

HOUSING ACTION ILLINOIS AMERICORPS NETWORK

2023 – 2024 Instructions & Resources Packet

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BREAKING DOWN THE COSTS

AmeriCorps Members & AmeriCorps Summer Associates

	Illinois-Based Organizations	Organizations Outside of Illinois
Project Participation Fee	\$4,000 per Member \$850 per Summer Associate	\$5,000 per Member \$1,000 per Summer Associate
Supplemental Benefit for Positions <i>Strongly Encouraged</i>	\$300 - \$500 per month	\$300 - \$500 per month
Housing Action Membership Dues	\$50-\$300 per year <i>Based on annual budget</i>	N/A

Note: Organizations must be in good standing with and up-to-date on Housing Action membership dues in order to apply to host an AmeriCorps position.

These costs are the bare minimum required for host sites. **Housing Action strongly encourages organizations to offer supplemental benefits to AmeriCorps Members and Summer Associates, such as a housing stipend and/or gift cards to local establishments (grocery stores, gas stations, etc.).** Doing so greatly increases the chances of securing a candidate for your AmeriCorps position.

There are other, less predictable costs you should keep in mind, as well: the staff time it will take to supervise and support a position, reimbursement for work travel, and the cost of marketing the position for successful recruitment.

KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE

Indirect vs. Direct Service

Direct Service: Activities that provide an in-person, measurable benefit to an individual, a group, or a community. Working directly with people to make change, or work that is involved in making that direct change.

Indirect Service: Activities that build the capacity of an organization to enhance its mission, strategy, skills, and culture, as well as the systems, infrastructure, and human resources of an organization that is fulfilling unmet community needs. Capacity-building activities help an organization gain greater independence and sustainability.

INDIRECT SERVICE	DIRECT SERVICE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write Grants and Organize Fundraisers • Community Organizing • Enhance Marketing Tools • Recruit Volunteers to Build Houses • Write a Financial Literacy Course Curriculum • Setting Up Partnerships in the Community • Create Volunteer Management System for an Overnight Shelter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor Children in Reading • Reorganize a Food Pantry • Client Intake & Case Management • Build Houses • Teach a Financial Literacy Course • Deliver Meals on Wheels

KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE

AmeriCorps Members & AmeriCorps Summer Associates

	AmeriCorps MEMBER	AmeriCorps SUMMER ASSOCIATE
Term of Service	Full-time, 12-month commitment	Full-time, 8–10-week commitment (June–August)
Project Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing & Homelessness • Education • Hunger • Health Care • Environment • Disaster Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing & Homelessness • Education • Hunger • Health Care • Environment • Disaster Services
Positions Per Organization*	Usually no more than two	No limit, but usually no more than six
Service Type**	Indirect service	Indirect or direct service
Host Site Fee	<i>IL Orgs</i> - \$4,000 per member <i>Non-IL</i> - \$5,000 per member	<i>IL Orgs</i> - \$850 per member <i>Non-IL</i> - \$1,000 per member
2023 Start Dates	6/5, 6/20, 7/17, 7/31, 8/14, 8/28 (Sept – Dec Dates TBD)	6/5 & 6/20 (Other Date Available if needed)
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living allowance • Choice of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education Award (\$6,895) ○ Cash Stipend (\$1,803) • Non-competitive eligibility status for federal jobs • Healthcare allowance • 10 health leave days • 10 personal leave days <p><i>If Eligible:</i> <i>Relocation payment (\$750)</i> <i>Child Care Assistance</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living allowance • Choice of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education Award (\$1,459) ○ Cash Stipend (\$345) • 1 or 2 sick days may be granted, but must be made up by serving extra hours before the term of service ends

*Organizations can apply for/host both AmeriCorps Member and Summer Associate positions.

**See page 3 for a description and examples of indirect service and direct service.

HOST SITE FEE, APPROVAL, & RECRUITMENT

AmeriCorps Members

Host Site Fees & Reimbursement

Host sites are required to pay a project participation fee to Housing Action Illinois. This fee covers match requirements with the federal agency that oversees the AmeriCorps program and helps offset administrative expenses for the project.

- The host site participation fee is \$4,000 (IL Orgs) or \$5,000 (Non-IL) per position.
- Your organization will pay the project participation fee by April 25 if the position is approved.
- Organizations that do not successfully recruit for their position are eligible to receive a full refund of their project participation fee (\$4,000/5,000 per position), provided they meet our recruitment requirements (see below).

Approval & Recruitment

Housing Action will approve as many positions as we determine are eligible. Members will be placed at host sites on a first-come, first-serve basis to organizations that successfully recruit for their positions. We will notify all organizations when every slot has been filled, and any organization that has not successfully recruited for their position (but has met all recruitment requirements) will be reimbursed for the full project participation fee.

Recruitment Requirements

- Publicize the position on at least two websites.
- Attend a Site Supervisor Training (exact timing and location TBD).
- Respond to communications from your assigned AmeriCorps Leader and Housing Action staff within 5 business days.

HOST SITE FEE, APPROVAL, & RECRUITMENT

AmeriCorps Summer Associates

Host Site Fees & Reimbursement

Host sites are required to pay a project participation fee to Housing Action Illinois. This fee covers match requirements with AmeriCorps and helps offset administrative expenses for the project.

- The host site project fee is \$850 (IL Orgs) or \$1,000 (Non-IL) per position.
- Your organization will pay the project participation fee by March 26 if the position is approved.
- Organizations that do not successfully recruit for their position will receive a full refund of their project participation fee (\$850/1,000 per position), provided they meet our recruitment requirements (see below).

Approval & Recruitment

Housing Action will approve as many Summer Associate positions as we determine are eligible. Summer Associates will be placed at host sites on a first-come, first-serve basis to organizations that successfully recruit for their positions. We will notify all organizations when every slot has been filled, and any organization that has not successfully recruited for their position (but has met all recruitment requirements) will be reimbursed for the full project participation fee.

Recruitment Requirements

- Publicize the position on at least two websites.
- Attend a Site Supervisor Training (exact timing and location TBD).
- Respond to communications from your assigned AmeriCorps Leader and Housing Action staff within 5 business days.

WRITING STRONG APPLICATIONS

Prospective host sites are able to apply for AmeriCorps positions through our online [Host Site Application](#). Applications are accepted between December and February each year. The following section contains guidance to help complete the online application, with a particular focus on Section 6: AmeriCorps Project Information.

Please contact Housing Action AmeriCorps Leaders and staff members at americorps@housingactionil.org or [join our webinar](#) on January 13, 2023 at 1:00 pm if you need guidance or advice on any parts of the application.

Section 6: AmeriCorps Project Information

An AmeriCorps project encompasses a set of activities that an AmeriCorps member can perform to accomplish short- and long-term goals for your organization. Projects in our network must satisfy the core AmeriCorps VISTA requirements of capacity building and poverty alleviation.

Applications should focus on activities and goals that can be accomplished within the service term (summer or full-year) of a particular AmeriCorps member, AmeriCorps projects can be renewed for up to 2 additional years if an organization remains in good standing with the Housing Action AmeriCorps Network and there continues to be additional capacity building activities related to the project.

