



NEXT STEPS

Life After AmeriCorps

Where do I go from here?

How can I
continue
to serve?

How do I find a job?

Do I need more education?

What's next?



Created in 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service gives more than a million Americans opportunities to improve communities through service. The Corporation supports service at the national, state, and local levels, overseeing three main initiatives:

- **AmeriCorps**, whose members serve with local and national organizations to meet community needs and, after their service, receive education awards to help finance college or training;
- **Learn and Serve America**, which helps link service and education for students from kindergarten through college; and
- **Senior Corps**, through which Americans fifty-five and older contribute their skills and experience.

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Introduction

Before you know it, you will have completed AmeriCorps service. Whether you are a full-time or part-time AmeriCorps member, you may already be thinking ahead to the future—what you will do, where you will go to do it, and so on. This workbook can help you decide not only what you want to do next, but also where you want to be a few years from now. In other words, it can help you lay out short-term and long-term plans, which will help you work through the transition from your AmeriCorps experience to the next step along your path.

Shorter-Term Plans. Among the immediate decisions that face you is the question of whether you will leave the community where you are serving. If so, where will you go? Why? Will you go alone or with others? When will you go? What will you do at the new location to keep yourself going while you make

longer-term decisions? If you aren't relocating, what will you do to manage your finances and focus your energy? Will anyone help you? Who? These decisions are examples of the kind of short-term planning that lies ahead.

Longer-Term Plans. Other decisions you may be working on concern longer-range planning. For example, you may be giving a lot of thought to the career you will pursue. Certainly, this will be a decision with long-range implications. Once you establish your career goal, you will need to address some mid-range planning. Will you seek additional training, for example? If so, where will you get it, and how much will it cost? Other longer-term planning might concern ways to move yourself closer to the region in which you eventually want to live.

What's Inside. Be sure to read the sections in this workbook concerning any options that interest you. Many of the options are discussed in Part 6. Whatever decisions may face you, gather as much information as you can before making up your mind. Consider your options and the pros and cons of each.

Throughout your decisionmaking process, talk things over with others whose opinions you respect. Get feedback on your plans and ideas. By thinking and planning ahead, you'll be able to make your decisions in a calm and

reasoned way, rather than having them forced upon you.

As you search for your path, try to use as many "tools" as you can. One such tool is this workbook, which is designed to help you:

- plan your transition to your next step;
- reflect upon the personal and professional growth you've experienced as a result of your AmeriCorps service;
- assess your skills and accomplishments;
- weigh your choices for what comes next; and
- identify resources and strategies for the transition and whatever you choose to do next.

After this introduction, the workbook is divided into six parts. Following are descriptions of each section.

MANAGING YOUR TRANSITION

How will you cope with the transition from AmeriCorps service to the next phase of your life? This section can help you begin to assess your readiness for your post-AmeriCorps transition.

AMERICORPS AND YOU

What has your AmeriCorps service meant to

you personally and professionally? This section can help you begin to assess the impact of your service.

CONTINUING TO SERVE

How will you continue to serve after AmeriCorps? This section addresses your commitment to continuing to serve, the rewards and challenges of service, and your readiness for future service opportunities.

MAKING DECISIONS THAT WORK FOR YOU

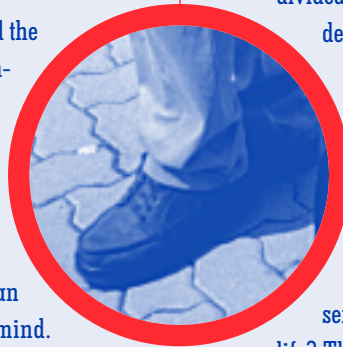
What next step best suits you? This section can help you define what you want next in general terms, research how to get what you want, and make good decisions for your next step.

LOOKING AT YOUR OPTIONS

What are your options after AmeriCorps service? This section describes five options—another year of AmeriCorps, more education or training, employment, starting your own community-based organization or business, or doing nothing—and gives suggestions about pursuing any of the options that appeal to you.

MOVING ON

This section provides some final words of guidance as you take action on your next steps.



The workbook also contains several appendices that provide detailed information to help you figure out and take your next steps.

A. HIGHER EDUCATION: GOING ABOUT IT

This appendix describes the nuts and bolts of selecting and getting into a school and program of study, earning academic credit through traditional and non-traditional means, utilizing campus resources, and making the most of higher education.

B. GRADUATE SCHOOL: A CLOSER LOOK

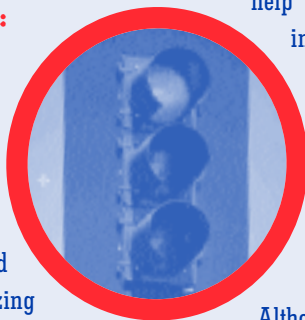
This appendix contains advice about the decision to attend graduate school and how to select and get into the program of your choice.

C. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This appendix lists sources of more detailed information about topics covered in the workbook.

Using the Workbook

This workbook is intended to be user-friendly—relevant, helpful, and easy to use. It is not necessary for you to read the workbook from beginning to end. Rather, you should focus on the sections that apply to you. For example, if



you're not considering further education right now, skip to other portions of the workbook that fit your interests and plans.

The exercises in each section are designed to help you clarify your wishes and intentions. This is particularly true in the self-assessment section of Part 5. Only when you know yourself well can you be reasonably sure of making decisions that pay off over the long run.

Although there are no rules for using this workbook, the self-assessment section should be your first focal point. This is true regardless of which section you choose to work with next. After you've completed the critical step of self-assessment, it will be clearer to you which material you need at this time and which you do not. Then work through whichever sections you choose in any order that makes sense to you.

If you find that some of the material repeats work you've done during your year of service, move on to another section. However, you should review "Leaving Right: Final Administrative Issues" in Part 2 and "Continuing to Serve" in Part 4. This material applies to all AmeriCorps members.