

# Opening Doors Newsletter

*A publication to promote the inclusion of individuals  
with disabilities within AmeriCorps programs.*

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## Interviewing and Selection

An interview is a conversation. Conversations with different applicants may cover topics in a variety of ways. Supervisors know that they must ask **all** applicants the **same** questions. This ensures that you do not inadvertently obtain information from one applicant that you do not obtain from all applicants.

An inclusive manager focuses on an applicant's abilities to perform the essential functions and not on speculation about possible disabilities or the performance of marginal functions. **Essential functions** are the elemental duties of a service position and if not performed, the nature of the position is fundamentally changed. A **marginal function** is part of a service description but may be a task easily reassigned. Service descriptions must accurately identify and clearly describe functions that the service members are actually required to perform.

Service descriptions are a valuable screening tool for supervisors and possible applicants. Written service descriptions attract interested candidates and qualified individuals. Frequent questions will be addressed at the Program Director's Meeting in March.

## Who would you hire?

Here is a real scenario with a service description and two individuals applying. Determine who is qualified.

Position is a FT (1700) hour term starting on September 1<sup>st</sup> and ending on May 30<sup>th</sup>. AmeriCorps member will directly tutor a minimum of 20 Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) students, and will create materials for use in classes that blend literacy instruction, civic participation, and issues of relevance to adult learners. Member will organize and implement 4 informational workshops that increase students' access to information about community systems and resources. AmeriCorps member will implement a civic participation project that addresses a community need. AmeriCorps member will recruit and support 15 non-AmeriCorps volunteers to help in the implementation of these activities. Member will work at Mason County Literacy, under direct supervision of the Executive Director and Instructional Resources Coordinator.

**Applicant #1** Person is blind. She will be unable to access any print books. She is a college graduate with a degree in special education. She has worked as a peer counselor for the National Federation of the Blind.

**Applicant #2** Person with severe depression. She never graduated from high school but received her GED at the age of twenty. She discloses her disability and states she will often need to take the day off. She requests the accommodation to work from her home.

Applicant #1 is qualified. She has educational background and interpersonal skills to be successful.

Applicant #2 is not qualified. No work experience or supervision of others. Duties cannot be performed from her home.

Thank you for your efforts toward promoting disability inclusion. Call or email with any questions or concerns; 406-444-5547 or [kbean@mt.gov](mailto:kbean@mt.gov).