AmeriCorps projects in our network typically work to reduce poverty by building the capacity of affordable housing and homelessness programs. We also support projects that impact and intersect with housing, such as those that focus on education, hunger, health care, environment, and disaster services. Select the project focus area that best describes the primary concentration of the AmeriCorps project.

Project Goals

Before starting this section, think about the broader reason for this position. The AmeriCorps project should result in building the capacity of your organization to meet community needs in a way your organization could not before, such as expanding scale/reach of services, enhancing effectiveness of services, improving efficiency of resource allocation, and/or increasing the available resources and partnerships.

- Identify at least 2 short-term and 2 long-term goals for the project
- Connect the long-term goals to at least 1 capacity building measure (scale/reach, effectiveness, efficiency, and available resources)
- Use specific numbers whenever possible
- If this is the second or third year of the AmeriCorps project, describe what the project has accomplished in prior service terms and how this year's member activities will differ from previous years

Project Goals Example (Communications/Marketing):

- Short-Term Goals: The member will collect 8 impact stories, research 4 similar organizations who use social media, and audit the organization's current communications and marketing efforts
- Long-term Goals: The member will develop and execute an effective social media outreach strategy that incorporates 2 social media platforms and raises awareness of services among youth in the community. They will develop a system for collecting, tracking, and sharing participant stories to use in fundraising campaigns and marketing efforts.
- Capacity Building Measure: This project will help our organization expand our services to more young people (ages 14-25) in our community, who currently have difficulties accessing and knowing about our programs. The marketing materials created and the story collection system developed by the member will also be used to enhance community partnerships and our annual fundraising campaign.

Project Goals Example (Community Outreach):

- Short-Term Goals: The member will create 4 new outreach materials that market our programs and services to families in the community. They will plan and attend 5 community outreach events in 3 neighborhoods near the organization. They will build relationships with 3 family services organizations in the area.
- Long-Term Goals: The member will create a system for identifying community spaces to promote services and increasing community partnerships. They will develop an outreach strategic plan and train staff on the process.
- Capacity Building Measure: This project will allow us to serve more families and expand our services into new areas, with a goal of adding 50 new clients by the end of service term. The systems put in place will also help improve our efficiency by streamlining the outreach process.

Project Goals Example (Data Enhancement):

- Short-Term Goals: The member will transition our client intake process to a more efficient, digital system. They will research and apply for 6 new grants.
- Long-Term Goals: The member will audit our current grantmaking and recommend strategies for streamlining the process, including developing a system for tracking and sharing data between programs. They will create a client intake guide and train staff on using the digital intake system.
- Capacity Building Measure: This project will generate new funding resources, as well as improve our efficiency and allow us to serve more individuals.

Project Impact Measurements

All AmeriCorps projects must track and report outcomes on at least three impact measurements. Impact measurements are described in detail in [AmeriCorps VISTA Performance Measures](#).

The application form will populate the most relevant impact measurements to the focus area you previously selected (housing, education, healthy futures, environment, or disaster services). Estimate specific numerical outcomes for at least three of these measurements, and input 0 for any project measurements the member will not address.

Numbers indicated in this section should also be reflected in the VISTA Assignment Description.

Tools & Strategies for Tracking Projects

We want to know how you plan to track and assess the progress on the listed project impact measurements. We included a list of the most commonly used tools and systems for tracking AmeriCorps projects (such as surveys, sign-in sheets, databases, volunteer management systems, and client/donor relationship management systems). Select all strategies that apply to your project and provide details on the specific software or processes your organization uses or plans to have the AmeriCorps member implement and enhance throughout their service term.

Additional Project Measures: Infrastructure, Sustainability, Community Input

The final questions in this section help us understand in more detail how the AmeriCorps project will build the long-term capacity of the organization to respond to community needs. We included the most commonly used strategies by host sites in our network, but please share any additional strategies that are specific to your project, organization, or community.

WRITING STRONG APPLICATIONS

Needs Statement, VAD, Opportunity Listing

Terms, Purposes, Best Practices, & Examples

Download the applicable material from the application form and use the following guidance to complete the Needs Statement, AmeriCorps VISTA Assignment Description (VAD), and Opportunity Listing for the position. All responses in this section are submitted verbatim to AmeriCorps for review of the proposed position. In contrast, the other sections of the application ask for critical information used by Housing Action to determine whether your organization is eligible to host a position and whether the position is a good fit for our program.

If you do not follow the word and character limits, we will not be able to submit your position for AmeriCorps' review. Failure to adhere to the word and character counts will result in your application being returned for edits in February. Failure to address word and character count issues after the application is returned may result in the application being automatically denied.

Need Statement

Responses to this set of questions are kept internally at AmeriCorps and Housing Action Illinois. This is your opportunity to show why your community and organization requires the support of an AmeriCorps position and how the project you have in mind will be effective.

- **Question A:** Cite sources for the response, as you might for an academic research paper. If your organization has development or grant writing staff, they may have standardized language or sources you can use. Some commonly referenced sources of data include the [NLIHC Out of Reach Report](#), [local Continuum of Care data](#), Quality of Life plans from your organization or for your community, [2021 State of Rental Housing in Cook County](#), and [Census and other governmental data](#).
- **Question B:** As with Question A, you need to cite sources. AmeriCorps is looking for evidence that completing a project like the one you are proposing is likely to be successful. Your cited source can be from your own organization's strategic plan, quality of life plan, or from organizations that have carried out similar projects in other geographic areas.

AmeriCorps VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) Terms

VADs are unique in their use by AmeriCorps. However, their general content is familiar to non-profit organizations, government agencies, and the various other organizations that host AmeriCorps positions. VADs are reframed and reorganized Outcomes Approach Logic Models for the specific position at the host organization.

Below, we will break down the three main portions of the VAD that you need to complete and how they relate to logic model terms:

Goal of the Project = Goal Statement

A Goal of the Project is a very broad statement of intended accomplishments or long-term outcomes. A well-defined goal will establish the overall direction and focus for the project, define what the program will achieve, and serve as the foundation for developing program strategies and objectives (recruiting good candidates and coaching positions during their terms of service). Goals are not always achieved during the one service year or summer. Goal statements should be specific to the community, population, hosting organization, and type of poverty to be addressed.

Objectives = Short-Term and Intermediate Outcomes

Outcomes specify the impact or specific intended results of the project. Objectives in the VAD may be short-term or intermediate, depending on the nature of the position.

- Short-term outcomes are the immediate results of the project: number of clients helped, research being completed, staff being trained, etc.
- Intermediate outcomes specify what individuals do with the short-term outcomes: implementation of a pilot program, increase in grants successfully awarded, ensure the sustainability of the project, etc.
- Long-term outcomes may also be identified. Typically, but not always, the objectives mirror the goal statement. It is important to identify the order in which outcomes will be attained.

Member Activities = Outputs

The outputs specify what the AmeriCorps Member and Summer Associate, program staff, and partners will do during the service year. They are typically more general statements: conduct RFP process, develop training materials, conduct training of trainers, provide technical assistance, etc.

