriate but think beyond chainsaws and power tools).

The program and host site should take reasonable steps to ensure member safety during service. Programs are encouraged to set parameters for member service hours allowed per day/week/month. Volunteer Iowa provided the following as a recommended maximum service scheduled for members in the Host Site Agreement: "AmeriCorps members cannot serve more than 12 hours in a day, 120 hours in a two-week period, and 200 hours in a month without prior approval from Program." Programs and site supervisors should monitor member service hours during their term to ensure that members have adequate time to complete their service without serving excessive hours as their term nears its end.

To protect member safety, the program is expected to follow CDC Guidelines related to any declared public health emergency. This may include social distancing, wearing of masks (or other protective gear), providing the opportunity to serve from an alternate location on a temporary basis, and required quarantine or isolation in cases of positive tests or exposure, etc. These guidelines may change based on a variety of factors. Therefore, the program is encouraged to regularly check the CDC website for the most recent guidance and notify host sites of significant changes in CDC recommendations that impact member service. If program intends to pursue mandatory vaccination for member(s), they must obtain approval from Volunteer Iowa.

III. SUPERVISION

Effective supervision of members is one of the best ways to ensure safety. Providing Site Supervisor training, including expectation for the development of onsite safety guidelines,

and the assurance that members will be made aware of the location of safety items, such as first aid kits and portable defibrillators (if available) and the location of storm shelters

IV. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Precautionary measures for service activities and projects could include:

- Assignment during daylight hours and enhanced security for carefully planned activities during evening hours;
- Service activities that are appropriate for the participants' ages and abilities;
- Awareness of weather, road conditions and other issues related to seasonal temperatures in Iowa (both extremes);
- Location of storm shelters and active shooter protocol;
- Attendance of someone trained in First Aid/CPR and the use of portable defibrillators (if available).

Many programs provide training for things that appear dangerous to most everyone, like operating chainsaws or working with power tools; but accidents can happen in any setting and learning how to operate simple pieces of equipment can make the difference.

To be prepared for any health and safety situation, Volunteer Iowa has developed a resource to support member safety and encourages programs to consider putting processes in place or having access to the following:

- A process to collect and/or update member emergency contact information.
- A process that ensures members know how to access their health insurance and ASC [Member Assistance Program](#) (phone/online access to licensed counseling) if applicable.
- Formal and informal mechanisms to help support members in dealing with personal or family challenges and/or crises.
- The program's retention of General Liability insurance coverage as required per the AmeriCorps [Terms and Conditions](#); this coverage includes employees and national service participants.
- In the case of member injury or death, a process that outlines how the program will notify in a timely manner relevant contacts in the member's and program's service circle (i.e., fellow members, supervisor, host site, community contacts).
- In the case of member injury or death, how the program will notify Volunteer Iowa in a timely manner.
- How the program will develop an action plan as appropriate to sustain the service work of the member for the length of time an injury impacts their ability to perform all or part of that service, or for the duration of the member service term in the event of a member death; how that action plan will be communicated to AmeriCorps.
- In the event of a member death, measures the program will take to connect fellow members, service site staff and program staff with access to grief counseling and other modes of support.

- In the event of a member death, measures the program will as appropriate take to communicate condolences to member family and friends, including the option to submit a request to Volunteer Iowa to pursue generation of a letter of condolence from the Director of AmeriCorps.

J. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

Volunteer Iowa challenges program staff to be thoughtful and mindful not only of the quality of required annual trainings, but to also think of member needs on an individual basis.

- What do members need to grow to that next level?
- Is there a training that would be perfect for them?
- Is there a mentoring relationship that would really benefit a member to move along their desired career path?
- Is there a special opportunity or speaker who can present to members in an area they have expressed an interest in?
- Are there resources suggested for a member that needs additional help in a particular area?
- Can a member step up and take on special leadership opportunities within your program to get additional experience by organizing an event or a meeting with partners?

All these things can be scaled to meet the program's budget and your members' needs. Some of the situations should include a framework with a time commitment from both parties that is clearly understood by the member. The opportunities are only limited by time and your imagination.

As with any "extra" service or process, these member development activities often go unmonitored. But it is necessary when pairing members with community members in the roles of mentors to ensure that the program is monitoring the progress of the arrangement.

Members' feedback should be gathered and taken into consideration, not only with this process, but after all trainings throughout the year. Programs should work to incorporate member feedback as quickly as possible, seeing it as a tool for improving training and orientation. Additionally, clearly communicate to members how best to contact the program staff with any concerns they may have about their service.

K. MEMBER SUPERVISION

Member supervision is critical to the overall success of an AmeriCorps program. It is a greater challenge when all members are not co-located with the program or for members serving in a shorter term. If members are not co-located, site supervisors should develop and provide a site orientation training in addition to the program orientation the member received when they enrolled, or shortly thereafter. For members serving shorter terms, supervisors should be intentional in creating a plan for supporting members and providing feedback quickly to ensure member success. Other site supervisor responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- i. Supervision cooperation with programs, should develop performance plans for each member.

- ii. Supervisors should have regularly scheduled check-ins with members to review their service.
 - a. The member position description and performance plan should clearly outline member expectations for the upcoming term
 - b. Any changes to the member's term, should also be made in these documents
- iii. Supervisors should provide feedback to the members regularly, not only on the things in the performance plan, but on other activities the member participates in – See above for help in providing feedback
- iv. Supervisors should be responsible for participating in the written, formal evaluation process.
- v. Supervisors are responsible for reviewing and approving timesheets. As a part of this responsibility, Supervisors should monitor member progress toward the completion of the term of service. Should a member fall behind, the Supervisors action would include:
 - a. Bringing this to the attention of the member and program staff
 - b. Including this situation in the member evaluation, should this occur during the evaluation period, and develop a plan to bring the member on track
 - c. Ensure the member stays on track with the plan according to the schedule. If the member does not stay on track, the site supervisor should communicate with the program.
- vi. Supervisors should participate in decisions regarding member discipline and should be communicating regularly on this topic if the program is not co-located with the member in question
- vii. Supervisors should be communicating regularly with the appropriate program staff member regarding member supervision.

Site supervisor expectations are detailed in a Host Site Agreement. This is the agreement between the organization holding the grant agreement with Volunteer Iowa, and the partner organization hosting the member. There is a resource for site supervisors that condenses the information from the Host Site Agreement that pertains specifically to the expectations for site supervisors. The Host Site Agreement Highlights resource is available on Basecamp. From the member's point of view, these are things they need to know or should be able to report in a follow-up survey or monitoring. The responsibility for these may fall on either the program or site supervisor, depending upon the program design.

- Members know how to report a problem
- Members know to whom to report a problem
- Members understand they have a grievance process and support if they feel they are being asked to do something they believe is not right or they are uncomfortable with, and they have exhausted other avenues
- Members know who their site supervisor is
- Members know the difference between their site supervisor and their program
- Members feel well supported o Members report their questions are answered in a timely manner

- Members report their site supervisor knows information about AmeriCorps or knows where to find the information
- Member report having the tools to do their service activities
- Member report having clear expectations
- Members report receiving feedback from their site supervisors and/or program staff regarding their service

L. NEPOTISM POLICY

In order to avoid the presence or perception of nepotism within Volunteer Iowa's AmeriCorps programs and to provide appropriate support to members, Iowa AmeriCorps programs should avoid situations in which an AmeriCorps member is directly supervised by a close relative. For this purpose, the term "close relative" includes relationships such as: parent/stepparent, child/stepchild, sibling/stepsibling, grandchild, grandparent, spouse, cousin, niece, nephew, aunt, or uncle. Additionally, if a member enrolls in a program managed by lead or key staff that is a close relative, that member should have the background check should be completed and enrolled by someone other than the relative. AmeriCorps programs are also encouraged to follow any policy their organization may have on nepotism and may impose more stringent requirements for their program.

REFERENCES

- AmeriCorps State and National (ASN) 2024 Terms and Conditions, [2024 Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants](#)
- AmeriCorps State and National Regulations <https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/textidx?SID=7ca2eb2ecd1b1905f8d4f430d4a560c0&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title45/45chapterXXV.tpl>
- AmeriCorps State and National Policy FAQs https://www.volunteeriowa.org/sites/default/files/documents/2020/07/2-ameri-corps_state_national_policy_faqs.pdf

4

FISCAL OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

1. OVERVIEW

The program has full fiscal and programmatic responsibility for managing all aspects of grant and grant-supported activities, subject to the oversight of Volunteer Iowa. Grant and financial management are inextricably linked. That is, poor member and program management have negative impacts on financial management because member/program compliance issues often result in disallowed costs.

The program is accountable to Volunteer Iowa and AmeriCorps, for operation of its Iowa AmeriCorps Program and use of AmeriCorps funds. Although programs are encouraged to seek the advice and opinion of Volunteer Iowa staff on circumstances that may arise, such advice does not diminish the program's accountability for operating decisions.

It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of effective grants and financial management standards, be good stewards of federal resources by practicing strong financial, grant, program, and member management, and to continually improve the systems and practices used in these areas. Volunteer Iowa staff are committed to sharing updates, resources, and training on relevant topics impacting financial management. All financial staff are encouraged to participate in relevant calls and trainings. Please reference the calendar in section 1.4 for more information.

Program staff plays an important role in financial management of the AmeriCorps grant, such as budget development, managing program expenditures, budget monitoring, and financial reporting. Ongoing communication between program and financial staff is essential for strong program and financial management and compliance. Some key elements include:

- i. **Connecting the budget/expenditures to program objectives.**
Example: Ensuring member trainings costs are connected to the approved grant objectives.
- ii. **Identifying and correcting discrepancies.**
Example: Reviewing financial reports and noting if something is inadvertently charged to AmeriCorps that is related to another program or which should be under admin costs.
- iii. **Understanding requirements and applying them correctly and consistently.**
Example: Knowing that organizational background checks will not meet AmeriCorps requirements and ensuring that the correct checks are paid for and conducted.
- iv. **Identifying trends and issues that impact the budget.**
Example: Knowing that increases in living allowances are necessary in order to recruit and retain members. Informing key staff and working to raise additional funding, if needed.
- v. **Proactively solving budgetary issues.**
Example: Identifying that travel costs are much higher due to higher gas prices and proposing adjustments in other areas of the budget to account for this.

- vi. **Identifying risks and mitigating or accepting calculated risks.**
Example: Having members working with chainsaws increases program insurance costs, but if there is an accident, the costs will increase further. Therefore, you ensure members receive advanced chainsaw training and establish safety standards.
- vii. **Establishing budgetary priorities (in conjunction with program priorities).**
Example: You decide to prioritize paying for an additional member healthcare benefit to cover mental health services because you have had several members leave the program for this reason and member retention/health/wellness are a program priority.
- viii. **Identifying and notifying relevant parties of mistakes/errors that impact the budget.**
Example: You notice that no funds were included for upgrading computer equipment and your technology device is outdated, so you bring this to the attention of the financial staff.
- ix. **Timeliness and accuracy of reporting.**
Example: You send a reminder to your accountant based on the reporting deadlines in the Program Manual and Weekly Update message from Volunteer Iowa.
- x. **Site interactions, including reporting and collecting match and development of site agreements, if applicable.**
Example: You realize that the program costs are increasing and therefore, you recommend that the program increase host site fees as one way to help cover these costs.
- xi. **Sharing information conveyed from Volunteer Iowa or AmeriCorps pertaining to key budgetary or programmatic elements.**
Example: You send an update to your accounting team when AmeriCorps announces a change that impacts the budget (such as all staff needs a three-part NSCHC).
- xii. **Authorizing, approving, and coding of program costs (including allocation).**
Example: You review the office supply receipt to ensure that only AmeriCorps related costs are charged to the AmeriCorps grant.

