



# TRAINING BRIEFS

*A Resource for Indiana AmeriCorps Programs Provided by the Office of Faith-Based & Community Initiatives*

## Developing Inclusive Position Descriptions



(From "Inclusion: Creating an Inclusive Environment")

Inclusive service descriptions contain all the elements of a good service description, but also clearly demonstrate the essential and marginal functions of a position. They are a critical first step to creating an inclusive service environment. Taking the time to ensure that your service

descriptions are inclusive will assist you in outreach and recruitment. It will send a clear message that you are actively inclusive and will help you make good management decisions.

Matching an applicant with a disability and a service position is virtually the same as matching any other applicant with a service position. Spending time to create a current, thorough, and clear service description is well worth the energy and will increase your ability to make good matches for all participants.

### *What is an essential function?*

An essential function is a task or service activity that is critical to the position. If it is not performed, the nature of the position is fundamentally changed.

There are three factors that make a

function essential:

1. The position exists to perform a specific function;
2. There are a limited number of other participants available to perform the function or among whom the function can be distributed; and
3. A function is highly specialized and the person in the position is selected for special expertise or ability to perform it.

When identifying essential functions:

- Identify the purpose and importance of the tasks
- Consider the frequency with which the task is performed
- Consider the amount of time required to perform the function

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## Resources for Inclusive Member Recruitment

***Inclusion: Creating an Inclusive Environment: A Handbook for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in National and Community Service Programs:*** This handbook is your comprehensive guide to all things inclusion and is downloadable from the National Service Resource Center: [www.nationalserviceresources.org](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org).

***The National Service Inclusion Project (NSIP):*** NSIP is the training and technical assistance provider to CNCS-funded programs in the area of disability inclusion. Their expert staff are available to assist your program in becoming as inclusive to all Americans as possible. Their website can be found at [www.serviceandinclusion.org](http://www.serviceandinclusion.org).

***Effective Practices Related to Disability Inclusion and Legal Responsibilities:*** This section of the National Service Resource Center's website lists several replicable practices relative to disability inclusion. To access these effective practices, go to [www.nationalserviceresources.org](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org) and type "inclusion" into the search box.

## Writing Inclusive Position Descriptions

*(Continued from Page 1)*

- Consider the consequences if the function is not performed
- Distinguish between the methods and results, i.e., focus on the end result rather than the method
- Essential functions must be completed, but they can often be completed in any variety of ways rather than in one particular manner

### *What is a marginal function?*

A marginal function is one that is part of a service position, but not essential. It may be a task that is done on an as-needed basis; or a task that can be easily reassigned. Analyzing service functions is crucial in determining if they are essential or marginal.

When identifying marginal functions:

- Identify the purpose and necessity of the task
- Consider whether the task is critical to the service position; if it is not performed, will the nature of the position be fundamentally changed?
- Consider if the task can be performed on an as-needed basis
- Consider if the task can be easily reassigned

*Example service task broken out into essential and marginal functions:*

**Service task:** Participant will provide homework help to third grade students in an after-school program. Participant will occasionally fix snacks for students as needed.

**Essential functions:** Ability to read and explain third grade subject matter, ability to communicate effectively with children.

**Marginal function:** Fixing snacks at the end of the tutoring session.

*What is the definition of a “Qualified Individual with a Disability?”*

A “qualified individual with a disability” is able to perform the essential functions of the position with or without accommodations. He or she must also meet any qualifications or certifications that the program has in place, such as being a registered nurse, for example. Simply because someone may be a person with a disability does not mean that you must accept him or her to serve as a participant in the program. Individuals who wish to be participants must be able to perform the essential functions of the position with or without accommodations.

So what should be included in an inclusive position description? Check out page three for a template you can follow!



A Tennessee AmeriCorps member serving as a reading tutor and mentor.

***“A qualified individual with a disability is able to perform the essential functions of the position with or without accommodations.”***



***Remember to include the AmeriCorps logo and public notice of non-discrimination on all recruitment materials, whenever possible.***

## Position Description Template

<b>Service Position Title</b>	Indicate title and whether a full- or part-time position.
<b>Immediate Supervisor/Title</b>	List name and/or title.
<b>Service Position Summary</b>	Briefly describe the responsibilities of the position in a narrative format.
<b>Essential Functions of Position</b>	List all basic duties that must be performed with or without reasonable accommodations. Identify only the tasks essential to the position. Focus on function, not “how to’s.” For example, if the essential function is to get from A to B to conduct training, do not say driving or a driver’s license is required.
<b>Marginal Functions of Position</b>	List additional duties that are preferred, are re-assignable to others, or can be eliminated or otherwise do not change the nature of the position.
<b>Principal Working Relationships</b>	Identify internal and external working relationships required for successful accomplishment of responsibilities.
<b>Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities</b>	Identify the specific areas of knowledge and abilities required to be qualified for the position, as well as any required skills.
<b>Academic and Experience Qualifications</b>	List minimum qualifications and experience required to be eligible for the position. Do not include “nice to have’s.”
<b>Service Conditions</b>	Identify the conditions under which the position must be accomplished. For example, service is to be performed in a classroom, or service is performed primarily outdoors, or service involves travel outside the state.
<b>Physical, Emotional, and Intellectual Demands</b>	Identify the degree to which these demands are applied to the requirements of the position. An example of an emotional demand might be: “Patience is required because of work with children with cognitive disabilities.” An example of an intellectual demand might be: “Duties include extensive research and analysis of data.”
<b>Equipment Used</b>	List the types of tools and equipment used in this position.

*For more information on inclusion-related issues, check out “Inclusion: Creating an Inclusive Environment: A Handbook for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in National and Community Service Programs”, which can be downloaded from the National Service Resource Center at [www.nationalserviceresources.org](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org).*