Action Verbs to Create a Strong VAD

One common mistake when writing a VAD is framing the position’s responsibilities and goals as assisting a staff member in implementing a program or acting primarily in administrative or clerical roles. This can easily be prevented by showing how your position focuses on building the capacity of your organization.

Avoid verbs like “help” or “assist,” which can indicate a lack of leadership in the position to AmeriCorps.

Here is a list of action verbs to use instead:

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| Analyze | Ensure | Present |
| Assess | Establish | Promote |
| Build | Evaluate | Recommend |
| Collect | Generate | Recruit |
| Communicate | Identify | Refine |
| Compile | Implement | Research |
| Coordinate | Launch | Secure |
| Create | Market | Suggest |
| Develop | Measure | Update |
| Distribute | Monitor | Use |
| Engage | Plan | Write |

Sample VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) Template

Title: Program Development Associate VISTA	
Sponsoring Organization: Housing Action Illinois	
Project Name: Illinois Affordable Housing Support Project	
Project Number:	
Project Period: 09/01/2021 – 09/01/2022	
Site Name (if applicable): Southeast Supportive Housing	
Focus Area(s)	
Primary: Economic Development	
Secondary:	
Note:	
<i>If your VAD is not accepted, the State Office will note the reason(s) why here.</i>	
VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities	
<p>Goal of the Project: Southeast Supportive Housing (SSH) provides permanent supportive housing for youth ages 18 – 24. Research shows that financial literacy builds the economic empowerment and self-sufficiency of youth. In 2021, SSH will launch a financial education program designed to provide supportive housing tenants with the basics of financial management, household finance, and banking. The VISTA member will design and implement the pilot program. In doing so, the VISTA will build a program that will help supportive housing tenants to break the cycle of poverty. <i>Goal of the Project states: a description of the organization, communicates a community need, how the work of the AmeriCorps member directly addresses this need, and how this need can help break the cycle of poverty.</i></p>	
<p>Objective of the Assignment (08/15/2021 – 12/15/2021) ←</p> <p>By December 2021, the VISTA will have conducted community outreach and finalized curriculum for a pilot Youth Financial Literacy Program.</p>	<p>These sections are filled out to show the timeframe.</p>
<p>Activity 1: The member will understand existing financial literacy program and conduct community outreach in support of a new Youth Education module.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Member will become familiar with agency services and work with management to assess the state of Financial Education programming. Survey potential beneficiaries ages 18-24 with the purpose of identifying gaps in youth supportive services. 	
<p>Activity 2: The VISTA member will research best practices and finalize existing curriculum based on findings and outreach survey.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practices in Financial Literacy and Youth Supportive Services making any necessary updates to existing program materials. Develop a manual for Youth Financial Education program administrators and Resident Leaders. The member will finalize all service materials pending staff approval. 	

Objective of the Assignment (08/15/2021 – 12/15/2021)

By December 2021, The VISTA will create an advisory committee composed of SSH members and community partners in order to establish support and guide the direction of the Financial Education Program.

Activity 1: Create a database of current people and projects in financial literacy to track and gauge interest in program development.

- a. VISTA member will identify and establish partnerships with 5 local financial institutions.
- b. Create a tracking and coordination system to support regular communications and project updates.

Activity creates tools that can be used by staff and future AmeriCorps members, ensuring the overall sustainability of the project produced by the member.

Activity 2: During October and November 2021, plan and help facilitate at least five focus groups to gather input about potential program and direction.

Activity 3: Coordinate and help facilitate monthly advisory meetings throughout the year.

Objective communicates a finite timeframe and includes separate schedules for individual activities. Having milestones allows for the most efficient use of the AmeriCorps member's time, and prevents the member from being diverted to perform non-AmeriCorps related tasks.

Objective of the Assignment (01/30/2022 – 09/01/2022)

Help modify pilot curriculum for Youth Financial Education Program for Summer 2021 in order to engage students learning and provide long term financial practices.

Activity 1: Meet with partner pilot classroom to monitor and gather feedback best fit for new curriculum.

Activity 2: Document feedback and best practices on shared resources folder.

Objectives include activities documenting the work of the AmeriCorps member; ensuring that the project developed by the member can be easily sustained by future AmeriCorps members and/or staff.

Activity 3: Revise existing curriculum based on implementation feedback and conduct required research to support the finalization of program curriculum.

Activity 4: Present the status of the pilot Youth Financial Education program to advisory committee for review and approval.

Objective of the Assignment (02/28/2021 – 05/30/2021)

The VISTA member will develop program administration guides and train one Youth Resident Leader to Facilitate Financial Services Curriculum.

Activity 1: VISTA will document program processes, update administrator's manual, and create presentations for training.

Activity 2: Work with program staff to identify candidates for program facilitation training.

Activity 3: Conduct one full training and certify a Resident Leader as a Youth Financial Education program facilitator.

Sample VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

Title of the Position: Volunteer Recruitment and Management Systems VISTA
Sponsoring Organization: Housing Action Illinois
Project Name: Illinois Affordable Housing Support Project
Project Number:
Project Period: 08/28/2021 – 08/27/2022
Site Name (if applicable): Peoria Cares
Focus Area(s)
Primary: Economic Opportunity
Secondary:

VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities

Goal of the Project (no more than 750 characters with spaces):

Peoria Cares provides holistic support to the individuals and families that are experiencing homelessness in the Peoria area to help these people break the cycle of homelessness and poverty. To help ensure that individuals and families that are experiencing homelessness receive the broad spectrum of support they need to break the cycle of poverty, the VISTA project will build the capacity of Peoria Cares by developing a sustainable volunteer recruitment and management system for its overnight emergency shelter program.

Goal of the project directly states how the project will address a specific need in the community. The goal also addresses how the work of the AmeriCorps member directly relates to ending poverty. There is a description of the organization, too.

Objective of the Assignment (08/15/21-12/20/2021) ←

No more than 1,000 characters with spaces.

These sections are filled out to show the timeframe.

By December 20, 2021, assess the current state of Peoria Care's efforts in reaching, selecting, and supporting volunteer mentors and create or revise policies, procedures, and documents to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the management system of the overnight emergency shelter.

Objective is geared toward building capacity within an organization, and creates a timeline for when the implementation of the project should begin. Having milestones allows for the most efficient use of the AmeriCorps member's time, and prevents the AmeriCorps member from being diverted to perform non-AmeriCorps related tasks.

Member Activities (no more than 2,500 characters with spaces):

1. Research the history of volunteer programs at Peoria Cares.
 - a. Review and become familiar with internal policies, procedures, and documents related to the mentor recruitment and matching system by September 20, 2021. Identify the current program's strengths and

challenges.

- b. In collaboration with Peoria Cares leadership, develop a written plan for improvement by October 20, 2021. *Member activities show how the AmeriCorps member will be focused on increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the program, and will not be administering the program themselves.*
2. Refine or develop systems for screening and scheduling volunteers.
 - a. Develop or revise documents related to internal policies and procedures regarding volunteer recruitment and scheduling by November 20, 2021.
 - b. If needed, participate in online training on how to build a database in Excel by November 20, 2021.
 - c. Create Peoria Cares Excel database to track mentor screening and scheduling by December 20, 2021.