2. PERTINENT TERMS AND CONCEPTS

- i. **Grantee/Recipient**
The party or parties to a grant funded, in whole or in part, with Federal financial assistance, other than the Prime Grantee/Recipient, and includes grantees, subgrantees, Subrecipients and borrowers. For the purposes of Transparency Act reporting, grantee does not include Vendors.
- ii. **Prime Grantee/Prime Recipient**
The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service (Volunteer Iowa) is the prime grant or prime recipient for the AmeriCorps funds.
- iii. **Subaward**
AmeriCorps grants are considered federal pass-through grants to “subrecipients.” While this manual uses the term “program” for the purposes of federal grant management, it is important to note that programs are considered “grantees,” “subgrantees,” or “recipients,” or “subrecipients.”

- iv. **National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC)**
The required process by which members or staff who are included on the grant budget undergo an examination of their criminal history using a specific process as mandated by AmeriCorps.
- v. **Fixed Amount Grants (Fixed Amount and Education Award Only Grants)**
Grants of this type are exempt from the Cost Principles in 2 CFR, Subpart E, which means that the amount AmeriCorps awards is not based on a line-item budget and programs are not required to maintain documentation to support the allowability of expenditures charged to federal or matching grant funds. The remaining provisions of 2 CFR Part 200 are not exempt. Federal assistance is based on the approved and awarded numbers of full-time members and the members' completion of their terms of service.
- vi. **Reasonable Assurance**
A concept that acknowledges that control systems should be developed and implemented to provide management with the appropriate balance between risk of a certain business practice and the level of control required to ensure business objectives are met.
- vii. **Program Income**
Program income is revenue earned as a direct result of the grant-funded program activities during the award period and must be retained by the Grantee and used to finance the grant's non-AmeriCorps/match share.
- viii. **Cost Allocation Policy**
A narrative description of the procedures that the organization will use in identifying, measuring, and allocating incurred costs when they benefit more than one program administered by the organization. A cost allocation policy may include a written cost allocation plan that details how various costs will be handled.

3. FEDERAL GRANT BASICS ([2 CFR 200](#))

The program and financial staff are responsible for managing project costs related to the AmeriCorps grant. Staff must be vigilant; ensuring costs are allowable under applicable regulations and policies, properly allocated to the correct project, and are considered necessary and reasonable. In addition, costs must be treated consistently throughout the organization and across programs.

A. ACCOUNTING SYSTEM ([2 CFR 200.302](#))

The program shall establish and maintain a financial management system based on sound management policies and procedures to effectively control and account for all grant funds, including maximum segregation of financial duties.

The program and financial staff should ensure that the organization has in place and maintains financial management systems that include:

- Standard accounting practices,
- Sufficient internal controls,
- A clear audit trail, including a crosswalk to detail cost categories in your financial records that may vary from AmeriCorps categories. (For example, your accounting system may

have a telephone expense category, but telephone is not a category for the AmeriCorps budget, so those costs are coded to supplies for the purposes of the AmeriCorps grant.

- Costs should be treated consistently throughout the grant year and detailed in policies/procedures, including a written cost allocation policy and procedures (as necessary),
- The ability to distinguish expenditures attributable to this grant from expenditures not attributable to this grant,
- Accounting for each award/grant separately,
- Identification of costs by programmatic year and by budget category, and
- Differentiation between direct and indirect costs or administrative costs.

B. REASONABLE, ALLOCABLE AND ALLOWABLE ([2 CFR 200.404](#); [2 CFR 200.405](#); [2 CFR 400.403](#))

Procedures shall be established for determining reasonableness, allocability, and allowability of costs, in accordance with applicable cost principles and terms of the grant as defined in the grant agreement. Procedures shall be applied consistently across all programs.

I. REASONABLE ([2 CFR 200.404](#))

To be reasonable, a cost must meet the following criteria:

- What a prudent person would consider reasonable under the circumstances at the time the cost is incurred;
- Is generally recognized as ordinary and necessary for the operation of the grant or program;
- Is consistent with sound business practices, established laws and regulations, and terms of the program being charged;
- Is consistent with the market price for comparable goods or services; and
- Any deviation from established practices by the entity is explained and justified.
- Be authorized, or not prohibited, under state or local laws or regulations.
- Withholding federal or state limitations or exclusions set forth (for example, maximum costs or unallowable funds);
- Not be allocable to or included as a cost of any other program in either the current or prior period;
- Be net of all applicable credits; (for example, if you receive a discount on an item, you can only charge the discounted price to the grant, not the full price that you did not pay.)
- Allocable ([2 CFR 200.405](#))

A cost that can be assigned or charged to one or more activities or programs based on benefits received or in a reasonable proportion to benefits received, if the exact benefit basis cannot be determined. A shared cost that is allocable to a specific program may not be shifted to another program.

A shared cost is allocable:

- Based on its relative benefits received

- If it is treated consistently with other costs incurred for the same purpose in similar circumstances and if it:
 - is incurred specifically for the award
 - benefits both the award and other work and can be distributed in a reasonable proportion to the benefits received
 - is necessary to the overall operation of the organization

II. ALLOWABLE ([2 CFR 200.403](#) AND [GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#))

To be allowable, costs must:

- Be necessary and reasonable for the proper and efficient administration of the Iowa AmeriCorps Program,
- Conform to grant award limitations or cost principles,
- Be consistent with policies and procedures that apply to the federal and non-federal activities of the organization,
- Be included in the approved program budget,
- Be given consistent treatment,
- Be in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP),
- Be adequately documented, and
- Not be included as a cost or used to meet cost sharing or matching requirements of any other federally funded program. (Unless explicitly allowed by the other federally funded program.)

Additionally, AmeriCorps/Volunteer Iowa's AmeriCorps State programs have some specific conditions for certain types of costs, for example meal costs for member or site supervisor training sessions. See below for details about allowable food/beverage items. Programs may use non-grant funds to provide food/beverages during training events that are fewer than six hours.

III. UNALLOWABLE COSTS ([2 CFR 200.400 - 200.476](#))

Care should be taken to ensure that unallowable costs are not charged to the federal share or reported as program share/match to the AmeriCorps grant. Program officials should review the [Uniform Guidance](#) to determine whether a cost is allowable. In addition to the unallowable costs referenced in the regulations, other specific activities are unallowable for AmeriCorps ([2 CFR 2520.65](#)):

- Fundraising by staff
- Generally, writing of the AmeriCorps grant ([2 CFR 200.442](#))
- The value of nonprofessional volunteer hours as match
- Member unemployment (Iowa-specific ruling)
- Costs that support prohibited member activities
- Costs to support member activities that are not included in the approved grant narrative
- Costs for members serving outside of their service agreement (either the start/end dates or the activities outlined within)

- Costs for members that are incurred before the individual is successfully enrolled in eGrants (however, costs for member recruitment and NSCHC are considered ongoing and can be charged in the year they were incurred)
- Costs for staff that are incurred before the AmeriCorps NSCHC has been completed
- Costs for members or staff that are ineligible to serve/work due to results from the NSCHC
- Meal costs for staff-only planning or training sessions
- Supplies for days of service projects, unless specifically included in the approved budget
- Snacks and beverages for training sessions
- Meals for AmeriCorps grants are viewed as entertainment by the AmeriCorps Office of Inspector General and are therefore unallowable. Exceptions:
 - 1) If a staff or AmeriCorps member is in travel status (outside of the county where they live or as defined by your organizational policy),
 - 2) If members or staff are participating in an AmeriCorps training that is six (6) hours or more that is supported by an agenda and sign-in sheet,
 - 3) If the food costs are expressly included in the approved AmeriCorps budget narrative.

IV. GRANT COSTS

The total cost of a grant is comprised allowable direct cost, plus the allocable portion of allowable indirect costs (administrative costs), less applicable credits. Guidelines for determining direct and indirect costs allowable under grants are provided below.

V. DIRECT COSTS

Direct costs are specific expenses related to the operations of a specific project and are readily assignable to the AmeriCorps program.

VI. INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs are those that are not directly identified with a program, but is necessary for the general operation of the organization. Similar costs incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances must be treated consistently as either direct or indirect costs. Costs across programs must be treated consistently in accordance with the organizational policies.

VII. ALLOCATION OF SHARED COSTS

Shared costs are those direct costs that benefit more than one program objective; if a direct relationship cannot be established it is considered a shared cost. (See cost allocation policy in section 2.1.)

VIII. CONSISTENT TREATMENT

There is no universal rule for classifying certain costs as either direct or indirect; therefore, each item of cost for the Iowa AmeriCorps program should be treated consistently as either a direct or an indirect cost. Costs must be given consistent treatment through application of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles ([GAAP](#)) appropriate to the circumstances.

EXAMPLE: A cost (such as an audit or an accountant’s time) cannot be treated as a direct cost to AmeriCorps but treated as an administrative cost to other programs operated by the organization.

4. GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

Both the program and financial staff should ensure that the program adheres to Volunteer Iowa and AmeriCorps policies for operation of an AmeriCorps grant. Key governing documents are referenced below and incorporated in the grant agreement.

A. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)

These include the [Uniform Guidance](#) (2 CFR 1-2). The federal regulations contain the cost principles, administrative requirements and audit requirements for organizations receiving federal funds.

Administrative Requirements	Uniform Guidance 2CFR Chapter I and Chapter II, Parts 200, 215, 220, 225 and 230			
Uniform Guidance Administrative Requirements	Educational Institutions 45 CFR 2543 2 CFR 215	Governments 45 CFR 2541	Non-Profits 45 CFR 2543 2 CFR 215	Hospitals 45 CFR 2543 2 CFR 215
Administrative Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting system requirements • Documentation requirements • Cost sharing or matching • Program income • Standards for financial management systems 			
*Cost Principles	Uniform Guidance 2 CFR Chapter I and Chapter II, Parts 200, 215, 220, 225 and 230			
Uniform Guidance Cost Principles	Educational Institutions 2 CFR 220	Governments 2 CFR 225	Non-Profits 2 CFR 230	Hospitals 45 CFR 74
Cost Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowable and Unallowable Costs • Indirect Costs • Reimbursement Requirements • Consistent Treatment of Costs 			
Audit Requirements	Single Audit Requirements apply if organization expends at least \$750,000 of Federal funds in its fiscal year			
Single Audit Requirements	Uniform Guidance 2 CFR Chapter I and Chapter II, Parts 200, 215, 220, 225 and 230			

*Note: Fixed Amount Grants are exempt from 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E, but other Uniform Guidance requirements still apply.

B. STATE AND LOCAL REGULATIONS

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

C. GRANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Terms and Conditions are the guiding principles for AmeriCorps-funded grants. These include the certifications and assurances that are agreed upon by the program at the time of application submission. AmeriCorps Programs are subject to both [General Terms and Conditions](#) and [ASN Terms and Conditions](#); in some cases, Special Conditions may apply and if so, they will be listed in the grant agreement and in IowaGrants under Grant Reference Material.

D. NOTICE OF GRANT AWARD (NOGA)

The official notice of grant funding from AmeriCorps. The Notice of Grant Award is made at the Prime Grantee level and grant awards to programs are based on the NOGA.

E. APPROVED GRANT APPLICATION AND BUDGET

As submitted in eGrants. This includes the grant narrative, logic model, evaluation plan, budget, performance measures, and supporting documents.

F. APPLICATION MATERIALS FOR CURRENT GRANT YEAR

All materials can be found online (AmeriCorps website, Volunteer Iowa Website and/or Basecamp).

