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# AmeriCorps 101



*Office of Faith-Based and  
Community Initiatives (2007)*

# Today's Learning Objectives:



- What is AmeriCorps?
- What areas of need does AmeriCorps target?
- How can AmeriCorps benefit my organization and community?
- How does AmeriCorps benefit the participants?
- Is AmeriCorps a fit for my organization?
- AmeriCorps jargon?



# What is AmeriCorps?



- A network of local, state, and national service programs...
- Engaging thousands of Americans in service every year...
- Addressing a variety of critical needs in communities...
- While providing participants with tangible benefits, including experience, training, and an education award to finance their education.



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# AmeriCorps Programs



- Divided up into three programs:
  - ❑ AmeriCorps\*State and National
  - ❑ AmeriCorps\*VISTA
  - ❑ AmeriCorps\*NCCC



# AmeriCorps\*State and National



- Largest of the three programs (>65,000 members serving every year)
- Members engage in direct service to address critical needs in education, the environment, public safety, homeland security, and other areas
- Members serve in nonprofits, public agencies, and faith-based organizations all over the country
- Most of the funding for these programs is administered by Governor-appointed state service commissions in each state



# AmeriCorps\*VISTA



- VISTA = Volunteers In Service To America
- Helps individuals and communities implement grassroots solutions designed to alleviate poverty.
- Members serve full time for a year
- Funding comes directly from CNCS.
- Behind the scenes, capacity-building:
  - Recruiting volunteers
  - Raising funds
  - Managing projects
  - Etc.



# AmeriCorps\*NCCC



- NCCC = National Civilian Community Corps
- Program for men & women ages 18 – 24
- Members serve full-time for 10 months
- Serve in teams of 10-14
- Based out of three regional campuses across the country
- Take on a series of 6 – 8 week projects across their region relative to conservation, revitalization, homeland security, disaster preparedness, and other areas



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# What Areas of Need Do AmeriCorps Programs Target?



- Education
- Public Safety
- Health
- Environment
- Other Human Needs





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# CNCS and Indiana Priorities



## ■ **CNCS Strategic Priorities:**

- ❑ Mobilizing More Volunteers
- ❑ Ensuring a Brighter Future for All of America's Youth
- ❑ Engaging Students in Communities
- ❑ Harnessing Baby Boomers' Experience

## ■ **Additional Indiana Priority:**

- ❑ Engaging Hoosiers in Healthy Lifestyles



# Examples of Appropriate Service Activities for AmeriCorps\*State



- Tutoring at-risk youth
- Recruiting volunteers
- Teaching conflict resolution skills
- Environmental conservation activities
- Assisting crime victims
- Building homes
- Restoring parks
- Mentoring at-risk youth
- Building organizational capacity
- Teaching computer skills
- Running after-school programs
- Other direct service or capacity-building activities...



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# Examples of **Prohibited** Service Activities for AmeriCorps\*State



- Attempting to influence legislation
- Organizing or engaging in protests, strikes, petitions or boycotts
- Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing
- Any political activities



# Examples of **Prohibited Service** Activities for AmeriCorps\*State



- Engaging in religious instruction, proselytization, worship activities
- Administrative duties (i.e. acting as your agency's receptionist, clerical work, etc.)
- Constructing or maintaining a facility inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship
- Providing a direct benefit to a for-profit organization, labor union, political party, or religious organization



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## Examples of **Prohibited** Service Activities for AmeriCorps\*State



- Providing services and activities that could otherwise be performed by employed workers or volunteers, or that will supplant the hiring of, or result in the displacement of, employed workers in the community



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## Case Study: Indiana TutorCorps



- AmeriCorps funding used to recruit and place members to serve at 20 different after-school programs, to assist them in their mission to bring children up to grade level in reading
- Members serve as tutors and mentors in these programs
- Members receive a living allowance, training, an education award, and (in some cases) health insurance and childcare benefits



# How can AmeriCorps\*State benefit my organization?



- Increases the number of people your organization can serve
  - 92% of participating organizations report that members helped them to increase the number of persons served to a large or moderate extent
  - Members will recruit additional volunteers to help serve your target population
- Enhanced visibility/reputation



# How can AmeriCorps\*State benefit my community?



- Committed individuals providing manpower to address unmet needs
- Members become role models in the community
- Members can be recruited from the community and receive the benefits of AmeriCorps service (living allowance, education award, etc.)
- Development of participative citizens in the community
  - A recent study revealed that AmeriCorps alumni are:
    - More connected to their communities;
    - More knowledgeable about problems facing their communities;
    - More likely to participate in community activities;
    - More likely to choose public service careers.





# How does AmeriCorps benefit the members?



- Valuable training and experience
- Living allowance (in some cases)
- Education Award (\$4,725 for full-time)
- Development of ethic of service and civic engagement
- In some cases, health insurance and childcare as well



# Is AmeriCorps Right for My Organization?

Some Questions to ask:



- Is my organization a public/private nonprofit, tribe, school district, government agency, or higher education institution?
- Does my organization address compelling needs in education, the environment, public safety, homeland security, or other human needs?
- Does my organization have the organizational, technological and fiscal capacity to manage a federal grant (see self-assessment worksheet)?
- Does my organization have the resources to match the federal funds (cash and in-kind)?



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## More Questions to Ask:



- Will this program offer services not already offered in the community?
- Are we seeking funds for a program that would recruit 10 or more full-time members or equivalent?
- Do we have the resources to manage a program for 30-60 days before receiving reimbursement?
- Would this program support my organization's mission and strategic plan?





# AmeriCorps Lingo

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## AmeriCorps Lingo:



**Member:** a participant in the AmeriCorps program, who makes a commitment to a term of service and to “getting things done”



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## AmeriCorps Lingo:



**State Service Commission:** A group appointed by the Governor, charged with administering AmeriCorps\*State funding that is allotted to that particular state.

**Indiana Commission on Community Service and Volunteerism:** a.k.a. “/CCSV”, the Governor-appointed State Service Commission for Indiana, which makes funding decisions for the AmeriCorps\*State funds



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## AmeriCorps Lingo:



**Corporation for National and Community Service**: a.k.a. “*the Corporation*” or “*CNCS*”, the federal agency that administers the AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America programs across the country



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AmeriCorps Lingo:



**Office of Faith-Based & Community Initiatives**: a.k.a. “*OFBCI*”, the agency in Indiana responsible for administering the AmeriCorps\*State program and staffing the State Service Commission.



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## AmeriCorps Lingo:



**Member Service Year:** a.k.a. “MSY”, equivalent of the number of service hours that a full-time AmeriCorps member would serve over a one-year period, approximately 1,700 hours.



## AmeriCorps Acronyms:



- RFP: Request for Proposals
- NOFA: Notice of Funding Availability
- OIG: Office of the Inspector General
- OMB: Office of Management and Budget
- CFR: Code of Federal Regulations
- EAP: Education Award Program





**Thanks!!!**

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