



### AmeriCorps Program Start-Up Checklist

	<p><b>Hire or Assign Program Staff</b> If you do not already have a program coordinator, you will need to select someone as soon as possible. Even though your program contract may not begin until September 1<sup>st</sup> or sometime there after, there are a lot of rules that need to be learned, documents that need to be created, and recruitment for members and host service sites that need to start well before your Members start.</p>
	<p><b>Childcare</b> Call AmeriCorps Care at <b>1-800-570-4543 Ext. 344</b> to request a program director's packet. You can also download a packet at <a href="http://www.naccrra.org/ Americorps/">http://www.naccrra.org/ Americorps/</a>. Program directors must verify the eligibility of Members to receive childcare. Eligibility guidelines will be explained in this packet.</p>
	<p><b>Service Gear</b> AmeriCorps service gear can be ordered from the National Service Catalog, found at <a href="http://www.nationalservicecatalog.org/">http://www.nationalservicecatalog.org/</a>. Programs should provide a minimum of t-shirts (guess on the sizes) as soon as possible because they can take a long time to arrive. You can order other clothing items later.</p>
	<p><b>Contact your Program Officer</b> Get to know your Program Officer at the Serve Illinois Commission. He/She will be the key source of support and technical assistance during the coming year. You are encouraged to consult the AmeriCorps Provisions before calling him/her with your questions; this is a good way to learn what they include. However, after reviewing the Provisions, do not hesitate to call him/her with any of your questions or concerns for clarification.</p>
	<p><b>Contact your Peers</b> Your fellow Programs will be a great contact to ask a lot of the "how do I" questions. Your peers will be able to share experiences, forms, and best practices with you. Know that you are welcome to call any Program Director or other staff member. You might even arrange to visit another program that is similar to yours.</p>
	<p><b>Recruit, Interview and Select Host Sites</b> If you have not already done so, have agencies apply to become host sites for your Members. Make sure they understand the basics of what will be expected of them in terms of Member supervision, training and evaluation and match requirements. Also make sure they understand what Members can and cannot do. Some Program Directors require that the potential sites submit Member position descriptions.</p>

## AmeriCorps Program Start-Up Checklist - continued

	<p><b>Arrange/Schedule your Site Supervisor Group</b> It is important that your site supervisors (those who will work very closely with the Members) buy into the Program as soon as possible. Bring them together for an orientation before the Members are oriented and enrolled. You can request that your Program Officer participate in this orientation.</p>
	<p><b>Contract for Host Sites</b> This should happen after the site supervisor orientation. You may want to contact one of your fellow Programs to obtain information relating to their host site contract.</p>
	<p><b>Join AmeriCorps Listserv</b> The AmeriCorps Listserve is a forum for AmeriCorps programs (staff only), State Commissions, T/TA Providers, Staff of the Corporation for National Service, and anyone else interested in AmeriCorps. Discussion focuses on training, technical assistance, and programmatic issues. Go to <a href="http://nationalserviceresources.org/resources/listserves/index.php">http://nationalserviceresources.org/resources/listserves/index.php</a> to find out how to subscribe.</p>
	<p><b>Read, read, read</b> Become familiar with the AmeriCorps Provisions that were included chapter 1 of your 2008 Program Director Manual.</p>
	<p><b>Training opportunities offered by Serve Illinois</b> The Serve Illinois Commission provides various trainings on an as-needed basis. In addition to required AmeriCorps meetings, take advantage of these training sessions as they provide a wealth of information. Be sure to look for training related opportunities in the Serve Illinois newsletter.</p>
	<p><b>Order Free Resources</b> See Chapter 3 of the Program Director Manual for order forms.</p>
	<p><b>Finalize your Program Performance Measures</b> You should work with your Program Officer to make sure that the performance measures are aligned. For resources that help you write clear PMWs please see project Star's website at <a href="http://www.projectstar.org">www.projectstar.org</a>. Under <b>AmeriCorps State and National</b>, click the <i>Performance Measurement Toolkit</i> link.</p>
	<p><b>Develop Data Collection and Reporting Procedures</b> It is important that you come up with a strategy for how these tools will be implemented: who will be responsible to record, collect, and compile data, how often will it be done, who will be responsible for reporting to your Program Officer, etc.</p>
	<p><b>Develop Action Plan with Target Dates</b> Make your best effort to develop an action plan complete with all tasks that need to be accomplished before the start of the program year AND with deadlines for each task. Assign these tasks to staff as appropriate and meet regularly to check on the progress. You'll thank yourselves for it later!</p>
	<p><b>Recruit, Interview and Select Members</b> Recruitment is the key to retention! Be clear with candidates from the very beginning about what the expectations are for your AmeriCorps program. There is an online recruitment system available at <a href="https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp">https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp</a>. You are required to place a listing on the web to advertise your AmeriCorps positions and can search for potential members using the same website.</p>

## AmeriCorps Program Start-Up Checklist - continued

	<p><b>Review Member Eligibility Requirements</b> To be eligible to serve in AmeriCorps, individuals must be at least 17 years old and be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien. Members must also have a high school diploma or equivalency, or agree to earn one prior to using the education award. Please contact your Program Officer if you have questions relating to Member eligibility.</p>
	<p><b>Review Member Benefits</b> Living allowance: Your Program needs to set up a system for paying Members the living allowance. Health insurance (if applicable): Decide on a plan and get information/enrollment forms from the provider. Childcare (if applicable): Order program director's packet from NACCRRRA. Education Award: Know the correct amount for your type of Members and learn how it works.</p>
	<p><b>Member Contract</b> Please see the Member Contract Check list that was provided in your 2008 Program Director Manual.</p>