- Volunteer Iowa Funding Opportunity Announcement, Request for Applications (RFA), Application Instructions, Review Criteria, and Planning Application Instructions: Contains specific financial details that change on an annual basis (such as the maximum living allowance). Contains details on how the application should be completed and submitted.
- Volunteer Iowa Pre-Application Instructions: Shares guidance on the required preapplication and includes information on available waivers.
- Volunteer Iowa State Priority Certification: Guidance and worksheets for requesting certification for priority areas established by the state.
- AmeriCorps Mandatory Supplemental Information: Contains important definitions and other details to support the AmeriCorps grant.
- AmeriCorps Performance Measure Instructions: Detailed information on AmeriCorps performance measure requirements, including the national performance measures.
- Public Health AmeriCorps Performance Measure Instructions: Detailed information on Public Health AmeriCorps performance measure requirements, including the national performance measures.
- Attachments: Tools and resources to support submission of an Iowa AmeriCorps application.

G. AMERICORPS GRANT AGREEMENT

The Grant Agreement issued by Volunteer Iowa governs the grant and contains specific reporting deadlines and other details. The Grant Agreement binds the program to comply with its approved grant application and other documents which are incorporated by reference into the grant agreement. Many key financial management components are covered in the Grant Agreement, so program and financial staff are encouraged to read this document closely. A copy of the signed Grant Agreement and any approved amendments are in IowaGrants under Grant Reference Materials.

5. FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ([GAO STANDARDS FOR INTERNAL CONTROLS](#))

The program and financial staff should work together to ensure that the organization has adequate policies and procedures in place for effective grant management. Volunteer Iowa reviews a select group of policies and procedures as part of our regular monitoring process; however, we retain the right to request any relevant policies or procedures to support claimed costs and/or to provide technical assistance. Resources and tools are available in Basecamp. In addition, Volunteer Iowa has samples of some policies and procedures available for your use. Please contact the compliance officer if you are interested in utilizing a sample or having Volunteer Iowa review a specific policy or procedure. The following are some key elements of effective financial management policies:

- **Reporting process and procedures** that provide accurate, current, and complete disclosure of the revenue and expenses of each grant in accordance with reporting requirements established by Volunteer Iowa and AmeriCorps.
- **Maximize internal controls** to serve as a checks and balances system. Internal controls include segregation of duties, wherein both the program and financial staff have clear roles in approving expenditures, tracking, and recording transactions, identifying, and correcting discrepancies, maintaining documentation, etc.
- **Internal cash control policies** to ensure safeguarding of assets, reliability of financial information and compliance (including procedure for monitoring variances in budget, to identify why variances occurred and to make budgetary adjustments).
- **Effective control system** to provide reasonable assurance for the safeguarding of assets, the reliability of financial information, and the compliance with laws and regulations. The cost of a control should not exceed the benefit derived from it.
- **Avoid recurring deficits and secure adequate funding** to carry out mission and activities.
- **Expend funds responsibly** in compliance with conditions attached to funding.
- **Policy for tracking in-kind match** for the AmeriCorps grant. If a program uses in-kind match to provide grantee share of costs, these costs should be tracked within the organization's financial management system. If a program elects to track in-kind match outside of the financial system, a specific AmeriCorps policy must be developed and approved. Procedures for documenting in-kind match that is not tracked in the organization's financial records must also be established. A template policy to support in-kind tracking in this manner is available on Basecamp.
- **Policy for tracking, use and reporting of Program Income** ([2 CFR 200.307](#) and [42 CFR 2541.250](#)) Regulations require that programs fully utilize program income at the time it is earned to ensure that there is not excess program income on hand or at the end of the grant period. Programs should not request federal funds through the claim/reimbursement process if they have program income on hand. Program income on hand must be expended before federal funds are requested.
- **Ensure that assets are used solely for the benefits of the organization** and not personal or other gains. Program-specific funds or donor designated funds should be used for the purposes for which they are approved/designated and not shifted to support general operations or other costs.
- **Code of Conduct** for employees encourages ethical behavior, accountability and transparency while discouraging or prohibiting unethical behavior (such as nepotism), harassment,

discrimination, breaches of confidentiality, and other undesirable, dangerous, or illegal behavior. Procedures shall be in place to ensure that all staff and board members are familiar with and comply with the code. AmeriCorps members have the Code of Conduct included in their Member Service Agreement.

- **Clear conflict of interest policy** should be employed and reviewed and approved annually by the board. This should include a policy on nepotism.
- **Procedures for determining reasonableness, allocability, and allowability of costs**, in accordance with applicable cost principles and terms of the grant as defined by the Volunteer Iowa. Procedures must be applied consistently across all programs.
- **Record retention and destruction procedures** shall be established to store, secure, and maintain records and to ensure that records can be obtained and presented for review during monitoring or audit. More information on record retention can be found in Section 2.1.

6. COMMON AUDIT FINDINGS

Program policies should be evaluated from the perspective of potential financial implications. With this in mind, Volunteer Iowa shares these common areas of questioned costs and repayments in recent AmeriCorps audits. To prevent audit findings, strong AmeriCorps-specific policies and procedures in the following areas should be created, followed, and regularly reviewed/updated. In some cases, these policies are detailed in Section 2.1, Subsection 4 of this manual. These are the most common audit findings as identified by AmeriCorps Office of Inspector General:

- Member and staff timekeeping (lack of documentation, shortage of hours, supervisors and members with excessive hours, unsigned timesheets, costs claimed based on budget not actuals, costs claimed before or after member service agreement period, costs claimed before or after grant agreement period).
- Member end-term evaluations are not completed (if member serves any terms without an end evaluation of a prior year, all costs for subsequent terms are questioned).
- Program activities (member or staff training or travel lack supporting documentation, member activities are not included in the approved grant, member activities replace or displace paid staff).
- Program costs are excessive or not included in the approved budget/grant (failing to obtain a budget amendment for a planned change in their budget, costs are not relevant or necessary to the grant).
- Source documentation has not been retained and therefore is not available to support claimed costs.

7. BUDGET OVERVIEW

Budget description by section with highlights of key resources and tips for common errors in reporting/documentation. The documentation standards and requirements are the same for federal share or matching share. Volunteer Iowa resources to assist with budget development can be found on Basecamp.

A. Section I. Program Operating Costs - personnel and other costs designed to support the program ([2 CFR 200.430](#)).

I. PERSONNEL

Every individual on the federal or grantee share of the AmeriCorps grant must maintain a timesheet to document personnel costs. Programs are encouraged to use the Wages and Benefits Calculator to calculate costs correctly. This tool is available online and will help programs consistently claim personnel and benefit costs. The personnel category is intended for employees of the applicant organization. Everyone in this category must have a completed NSCHC before charges can be applied to the grant. Individuals employed by host sites or other organizations should appear in the "Consultant and Contractual Services" category of the grant budget.

II. SUPPLIES

Program supplies including staff cell phones, office supplies, planned computer/cell phone replacement in accordance with organizational policies,

III. MEMBER AND STAFF TRAVEL

Reimbursement cannot be provided for commuting miles (the miles the individual drives to and from their work/service site).

IV. CONTRACT AND CONSULTING SERVICES

Site supervisors at other organizations have their costs reported in this category.

V. OTHER PROGRAM OPERATING COSTS

The Volunteer Iowa Fee and the Member Management and Timekeeping system costs. Costs related to member recruitment, including recruitment/referral bonuses, and housing supports, America's Service Commission membership fee and NSCHC costs. NSCHC and recruiting costs are considered ongoing costs and are eligible at the time they are incurred.

B. SECTION II. MEMBER COSTS - LIVING ALLOWANCE AND OTHER COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH AMERICORPS MEMBERS

I. LIVING ALLOWANCE -

Member payroll must be managed in accordance with AmeriCorps requirements. Living allowance must be paid in equal increments from the start of service through the end of service. Programs cannot issue lump sum payments to "make-up" payments for late starts or early exits. Generally, members in the same slot type cannot receive varying living allowance amounts. Additionally, member living allowance cannot increase or decrease over term of service, members cannot receive overtime pay, and no living allowance can be paid before the start date or after the end date of the service agreement period using grant funds. Living allowance payments should align with the number of approved timesheets in the AmeriCorps timekeeping system, or approved alternative.

Each program is required to have a policy to address situations that may impact the payment of living allowance. In addition, programs should develop procedures for communicating member enrollments and exits in a timely fashion with the

accounting/payroll staff. Note: member living allowance payments cannot be withheld as a penalty for members with zero hour timesheets. Variances from these documents, including members without fully executed MSAs may result in federal disallowances.

Additional living allowance that aligns with the program's plan to provide increased stipends for returning members or members in lead roles should be included in the appropriate slot type(s) budget. Additionally, funds for completion or retention bonuses should be included in the slot type(s) for which the bonuses are being offered. Any bonuses or lead role increase should be supported by program policy. See section 2.1 for additional information.

II. GARNISHMENT

Because of sovereign immunity, the federal portion of AmeriCorps member living allowances is not subject to garnishment. Additional information is available on Basecamp.

III. UNEMPLOYMENT

AmeriCorps members are not eligible for unemployment; therefore, unemployment taxes should not be applied to member payroll.

IV. HEALTHCARE

Member costs attributable to specific members should be paid with funds from the appropriate grant year. For example, MAP costs for a 24-25 member should not be paid from 23-24 funds. However, rebates of healthcare costs are allowed by statute to be applied to healthcare costs in the year the rebate is received [[2 CFR 200.447\(e\)](#)].

V. JURY DUTY

During the time AmeriCorps members serve as jurors, they should continue to receive credit for their normal service hours, a living allowance, healthcare coverage and, if applicable, childcare coverage regardless of any reimbursements for incidental expenses received from the court. Normal service hours are determined based on the Anticipated Service Schedule.

VI. NATIONAL GUARD ACTIVE DUTY –

In instances where the dates of active duty are inflexible and conflict with AmeriCorps service, members should be granted a leave of absence for the two-week period of active-duty service in the Reserves. Grantees should continue to pay the living allowance and provide health care and childcare coverage for the two-week period of active duty. Grantees should credit members for normal AmeriCorps service hours (the number of hours he/she would have served) during their two weeks of active-duty service in the Reserves if it occurs during their AmeriCorps service. No AmeriCorps service credit is earned for the once-a-month weekend (inactive duty/Drill) service in the Reserves. Normal service hours are determined based on the Anticipated Service Schedule.

C. SECTION III. ADMINISTRATIVE/INDIRECT COSTS

Centralized expenses of the overall administration of an organization exclusive of particular project costs.

Programs should charge the federal and grantee/match administrative share monthly based on claimed costs. Details about the program's administrative/indirect basis are found in the approved budget.

Federal administrative share should be included in the organization's ledger. Match administrative share should also be included in the organizational ledger; at a minimum, there must be a note to the ledger regarding the grantee share of administration.

8. BUDGET MONITORING, CHANGES, AND AMENDMENTS

Budgeting is not an annual process, but rather an ongoing review of actual and anticipated costs. This process allows for proactive action to be taken to address budget variances. The program management and financial personnel should work together to conduct periodic budget review.

A. BUDGET MONITORING (CONTROL PRACTICES) ()

Budget controls assure programs stay within the parameters of the approved budget. Example practices include:

- Regular monitoring (monthly or quarterly corresponding with submission of reimbursement requests to Volunteer Iowa) of budget figures by comparing them to actual year-to-date and current period expenditures. Used to accurately determine the difference between projected revenues and expenditures (as captured in the grant budget) against actual funds spent and received to implement grant activities.
- Regular reconciliation of the organization's general ledger (financial records) to the claim reports to determine how budgeted expenses are actually expended.
- Monitoring to accurately project unexpended funds and adequately plan for their use (through approved budget amendments) to report them to Volunteer Iowa (through the Unexpended Funds report).
- Review to ensure that match requirements are met. (Not applicable for fixed-amount programs.)
 - Method to ensure that the administrative match remains within allowable rates. (Not applicable for fixed-cost programs.)
 - Identification of the cause of discrepancies between projected and actual figures. Process for recording and explaining budget variations that are unexpected or unusual and determining necessary adjustments, including the attribution of cost changes to specific program circumstances or timing of activities.
 - Ability to accurately track, expend and report program income as required by federal regulations. (For Fixed Amount programs, the ability to verify whether program income exceeds project costs and, if so, to report this information to Volunteer Iowa.)
 - Ability to obtain approvals, track, and report other federal funds used as match to the AmeriCorps grant.
 - Process for requesting prior approvals for budgetary modifications when necessary. (Not applicable for Fixed-Amount programs.)
 - The ultimate goal of budget monitoring is to effectively utilize, track and report program financials; leading to preparation of more accurate budgets in the future.