Objective of the Assignment (01/01/22-08/15/2022)

No more than 1,000 characters with spaces.

By 8/15/2022, set up outreach systems and build partnerships with at least 10 community organizations—and then develop targeted marketing materials—to increase public awareness of the volunteer program.

Objective shows how program will create a sustainable and effective volunteer program that can continue without the support of an AmeriCorps member and has a specific goal of 10 community organizations.

Member Activities (no more than 2,500 characters with spaces):

1. Plan for outreach and recruitment. *Member activities act as a work plan for the AmeriCorps member.*
 - a. Identify the skills, abilities, and experiences sought in volunteers by January 30, 2022. *Member Activity ensures that AmeriCorps member's work focuses on community empowerment.*
 - b. Write volunteer task descriptions that include qualifications, activities, benefits, time commitment, and other expectations by February 28, 2022.
 - c. Attend 10 community events, as well as identify and develop partnerships with 10 community organizations whose members are possible volunteers or who can otherwise support the organization, by March 30, 2022. Continue to update the internal database to track volunteer screening and scheduling. *Member activity has measurable outcomes, as well as focuses the AmeriCorps member's work on increasing collaboration among organizations.*



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HOUSING ACTION ILLINOIS



AmeriCorps

2. Market the program to targeted audiences. *Member Activity is a timeline in which outcomes should be reached.*
 - a. Develop community organization-specific marketing emails by May 15, 2022.
 - b. Design marketing materials to post on five social media sites by May 31, 2022. *Member activity has measurable outcomes.*
 - c. Create Peoria Cares marketing binder / electronic folder with updated marketing materials by June 30, 2022. *Member activity is focused on sustainability and creating tools for staff members to use after the AmeriCorps member's term has ended.*

Sample VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

Title of the Position: Communications and Resource Development VISTA
Sponsoring Organization: Housing Action Illinois
Project Name: Illinois Affordable Housing Support Project
Project Number:
Project Period: 08/28/2021 – 08/27/2022
Site Name (if applicable): Midwest Alliance to End Homelessness
Focus Area(s)
Primary: Economic Opportunity
Secondary:

VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities

Goal of the Project: Our region is dealing with housing insecurity for homeowners and stretched demand for rental housing. Midwest Alliance to End Homelessness (MAEH) works to alleviate poverty through housing-related services and public advocacy. The Communications and Resource Development VISTA will help us communicate with our partners, community stakeholders, and funders by developing print and digital materials, as well as aid us in building our capacity and influence by cultivating supporters, expanding our outreach, and diversifying our resources.

The goal shows how the work of the AmeriCorps member directly relates to addressing a specific need in the community, and provides a brief description of the organization. The goal of the project also directly states how building capacity in the organization will help it fight poverty.

Objective of the Assignment (08/15/21-08/15/22) ← These sections are filled out to show the timeframe.

Work with Communications Manager and Staff to expand and develop communications materials (print and digital) that will raise MAEH's profile, reinforce member and donor involvement, and educate and activate the public around ending homelessness and affordable housing.

Objective is related to how the AmeriCorps member will achieve the goal of the project. Having objectives and member activities that are goal-focused prevents the AmeriCorps member from being diverted to perform non-AmeriCorps related tasks.

Member Activities

1. Work with Communications Manager to assess our current digital content and strategy (email, website, and social media); help develop consistent branding and messaging across platforms.
2. Collaborate with staff to develop promotional materials as needed. Potentially contribute to publications such as fact sheets, annual report, email newsletters, etc.

3. Update social media content and strategize ways to expand to new audiences. Plan and launch social media campaign for Affordable Housing Month and identify other events and awareness holidays with campaign potential. Create content for social media kits to share with our supporters.
4. Aid MAEH and our partner agencies in collecting stories that demonstrate our impact and explain our issues, as well as shaping and sharing those narratives with the public, funders, and policymakers. *Member Activity ensures that the AmeriCorps member's work focuses on community empowerment.*
5. Monitor media for housing-related news; help develop/execute media strategy and solidify a network of media contacts.

Objective of the Assignment (11/30/21-08/15/2022)

Collaborate with staff and Board on campaign to gain 3,000 new MAEH Housing supporters, and cultivate them for increased future engagement.

Member Activities

1. Aid in planning and execution of email campaigns and in-person events intended to activate new supporters.
2. Help create welcome materials for new supporters that will raise their level of engagement.
3. Identify prospective partner organizations, develop strategic plan for approaching them, and help create/test new welcome materials. Begin to implement plan and revise as necessary. *Member activity focuses the AmeriCorps member's work on increasing collaboration among organizations.*

Objective of the Assignment (10/15/21-06/15/2022)

Work with Executive Director, Board, and staff to expand and develop resource base.

Member Activities

1. Research and produce summaries of potential funding sources. Investigate new foundations and initiatives that might fund our work; research fee-for-service models that other organizations have implemented, and then recommend strategies for MAEH.
2. Contribute to the development and editing of funding proposals.
3. Collaborate with Executive Director and Communications Manager on planning, implementing, and assessing new fundraising strategies
 - a. Plan and execute a #GivingTuesday campaign.
 - b. Investigate local business partnerships or sponsorships, recommend

ones worth pursuing, and begin outreach to establish relationships.

c. Research and brainstorm ways to increase our individual donor base.

Member activities act as a work plan for the AmeriCorps member. Member activities should not include things like “other duties as assigned.”

Objective of the Assignment (08/15/21-12/15/2022)

Assess staff use of our database and email marketing system, then help establish streamlined processes for data collection, cleanup, maintenance, and integration.

Member activities are focused on sustainability and creating tools for staff members to use after the AmeriCorps member’s term has ended.

Member Activities

1. Work with Communications Manager to assess current staff use and capabilities of our database and email system, as well as the state of current data.
2. Research and implement plan for data cleanup, propose new procedures for data entry and relationship tracking, and help integrate the systems so that they work together.
3. Revising, building, and improving contact lists for community partners, media, and donors.

