



## Site Selection and Management in 3 Easy Steps!

The service sites where your AmeriCorps members work are critical to the success of your program. It is here that AmeriCorps values are acted out and members gain a sense of the importance of what they are doing to help their communities. Here are some tips on establishing and maintaining strong relationships with AmeriCorps service sites.

**1!**

### Select Appropriate Sites for Your AmeriCorps Program

- ♦ Sites must offer work that meets the service objectives of the program.
- ♦ Sites must be able to provide enough service activities to keep members occupied, but not over-burdened.
- ♦ Sites must be accessible to members.
- ♦ Sites must provide a safe working environment for members and service recipients.
- ♦ A staff person must be appointed to supervise your AmeriCorps members at each site where they serve. This person is known as the AmeriCorps Site Supervisor.
- ♦ Site supervisors must be willing to meet the AmeriCorps program requirements and have the time and ability to manage the AmeriCorps members at their site.
- ♦ Ideally, site supervisors should have previous experience in supervision and see the addition of an AmeriCorps member as an asset to the site mission, but not as the sole means of meeting that mission.



# 2!

## Site Supervisor Orientation



### ❖ How?

Although you have a great deal of information to share with your site supervisors, remember that they have expert knowledge of their service sites that will be valuable to you, as well. An **interactive orientation** structure that allows for participant input and feedback will give site supervisors the opportunity to share their knowledge with you and each other. Holding a successful orientation requires thoughtful planning and preparation in order to meet your goals for the session, while making it engaging and fun for your site supervisors. Resources for further guidance on planning your site supervisor orientation are listed at the end of this tip sheet.

### ❖ Why?

Establish **a clear understanding of AmeriCorps requirements and values** among your site supervisors during orientation. An understanding of AmeriCorps is essential for effective management and leadership of AmeriCorps members. Orientation is an excellent opportunity to **set the tone** for your working relationship with your site supervisors. The dialogue that occurs during orientation will open channels of communication between you and the supervisors that will be valuable in the future.

### ❖ When?

Ideally, an orientation should last no more than **2 to 3 hours**, given that your site supervisors will be taking time out of their respective schedules to come together on that day. Hold an orientation for site supervisors as soon as possible **before beginning your program year** to help establish a strong working relationship between yourself and your site supervisors. It is important to hold the site supervisor orientation **prior to the orientation for members**. This will give site supervisors the chance to gain an understanding of their role and AmeriCorps before beginning their job of managing members. Making sure that your site supervisors are prepared to provide members with oversight and leadership will help in getting your program off to a strong start.

### ❖ What should the orientation cover?

The best tone for an orientation session is one that is professional, yet collegial. Orientation tends to be most effective in a group context that **emphasizes the sharing of information and ideas**. Use this time with your site supervisors to review both the site supervisor and member handbooks and to discuss the regulations that apply to site supervisors and members. The AmeriCorps video, "Getting Things Started," is a good way for site supervisors to learn about the AmeriCorps vision and mission, as well as specific details regarding their roles. Other useful materials to discuss include the member agreement, the member time sheet and member orientation materials. Orientation is the best time to **discuss expectations for communication** between you and your site supervisors, as well as how to handle any problems that may arise. This may involve establishing a schedule for regular contact and exchanging information through e-mail, phone calls, meetings and reports. Orientation can also be a great opportunity to **build alliances** in the greater service community. Bringing in local professionals to assist you in the training sessions for your site supervisors will introduce your AmeriCorps program to other organizations in the community, increasing local awareness of the services that your members will be providing.



# 3! Ongoing Management

The emphasis on the exchange of information that characterizes your site supervisor orientation should carry over into your working relationship with your site supervisors.

Both you and the site supervisors will get most of your information about the progress of your AmeriCorps program from members, through written and informal exchanges. Information from members is valuable, but you will need more than that to manage your program effectively.

## ❖ Site visits



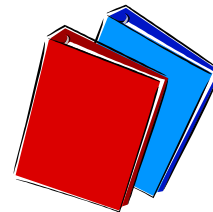
Establish a schedule for regular site visits, the first one within the first month of the program. Plan to hold at least two others, one at the midpoint of the service year and then a final one near the end of the program. During site visits, look at program achievements as well as challenges.

## ❖ One-on-one and group meetings



Set aside a regular time each month or quarter to meet with your site supervisors privately to exchange feedback on the status of the program. Use time during your site visit if necessary. If you have multiple sites, plan group meetings that bring together all of your site supervisors in order to develop the sense of community and exchange that you established during their orientation.