B. BUDGET CHANGES ([TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#) AND BUDGETARY CHANGES [2 CFR 200.308](#))

At times budgetary changes may be needed. Some changes require approval at the state level, while others may require federal approval. Programs should keep Volunteer Iowa informed about

deviations in the approved budget that may impact the grant and contact their program officer for guidance on how to handle any budget modifications or amendments.

Requests for budget changes should be submitted in IowaGrants on a Program Officer Notification status report (this status report includes a link to a budget modification spreadsheet template). Depending on the nature of the change(s), the amendment will be made in IowaGrants, as a Volunteer Iowa amendment or as an AmeriCorps amendment at the federal level. If an AmeriCorps amendment is required, Volunteer Iowa will facilitate the required approvals with AmeriCorps. The program officer will notify the program when the request is approved; and a grant agreement amendment will be issued as appropriate.

Requests for extensions and/or amendments will be reviewed by Volunteer Iowa in January, May, and July with a mandatory amendment at the end of April for all programs reporting unexpended funds. Budget amendments must never be requested to “spend down” federal resources; but should be based only on actual program needs as planned for in the approved grant application. Volunteer Iowa has an established deadline for no cost extensions to allow members to complete their terms of service. The no-cost extension may be rescinded, and a new end date established if the member term(s) that required the extension exits their service prior to the planned end date. Programs should not implement any changes until they receive written approval from Volunteer Iowa and/or AmeriCorps.

C. BUDGET AMENDMENTS

The following items require Volunteer Iowa approval (regardless of whether the expense is on the federal or match side). Changes listed below also require AmeriCorps approval, which will be handled through your Volunteer Iowa program officer. In the case of any budget amendment, the program will be expected to meet the matching share noted in their approved budget.

Items Not Included in Budget

Items not described or accounted for within the budget require approval from Volunteer Iowa. (For example, if the program did not budget for purchase of supplies in excess of \$1000, e.g., a laptop, but determines a need for such an item and wants to purchase it using AmeriCorps funds or match.)

- Budgetary changes related to changes in the scope or goals of the project.
- Transfer from Indirect to Direct Costs. The transfer of amounts budgeted for indirect costs to absorb increases in direct costs, or vice versa.
- Costs Requiring Prior Approval
 - The inclusion of costs that require prior approval according to relevant Uniform Guidance (overtime pay, alteration, *pre-award costs).
 - Sub-grants or contracts not included in approved application and budget;
 - Equipment with a value of \$5,000 or greater;
 - Supplies costing \$1000 or more; and
 - Adding a cost in a line item that was not included in the approved budget.

- Changes amounting to 10% or more of the total budget require AmeriCorps approval; however, it is a best practice to keep Volunteer Iowa aware of any significant budget variances.

*Note: Pre-award costs may only be charged to the first budget period ([2 CFR 200.458](#))

To make determination of approval, Volunteer Iowa will consider:

- Whether the item is included specifically in the grant,
- Whether the cost is necessary, reasonable, and allocable to AmeriCorps,
- Whether the program is maintaining the cost/MSY that was approved, and
- In the case of equipment, whether the bid is acceptable based on equipment specifications, availability, and other reasonable considerations.

D. ANNUAL BUDGET REVIEW AND MODIFICATION

I. MID-YEAR BUDGET MODIFICATION BASED ON UNEXPENDED FUNDS

Formula funded cost reimbursement programs with unexpended funds in excess of 10% of the federal share will be required to submit a Budget Modification form in IowaGrants by April 30 to minimize unexpended funds by reducing program costs or by making budget adjustments. If the program has low member recruitment and/or significant amounts of estimated unexpended funds, Volunteer Iowa will work to recapture these funds through a budget reduction. The budget reduction may be voluntary (upon mutual agreement with the program) or at the sole discretion of Volunteer Iowa based on low member recruitment, past unexpended funds or expected future expenditures.

Competitive funded programs may submit a Budget Modification form in IowaGrants by April 30 to reflect adjustments to approved line items.

Fixed Award grantees will not submit a mid-year budget modification.

II. FINANCIAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CALLS

As needed: Upon request, Volunteer Iowa will participate in a call with a program(s) to review current budget expenditures and discuss future financial plans, please contact us to schedule.

Mid-Year: In preparation for the April FFR and Unexpended Funds report, during the March/April program check-in call, Volunteer Iowa will review:

- Costs by line item
- Federal to Grantee Share allocation
- Overall matching share
- Administrative share
- Member recruitment
- Program questions or concerns

Based on this discussion and planned future grant expenditures, the program(s) will identify and report federal and grantee share of costs on their FFR and submit a figure for estimated

federal funds they expect to have at the conclusion of their grant period (unexpended funds).

9. REPORTING

- I. REPORTING TO VOLUNTEER IOWA MUST BE:
 - On time (according to due dates and deadlines established by Volunteer Iowa)
 - Fully supported by source documentation (federal share and match/grantee share)
 - By grant year (not agency fiscal year, state/federal fiscal year or calendar year)
 - Based on actual expenditures, not budgeted or estimated amounts. Claims must not be rounded.
 - Accurate and directly from the agency's general ledger/financial records.
 - Consistent based on a cash or accrual basis. Such documentation shall be retained for audit purposes.

- II. ALL COSTS REPORTED ON THE CLAIMS AND FINANCIAL REPORTS MUST BE:
 - Necessary for achievement of the AmeriCorps goals and activities
 - Described within the approved grant application or budget narrative
 - Adequately supported by source documentation on file and
 - Traceable to the organization's financial records.

As required by the Federal Regulations and/or Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance, AmeriCorps grant funds must be segregated from other organization expenses and tracked by grant year in the financial system. Separation by organization fiscal year or calendar year does not satisfy the AmeriCorps funding requirements. [[2 CFR 200.302\(b\)](#)]

A. MATCH/GRANTEE SHARE ([45 CFR 2521.40](#))

Cost reimbursement programs are required to meet an overall matching rate that increases over time (statutory match). Iowa cost reimbursement grant programs are expected to meet the matching requirements as outlined in the program's approved budget. There is no match requirement for fixed amount grant programs, including Education Award Only and Fixed Amount Grants.

Programs applying federal share and match to a single cost should document how they are attributing the costs based on the plan used to develop the grant budget. This is a different concept than 'allocation' which is the method used to distribute shared costs. The term 'attribution' describes how you distribute AmeriCorps-only costs to federal or grantee share.

The program should have documentation in their financial records that show which costs are attributed to federal share and which costs are attributed to match share. During financial desk monitoring, Payment Integrity Information Act (PIIA), and other financial monitoring, these percentages should be shared as supporting documentation for how the costs were applied to the grant. The documentation should indicate:

- The priority of funding (for example, all program income should be expended before federal funds are requested)
- The timing of various attribution patterns (for example,)

- The attribution percentage. (For example, if a program budget shows 62% of living allowance costs to the federal share and 38% of living allowance costs to the grantee share, this percentage could be applied consistently to all living allowance costs.)
- If not using an allocation percentage, a description of the method that is being used. (For example: the program is attributing all costs for X list of members to federal share and all costs for Y list of members to grantee share.)

Regardless of the method used, financial staff should monitor these attributions with each claim to ensure that you are remaining close to the budget federal share versus match share percentages. Programs can reference their approved budgetary match on the Grantee Reference Materials component in IowaGrants or in eGrants.

The acceptable sources of matching funds are state, local, private, and/or other federal funds in accordance with applicable AmeriCorps requirements. In-kind match is also acceptable under the AmeriCorps grant and the documentation standards are the same as those for cash match.

AmeriCorps legislation permits the use of non-AmeriCorps federal funds as match. Program must ensure activities meet the requirements and purpose of both grants and have verification from the other federal agency of the ability to use their funds as match to the AmeriCorps grant.

At the time of publication of this manual, we are aware of written authorization from the following federal agencies which details the terms under which their funds can be used as match.

- Department of the Interior (conservation corps and similar programs)
- Administration On Aging (use of Title III E funds to support similar activities)
- Department of Education
- Department of Health and Human Services
 - Office of Refugee Resettlement
 - Community Services Block Grant Program-CSBG
 - ACF Child Welfare Grants
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families-TANF

The program is responsible for confirming the source of match from sites or financial contributors to ensure allowability.

B. DOCUMENTATION

All AmeriCorps federal and grantee share of costs (including in-kind contributions) shall be supported with properly authorized source documentation such as time and attendance reports, canceled checks, invoices, paid bills, travel documentation, or contracts. Records shall be maintained which adequately identify the source and application of funds (federal share or grantee share) for grant supported activities. Records shall be maintained that trace funds to a level of expenditure adequate to establish that funds have not been used to violate the restriction imposed by the grant. Further, financial information shall be maintained to show the relation of expenditures or matching resources to grant-related performance or productivity. Volunteer Iowa requires that the program certify, in writing, that matching funds for these costs are from non-federal or approved federal sources on an annual basis. The Guidelines to Financial Management resources

can assist programs in ensuring they have the correct documentation. The resource can be found in Basecamp.

C. COST ALLOCATION POLICY ([2 CFR 200.416](#))

Cost allocation is a method to distribute cost based on benefit to the Iowa AmeriCorps Program and may be used to charge the cost to more than one program or grant. Information about developing a cost allocation policy, including a template policy and cost allocation plan is available from Volunteer Iowa. Please talk with your program officer if you would like these resources. Please see section 2.1 for more information on Cost Allocation Policy.

Some examples of cost allocation:

- Organization's rent may be allocated to programs based on the square footage used by the staff of each program. However, this method does not account for any shared space – such as hallways, meeting rooms, restrooms, etc. Therefore, it may be preferable to allocate the overall square footage based on the number of FTE based in the office and working on each program. Either of these methods could be considered reasonable if used consistently.
- Office internet costs allocated using the number of full-time employee (FTE) equivalents working on each program.

D. IOWAGRANTS REPORTING

AmeriCorps programs are required to report expenditures and matching resources on a monthly* basis to Volunteer Iowa through the IowaGrants system (www.iowaGrants.gov). Failure to report in a timely manner can result in corrective action, up to and including revoking of the grant award. Timeliness and accuracy of reporting will be a consideration of the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service's Programs Committee for future funding recommendations. While programmatic reporting is covered elsewhere in the manual, it is important to note here that programmatic activities are the justification for expenditures, so reporting is connected and critical for programmatic and financial reporting.

**Programs rated low risk may request quarterly reporting. Upon approval, Volunteer Iowa staff will provide instructions and written authorization for quarterly reporting.*

E. VOLUNTEER IOWA FINANCIAL REPORTS

The following financial reports will be collected from programs. Reporting requirements may vary for Fixed Amount and Education Award Only programs. Programs are encouraged to read the directions in each of the IowaGrants report form. Screenshots of report forms are available upon request.

I. START FORMS (STATUS REPORTS)

The following are the relevant financial start forms. Financial personnel should complete all financial start forms.