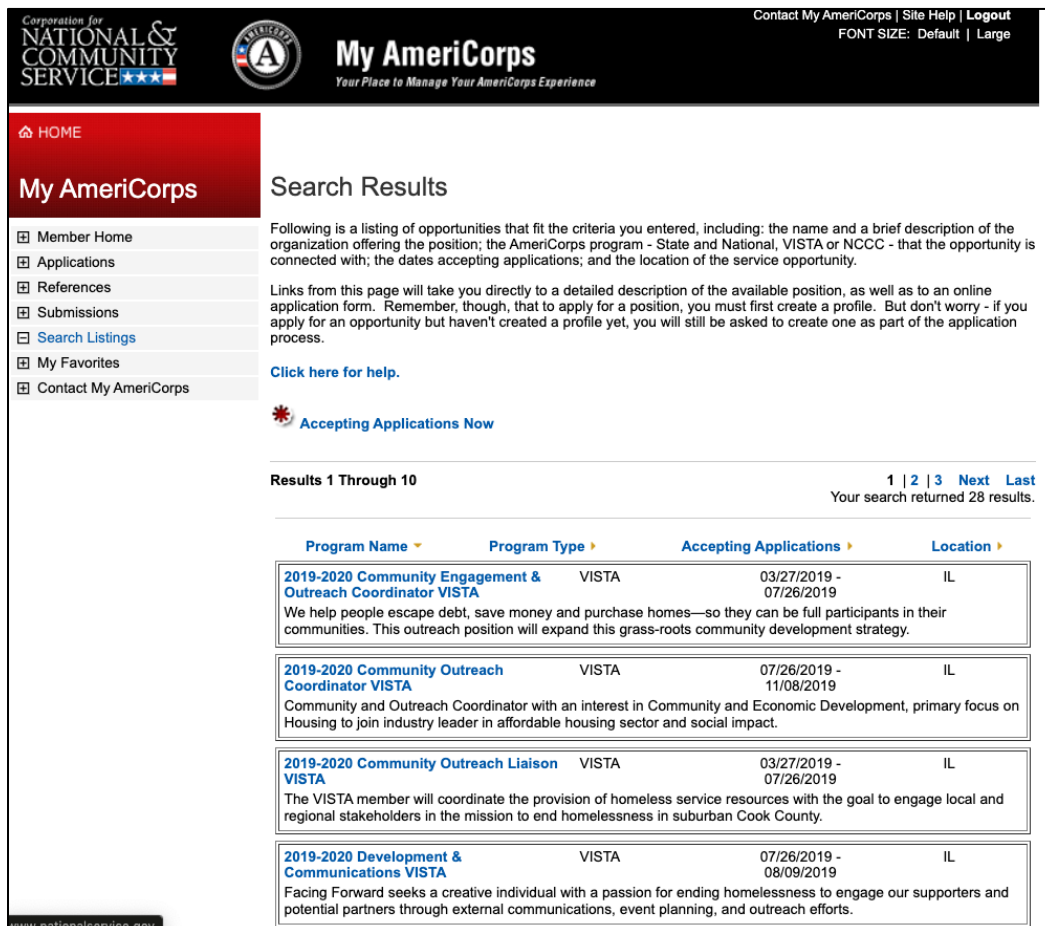
Opportunity Listings

Below are the definitions of the specific sections, as well as screenshots of the AmeriCorps Portal to show what the content of these sections looks like in the portal.

AmeriCorps Portal: What [USAJobs](#) is to federal employment, the [AmeriCorps Portal](#) is to AmeriCorps positions. Every single AmeriCorps position nationwide is posted through this platform.

Opportunity Listing: The job description posted on the AmeriCorps Portal describing your position's role, responsibilities, benefits, and expectations. This listing has sub-categories that are defined starting below.

Two-Liner: This content is the brief description of your position underneath the title of the position used to attract candidates. As you can see in this screenshot, when applicants search for positions, the positions are listed next to each other. Great two-liners make your position stand out so that applicants want to see the full description.



The screenshot shows the 'My AmeriCorps' search results page. The header includes the AmeriCorps logo and navigation links. A sidebar on the left contains a menu with options like 'Member Home', 'Applications', and 'Search Listings'. The main content area displays search results for '2019-2020 Community Engagement & Outreach Coordinator VISTA' and other similar roles. Each result includes the program name, type, application dates, location, and a brief description.

Program Name	Program Type	Accepting Applications	Location
2019-2020 Community Engagement & Outreach Coordinator VISTA	VISTA	03/27/2019 - 07/26/2019	IL
2019-2020 Community Outreach Coordinator VISTA	VISTA	07/26/2019 - 11/08/2019	IL
2019-2020 Community Outreach Liaison VISTA	VISTA	03/27/2019 - 07/26/2019	IL
2019-2020 Development & Communications VISTA	VISTA	07/26/2019 - 08/09/2019	IL



If a candidate clicks on a position from the listings shown in the previous screenshot, they are brought to the Opportunity Listing (below).

HOME
My AmeriCorps

- Member Home
- Applications
- References
- Submissions
- Search Listings
- My Favorites
- Contact My AmeriCorps

* BMVP - Habitat Housing in Red Lodge, MT!

As a small resort community, affordable housing is a big issue for the local workforce, many of whom live in poverty and low-income situations. According to the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS), 16.3% of households in Red Lodge fall below the poverty level. According to a 2016 Housing Assessment, about half of respondents reported spending more than 30% of their income on housing, which becomes even more burdensome for low-income households. According to Zillow.com, the median home price is over \$220,000; however, the median household income is \$46,786 – leaving a large gap between what people can afford and what is available. There is a housing stock of just over 1,000 units, but of those units, less than one hundred are unoccupied and available for rent or for sale, without taking affordability into account. In addition, due to its location and recent office closures, the city lacks many public service resources available to assist the local workforce with housing needs. By increasing the stock of permanently affordable rentals and homes for sale, providing training and education, creating programs to address home owner and renter needs, and building awareness of these programs, the organization will be providing incremental and long-term benefits for the community. This project will help alleviate poverty by helping to increase permanent affordable housing stock, providing financial education opportunities, and connecting people to programs and services that support their housing goals. For the local workforce struggling with housing costs, increased knowledge of financial management and access to sustainable housing will ultimately lessen the housing cost burden that many low-income families experience.

Further help on this page can be found by [clicking here](#).

Member Duties : Assist the Red Lodge Area Community Foundation to bring people out of poverty by connecting them to housing services and housing opportunities! The overall goal of the project is to help low-income individuals and families that work in the Red Lodge Area, secure quality affordable housing, increase their knowledge of financial management, and increase community engagement in upcoming housing opportunities. Capacity will be built for this project through creating an effective outreach plan to connect people to existing housing assistance programs and services, and by increasing community engagement and awareness of the upcoming development of single family homes and multi-unit housing. The VISTA member will also participate in the development of local financial counseling or Homebuyer Education (HBE) events to benefit households seeking education in support of their housing goals.

Program Benefits : Childcare assistance if eligible , Living Allowance , Relocation Allowance , Training , Choice of Education Award or End of Service Stipend , Health Coverage* .

*For details about AmeriCorps VISTA healthcare benefits, please visit <http://www.vistacampus.gov/healthcare>

Terms :
Permits working at another job during off hours , Permits attendance at school during off hours , Car recommended .

Service Areas :
Entrepreneur/Business , Homelessness , Children/Youth , Education , Hunger , Health , Community Outreach , Community and Economic Development , Housing .

Skills :
Communications , Writing/Editing , Public Speaking , Community Organization , Leadership , General Skills , Fund raising/Grant Writing , Counseling .

Apply Now!

[Return to Search Results](#) | [Search Again](#)

SUMMARY

Program Type: AmeriCorps VISTA

Program
* BMVP - Habitat Housing in Red Lodge, MT!