## ❖ Resources for Site Supervisors



It is important to give your site supervisors a sense of being a part of the mission of your AmeriCorps program and the larger National Service network even though they may be working at different agencies and sites. In addition to group site supervisor meetings, making sure that site supervisors receive publications and information about AmeriCorps such as newsletters, upcoming trainings and invitations to local or regional AmeriCorps events.

# AmeriCorps Site Selection and Management Resources

There are many resources available to assist you in the management of your AmeriCorps sites. The AmeriCorps Site Supervisor and Member Handbooks and the Catholic Network of Volunteer Service AEAP 101 Manual for Program Directors are excellent start-up resources that will serve you well throughout the course of your AmeriCorps program. In addition, the materials listed below can provide further insight and information on the selection and management of your AmeriCorps sites. The materials are available on loan through the National Service Resource Center (NSRC), an AmeriCorps training and technical assistance (T/TA) provider. The NSRC catalogue number for the materials follows each description. The NSRC can be reached at 1-800-860-2684. The NSRC can be reached on line at [www.etr.org/NSRC](http://www.etr.org/NSRC) or by e-mail at [susan@etr-associates.org](mailto:susan@etr-associates.org)

**AmeriCorps Front-line Supervisors' Workshop: Participants' Notebook.** National Crime Prevention Council, Washington, DC 1997. Manual used in front-line supervisor's workshops. Includes roles and styles of supervision, communication skills, building a cohesive team, prioritizing work, and action planning.

**Becoming a Better Supervisor: A Resource Guide for Community Service Supervisors National Crime Prevention Council 1996.** Designed to strengthen supervising skills, illustrates the various roles of a supervisor, including communicator, team builder, planner/manager, and AmeriCorps representative. Includes readings, assessment tools, and checklists. Guide developed by three major sources: a comprehensive needs assessment; views of AmeriCorps supervisors who participated in Supervisory Skills Workshops; and literature in the fields of supervision, management, and community participation.

**(Help!) I don't Have Enough Time Guide to Volunteer Management, The.** Campbell, Katherine Noyes and Susan J. Ellis. Energize, Inc., Philadelphia, PA 1995. A step-by-step approach to building a volunteer management team. includes how to map the boundaries of a job, find administrative volunteers and put them to work productively, and coordinate the efforts of a management team. Provides figures and practical worksheets to help with specific tasks.

**Leadership and Management of Volunteer Programs: A Guide for Volunteer Administrators.** Fisher, James C., and Kathleen M. Cole Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA 1993. Discusses the profession of volunteer administration from a management perspective. Provides a multidisciplinary look at current research, theory, and literature from the field of management as they relate to volunteer administration. Describes situations from a range of settings, involving such populations as board members and regular, off-site, and short-term volunteers.


**Managing Meetings that Get Results: The Effective Manager Seminar Series.** Tracy, Brian. Nightingale-Conant Corporation, Chicago, IL. A kit that includes a video and an audio tape, it presents a condensed mini-seminar on how to manage and participate in meetings more effectively for maximum return on time invested. Includes information on different types of meetings and agendas, room layouts, how to problem solve, and reasons for ineffective meetings.

**New Supervisor, The: Skills for Success.** Tepper, Bruce B. American Media Publishing, West Des Moines, IA 1995. Guidelines for improving supervising skills, including decision making, managing time, communicating effectively, and delegating work. Provides worksheets for self-assessment.

**Starting Strong: A Self-Help Guide to Effective AmeriCorps Pre-Service Training.** McKay, Emily Gantz, Diane Cabrales, et. al. Mosaica, Washington D.C. 1995. Provides information on the type of formal pre-service training is appropriate for a specific program. Written for AmeriCorps programs and Corporation for National Service staff, it reflects program member input regarding training methods.

As a Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Provider, the Catholic Network of Volunteer Service helps Corporation for National Service (CNS) funded programs, primarily AmeriCorps Education Awards Programs (AEAPs), find effective approaches to meeting program and member development needs.

For More information, contact:  
Karen Stran and Stacey Scherschligt  
Catholic Network of Volunteer Service  
1410 Q Street, NW Washington, DC 20009  
Phone: (800) 543-5046 Fax: 202-332-6000  
Email: [tta@cns.org](mailto:tta@cns.org)

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