- Pre-Award Financial Form
- Financial Survey
- Annual Audit Form - For more information, see the closeout section below.
- Financial and Program Policies
- Second Audit form

- Required AmeriCorps Financial Training, in LITMOS

II. COST REIMBURSEMENT, FIXED AND FINAL CLAIM OVERVIEW

Cost Reimbursement Claim Form

Details all costs for the prior reporting period for which the program is requesting payment and that which the program is reporting as match to the AmeriCorps grant. Submitted on a monthly basis in IowaGrants. A training that walks through how to submit a cost reimbursement claim is available on Basecamp.

In cases in which monthly expenses are less than \$100, the program should submit a zero claim and combine costs on the next claim(s) until the amount of the combined costs reaches at least \$100. Then the costs should be submitted on a combined claim with the date reflecting the combined claim period.

Fixed Amount Claim Forms

Details enrolled members (Ed Award Only) and approved member hours (Fixed Amount Awards) as support to claimed costs. The Fixed Amount Claim Support spreadsheet is available on Basecamp.

- **Education Award Only Programs:** Claims to Volunteer Iowa will be based on the total number of MSY enrolled multiplied by the cost/MSY as approved by AmeriCorps in your grant award. In order to be eligible for reimbursement, the enrolled member must serve hours during their enrollment period. Supporting member enrollment reports will be submitted with each claim.
- **Fixed Amount Grant Programs:** Ongoing claims must be based on the proportion of awarded MSY served by members (and approved by supervisors), based on number of hours served per member multiplied by the MSY slot value per member. Programs will submit a summary of member hours approved from the timekeeping system along with a calculation of MSY equivalency with each claim. Volunteer Iowa has a [spreadsheet](#) to assist Fixed Amount Grantee calculate and provide support for each claim.

Final Claims

Programs are expected to continue submitting monthly claims in accordance with the schedule. The final claim in IowaGrants is due by 30 days following the grant end date.

- If an additional claim or more time is needed, request an extension from your program officer. Volunteer Iowa may deny payment of claims submitted later than 60 days past the grant end date.
- By the final claim, programs should ensure that all financial activities are complete and in compliance with the awarded grant.
- Prior to submission, the final claim should be reviewed to ensure that overall match and administrative share are in alignment with the approved budget in eGrants and that all costs have been recorded appropriately in the accounting system and reported to Volunteer Iowa in IowaGrants. Any adjustments or correction should be handled prior to the submission of the final claim and the program should ensure

that supporting documentation is available for all claimed costs (federal share and match).

III. CLAIM COMPONENTS

- **General Information** – Program enters the report period for the claim
- **Reimbursement** – Program enters expenses this period (costs to be paid by Volunteer Iowa) and match this period (costs paid by the grantee)
- **State Funding Recipients Only (Allocation Form)** – Program splits out costs that are paid by Volunteer Iowa into eligible categories (for example, federal funds, state funds)
- **Documentation (Attachments)** - Program attaches any supporting documentation. New and High Financial Monitoring Level Programs will attach supporting documentation for all claimed costs in IowaGrants to the claim report until Volunteer Iowa releases them of this requirement in writing. Excel is the preferred format for any attached reports. Volunteer Iowa may request supporting documentation for costs at any time and may review documentation on site as well as remotely.
- **Comments** – Program enters any comments related to the claim form. For example, notes about adjustments or variances on the claims should be included here.
- **Internal Exchange Transfer (IET) (State of Iowa programs only)**- Form authorizing the transfer of funds between state agencies.
 - Volunteer Iowa requires programs to submit both the buyer and seller pages. Forms should be coded based on the state fiscal year. Expenditures incurred in reporting periods prior to 6/30 should be separated and filed on separate Iowa Grants claims with separate IET forms from those incurred after 7/1. IET is used by state agencies. State agencies should contact Volunteer Iowa to request the accounting string for the purposes of coding the IET.

IV. FEDERAL FINANCIAL FORM (FFR)

Instructions on how to complete the FFR can be found on Basecamp. The FFR provides aggregate funding information and includes:

- Federal Share
- Grantee Share
- Fixed Amount and Education Award - Only programs will be asked to report excess Program Income on the FFR to ensure the total cost of conducting a Fixed or Education Award Only program is less than the combined Federal grant and program income earned.

- Program Income ([2 CFR § 200.307](#))
 - All program income as defined in 2 CFR 200.307 shall be added to the budget and used to meet the grantee share in furthering eligible program activities as defined in the Agreement and the approved Grant Application. In general, proceeds generated from the AmeriCorps program (such as host site fees) are considered Program Income.
 - Program income not used as match to further program activities will be deducted from the federal share for the purpose of determining the amount of reimbursable costs.
 - All program income shall be expended as it is received and prior to requesting federal AmeriCorps funds. Program income received after the Agreement Completion Date shall be returned to Volunteer Iowa.
 - Programs are required to report all program income generated in excess of that which is used to meet the grantee share of the expenditures on the FFR.

- Federal Funds Used as Match [[National and Community Service Trust Act Section 121\(e\)\(5\)](#)]

Programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant must report the amount and source of these funds to AmeriCorps. This includes other federal funds expended by operating sites as match. **Fixed Amount and Education Award Only programs are not required to report other Federal Funds Used as Match.**

- Unexpended Funds Report (reports anticipated unexpended funds)

Programs should regularly compare budget to actual costs to determine if the program is on-track to meet grant requirements and utilize federal funding. Ideally, Iowa AmeriCorps programs will utilize their federal funding and meet their matching obligations on an annual basis, with minimal budget amendments.

 - Formula funded cost reimbursement programs reporting unexpended funds in excess of 10% of the federal share on the FFR, will submit a Program Officer Notification Status Report with a budget modification worksheet by April 30. See Annual Budget Review and Modification section above for more information.
 - Competitively funded cost reimbursement programs reporting unexpended funds in excess of 10% of the federal share on the FFR, may submit a Program Officer Notification Status Report with a budget modification worksheet by April 30. The modification will enable the program to make changes to their budget to allow them to reach program goals and expend funds differently than what was approved in their original budget.
 - Fixed Award grantees will submit the Unexpended Funds report but will not submit a budget modification.

- V. **DESK REVIEW (STATUS REPORT) - BASED ON PROGRAM MONITORING LEVEL**
Volunteer Iowa will conduct desk reviews based on program monitoring level. The program will attach supporting materials for federal share and match for a claim period in IowaGrants and Volunteer Iowa will track claimed costs to documentation. In addition, the program will submit an income report for all program income received during the claim period. The supporting materials must be uploaded in the status report, even if the program attaches the documentation in the claim. Desk review schedules are provided in the monitoring tools. Depending on program monitoring level, documentation may be required for all costs or only for certain cost categories. Documentation should be submitted in Excel format whenever possible.
- VI. **CLOSEOUT PACKET (STATUS REPORT)**
Volunteer Iowa requests supporting documentation or self-certification of closeout based on program financial risk as part of the closeout process. These are attached in the Closeout Status Report in IowaGrants. Fixed amount programs certify that closeout activities are compliant and complete, provide a final member payroll ledger, and submit a Program Income Report (if necessary). Fixed amount programs that do not use OnCorps must also provide a report of member end hours generated from the timekeeping system. The closeout packet has program and financial components, so please confer with program staff to ensure that all programmatic components of closeout are complete. The program will not be closed and final payment may not be issued until all close-out activities have been completed by the program and approved by Volunteer Iowa.
- VII. **CLOSEOUT LETTER**
Volunteer Iowa will send a closeout letter accepting the closeout packet or following up with additional questions. However, the closeout process is not considered complete until the agency audit covering the entire grant period has been received and accepted by Volunteer Iowa. Timeliness and accuracy of the closeout and audit reports will also be a factor for continued funding.
- VIII. **ADJUSTMENTS AFTER CLOSEOUT**
If a program has a financial adjustment after the grant is closed, the program should contact Volunteer Iowa for instructions on repayment and corrections to the final grant reports.
- IX. **CLOSEOUT COMPONENTS**
These are the components for program closeout that are completed on an annual basis. All reports should be provided in Excel format.
- **Residual Supplies Form:** Provide a list (with fair market values) of supplies purchased with federal funds that exceed \$5000.
 - **Equipment Inventory Form:** Please provide a list (with fair market values) of equipment purchased with federal funds that exceed \$5000.

- **Member Payroll Report:** Report (from the accounting system) of the member living allowance payments by member by month, detailing federal and grantee shares. If needed, a member reconciliation report can be submitted to assist Volunteer Iowa staff with reconciling the information in your member payroll report with what was reported in IowaGrants. Volunteer Iowa would prefer the reconciliation spreadsheet to be provided in Excel. (Not required for those programs that do not provide a living allowance to any members.) Fixed Amount Grant payments will be justified by completed MSY supported by approved member timesheets.
 - **General Ledger:** A printout from the agency's accounting system that shows (by line item or budget category) total grant expenses for federal share and match that agrees with what was reported to Volunteer Iowa at year-end on the claims and FFRs. (Not required for Fixed Amount or Education Award Only programs.)
 - **Reconciliation Spreadsheet:** If reconciliation between the claims and the agency financial reports is not clear, a reconciliation spreadsheet should be attached to assist Volunteer Iowa staff in “cross-walking” claimed costs to your accounting system report(s). Volunteer Iowa prefers this reconciliation spreadsheet be in Excel. A sample document is available upon request. (Not required for Fixed Amount or Education Award Only programs.)
 - **Final Federal Financial Report:** (For Fixed Amount and Education Award Only programs, only Program Income section required.)
 - **Verification that grantee share/match and admin shares** are in compliance. (Not required for Fixed Amount grantees.)
- X. SECOND AUDIT REPORT ([2 CFR 200.501](#)) AND MANAGEMENT LETTER ([2 CFR 200.512\(E\)](#))
- The Audit Report serves as a start-up form and the Second Audit Report serves as the final/closeout audit for the prior year’s AmeriCorps grant. Organizations whose federal expenditures for the organization’s fiscal year exceed \$750,000 must obtain a Single Audit. Under the Volunteer Iowa Grant Agreement, all programs (regardless of funding level) are required to submit an annual audit (including management letter) or financial review if one is performed on their organization for any period inclusive of a grant period(s) covered by an AmeriCorps grant.
- Volunteer Iowa requires that programs also provide copies of any management letters issued by the auditor.
 - The Audit Reconciliation Report is used to separate audit costs to two (or more) grants. Because one audit period overlaps at least two grant periods, this form expedites reconciliation of claimed costs to the audit. This report can be completed by your Auditor as part of their review or can be completed by the program and submitted to Volunteer Iowa with the Audit Report. A sample Audit Reconciliation Report is available in IowaGrants, in the Resources section of this manual, and on Fiscal/Financial Management resource webpage. If your organization uses an alternate form/report for the purposes of audit reconciliation, you may attach that form in IowaGrants. You are not required to use the sample report provided.

F. OTHER REPORTING TO VOLUNTEER IOWA

In addition to regular reporting, the program must notify Volunteer Iowa when other significant conditions arise. Some examples of these situations are noted below. Other notifications related to member and program management and are covered in other areas of this manual.

I. CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANS

Volunteer Iowa will require Corrective Action Plans in cases of significant noncompliance and/or in delays in correction of compliance issues. Potential corrective action can include withholding payments, requiring additional documentation, or supporting documentation, or other appropriate consequences as outlined in the grant agreement. In most cases, Volunteer Iowa will expect correction within 30 days, or within the established timeline noted in the communication from Volunteer Iowa.

II. PROBLEMS/ISSUES, INCLUDING LEGAL ISSUES

Notify Volunteer Iowa immediately if any of the following instances occur and also inform Volunteer Iowa about the corrective action taken:

- Legal issues, such as lawsuits against the organization, its authorized representative, or board of directors,
- Instances of fraud, theft or misuse of federal funds related to the AmeriCorps grant or staff on the AmeriCorps grant,
- Any developments or delays that have a significant impact on funded activities,
- Any significant problems relating to the administrative or financial aspects of the grant,
- Any suspected misconduct or malfeasance related to the grant or program,
- Losses of federal funds or goods/services supported with federal funds, or
- When information discovered by someone at the program indicates that there has been waste, fraud or abuse, or any violation of criminal law, at the program or at a sub-recipient.