Program Start/End Date
03/16/2020 - 03/15/2021

Work Schedule Full Time

Education level College graduate

Age Requirement
Minimum: 18 Maximum: None

Program Locations MONTANA

Accepting Applications
From 11/14/2019 To 02/14/2020

Contact
Carly Collins
2825 3rd Ave N
Billings MT 59101
4062478675
collinsc@billingsmt.gov
www.CityofBillings.net/vista

Listing ID 77147

add to favorites

The rest of the parts of this listing that you, the member organization, control are: the Position Description (the first paragraph of the listing), Member Duties, Skills, Terms, and Benefits (only if you offer additional benefits; otherwise this section is standardized by Housing Action). The rest of the sections are input by Housing Action with the approval and consideration of the member organization.

Position Description

Describe your organization, community, and the project the AmeriCorps member will work on, and provide a narrative description of your ideal candidate. In the application, you will notice there is a required section, which Housing Action provides, that ensures the applicants are aware that the position is a part of the Housing Action AmeriCorps Network.

Member Duties

Describe the objectives, goals, and activities for your position. This section can be used to provide additional narrative description regarding your ideal candidate beyond the character limit in the Position Description. Many organizations share the objectives and key member activities from the VAD in this section.

Skills

There is a specific list of skills to choose from using the AmeriCorps Portal. There is a section for “other,” but it only allows for one additional skill. If there is more than one skill that you would like to add to the list, add those skills in the Member Duties or Position Description.

Terms

Housing Action usually completes this section because the responses are the same for all hosting organizations. Please let us know if you will:

- Not allow AmeriCorps positions to have an outside job.
- Not allow AmeriCorps positions to be enrolled in academic coursework.
- Require AmeriCorps positions to wear a uniform.

Service Areas

Housing Action usually completes this section because the responses are the same for all hosting organizations. Feel free to highlight any of the other options provided by the AmeriCorps Portal in the Opportunity Listing question of Section III of the application.

How to Write Compelling Opportunity Listings

Diversity and Inclusion

The diversity of those who generally serve in AmeriCorps programs is an asset for organizations that also serve diverse communities and individuals from many different backgrounds and identities. 83% of AmeriCorps VISTA members were born after 1982¹, and AmeriCorps VISTA members are the oldest AmeriCorps alumni cohort, with an average age of 37, compared to NCCC at 28, and State and National members at 34. Out of the AmeriCorps programs, AmeriCorps VISTA members have the highest proportion of female alumni at 73 percent. AmeriCorps alumni are 63% white (Non-Hispanic/Latinx), 15% Black, 12% Hispanic/Latinx, with the remaining 10% another race.²

Having a diverse cohort of AmeriCorps VISTA members, which reflects the diversity of the populations they serve, “will bring many different perspectives, ideas and thinking that will inform and enrich the AmeriCorps VISTA program and projects.”³ AmeriCorps service provides an opportunity for community members to increase their ability to succeed in diverse environments. AmeriCorps alumni have high levels of cultural competency, reporting that they are “skilled at working with people different than themselves, and they believe that the AmeriCorps experience helped increase this skill.”⁴

However, current marketing resources, strategies and materials from AmeriCorps are not sufficient to connect effectively with and engage diverse populations, leaving communities and organizations without the benefits of diverse AmeriCorps VISTA member cohorts. Therefore, it becomes necessary for AmeriCorps VISTA programs and member organizations to take on the responsibility of reaching out to diverse candidates, avoiding writing job postings that can shrink your candidate pool, while also keeping a high-quality candidate pipeline.

Job Requirements and Skill Sets

List only the most relevant skills to avoid discouraging potential candidates from applying. Use caution with qualifications—while you may know that there is some flexibility in which qualifications a candidate possesses, not all candidates will interpret it that way.

¹ Corporation for National and Community Service (2016) *Who are the VISTAs?*

² Friedman, E., et al. (2016). *New Methods for Assessing AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes: Final Survey Technical Report*. (Prepared for the Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Evaluation). Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates Inc. p.22

³ Stevie Chilcote, Caitlin Epsing, Rhea Johnson and Kevin Kenneally (2017) *Recruiting for Diversity: A Resource for VISTA Program Sponsors and VISTA Leaders* Corporation for National and Community Service. p.4

⁴ Corporation for National and Community Service (2016) *Research Report Brief: AmeriCorps Alumni Pilot Outcomes Study: Findings on Cultural Competency and Diversity Skills*.

For skills that are not required, but will help a candidate stand out, consider using language such as:

- “familiarity with...”
- “bonus points for...”
- “working knowledge of...”
- “comfortable with...”
- “if you have any combination of these skills...”⁵

Ask whether you need the candidate to be an expert, or someone who has the potential to become an expert. Consider the things that your organization may use to screen out candidates at the application review stage. Certain things, such as gaps in employment history, typos, or grammar usage may not be relevant to the position, but can create a negative impression of a candidate.⁶

Language in job descriptions that assume a candidate has the same level of knowledge of your organization or field as you do can deter candidates by making them feel like outsiders. This can be especially true if your job description contains language that is used mostly in internal communications. When in doubt, spell out acronyms and provide brief descriptions of the programs the candidates will be working on.

Candidates may also be deterred from applying when job requirements rely heavily on credentials. For example, a job posting and opportunity listing may have a requirement for specific degrees or previous employment in the field rather than demonstrated skills. When creating job postings and opportunity listings, recognize that candidates from other fields may have relevant and valuable skills. Also, consider creating opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their skills in the application process or during the interview.

While many AmeriCorps applicants are recent college graduates, there is no age restriction for serving in AmeriCorps. However, many organizations primarily market their position to recent graduates. Language in job descriptions can make it seem that the position is only for younger people. For example, the term “digital native” can mean “we’re looking for someone who is passionate about technology, but a reader might interpret this as ‘someone who is under 25’.”⁷

Beyond the education award, highlight other benefits that “are supportive of diverse workers. Ex: Flexible hours, accessible facilities and workplace environments,

⁵ Fleishman, Hannah (2017). *Your Job Descriptions Are Hurting Your Hiring Pipeline*. <https://thinkgrowth.org/your-job-descriptions-are-hurting-your-hiring-pipeline-52b5a406fb8f>

⁶ McNamee, Katherine (2018) *More Inclusive Hiring Practices Established at Small Nonprofit*. Association for Talent Development

⁷ Fleishman, *Your Job Descriptions Are Hurting Your Hiring Pipeline*

mentoring, training opportunities, inclusive restrooms, childcare assistance, transportation reimbursement, etcetera.”⁸

Adding transparency can improve the applicant experience. List items to include in cover letters, provide the exact amount of the living stipend to help manage candidate expectations, and directly address potential barriers to service. Also, proactively communicate the benefits associated with being an AmeriCorps member—don’t wait for the candidate to ask.

Additional Barriers

Job postings can create barriers to potential applicants. If English is a second language, the AmeriCorps Portal application may contain words and instructions that an applicant may not understand. The applicant may also be concerned that their level of English proficiency may create a bias against their application, preventing them from seeking help. Written language barriers may also include blindness or other sight issues, and dyslexia. Consider making recruitment materials and communication in large print and dyslexia friendly fonts, and in the most common languages spoken in your community – including sign language.