Refer to the [Terms and Conditions](#) for additional information on reporting of issues. Notification is required in some cases related to alleged member criminal or drug activity. Those notifications are covered in the Member Management section of this manual.

III. CHANGES IN FINANCIAL OFFICER

Changes must be reported to Volunteer Iowa using the Program Officer Notification status report in IowaGrants within five (5) business days. Each authorized representative must designate who is authorized to sign fiscal documents, i.e., financial reports, closeouts, grants, etc. by completing the Financial Officer information on the Volunteer Iowa Grant Agreement.

G. REQUEST FOR EXTENSIONS TO ESTABLISHED DUE DATES

Extensions must be requested in writing from the program officer. Volunteer Iowa may withhold payments or take other actions as outlined in the Grant Agreement if program or financial reports are late, inaccurate or out-of-compliance (i.e., matching requirements not met).

Volunteer Iowa creates many of the reports in IowaGrants; please confirm if the report is created by Volunteer Iowa before adding your own report in the system.

Form	System/Format for Submission	*Date Due
Financial Start Up Forms	IowaGrants (completed by Financial Staff)	Submitted in accordance with timeline outlined in Start Up Form Checklist.
Claim	IowaGrants	Monthly by the 25th of the month following the end of the report period. Claims should total at least \$100 at the time of submission. **Programs may request quarterly reporting due 25th of the month following the end of the quarter.
Program Claim Attachments New Programs and High Financial Monitoring Level Programs	Attachments in IowaGrants	Attached monthly (to coincide with Claim Form) supporting documentation for all claimed costs.
IET Form Attachment (State Agencies only)	PDF attached in IowaGrants	Attached monthly (or **quarterly) to coincide with Program Claim Form) by the 25th of the month following the end of the report period.
***Federal Financial Reports	IowaGrants as status report (Fixed Amount and Education Award Only complete only specific sections)	April 25 October 25 FINAL: due within 60 days after the completion date of the grant (if grant end date does not correspond with above reporting deadlines).
Estimated Unexpended Funds Report (in FFR)	IowaGrants	April 25 for all programs, and upon request
Budget Modification Request (Program Officer Notification) N/A for Fixed Programs	IowaGrants	Required November 15 for programs that will not fill all full-time member slots.
Budget Modification Request (Program Officer Notification) N/A for Fixed Programs	IowaGrants	Optional April 30 for competitive programs with >10% unexpended federal funds. Requests for budget modifications can be made at any time.
Budget Modification Request (Program Officer Notification). N/A for Fixed Programs	IowaGrants	Required April 30 for formula programs with >10% unexpended federal funds. Requests for budget modifications can be made at any time.

Form	System/Format for Submission	*Date Due
No Cost Extension Request (if needed) (Program Officer Notification)	IowaGrants	April 30 in IowaGrants
Closeout Packet (Status Report)	IowaGrants	Within 60 days after the termination of the grant.
Self-Certification of Closeout	IowaGrants	Within 60 days after the termination of the grant. <i>Prior approval required for use of Self-Certified Closeout</i>
Audit Report and Second Audit Report (Status Report)	In IowaGrants as attachment with Management Letter and Audit Reconciliation Report	Within 30 days of the release of the audit report or financial review. <i>IowaGrants is set to receive up to two audit reports per year.</i>
Site Visit Response	IowaGrants	Within timeline as established in site visit report from Volunteer Iowa.
Financial Desk Review <i>Covers one-reporting period as noted in the monitoring schedule based on program monitoring level.</i>	IowaGrants as attachment	Submitted in conjunction with a monthly financial claim report. Spreadsheets should be provided in Excel.
Change in financial staff	Update in IowaGrants	Within 5 days of the person's last day of work or as soon as possible.
Budget Changes (Program Officer Notification) <i>In general, major budget changes should be made in the first six months of the grant.</i>	IowaGrants	By April 30 for programs with a August or September start date and July 31 for programs with a January start date OR Within 15 days of awareness of the need to make the change or as soon as possible.
Problems/Concerns – including suspected fraud, waste, or abuse of federal funds	Via email or phone call to program officer	Immediately

*If the reporting deadline falls on a weekend or state holiday, the reporting due date remains the same. The program may submit on the due date or prior to the due date.

**Prior approval from Volunteer Iowa required for low-risk program to report quarterly. Quarterly reports cover the following periods: Grant Start-Dec; Jan-Mar; Apr-Jun; Jul-Sept, Oct-Nov (this reporting schedule includes the maximum grant period inclusive of no-cost extensions).

***FFR completion is limited to selected categories to monitor unexpended funds and excess program income for Fixed Amount and Education Award programs.

REFERENCES

1. Uniform Administrative Requirements (2 CFR 200) <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200>
2. FY 2024 General Grant and Cooperative Agreement Terms and Conditions [FY 2024 General Terms and Conditions \(americorps.gov\)](https://www.americorps.gov/fy-2024-general-grant-and-cooperative-agreement-terms-and-conditions)
3. GAO Internal Controls for the Federal Government <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-14-704g.pdf>
4. FY24 Application Instructions/Budget Instructions [ASN Application Instructions Sept 2023 \(americorps.gov\)](https://www.americorps.gov/asn-application-instructions-sept-2023)
5. AmeriCorps State and National (ASN) 2024 Terms and Conditions [2024 Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants](https://www.americorps.gov/2024-terms-and-conditions-for-ameri-corps-state-and-national-grants)
6. AmeriCorps Grant Assurances Available here: <https://egrants.cns.gov/cnsmisc/EASSUR.HTM>
7. AmeriCorps Grant Certification [CERTIFICATIONS \(cns.gov\)](https://www.americorps.gov/certifications)

IOWA AMERICORPS PROGRAM STAFF CORE COMPETENCIES

1. CORE COMPETENCIES

Core competencies are intended to provide programs and prospective applicant organizations with an overview of the competencies needed for effective AmeriCorps program management. A competency is a combination of knowledge, skills and abilities that are required to perform a task. Competencies described here are all important and interrelated. Managing a program and grant effectively requires proficiencies in all core competencies. These competencies have been integrated into Volunteer Iowa’s training (upcoming and previous), resources and tools. Past trainings, and current tools and resources are available on the Volunteer Iowa website. Additionally, the competencies have also been integrated into the updated risk assessment.

As part of each new grant year, programs will be provided with a link to a Core Competencies Self-Assessment. The link will be included with the Grant Award Letter. Lead and key staff, as well as financial staff that are responsible for the management of the AmeriCorps grant should take the self-assessment. All program staff on the grant will be required to complete the self-assessment prior to accessing grant funds. The results, along with Volunteer Iowa staff assessments will be used to help complete the risk assessment. Completing the self-assessment should only take 10-15 minutes.

Program staff are encouraged to seek out Volunteer Iowa or other trainings in areas where professional development could benefit the management of the AmeriCorps grant. If programs have suggestions regarding training, please talk with your program officer.

	COMPETENCY	PROGRAM STAFF WORKING WITH AMERICORPS PROGRAMS WILL POSSESS THE ABILITY TO:
Effective Grant and Program Management	Program Management	Develop and maintain sound fiscal and organizational management systems and practices compliant with federal laws and regulations, AmeriCorps requirements and Volunteer Iowa policies, procedures. Demonstrate knowledge of current grant, state/federal requirements, and program policies.
	Theory of Change	Define and revise a Theory of Change for how the program activities will lead to long term results, including performance measures with outputs and outcomes; develop and utilize appropriate data collection instruments, analyze data gathered, report on the performance as demonstrated by the data, and utilize this data to make improvements to the program. Ensure that member placements are developed based upon a program design that is reflective of community need and that member activities contribute to the program goals.
	Site Management	Develop strong partnerships with member service sites, supported by written agreements, and training intended to support overall program goals and quality member experiences. Ensure proper training, and site monitoring and assessment. Incentivize strong site management, such as through a competitive application process, and act with host sites that are performing poorly

	Community Engagement and Strengthening	Work with individuals and organizations to identify community needs, leverage community assets, and position the program as a strategy for solving community problems, ideally as part of a collective impact model.
Member Management	Human Resources	Utilize sound human resource and inclusion practices and principles to recruit, enroll and retain member positions as detailed in the approved grant. Provide members with written service agreements and position descriptions, outlining program requirements and allowable service activities that align with the Theory of Change. Effectively recruit and retain a corps that represents the overall diversity of the community it serves.
	Member Support	Develop and conduct a comprehensive member training plan, designed to ensure that members receive the federal and state required trainings, and maintain appropriate documentation thereof. Work to ensure that members have the skills and training necessary to successfully carry out their specific service activities. Provide members with opportunities to develop professionally, maintain safety for members and others, and apply skillsets gained during service.
Fiscal Oversight and Management	Financial Management	Actively participate in managing the budget of the program. Work cooperatively with financial and leadership staff to develop practices that effectively plan for and manage program funds and provide for accurate, complete, and current disclosure and documentation of the financial status of the AmeriCorps program. Keep up to date on changes that impact financial management and communicate them to the appropriate staff. Modify grant application budgets to reflect programmatic and budget changes
	Sustainability	Develop financial and non-financial support including, but not limited to, creating a sustainability plan, identifying potential sources of funds, developing funding and partnership proposals, presenting requests for assistance, and securing adequate cash and in-kind match
Leadership Development	Professional Development	Plan and participate in skill and knowledge-building educational opportunities that promote personal and professional growth. Opportunities should be related to issues that impact the program, broader community needs, evolving national priorities and the competencies outlined in this document. Actively incorporates diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in all aspects of programming
	Leadership and Public Policy	Cultivate leaders and champions within AmeriCorps and the national service network. Maintain a working knowledge of federal and state legislation, national governing policy, and policy trends that affect the implementation of national service programs. Form positive relationships with local, state, and federal elected officials for the purpose of informing legislators about the work of the AmeriCorps program.

Volunteer Iowa is firmly committed to providing access, equal opportunity and reasonable accommodation in its programs, activities, and materials. If programs have any questions about inclusion or reasonable accommodations, please contact the Volunteer Iowa Program Officer

2. CORE COMPETENCIES INDICATORS

Materials Needed: AmeriCorps Program Manual, Application Instructions & Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity, AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions, and AmeriCorps Regulations, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance, and AmeriCorps Grant Agreement.

Purpose: To ensure that AmeriCorps program staff have the information necessary to successfully administer and manage an AmeriCorps program. This form serves as a diagnostic tool for Program Directors to help identify areas of improvement and highlight competencies they excel in.

Instructions: Please check the box for each statement that accurately describes the program director/staff's level of knowledge or ability to properly implement the practice in the program. After finishing this exercise, please review the form and use the information to identify areas where additional training or technical assistance may be beneficial. Reach out to the Volunteer Iowa Program Officer for assistance in identifying potential resources or training opportunities.

A. EFFECTIVE GRANT AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Program Design Aligned with Approved Grant

Objective: To ensure that programs have an overall program design that supports the program Theory of Change and that the activities are evidence-based approaches directly connected to the identified need and underlying root causes. Ensure that program staff understand how the approved grant application and budget support the program goals, address the measurable objectives, and plan for regular programmatic evaluation.

- Summarize the Theory of Change in the program's approved grant
- Describe the evidence in support of the program's Theory of Change
- Explain how the member activities support the Theory of Change and address the underlying causes of the community need
- Describe how the member positions and terms of service support the program design
- Articulate why a program design is important and how it relates to slot and member conversions and member early terminations

Governing Documents

Objective: To ensure a thorough understanding of the Notice of Grant Award, regulations, OMB Omni Circulars, Terms & Conditions, guidance, policies, and procedures governing the management and administration of an AmeriCorps program in Iowa.

- Provide a basic overview of the governing documents for AmeriCorps and a basic description of the information found within that document
- Locate information related to various management components of the AmeriCorps program (both the information located at the physical office location and the information available on-line)
- Describe the steps the program would take to locate the answer to a question related to the governing policies of the program if it is an issue that is unfamiliar
- Identify situations in which the program must provide notice to AmeriCorps, the Agency ("the Agency") or Volunteer Iowa and the timeline in which most notifications must occur
- Identify changes that require prior approval from Volunteer Iowa or the Agency

Internal Staffing Levels, Communication and Coordination

Objective: To provide staffing levels that are sufficient to meet program management requirements. To ensure that individuals involved with the AmeriCorps program are aware of AmeriCorps and National Service and are well-versed in its purposes, goals, and values; that they have an understanding of program requirements, reporting timelines, strategic and policy issues, and that the program is integrated into the organization at all levels.

- Name the other individuals in the organization who are also responsible for administering the AmeriCorps program and describe how the work is coordinated among staff to ensure compliance and continuous improvement
- Avenues for oversight and regular communication are in place among key staff
- Cross-training and established systems provide for back-up in cases of staff absences or other emergencies
- Describe the written internal policies and procedures that are used for management of the AmeriCorps program

Program Record-Keeping

Objective: To ensure that appropriate and complete documentation for all grant-related activities are maintained according to grant requirements.

- An organized system is used for organizing grant-related documents
- Program director and other grant staff know where various grant documents are kept, including whether any are kept in secure locations
- Identify the record retention period for the organization's AmeriCorps records

B. PERFORMANCE MEASURES, REPORTING, AND EVALUATION

Tracking, Recording and Reporting Progress

Objective: To ensure the program is collecting, documenting, and reviewing necessary data; that it is on track to meet its stated objectives; and that it submits accurate and timely reports of AmeriCorps-related performance measure objectives.

- Describe how the program will record all data relating to performance measures
- Describe how program will retrieve information from site partners
- Outline a performance measure training, collection, clarification, and reporting schedule
- Describe how staff will review data to ensure program is on track to meet its stated objectives
- Ensure required progress reports to Volunteer Iowa are on time
- Ensure National Performance Measure criteria (Agency definitions, tools, etc.) are met
- Implement data quality components (validity, verifiability, completeness, consistency, timeliness)

Program Evaluation

Objective: To ensure the program evaluates progress towards performance goals and meets Agency requirements for evaluation.

- Understand Agency evaluation requirements for competitively funded programs

- Draft an evaluation plan (that meets Agency-approval, if required)
- Conduct evaluation activities within the necessary timeframe
- Draft evaluation report for submission to the Agency
- Utilize program evaluation results as part of continuous improvement of the program

Continuous Improvement

Objective: To ensure the program assesses and addresses the quality of its service activities which includes involving extensive broad-based representation from the following: the community served, members and potential members, site partners, community-based agencies with a demonstrated record in providing services, foundations and businesses.

- Identify stakeholder groups
- Plan to provide information and progress to stakeholder groups
- Have at least one formal method in place to gauge member satisfaction
- Have at least one formal method in place gauge service recipient satisfaction
- Have at least one formal method in place to gauge management effectiveness
- Have a plan to continuously assess community needs
- Include a plan to consult with the community on program design
- Include a plan to consult with the community on program implementation
- Include a plan to consult with the community on program evaluation

C. SITE MANAGEMENT

Site Partner Management

Objective: To ensure the program clearly outlines relationships with site partners through formal agreements and that it manages these relationships.

- Outline selection criteria used to choose site partners
- Ensure sites are accessible to people with disabilities
- Ensure written site partner agreements
- Include a plan for site partner orientation comprised of:
 - Prohibited activities
 - Program mission
 - AmeriCorps 101
 - Site monitoring tool and schedule
 - Data collection plan
 - Program feedback and evaluation tools and schedule
- Include a plan for orienting site partners absent from initial orientation
- Plan for identifying sites with AmeriCorps and Volunteer Iowa by displaying banner/sign
- Include a process for monitoring sites and assessing site supervisor performance

D. HUMAN RESOURCES

Recruitment

Objective: To ensure a fair and equitable recruitment process in order to enroll a diverse potential applicant pool and staff that meets program needs.

- Describe a non-discriminatory, fair, and equitable recruitment process
- Include consultation with leaders in underrepresented communities for help with recruitment of AmeriCorps members (including persons with disabilities, persons of color, LGBTQ, individuals living in poverty)
- Include a plan to recruit locally, with a focus on recruiting a corps of members that is reflective of the community
- Include a plan to recruit a diverse corps, including potential incentives to attract individuals from underrepresented communities
- Include a plan to recruit members who meet program needs
- State reasonable accommodations can be made for interviews

Selection

Objective: To ensure a transparent and equitable member selection process by demonstrating a consistent application process followed for each applicant.

- Ensure completed member application
- Ensure uniform selection documentation
- Guarantee members are chosen based on essential functions in position description
- Assess a member's ability to complete the essential functions of the position with/without reasonable accommodation
- State reasonable accommodations can be made for service
- Notification to members who are accepted to the program

Eligibility and Enrollment/Pre-Enrollment for Members

Objective: To ensure that the program has all necessary documentation for each member in their member files and that member information and service locations are entered in the My AmeriCorps Portal within eight (8) days of member enrollment.

- Ensure member pre-enrollment is completed in the My AmeriCorps Portal prior to member start date
- Ensure member enrollment is completed in the My AmeriCorps Portal within 8-day period
- Document citizenship eligibility for members whose citizenship status is not automatically verified in the Portal
- Ensure members do not serve until eligibility documentation is on file
- Ensure member service agreement is signed on or before first day of service
- Ensure member service location entered into the My AmeriCorps portal within 30-day period
- Ensure members are added to the OnCorps timekeeping system within 30 days of their enrollment date
- Ensure Member Service Agreements (including Member Position Descriptions) are uploaded into OnCorps within 30-day period

National Service Criminal History Checks for Prospective Members (candidates) and Staff

Objective: As part of a thoughtful process to protect members and beneficiaries, ensure that the program complies with Agency requirements to conduct, screen, and accept members and staff based on a review of the individuals' criminal history. Fully document the process and maintain this documentation confidentially and in accordance with state and federal law.

- Ensure required National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC) are conducted and adjudicated in accordance with the Agency timeline
- Obtain written consent to perform checks
- Document candidate's understanding that his/her/their position is contingent on the results of the NSCHC
- Verify the candidate's identity through government-issued photo identification and conduct the check on the candidate's name exactly as it appears on the government issued photo identification
- Document whether the candidate has recurring access to vulnerable populations
- Use state repository or Agency vendor method to conduct checks
 - National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) – document that it was completed and adjudicated with all states and territories reporting before the member's first day of service
 - FBI National Fingerprint Check (if required based on Agency guidance) – document that it was initiated on or before the member's first day of service
 - State Criminal Records Check of the state of residence (if required based on state of residence and Agency guidance) – document that it was initiated on or before the member's first day of service
 - State Criminal Records Check of the state of service- document that it was initiated on or before the member's first day of service (Note: Iowa check is not required when utilizing the three-part check for individuals with access to vulnerable populations because of the NFF ASP)
- Provide accompaniment until all checks are completed (this includes adjudication)
- Maintain confidentiality and adhere to user agreements pertinent to the method being used

Member Benefits

Objective: To ensure that program staff have strong knowledge of all benefits available to members and that members maximize their use of available benefits.

- Ensure that member living allowances do not exceed minimum or maximum and are paid out as required
- Ensure that all members are covered by workers' compensation or accidental death & dismemberment coverage
- Ensure that health insurance meeting requirements is provided or made available to all full-time members who are not covered by another policy
- Ensure that childcare assistance is made available to eligible full-time members who need such assistance in order to participate
- Ensure that members know their options and how to request National Service Loan Forbearance & Interest Repayment or Public Service Loan Forgiveness and Income-Based Repayment for student loans

- Ensure members know how to use and maximize the value of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award

Member Timekeeping and Term Management

Objective: To ensure that timesheets are kept in a manner that is consistent with AmeriCorps requirements and members are on track to meet the required number of service hours.

- Ensure members hours are recorded appropriately in OnCorps or other approved system under “direct service, fundraising or training hours”
- Ensure that hours are entered by members and approved by site supervisors in a timely manner
- Ensure that first timesheet corresponds with enrollment date which is noted on the service agreement as the member start date
- Ensure member remains within the allowable fundraising (10%) and training (20%) limitations
- Ensure members receive required trainings and that these hours are documented appropriately on their timesheets under “training”
- Ensure that members’ holiday/sick leave/vacation, and mealtime(s) are not counted in the member service hours and that these hours are considered in ensuring that members have adequate time to complete their service
- Ensure members are on-track to meet their required service hours
- Ensure member service hours are substantiated by timesheets
- Ensure program communicates with members about progress towards completing hours
- Ensure mid-term evaluation is completed and retained in the member file (including the three required AmeriCorps questions) for all members serving more than 9 months

Suspending Members

Objective: To ensure that there is a consistent process for suspending members that includes suspension forms, documentation for compelling circumstances, suspending the member in the Portal within 30 days of the suspension date, and an established procedure for the member to return to service.

- Ensure that there is written documentation from the member detailing the nature of the compelling circumstances or written documentation from the program detailing disciplinary reason(s) for the suspension
- Ensure member suspension is entered into the Portal, OnCorps, and IowaGrants within 30 days of effective date
- Ensure that member and program have established on-going communication process during the suspension period, including an anticipated return date
- Ensure that program disciplinary policies account for a member’s failure to return from suspension as a reason for termination for cause

Exiting Members

Objective: To ensure a consistent process for exiting members that includes exit forms, documentation for early release if applicable (cause or compelling circumstances) and exiting out of the My AmeriCorps Portal with correct hours reported within 30-days of the end of the term of service.

- Ensure members have completed all hour and program requirements for successful completion before exiting

- Ensure all member paperwork is in file prior to exiting member
- Ensure members served for the length of service term outlined in the Member Service Agreement (MSA)
- Include documentation of progressive discipline (if applicable)
- Include documentation of early release for cause or compelling personal circumstances
- If member exits prior to their final pay period, the program must complete a Program Officer Notification in IowaGrants and may need to issue an amendment to the MSA
- Ensure members' exit dates coincide with last time sheets in OnCorps or other approved timekeeping system
- Ensure members' total hours in the timekeeping system match exit form in MyAmeriCorps Portal
- Ensure members are exited in the My AmeriCorps Portal within 30 days of their end date
- Ensure member end of service evaluation is completed and included in member file or stored electronically in accordance with program policies (including three required AmeriCorps questions)
- Ensure National Service Trust End of Term/Exit Form is completed in My AmeriCorps Portal by member and program official

Member Record-Keeping

Objective: To ensure that appropriate and complete documentation for all member-related activities is maintained according to grant requirements.

- Ensure the following documents are in all member files
 - Member Service Agreement (including Member Position Description)
 - Verification or copy of Government-Issued Photo Identification
 - Required NSCHC documentation, including NSCHC Documentation Checklist and results of checks (if maintained in separate file, please make note of alternate storage location in the member file)
 - Member Evaluations
 - Documentation of early exits or suspensions
 - Citizenship verification (if manual verification is required by the Agency)
 - For tutoring members, ensure these additional documents are included:
 - Verification of high school graduation
 - Pass of test documenting capability to provide tutoring services

E. MEMBER SUPPORT

Developing and Implementing Member Training

Objective: To ensure that Members are prepared for service, civic engagement, and personal development through a planned, consistent, and structured method.