An additional barrier during the application process can be computer literacy and access. An applicant can find the online application intimidating depending on their level of experience with computers. Applicants may also not have regular access to the Internet, and have to spend time or money to travel to a library or pay to use the Internet. Consider accepting resumes, cover letters, and references in alternative formats, while they finish the online application at their own pace.

Communicating Benefits

Because applicants are assessing whether AmeriCorps is a good fit for them during the screening conversation, it is important to directly address potential barriers with all candidates. Do not present them as barriers, but offer up how your organization supports their AmeriCorps members in light of potential barriers to successfully completing a term of service. Then mention additional support options. These could include:

- Relocation/settling in allowances (if applicable)
- Outside employment
- If your organization offers additional benefits
- Federal or state assistance available in your area
- Healthcare benefits
- Explain Education Award/end of service stipend and provide exact amounts
- Explain childcare support option
- Be very honest with candidates about the steps of your hiring process, especially if you are hiring on a rolling basis

⁸ Chilcote et. al. *Recruiting for Diversity* p. 13

- Let candidates know who is making the final decision
- Honestly and respectfully ask candidates if they have any hesitations about the position that they'd like to address.

(Adapted from Stevie Chilcote, Caitlin Epsing, Rhea Johnson and Kevin Kenneally (2017) *Recruiting for Diversity: A Resource for VISTA Program Sponsors and VISTA Leaders* Corporation for National and Community Service. p. 24)

Use Inclusive Language in Your Outreach

Inclusive language is important when conducting outreach strategies. Using inclusive language can broaden your efforts and help you reach a greater number of diverse applicants. You can find this definition along with several other definitions in the definition section of this tool kit.

Your outreach and marketing efforts are often the first-time potential AmeriCorps candidates become aware of your organization and AmeriCorps. Due to this reality, it is of vital importance that inclusive language is embraced in every single advertisement, position posting, and outreach that you do on behalf of your AmeriCorps program.

What is inclusive language?

Inclusive language is language that avoids the use of phrases and terms that devalue other people. Using inclusive language places value on all experiences and identities. Using inclusive language helps us to reflect on our own unconscious biases surrounding what we perceive to be “normal.” Language can reinforce inequity based on dominant cultural norms.

Inclusive language changes over time and it is important to acknowledge this. What is considered appropriate and inclusive language now could change.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and only provides some examples of areas you need to consider when using inclusive language in your own outreach strategies.

Gender and Sexual Orientation

- Be aware that there is a difference between gender and sexual orientation.
- Gender exists on a continuum. Trans and transgendered refer to gender identity rather than sexual orientation.
- Be aware of the fact that not everyone uses he/his and she/her as their pronouns. An individual's pronouns should be used and never assumed, so try to avoid using phrases like “his or her” in your outreach efforts.

Race and Ethnicity

- Make sure to avoid references that draw unnecessary attention to race. When a reference is relevant, make sure to learn the appropriate terminology. Using a phrase like “people of color” is appropriate because it places people first.

Disability

- Use language that focuses on the individual, not the disability. Do not define others by their disability.
- Say “people with muscular dystrophy,” not “the disabled.”

Language

- The importance of providing outreach material in different languages is something often overlooked to those of us that only speak one language. Position listings often ask for people who speak a second language, but rarely create outreach material in the desired second language.

(Adapted from Stevie Chilcote, Caitlin Epsing, Rhea Johnson and Kevin Kenneally (2017) *Recruiting for Diversity: A Resource for VISTA Program Sponsors and VISTA Leaders Corporation for National and Community Service*. p. 10-13)

Additional Resources

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lexicon

From the Institutional Diversity Blog, this is a deeper dive into the principles and definitions around diversity.

<http://institutionaldiversityblog.com/glossary/>

Smallbusiness.chron.com

Provides several articles highlight the importance of diversity in marketing, and includes marketing tools and more.

<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/importance-diversity-marketing-24765.html>

List of Diversity-Focused Recruitment Resources

http://hr.fas.harvard.edu/files/fas-hr/files/diversity_recruitment_resources.pdf

QUANTITATIVE CHART DEFINITIONS

AmeriCorps Members

Number of safe, healthy, affordable housing units made available, developed, or repaired as a direct result of capacity building efforts by the AmeriCorps member.

Housing Unit: *A single-family home (including a mobile home if permanently placed), an apartment, or a room in a group home for people with disabilities.*

Safe, healthy, affordable: *Grantee certifies that the housing unit is safe and healthy based on an inspection or other documentation. Grantee defines affordability and certifies that the housing unit is affordable.*

Made available: *This count indicates that the work has been completed to make the units available but they may or may not have been occupied.*

Develop: *Build new or substantially rehabilitate housing units that were uninhabitable or soon would have become so. Involves replacing major systems such as the roof, the plumbing, the wiring, the foundation, or elevating the unit as required by a flood plain standard.*

Repair: *A more modest level of physical work on the unit, such as weatherizing, painting, replacing appliances and removing safety hazards.*

How to Calculate, Measure, and Collect Data

Unduplicated count of **Housing Units** developed, repaired, or otherwise made available as defined above. This count indicates the work has been completed to make the units available but they may or may not have been occupied.

Programs can use a dollar cut-off to distinguish “developed” from “repaired” (e.g., 30K/unit) or can distinguish by whether major systems are replaced. Dollar cut-off would require valuing volunteer labor, distinguishing between skilled trades, and other workers.

Inspection report, certificate of occupancy, or other verification from an external agency that the work was completed.

Goal:

Number of individuals receiving housing services as a direct result of capacity building efforts by the AmeriCorps member.

Housing Services: *substantive engagement of individuals with a specific goal in mind related to housing. Cannot consist solely of mass dissemination of information such as email blasts, social media posts, or distributing pamphlets.*

How to Calculate, Measure, and Collect Data

Count of **Individuals** as defined above benefitting from the housing service. Can only count each individual once during the program year even though it may be necessary to provide services to the individual more than once.

The data should be collected using a tracking mechanism appropriate for the type of service, which may include: CNCS-supported agency's administrative or call center records, referral logs, attendance logs or sign-in sheet, client tracking database, or other information management system.

The client tracking database should have unique IDs; for example, the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

Goal:

Number of community volunteers recruited or managed to support housing-related programs.

Community Volunteers: *Residents in the community who are recruited and/or managed by the organization) to offer time, knowledge, skills and expertise for free. Community volunteers differ from AmeriCorps VISTA Members or other national service participants.*

Recruited: *Enlisted or enrolled as a direct result of an intention to do so.*

How to Calculate, Measure, and Collect Data

Only count community volunteers that were specifically recruited or managed by your organization or the AmeriCorps member engaged in the capacity building activity for the intended purpose of supporting or enhancing the housing-related programming may be counted.

At the outset, your organization should indicate a minimum number of days or hours, or other units of service, that must be performed by the individual in order for them to be counted as a recruited volunteer.