- Plan to provide a comprehensive member orientation including:
 - Member rights and responsibilities
 - Prohibited activities
 - Suspension/termination from service
 - Sexual harassment and other discrimination issues
 - Grievance procedures

- Code of conduct
- Requirements under the Drug-Free Workplace Act
- History of AmeriCorps & National Service
- Role of Volunteer Iowa
- Plan for orienting members to their service sites
- Plan for supporting members in obtaining GED (if applicable)
- Plan for encouraging members to be civically engaged
- Plan for involving members in selection of training
- Plan for providing Life After AmeriCorps training - supporting members in making the transition after end of service
- Plan to use structured activities for members to reflect on service and connect to the national service movement

Member Supervision

Objective: To ensure members receive appropriate supervision, that reasonable accommodations are made when appropriate, and that supervisors evaluate the member performance at required times during the service year.

- Provide site supervisor training and ensure that members receive adequate supervision
- Describe how to monitor member service activities and ensure alignment with member position description and that members are not engaging in prohibited activities
- Describe how to make reasonable accommodations for members as requested based on the essential functions of the position description
- State who is responsible for overseeing member grievances
- Provide a member evaluation schedule
- Include a mid-term member evaluation (if applicable)
- Include an end-term member evaluation
- Describe accompaniment of members with pending NSCHC checks

F. FISCAL OVERSIGHT & MANAGEMENT

Accounting Knowledge

Objective: To ensure an understanding of key grant documents (Notice of Grant Award, regulations, OMB Circulars, Terms & Conditions, guidance, policies and procedures) governing the financial management and administration of an AmeriCorps program in Iowa in order to work collaboratively with financial personnel to maintain program compliance and ensure effective fiscal operations and reporting.

- Provide a basic overview of the governing documents for AmeriCorps and a basic description of the information found within each document
- Describe what is meant by the accounting terms, “allowable, reasonable, allocable and consistent treatment” and how these apply to the AmeriCorps grant
- Describe the financial staff and their role in budgeting, financial tracking, and reporting.
- Detail how the financial and program personnel work together for budgeting, tracking, and reporting purposes
- Highlight key internal policies that are in place to support AmeriCorps financial management
- Identify what types of changes require prior approval from Volunteer Iowa or the Agency

Budget Development

Objective: To ensure that the program develops and implements a budget designed to maximize resources in support of a fully compliant AmeriCorps program.

- Describe the basic components of an AmeriCorps budget, including the amount of federal funds and matching resources identified in the current budget
- Discuss the administrative section of the budget and, if the program will claim admin, describe the basis for admin for the AmeriCorps program
- Detail the sources of cash and in-kind match in the AmeriCorps budget
- Describe how the budget is tied to the objectives and goals of the program
- Describe the tools and information needed to develop the AmeriCorps budget
- Describe how the program director works with financial personnel on developing the budget

Manage Program Expenditures

Objective: To ensure that grant-related expenses are properly reported; that programs maintain financial management systems that include written cost allocation procedures and systems that distinguish expenditures attributable to this grant as well as expenditures not attributable to this grant; and that adequate supporting documents for expenditures are maintained.

- Describe how a bill or invoice related to the AmeriCorps program is processed
- Articulate how a payment or in-kind match is received and recorded by the program.
- If the program utilizes federal funds as match, describe how the program tracks and reports this information.
- Explain how the costs associated with AmeriCorps are labeled or coded in the accounting system
- Describe how the accounting system separates AmeriCorps costs from other agency costs and how these costs are tracked by grant year (as opposed to agency fiscal or calendar year)
- If a cost is attributable to more than one program, describe how the organization assigns costs to each program
- Detail the people who are involved in processing payments and recording match for the AmeriCorps program
- Describe how the program director works together with financial personnel to manage AmeriCorps expenditures

Monitors Budget

Objective: To ensure the program plans for and monitors expenditures and matching resources for compliance with Agency and Volunteer Iowa requirements. Works in partnership with the financial personnel to identify budget variances, make corrections and develop options for maximizing resources within program requirements.

- Describe how the program director works with financial personnel to monitor the budget and make adjustments, if necessary
- Detail how the program compares budget to actual costs and makes adjustments based on “overages” or “underages”
- Describe how the program can project/anticipate costs in order to make budgetary adjustments or report unexpended funds to Volunteer Iowa

- Describe Program Income and detail how the program accounts for and ensures that program income is recorded appropriately
- Articulate how the program ensures that it is meeting the matching requirements and makes adjustments, if necessary
- Describe how and when a budget amendment is needed and how one is requested.

Financial Reports

Objective: To ensure the program submits accurate and timely financial reports for the AmeriCorps program.

- If requesting reimbursements, describe the system and the forms used to make these requests
- If requesting advance payments, describe the system, forms and documentation that must be submitted with these requests
- Describe the program director's role in submitting the claim and reimbursement request (or advance), FFR, and Unexpended Funds Report
- Describe the program director's role in submitting the closeout packet
- Describe how it would be handled if a mistake were noted on the financial report prior to submission.
- Describe how this would differ if the mistake were discovered after the financial report was submitted to Volunteer Iowa.

6

AMERICORPS PROGRAM CHECKLISTS, RESOURCES AND TOOLS

This is a list, by monitoring area, of checklists, resources and tools Volunteer Iowa has developed to assist program staff in managing their AmeriCorps programs. These items support the guidance available in the 24-25 AmeriCorps Program Manual. If you are program staff for an Iowa AmeriCorps program and do not have access but would like to, please email [Tawney Schreier](mailto:Tawney.Schreier). Documents with an asterisk (*) are new or recently updated.

PROGRAM START-UP RESOURCES

- AmeriCorps Pledge
- AmeriCorps Required Policies and Procedures
- [Creating a LITMOS account](#)
- eGrants Creating Service Opportunities
- eGrants Requirements for Service Opportunities
- eGrants Service Listing, Common Mistakes
- eGrants Service Opportunity Listing Template
- Giving Someone Access to IowaGrants
- Monitoring Level Assessment
- [NSCHC Account Registration Links](#)
- OnCorps Set Up for New Programs
- OnCorps Timesheet Set Up
- Prohibited Activities, Volunteer Iowa
- Prohibited Activities Memo, AmeriCorps
- Program Management Segregation of Duties
- Signing Up for eGrants
- Start Form Checklist (24-25)
- Updated IowaGrants Account Set-Up instructions

PROGRAM AND GRANT MANAGEMENT

- AmeriCorps Branding Guidelines
- Assigned Technology Agreement
- Data Collection Plan – sample
- Data Collection Plan Resource
- Disaster Policy template
- [Document Retention Periods](#)
- Enrollment Plan form
- Electronic Signature Policy and Guidance
- Electronic Signature Policy Sample
- Grant Scavenger Hunt
- Grantee Staff Transition Checklist*
- Host Site Agreement Template (24-25)
- Host Site Agreement – Highlights for Site Supervisors
- Host Site Performance Assessment Tool
- Host Site Prohibited Activities Scenarios, and Key
- Initial Progress Report Checklist
- IowaGrants Program Status Reports MSC vs PON
- Logic Model template
- Member Bonus Checklist
- Member File Monitoring Checklist
- Monitoring Schedule (24-25)
- NSCHC AmeriCorps User Guide
- NSCHC Applicant Guide
- NSCHC Documentation Checklist
- NSCHC Other Identification Examples
- NSCHC Monitoring Checklist
- NSCHC Procedures – DCI
- NSCHC Policy
- NSCHC Procedures - Vendors
- Program Closeout Checklist
- Program Staff Core Competencies (section 5 in the manual)
- Process for Providing Housing
- Progress Report Checklist
- Program Staff Interview Questions
- Recruitment plan template
- Site Supervisor Interview Questions
- Site Supervisor Jeopardy Game Template
- Site Supervisor Time Sheet Management
- Site Supervisor Training Plan
- Slot Conversion Chart
- Standard Operating Procedures - Template
- Standard Operating Procedures – Example
- Teleservice Policy Template
- Time and Effort Form to Collect Contractor Timesheet, Sample
- Timekeeping as Match for Site Supervisors
- Training Observation Form
- Using the IowaGrants Member Slot Change Form
- Using the IowaGrants Program Officer Notification Form
- VI AmeriCorps Branding Guidelines
- Welfare to Work Guidance
- Weird Topic Quiz*

HOST SITE RECRUITMENT SUPPORT TEMPLATES

- AmeriCorps Service vs Employment
- AmeriCorps Financial Package
- Education Award document
- Finding the Right Fit
- Iowa AmeriCorps FAQs
- MAP Services Resource
- Pathways Program
- Quick Overview of ASN Benefits
- Schools of National Service

MEMBER MANAGEMENT

- Allowable Unallowable Activities
- AmeriCorps State Heart Act Fact Sheet
- AmeriCorps Lingo
- AmeriCorps Public Benefits (includes NCCC and VISTA)
- [ASC's Member Assistance Program](#)
- Categorization of AmeriCorps Time
- Childcare with GAP Solutions
- Creating a Great MPD
- Date Alignment Spreadsheet
- Dental Resources for Members
- Documenting and Managing Member Exits
- Education Award Iowa Tax Handout
- eGrants Basics – Inviting and Enrolling Members
- Good – Better – Best. Developing Clear Member Service Activities +
- How to Apply for HHS benefits
- MAP Resource
- Member Benefits
- Member Exit Overview and Checklist
- Member Interview Questions
- Member Orientation Agenda and Training Plan
- Member Public Benefits
- Member Timekeeping Exercise
- Member Safety Resources
- Member Suspension, Exit and Payroll Policy Template
- Member Timekeeping Commitment Certification
- Member Time – Corrective Action Tool
- Member Timekeeping Component Review
- Member Time Served Milestones
- Member Timesheet Check Process
- Member Position Description Template*
- MSA Amendment Template
- MSA Template (24-25)
- [OnCorps login page](#)
- Pathways Program
- Position Description Breakout Template
- Prohibited Activities Scenarios for Members
- Quick Overview of ASN Benefits
- Recruitment Challenge Bingo
- Recruitment Challenge Tracker
- Schools of National Service
- Tax Reminders for AmeriCorps Members
- Timekeeping Tracking Tool
- Tips and Tools to Extend the Living Allowance*

FISCAL MANAGEMENT

- Audit Report Review Form
- Beyond the Budget – Budget Development tool
- Budget Modification Spreadsheet
- Capital Assets and Depreciation Sample
- Categorization of Expenses tool
- CEO Pay Policy – Sample
- Closeout Worksheet – Self-Certification
- Closeout Worksheet - Cost Reimbursement
- Closeout Worksheet – Fixed Amount
- Claim Summary Spreadsheet
- Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy – Sample
- Conflict of Interest Policy – Sample
- Cost Allocation Policy Template
- Financial Policies and Procedures - Sample
- FFR Instructions
- Financial Desk Review Checklist
- Financial Separation of Duties
- Fixed Amount Claim Support Spreadsheet updated*
- Fixed Amount Grants – Are they the Right Fit?
- Fixed Amount vs Cost Reimbursement grants
- Guidelines for Financial Management
- In-Kind tracking tool
- In-Kind tracking policy (for programs that track in-kind outside of the financial management system)
- In-Kind Contribution Form template
- Living Allowance Planning and Budgeting
- Member Payroll Options
- Sample PII Policy
- Sample Policies and Procedures Handbook
- Sample Procurement Policy
- Sample Timekeeping Policy
- Sample Travel and Business Expenses Policies

- Financial and Grant Management – Avoiding Common Pitfalls
- Wages and Benefits Calculator
- Whistleblower Policy – Sample (will be updated for 25-26)

TRAININGS AVAILABLE (Trainings are added throughout the year. Program staff is encouraged to check Basecamp for the most recent list of all trainings available)