The organization must use some form of volunteer management system, having processes or capabilities that allow them to track information about individual volunteers such as but not limited to: the volunteer's name, relevant demographic information including location of residence, method of recruitment, participation in orientation and/or training activities, planned and actual role, assignment(s) or



35 years

HOUSING ACTION ILLINOIS



AmeriCorps

activities, start and end dates of service, and hours served related to the program that the capacity building activities were intended to support or enhance.

The total number of volunteers recruited or managed should be an unduplicated count of community volunteers engaged by your organization or AmeriCorps member during the program year. Your organization should control for double counting or select the measure that best fits your program model.

Goal:

Number of staff and community volunteers that received training (of one or more types) to support housing-related programs as a result of capacity building services provided by hosting organization or the AmeriCorps member.

Staff: Paid or unpaid employees of the AmeriCorps-supported organization. AmeriCorps members are not considered staff members of the AmeriCorps-supported organization.

Community Volunteer: see above.

Training: An organized activity aimed at imparting information and/or instructions to improve the training recipient's performance or to help them attain a required level of knowledge or skill.

How to Calculate, Measure, and Collect Data

Count the number of individual staff members and community volunteers who received training that was developed, organized or delivered by your organization or AmeriCorps member. The training received should be intended to support or enhance housing-related programming. Count each staff member once, even if they receive multiple types of training.

At the outset of the activity, your organization should indicate the minimum amount of days, hours, or other units of service required to complete the activity and/or achieve results.

Goal:

Dollar value of cash or in-kind resources leveraged to support housing-related programs.

Cash resources: Cash, check, or other monetary gift.

In-kind resources: Non-cash contributions, including donated goods or services, expert advice, equipment or property.

Leverage: *To garner additional resources or assets through capacity building activities (such as funding, volunteers, in-kind support, and partnerships).*

How to Calculate, Measure, and Collect Data

Only cash resources and in-kind resources raised specifically as a result of capacity building activities provided by your organization or AmeriCorps member(s) engaged in the capacity building activity intended to support or enhance the housing-related programming may be counted.

The organization must keep administrative records or other information management systems that enable them to track and verify the origin, intent and other transactional information on commitments and contributions of cash and in-kind resources. Inclusion of cash or in-kind resources in the count is subject to IRS limitations, and should not include contributions made to specific individuals, political organizations or candidates. Adhere to the following provisions adapted from the IRS' Deducting Charitable Contributions, 6.

Regardless of the amount, to count a contribution of cash, check, or other monetary gift, your organization must maintain a bank record, payroll deduction records or a written communication from the individual or organization containing the name of the organization, the date of the contribution and amount of the contribution. For text message donations, a telephone bill will meet the record-keeping requirement if it shows the name of the receiving organization, the date of the contribution, and the amount given.

Goal:

Number of new systems and business processes or enhancements to existing systems and business processes put in place as a result of capacity building services.

Systems or business processes: *A collection of related, structured activities or tasks that produce a specific service or product (serve a particular goal) for particular clients or beneficiaries.*

Enhancements: *New features and functions or significant improvements made to existing systems or processes that improve efficiency and productivity or provide new capabilities that were not previously possible in support of the program delivery model.*

How to Calculate, Measure, and Collect Data

Count of new and enhanced systems and business processes at organizations as a result of capacity building activities provided. Count each system or process only



35 years

HOUSING ACTION ILLINOIS



AmeriCorps

once. Do not count upgrades to new systems or processes already included in the count.

Goal:

Number of organizations that received capacity building services

Organization: nonprofit or state/local/tribal government entity

Capacity building services: a set of activities that expand the scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of programs and organizations. Capacity building activities may also leverage resources (e.g., funding, volunteers, in-kind support, or partnerships) for programs and/or organizations. As a general rule, AmeriCorps considers capacity building activities to be indirect services that enable organizations to provide more, better and sustained direct services. Capacity building activities must (1) be intended to support or enhance the program delivery model, (2) respond to the organization’s goal of increasing, expanding or enhancing services in order to address pressing community needs, and (3) enable the organization to provide a sustained level of more or better direct services after the AmeriCorps member’s term of service has ended.

How to Calculate, Measure, and Collect Data

Count of the total number of organizations that received capacity building activities intended to support or enhance the housing related-program delivery model from your organization or AmeriCorps member. The activities must meet the criteria for capacity building described in the section of the above. It is your organization’s responsibility to ensure the capacity building activities meet the criteria provided in these definitions.

Goal:

QUANTITATIVE CHART DEFINITIONS

AmeriCorps Summer Associates Only

Number of students with improved academic engagement or social and emotional skills

***Improved academic engagement or social and emotional skills:** A positive change in student skills, attitude, and/or mindset that is likely to contribute to increased educational success. May include increased interest in school, improved perspective on school climate, increased attachment to school and/or increased educational aspirations.*

How to Calculate, Measure, and Collect Data

Programs should obtain counts of the number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness based on academic engagement or social and/or emotional development.

Accredited early childhood education programs may already have state requirements in place for assessing the social and emotional development of children to determine school readiness. For example, such a measure may be: "The number of children who often or very often exhibit positive social behaviors when interacting with their peers." This suggested measure is from the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative Project (Feb 2005).

Goal:

Number of individuals who report increased food security

***Food security:** Access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum: (1) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and (2) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies).*

How to Calculate, Measure, and Collect Data

Data collection will be based on a survey of the adult family member who received the food services.

Survey questions could be modeled after those used to assess household food security for the Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. The Household Food Security Survey is administered annually as a supplement to the Monthly Current Population Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The questionnaire

includes about conditions and behaviors known to characterize households having difficulty meeting basic food needs.

The report on Household Food Security in the United States (2007) measures the food security status of households by determining "the number of food-insecure conditions and behaviors the household reports. Households are classified as food secure if they report no food insecure conditions or if they report only one or two food-insecure conditions. (Food-insecure conditions are indicated by responses of "often" or "sometimes" to questions 1-3 and 11-13, "almost every month" or "some months but not every month" to questions 5, 10, and 17, and "yes" to the other questions.) They are classified as food insecure if they report three or more food-insecure conditions." The referenced question items can be found in the report (PDF).

Two different approaches to administering the survey could be used.

- (1) **"Pre/post" questionnaire.** The same questionnaire would be administered to the adult family member at the beginning of the education/training program. The questionnaire would ask about the food security of the adults and children in the household. The same questionnaire would be administered three to six months after completion of the education/training.
- (2) **Post-program questionnaire only.** Three to six months after completion of receiving the education/training, a questionnaire would be administered to the adult family member asking about a) the current level of food security of the adults and children in the household and b) their level of food security prior to receiving the service. The questions would address the same topics as those in the pre/post questionnaire but reworded to ask separately about current and prior food security.

Survey responses can be analyzed to calculate the differences in the number and percent of respondents who reported being food insecure prior to receiving the service and after receiving the service. Each individual should be surveyed only once regardless of the number or type of different services (e.g., education/training, counseling) received during the year.

Goal: