CREATING A SERVICE YEAR PROGRAM

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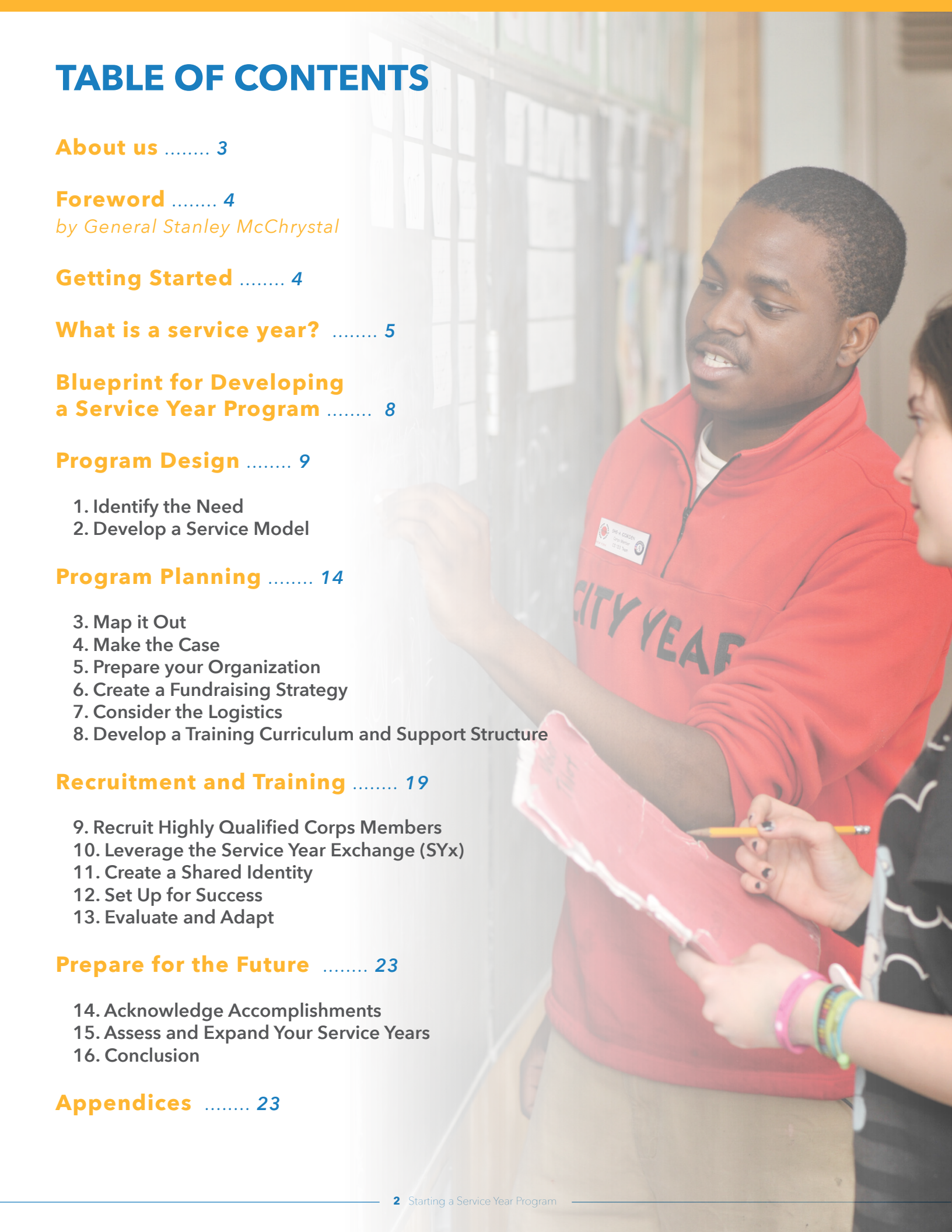


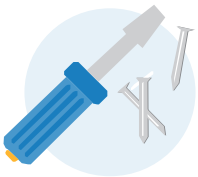
SERVICE YEAR℠

About Service Year Alliance

Service Year Alliance is a bipartisan organization committed to making a year of full-time service – a service year – a common expectation and opportunity for young Americans of all backgrounds. Expanding service years has the power to address our country's most pressing challenges, change the lives of those who serve, and unite our nation. Service Year Alliance is the result of the merger between the Franklin Project, Service-Nation, and the Service Year Exchange, and is a joint venture between Be The Change, Inc. and The Aspen Institute. General Stanley McChrystal (United States Army, Retired) serves as Chair of the board. Read the full merger statement.

A SHARED VISION

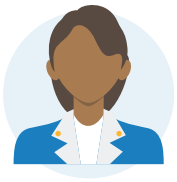
As leaders and organizations, we have joined together to form Service Year Alliance because our nation faces enormous challenges that can only be solved by a more engaged citizenry and a heightened sense of collective responsibility. Service Year Alliance represents the first organization with the boldness to chase our vision and the capacity to achieve it. **We believe the force of service years at scale can:**



SOLVE PROBLEMS

ENGAGE CITIZENS

UNITE THE COUNTRY



PREPARE LEADERS

Young Americans engaging in service years can repair broken cities, uplift and educate children at risk, and empower communities struggling with poverty. It could unite the most diverse nation in history, binding people of different backgrounds through common cause. It can inspire young Americans to serve for a year, and in the process, forge them into the leaders for life our nation needs.

OUR NORTH STAR

Every year, one million young Americans engaged in a service year, solving important problems while transforming their own lives.

Foreword by General Stanley McChrystal

(United States Army, Ret.)

Throughout its history—in both war and peace—our country has worked best when its citizenship has been most active. How do we restore citizenship to the core of the American psyche and culture? How do we help young people grow up to become citizens and not only individuals?

The answer is clear. By giving them the opportunity to serve America—and their fellow Americans—and creating the expectation that they do so. In periods of both war and peace, of both prosperity and want, service has bound Americans to the country and to one another. And yet, in our lifetimes, on our watch, we've allowed this tradition to weaken.

That's why we need universal national service. Not just for rich kids with a year to spare—or for poor kids desperate for a paycheck. But an opportunity—and an expectation—for every young American to serve and experience a common rite of passage into mature citizenship.

The concept isn't complex. All Americans would choose to serve some time in the decade they enter adulthood, between when they are 18 and 28. Their service, in one of a range of opportunities from education to conservation, would be voluntary—not legally required—but instead culturally mandatory. What if no American was comfortable having no answer to the question: "Where did you serve?"

Getting Started

This handbook provides a guideline for starting a service year program. An effective service year has the potential for substantial impact on three fronts - the host organization's capacity for achieving its mission, the community in which service is performed, and the individual who completes the service.

This handbook is built for organizations to design a high-quality year of service that will have lasting impact. It will also provide an introduction to the Service Year Exchange (SYx), a dynamic online marketplace that brings together young people seeking service positions, organizations seeking corps members, and funders who want to support these efforts. Programs that meet our certification criteria are eligible to post their programs and positions on the exchange and connect with these key audiences.

The need for service year opportunities is clear. Our communities face significant challenges and deep societal divides that threaten the health and well-being of our entire country. An entire generation of young people are entering adulthood lacking clear direction and disconnected from their communities. We have an urgent need to recruit this generation to become our community leaders and agents of change. Service years provide the critical human capital we need to make progress in all these areas. Our country needs organizations like yours to join us in this movement, and to create inspiring, empowering opportunities for service.

What is a service year?

A service year refers to service that 1) addresses important societal problems, 2) requires a substantial time commitment over a specific term (typically, at least 35 hours/week and usually over the course of 9-12 months), and 3) is performed through organized programs that are designed to build ties among individuals from diverse backgrounds or increase life opportunities for those who serve. Because of the substantial time commitment involved, service year participants are typically paid modest living allowances and benefits. They may also be rewarded with other benefits to support their living needs, such as housing, food vouchers, and travel support.

Service year programs are remarkably flexible; there is no one typical service year program design. In some cases, organizations recruit dozens of corps members and organize them in teams to take on projects across several locations. In others, one or two individuals serve at an organization working under staff supervision. Regardless of size, host organizations enable corps members to be part of a team and understand their larger role in solving society's problems, while providing a meaningful service experience. They conduct swearing-in ceremonies for members, provide orientations and trainings, connect with other local programs for training or joint projects, and recognize them at the completion of their service.

These programs can take several different forms across organizations, and each year the number of individuals who complete programs like Teach for America, Jesuit Volunteer Corps, and YouthBuild are increasing. Though individual programs and positions will vary, service corps members share a common identity as service professionals and alums. Service Year Alliance is working to connect these individuals and organizations, and recognize their shared experiences by standardizing expectations. Organizations may submit information about their positions and programs via the SYx to verify that it meets the qualifications for a certifiable service year. Individuals who successfully complete these service years will be eligible to receive a Certificate of Completion at the end of their term and be known as service year alums.

INTERNSHIP, FELLOWSHIP, OR SERVICE YEAR?

Service years differ from internships and fellowships in a few subtle ways. Below are guidelines for identifying the differences between these structures. If your organization currently hosts interns or fellows, it may be possible to make a few tweaks so that it qualifies as a certified Service Year:

SERVICE YEAR: *A service year is a near full-time commitment of work that is performed to address a societal need, performed under the direction of a nonprofit or public entity over the course of 9-12 months. Individuals completing a service year are provided a modest living allowance by their host organization, as well as support and oversight.*

INTERNSHIP: *The federal government applies strict guidelines to determine whether an internship or training program at a for-profit company can be performed with little to no compensation. Generally, an internship is comparable to training given in an educational environment, and its purpose is considered solely for the benefit of the intern. The Department of Labor has resources on the latest guidelines and definitions. However, an internship at a nonprofit or public institution may qualify as a service year if a living allowance is provided, if the work performed qualifies as direct service or capacity-building, and if the internship lasts for at least six months.*

SERVICE YEAR: *A traditional fellowship is given by an educational institution, and usually includes an amount paid or allowed to an individual for study, research, and basic living expenses. Research fellowships do not qualify as service years. However, a non-research fellowship at a nonprofit may qualify as a service year, depending on the type of work performed and the amount provided to cover basic living expenses.*

Why do we need service years?

Service years offer a remarkable structure for affecting change on individuals, organizations, communities, and our country. They offer high impact solutions to our most pressing societal needs in the following ways.

1. **Strengthen nonprofits' capacity:** The nonprofit sector is plagued with funding shortages and lack of professional development pipelines. Service year positions work with existing staff structures to complement and support a host organization's capacity, and create a pipeline for future nonprofit professionals.

2. **Build bridges across societal divides:** Contrary to the illusion of constant connectivity, Americans are isolated from one another—geographically, ethnically, economically, religiously, and culturally. Service years can connect individuals to populations and communities they might not otherwise interact with, and evidence suggests that a service year greatly increases corps members' cultural competency.

3. **Strengthen our democracy:** The need for a common experience of citizenship in our country is more pressing than ever. Many Americans' sole contribution to the country is through paying taxes—not nearly enough to bind people to their communities. A service year can build the foundation for a lifetime of civic participation.

4. **Support a movement:** Over half a million applications for national service positions were submitted last year from people willing to serve long hours for modest compensation. Most of these applicants were turned away. The millennial generation and emerging adults are actively seeking ways to give back, and we need organizations to step up to the challenge. Join the movement and create a service year opportunity for your community.

5. **Transform lives:** Research documents that those who serve are more likely to become employed, advance their educational attainment, stay healthy, and even become happier than those who don't. Young people who spend a year serving learn professionalism and job skills, learn about their communities or meet people from different backgrounds, and become more civically engaged. For young people uncertain about their futures—whether they are just out of high school or have graduate degrees—a year of service can help them find purpose and direction.

There's a chance—right now—to inspire a renewed sense of citizenship capable of solving our biggest challenges and creating the leaders our nation needs. The health of our communities and the strength of our democracy lies in the ability bring the next generation of citizens together through a shared experience of service. At this moment, we have the optimal alignment of visionary leaders, a high-tech platform, a cadre of supporters across sectors, and a clear vision to build off 25 years of national service impact for major growth.

How do service years benefit organizations?

Most nonprofit, education, and public organizations are perpetually short-staffed. They need passionate and dedicated individuals who can increase their capacity to fulfill their mission, without over-extending their budgets. They also lack a talent pipeline; experts expect that the "talent shortage" for nonprofit and public positions will grow dramatically as Baby Boomers retire.

Service years help meet these needs in three ways:

1. A full-time corps member can cost much less than entry-level staff, consultants, contractors, and temp agencies. Organizations benefit from the full-time service of individuals who can dedicate a year towards the mission while receiving a low-cost living allowance.

2. A full-time corps member can increase an organization's workforce capacity either by taking on direct service (like tutoring or construction) or working to develop the organization's institutional capacity to expand its reach and meet its mission.

3. Service years can be an effective recruitment and talent development strategy. Many organizations use service years to test the fit of corps members with their work, even hiring alums after their term of service. These alums may in turn supervise the next cohort of service members as they continue to develop their leadership roles within an organization.

It is important to note that service year positions are not meant to replace key roles or positions within an organization. The service year structure is intended to support and complement existing staffing models; not to create low-paying jobs or replace necessary employee roles.

Corps members may either perform "direct service" that helps people, animals, or the environment, or "indirect service" that builds the capacity of an organization to provide direct service, via professionals or volunteers. A corps member who tutors a child, delivers meals and companionship to the elderly, or removes invasive species from public lands is performing "direct service." In contrast, a corps member who recruits and manages volunteers, raises money for an organization, or creates a new web site for an organization is performing "indirect service" that enables the organization to expand its reach or operate more effectively.

THE FIELD TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE

Today, about 65,000 Americans serve through a combination of federally funded programs like AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, YouthBuild and other nonprofits and publicly funded independent programs. By enabling any nonprofit or public agency to create service year positions and have them certified, the SYx could enable the number of positions to grow dramatically over the next decade. These positions may be funded privately, through public sources, or a combination of both.

Service Year Alliance is seeking to grow the number of service positions to 100,000 by 2019, with a long-term goal of 1 million position available annually. As we reach our goal, we envision that the future impact of organizations and individuals will be profound. Nonprofits and public agencies will be able to expand their capacity and build their leadership pipeline. Alums who go into the private sector will benefit from the transformational experience of serving within a community on meaningful projects.

Your new service year program is an important component of this movement, and your support is crucial as we meet this goal. We are thrilled to have you join us in this mission. If you are interested in learning more about starting a program or would like additional resources, please contact Rachael Weiker (rweiker@serviceyr.org).

Blueprint for Creating a Service Year Program

PROGRAM DESIGN

1. Identify the Need
2. Develop a Service Model

PROGRAM PLANNING

3. Map it Out
4. Make the Case
5. Prepare your Organization
6. Create a Fundraising Strategy
7. Consider the Logistics
8. Develop a Training Curriculum and Support Structure

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

9. Recruit Highly Qualified Corps Members
10. Leverage the Service Year Exchange (SYx)
11. Create a Shared Identity
12. Set Up for Success
13. Evaluate and Adapt

PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

14. Acknowledge Accomplishments
15. Assess and Expand Your Service Years
16. Conclusion

Program Design

1. Identify the Need

How will your service year program address an unmet need in your community? What role does your organization play in the community, and how can a service year program support your goals?

Perhaps these questions are easy to answer. Your organization may have a laundry list of programs and activities that have been placed on the back burner for lack of capacity, and a service year may be the perfect solution to help meet your goals. Or perhaps a new need has recently come to your attention, either through an internal needs assessment or via feedback from the population you serve. Your stakeholders may have already identified a need in your community (for example, a lack of trust between neighborhoods and the police) that falls within your organization's mission. Once the need has become clear, consider how a service year can provide the additional support necessary to address the issue. What outcomes are you trying to achieve, and how can a service year meet that goal?

Alternatively, you may have the need (and capacity) to take a broader, more strategic view. It may be beneficial to convene local leaders to explore how expanding service years could address local priorities. Collect data that will document the scale and scope of the need and, together, write a plan of action to articulate a vision of the impact that increased service year opportunities would make. These stakeholders can become valuable champions for creating and supporting a service program.

The following chart provides examples of issues that your community may be facing and how service years can address them:

ISSUE	SERVICE YEAR OPPORTUNITY
Senior residents facing difficulty living independently, lack access to basic services.	*Recent college grads who are exploring health careers can spend 12 months as caregivers to seniors - ensuring that they stay active and adhere to medications, navigate healthcare facilities, provide transportation, and act as a social supporter.*
High school dropout rate on the rise.	*Recent high school graduates commit to a 24-month service term to tutor high school students (starting in sophomore year) and help them to explore and apply for colleges.*
Shortage of safe places for children to play during or after school.	*Service Year members commit to 12 months of supervising playgrounds during and after school, and facilitate summer-time programming for active play and positive social interaction.*
Urban residents lack access to fresh and affordable food	*Corps members spend 9 months creating and sustaining urban farms, while also providing education to local classrooms on healthy eating.*

Section 2 will walk through the main components of designing a service year program and positions to address this need. Refer to the "Designing a Service Year Program" worksheet in the appendix to help organize your thoughts as your design the concept with stakeholders.

EXAMPLE SERVICE YEAR LOGIC MODEL:

The following logic model outlines how a specific issue can be addressed through service; the activities and outcomes associated with servicel; and the expected outcomes and metrics expected as a result of the service.

Problem Statement: *High school and college drop-out rate rising*

Solution: *Service members as college navigators, directing high school seniors to appropriate academic and career pathways*

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
Service Year Corps Members *High school students*	*Service members provide info on career and college options* *High school students conduct interviews, assessments, and self-exploration practices*	*Each service member guides up to 20 high school students to complete career/ self exploration curriculum* *High school students complete college and career exploration maps, self-exploration exercises* *High school students graduate on time and enter a college or career-access program that matches their needs*	*Service members and high school students have strong understanding of the career, training, and academic pathways for success and the self-knowledge to choose a route that is best for them.* *High school students save money, time, and stress by selecting an appropriate career path*	*High school graduation rate* *Completion rate of career and self-exploration curriculum* *College/career training enrollment rate* *College/ career training completion rate*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE: ***The W.K. Kellogg Foundation*** *offers comprehensive guidebooks for designing outcome-oriented programs. The Foundation's Logic Model Development Guide is a good starting point for thinking through how a service year can work within your existing programs. The evaluation handbook will guide you through the steps necessary for a full program evaluation to evaluate your impact.*

Next, try to describe what roles and responsibilities a service member will perform to address these needs. What are their daily activities? What resources will they require, and who will they report to? Envision what role this person will play in the target population, as well as within your organization.

Appendix 1: Designing a Service Year Program Worksheet

2. Develop a Service Year Model

A. What will service members do to address this need?

Corps members may either perform "direct service"—that is, helping the clients of your program directly, (such as students in a school or residents in a neighborhood) or carrying out activities that directly provide a general benefit to society (such as reducing energy consumption); or "indirect service" that builds the capacity of organizations that offer direct service. Consider the following examples of direct and indirect service to determine which strategy is best to address your community need.

TYPES OF SERVICE

Direct Service: tutoring, mentoring, building or repairing houses, organizing and participating in a clean-up, providing financial counseling, preparing meals for older adults to enable them to live at home, helping job seekers write resumes, helping students complete student aid forms.

Indirect service: recruiting and managing volunteers, organizing fundraising events, developing a website for a nonprofit organization, creating a procedures manual for a new program, interviewing clients to assess and report on their needs.

Service that doesn't qualify: Note that some activities do not qualify for a service year. Research that does not build the capacity of a direct service organization (for example, academic or think tank research) does not qualify. Neither does purely administrative work, unless it is related to other qualifying activities performed by the corps member (e.g. a corps member cannot serve as a receptionist, database manager, or file clerk of an organization; however, a corps member can be expected to answer his or her own phone, keep the files on his or her project, and manage a database related to the project). Some activities are strictly prohibited, including religious proselytization, political and lobbying activities, union organizing or busting, and petitions and protests. Also note that you cannot use a service year to replace a paid employee. See Appendix 12 (Certification Criteria) for a full list of prohibited activities.

"Ensuring all of our service members, veterans, and their families get the support they need and deserve is an enormous task. As a growing nonprofit, service year members provide the capacity we need to meet this challenge."

- SHANE COOKE, Code of Support Foundation, Director of Communications, AmeriCorps VISTA alum and AmeriCorps volunteer coordinator

B. Create your metrics for success

Next, try to identify a measurable position outcome—that is, an outcome that can be quantified or assessed for achievement. If it is possible to attribute specific results to the program or individual corps members, that is even better. It may be most helpful to determine these metrics by identifying specific actions or positions ("X"), and how those will directly—or indirectly—affect a specific program, population, or organizational capacity. Here are some examples:

During the school year, a team of 5 corps members will provide homework help and reading tutoring to 100 K- 3 students. 80 percent of the students assisted will increase their school performance by one letter grade and their reading scores by one and half grade levels.

Corps members will each recruit and manage 20 volunteers, who will collectively build and maintain six community gardens. The gardens will provide the equivalent of 25 meals of produce to each of 25 families.

Each of the corps members will work directly with teaching staff in an elementary or middle school in the district. They will arrange service learning projects for at least 100 students in each school.

The corps members in our program will each work with six nonprofit organizations to improve their use of technology to advance their missions.

Whichever measures you select, it is important to consider how they will align with your organization's current evaluation methods and performance indicators. If you are interested in AmeriCorps support, you should try to design your outcomes to be consistent with AmeriCorps performance measures. More information about AmeriCorps performance indicators can be found online here.

C. Who will you recruit? What skills, backgrounds, and interests will the ideal candidate possess? How will you identify and select applicants?

Consider the service role that you have designed. What background, experiences, and cultural competencies will be relevant to the work? What skills and capabilities do they need? Where will you find individuals that have these qualifications? What high schools, college clubs, service clubs, associations, and places of worship might house the right audience?

Service Year Alliance aims to increase the number of young people completing a year of service, and the SYx is marketed to young adults, ages 18 – 28. However, this age range includes diverse young people ranging from individuals with limited work experience and no college to those with professional degrees and years of work experience. We believe most young people may want to serve right after high school or college. However, some may want to take time off from college and still others may serve after graduate school or after leaving the military. Organizations will need to determine the population they want to target for positions.

D. How many service members will you need to be effective? How many corps members are right for your organization?

The number will vary based on your need, proposed activities, and your capacity to manage and mentor them. Smaller organizations may be equipped to handle 1-5 corps members during a service year. Larger organizations may have the infrastructure to immediately support large corps of 50-100 members right away. Think creatively and carefully about your organization's bandwidth to recruit, train, and mentor your corps members, and consider the different program structures outlined in section 2D.

2D. What structure best suits your program?

Determining the best model for delivering service will have a significant impact on your program structure, corps member placement, and overall impact. You may wish to directly host all corps members within your organization to support their direct supervision and management. Or, you may wish to place corps members at separate service locations throughout the community (like schools or community centers) to reach a broader audience. The corps members may deliver their service in teams, small groups, or as individuals. Think creatively with your staff, partners, and stakeholders to determine the model that best fits your organization and need, and how the model will best solve your identified issue. Consider the following structures to identify the framework that best meets your needs.

CORPS MEMBER PLACEMENT

Teams: Many corps members find their experience to be more rewarding when they are organized in teams to work on a common project. Depending on the skills and experience of the corps members, one leader can lead a group of four to ten corps members. Often service year programs use an experienced second year corps member to lead a team.

Individual Placements: It is also possible to host just a small number of members, or even a single position at an organization, particularly if the organization is small or the function is highly specialized. In the case of individual placements, it will be important to incorporate opportunities for the corps member to connect with other corps members in the community and be mentored within the organization. It is also possible to combine individual placements with a team structure if organizations collaborate, or a single organization agrees to serve as the sponsor who will place corps members with other organizations.

Coordinated Placement: Consider partnering with an organization that works on a similar issue or within the same community to split the costs and responsibilities of a service member positions. Think of using service years as part of your collective strategy for change, and how multiple organizations might benefit from integrating service corps members into their programming.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Direct Host Organization: A host organization manages and administers all aspects of a service year programming. This includes recruitment, screening, placement, benefits administration, management, and oversight. The corps members then provides service directly for that organization. If your organization has the capacity to fulfill all of these duties successfully for an individual or team of corps members, consider being a host organization for an entire service program.

Umbrella: In some cases, a large organization can act as a host and placement coordinator for several organizations. These umbrella orgs act as the main recruiter and administrator of the service program, but do not oversee a corps members' daily work. Organizations that fall under an umbrella request a service member to be placed on their site and maintain daily supervision. These organizations may support the umbrella organization through financial contributions in exchange for managing the logistics of corps member recruitment and administration. For example, Public Allies and Campus Compact are umbrella organizations, managing the oversight, matching, and placing of service year corps members at institutions within their network. These umbrellas may already place service members in your community, and your organization may wish to consider becoming a placement site under an existing program.

2E. What will be the required length of service?

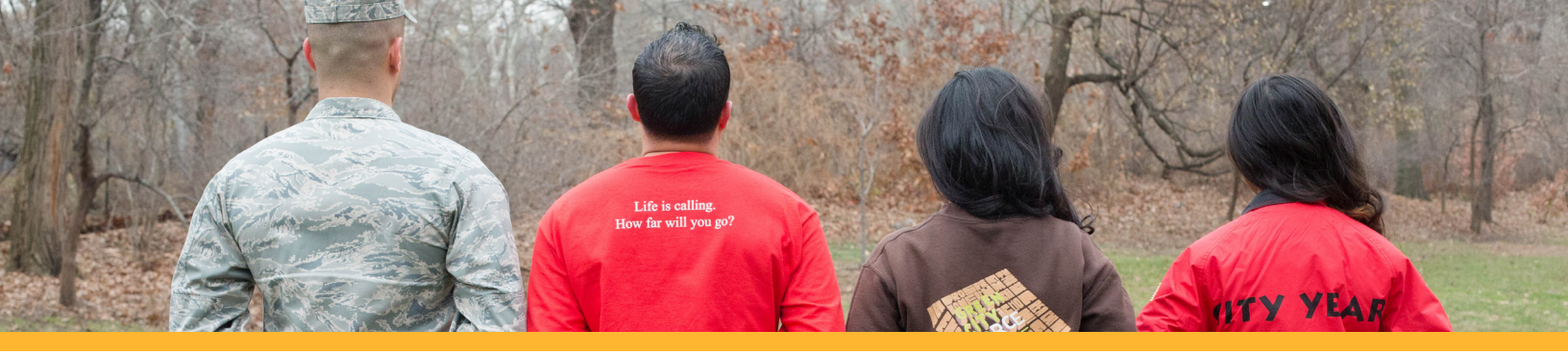
Service years usually last for approximately 12 months, though some may go as long as 24 months. However, we recommend a minimum of six months in order to meet the Service Year Exchange certification criteria. To be certified on the SYx, each position must have a start and end date and require at least 32 hours of service per week as part of a full-time commitment. (Note that there is an exception to the hours requirement for AmeriCorps programs and in some other instances, which are described in the Certification Criteria). Other program activities such as training, education, and team activities may make up the remainder of the hours for a full-time program. For example, a position in which service activities take place from 9 to 5, four days a week with the fifth day reserved for leadership training, online courses, and team planning would still be considered a full-time position.

2F. What will be the required length of service?

In most cases, corps members must receive a living allowance from the organization sponsoring their position, and any benefits that are required by law should be provided by the sponsoring organization. This living allowance ensures that the corps member has some means to support themselves during a service year, and is not reliant on external sources of income or support. The living allowance also helps to ensure that service year opportunities are accessible to individuals from all economic backgrounds. A good guideline for this living allowance is the AmeriCorps living stipend, which in 2016 ranges from $12,530 to $25,060. However, there are three exceptions to this rule. Corps members who will use professional skills within the program (such as computer programming, legal, or medical skills) may either be paid a typical professional salary, but work in a hard-to-serve area, or may be paid a below-market salary. Corps members who are provided housing or meals (or both) may be paid less than the minimum living allowance. Corps members may choose to waive their living allowance.

ABOUT AMERICORPS

*There are three types of AmeriCorps programs: **AmeriCorps State and National**, which is a grant program; **AmeriCorps VISTA**, which places VISTAs with host organizations; and **AmeriCorps NCCC**, a residential program run by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). All AmeriCorps members who complete a term of service with one of these programs are eligible to receive Segal Education Awards that can be used to pay for higher education expenses or to pay back student loans.Only corps members serving with AmeriCorps programs are eligible for Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards. However, arrangements can be made with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to sponsor Education Awards for certified programs that meet AmeriCorps standards and requirements. Through the AmeriCorps Partnerships Challenge, CNCS is making up to $30 million available for education scholarships to support new AmeriCorps opportunities throughout the country. Contact your state commission or CNCS state office to discuss these opportunities. In the future, Service Year aims to provide additional rewards for corps members after completing their terms of service. More information about AmeriCorps programs can be found in **Appendix 2: About AmeriCorps.***



Program Planning

3. Map It Out

Once you have an idea of the size, scope, and goals of your program, set up a timeline and budget for the program.

Important elements to consider for the budget are:

- **Living allowances and other benefits for corps members**
- **Training and professional development for corps members and managing staff**
- **Staff time for recruiting, training, and managing corps members**
- **General overhead**
- **Special equipment and materials necessary for the position**

In most situations a service position costs around $25,000 (estimating a $15,000 living stipend plus benefits, education and training, and overhead). This amount may vary depending on the training and materials the position may require. Your staff and stakeholders will have the best understanding of the resources necessary to make this service position a success.

Create a timeline: To develop a timeline for planning and implementing your service program, work backward from when you expect corps members to begin working. If your corps will work with school children in the fall, your timeline may line up with the school year calendar. Sticking to an academic calendar may be helpful for your recruitment timeline as well—many young people looking for a service opportunity after high school or college will likely start looking for positions in the springtime. Other important elements to consider for timing the implementation of your program include:

- **Urgency of need**
- **Stakeholder involvement & partnership development**
- **Planning**
- **System and infrastructure development**
- **Fundraising**
- **Recruitment**
- **Planning the training and development curriculum**
- **Your organization's major events or work cycles**

SAMPLE TIMELINE FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING A SERVICE YEAR

***1-2 months**: Program design*

***2-3 months:** Fundraising*

***2-3 months:** Recruitment, screening and selection*

***1 month:** Onboarding*

***5-23 months (for a 6-month to 24-month term)**: Managing, mentoring, and training service member*

IDEAL TIMELINE

***November-December**: Program Design*

***January-March:** Fundraising*

***April-June:** Recruitment and Selection*

***July:** Onboarding*

***August through End of Term:** Managing, mentoring, and training service member*

4. Make the Case

Now that you have an outline for your program, position description, budget, and timeline, you are ready to rally your supporters. Consider your potential stakeholders, such as your organization's upper management and board members, funders, community and implementation partners, and your target population. Define how each of these audiences will be affected by the program, and how their buy-in will affect its outcomes. General value propositions for supporting a service year include:

- **Strengthen organizations' efforts in supporting vulnerable populations**
- **Invest in the positive community transformation and social change**
- **Foster issue oriented and strengths based leaders**

Refer to the "Making the Case" document in the Appendix to define the value of a service year for your specific organization, the groups whose support you seek, and design a meaningful pitch that will persuade them to support the program.

"We couldn't have gotten COSF off the ground without the commitment and skills of our national service members. Their dedication to helping us build capacity in communications, development and programming has been invaluable."

- KRISTINA KAUFMANN,
Executive Director,
Code of Support Foundation

Appendix 3. Making the Case 1-pager

5. Prepare Your Organization

Service Year Structure: Once you have created your ideal program and position description, it will be necessary to determine the staff capacity that will be necessary to monitor the program, manage the corps member, and ultimately ensure a successful service year that benefits both your organization and the corps member. Questions to consider include:

- **Which staff members will the manage corps member, and how many members would they manage?**
- **How much time (weekly) would supervision require?**
- **What are the position's/project's milestones throughout the course of the service year?**
- **What does the ideal supervision and support structure look like? Factors to consider are frequency and type of interaction (virtual vs. in person, or one-on-one vs. group) and the ratio of supervisors to corps members.**
- **How will you track the project's progress, and troubleshoot any problems?**
- **How will you establish and track the corps member's development goals, and ensure that those are being met?**

Thorough evaluation and determination of these questions will allow you to outline a complete service year model, which will allow you to identify and track your goals related to the program.

Appendix 4. Staff Capacity and Preparedness Checklist

6. Create a Fundraising Strategy

A successful service year requires three elements—a host org with an opportunity, a corps member looking to serve, and a funding stream to support the work. There are several avenues to explore to find the right funding model for your organization.

Issue-based Funds: Several federal agencies and national foundations provide grants for issue-based work that can be applied to service year programs. For example, the Department of Labor provides funding for YouthBuild's service program as it specifically targets developing the employability of Opportunity Youth. Explore potential funding streams from the national level by finding federal agencies and grants that align with your organization's mission.

Place-Based Funds: If your program takes place within a defined geographic area or works with a specific population, you may also find funding through state and local agencies, community foundations, and foundations that focus on a specific geographic area.

Civic and Social Funders: Many funders specifically focus on supporting volunteerism, service, and civic engagement. Explore the Foundation Center Database and your networks to identify individual and institutional funders that may support your program in order to further these aims.

Crowdfunding: Why identify one funding stream when you can engage with several supporters at once? Crowdfunding has become an increasingly-used strategy for small nonprofits to start projects, grow to scale, and raise awareness for their cause. The SYx will soon support a crowdfunding platform to support organizations in utilizing this strategy.

7. Consider the Logistics

In order to ensure service year opportunities are accessible to all young people, regardless of financial background, it's important to consider the practical implications of bringing corps members into your organization.

In general, Corps Members should fall under the host organization's existing employment policies and requirements. To ensure that corps members' living allowances comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), their hourly wage should be at least 7.25 per hour for up to 40 hours per week, or meet the minimum wage requirements for their state of residence. Alternatively, host organizations may cover basic living expenses through housing and food assistance, and/or provide an additional monthly stipend.

Service years that are funded by AmeriCorps and VISTA-supported positions are exempt from the FLSA. These programs must follow AmeriCorps standards in determining a living allowance. In 2015, the allowable AmeriCorps annual living allowance ranged from $12,530 to $25,060. This amount may be increased in the case of professional corps positions requiring higher levels of skills or experience (though it should still be less than the market salary for professionals in the field or places participants in underserved communities.)

Other financial considerations, such as student loans and health insurance, can prevent corps members from participating in a program. The following lists offer a few options for exploring how service year hosts can support corps members to address these financial constraints.

OPTIONS FOR SUPPORTING CORPS MEMBERS WITH STUDENT LOANS

- **Design your service year program to take place before participants accrue student loan debt (i.e. before college), and specifically recruit high school graduates.**
- **Provide financial counseling to participants to help them with budgeting**
- **Recommend your corps members take advantage of economic hardship opportunities (note: generally they must make less than around $17,500 and they would to need to not have used up their 3 years of economic hardship already)**
- **Apply to become an AmeriCorps program through the Corporation for National and Community Service so that participants qualify for forbearance**
- **Make minimum student loan payments on your corps members behalf**
- **Pay your corps members at a level so they are not concerned about their ability to repay their loans**

OPTIONS FOR PROVIDING CORPS MEMBERS WITH HEALTH INSURANCE

- **Advise participants who are able to stay on their parents' healthcare (note: requires parents with healthcare and participants under 26).**
- **If your program is designed so that participants are students, enroll them in school health care plans**
- **Encourage participants to purchase subsidized insurance from state or national exchanges**
- **Encourage participants to utilize Medicaid if they will earn less than $16,000.**
- **Use CNCS health care option (VISTA).**
- **If your program is structured so that participants are technically employees, put them on your organization's health care.**
- **Provide allowance for people to buy health insurance.**

8. Develop a Training Curriculum and Support Structure

How will corps members be on-boarded and trained? What skills will they develop through their participation in the program?

All programs must provide an orientation for corps members, as well as any necessary training they will need to perform their service activities. The orientation must include information about **national service** and **its history,** the organization that will host them, the community where they will serve, **an overview of prohibited service activities** and all program/position requirements. Your organization may be able to provide all of these services, or it may be possible to join an existing corps' training programs. Contact your state service commission to identify these opportunities.

In addition, we encourage organizations to develop education plans for corps members that reflect their goals for developing skills, gaining credentials, and pursuing higher education. Many programs set aside a time each week for skill-building or education activities. Consider finding partners in the community, such as colleges, extension offices, and workforce development agencies that can provide training to the corps members on a one-time or regular basis. Specifying the skills-building and education opportunities that will be made available will help organizations recruit the right corps members.

Also, reconsider how you will help corps members develop and utilize 21st century skills, including communication, teamwork, creativity and problem solving, and decision making. We see service years as opportunities for young people that help them build skills on their path to further education and employment.

Finally, consider the corps members' personal development. A year of service is a transformational period in a young person's life, and a unique experience to devote their time and energy to your organization's mission. Guiding these individuals through personal and professional exploration is crucial to ensuring that corps members are effective in their roles, and well on their way to becoming the next generation of leaders. The Appendices includes several resources to support you in leadership development.

Appendix 5: Corps Member Training Curriculum
Appendix 6: Corps Member Goal-Setting
Appendix 7: Corps Member Leadership Development

As we build out the SYx, online resources and courses will be available. Host organizations will also be able to connect through Learning Communities to share knowledge and recommendations around Corps Member development.

How will corps members be supervised and supported?

In any work environment, support and supervision are critical to a positive and productive experience. The individuals who perform these roles for corps members will have a deep impact on the members' individual development and ability to provide effective service. Each service program should identify a supervisor who will be responsible for tracking whether a corps member is meeting his or her responsibilities, such as attendance, performance, and completing required paperwork. The supervisor cannot be a fellow corps member. The supervisor may also be the one who plays a supporting role by providing guidance to the corps member throughout the service year, such as feedback or assistance to help with service delivery. This supporting role may also be performed by a peer, such as a team leader, or an employee at the service site with specific content expertise.

Note that several established corps (like City Year, YouthBuild, and Corps Network organizations) typically have at least one or two team leaders for a team of 8 corps members, while organizations that typically place individuals in a variety of organizations may have one leader working with a similar number of corps members. Some programs use second year corps members as team leaders. Although team leaders who are corps members are not considered supervisors for purposes of the SYx (unless there are special circumstances), individuals serving in that capacity can play an important role in offering corps members additional support and guidance. It is expected that corps members will receive additional support from a team leader or other similar individual who is not the corps member's supervisor.

The Corporation for National and Community Service offers extensive resources for program managers and trainings for supervisors via their Knowledge Network.

Who will mentor the corps members?

Each corps member is required to have a mentor. The mentor should be available to the corps member on a regular basis and as needed to provide advice and moral support. The mentor may be a staff person, second year corps member, board member, donor, volunteer, alum, or other adult connected to the organization. A good mentor will be able to help the corps member make connections within the community, navigate the field in which they are working, and transition to future education or employment.

Recruitment and Training

9. Recruity Highly Qualified Corps Members

DESIGN A POSITION DESCRIPTION

A service year participant may be best utilized when viewed as a member of the team who is hired to complete specific responsibilities or a specific project. An accurate and exciting position description is the first step in finding the right addition to support your team and set the tone for your service year program. We recommend creating a position description that details responsibilities and milestones, but also allows room for the corps member to enhance or add to the role throughout the year (see "Template Service Year Position Description" for an example of how to describe this growth). It is important to not only identify goals for project outcomes, but also the ideal skills and qualifications necessary to successfully achieve them. Consider the following questions as you craft the project description:

- **What are the skills, experience, and qualities that a corps member must possess in order to be successful in this role?**
- **What will the average day look like for this corps member?**
- **Who will they report to, what resources will they require, and what will they be responsible for?**
- **Refer back to the program model developed in section 2, and the position description development worksheet to develop a narrative that reflects the role, responsibilities, and benefits of serving with your organization.**

DEVELOP A RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

How will you recruit the ideal candidate? What kinds of job boards, associations, and schools will you connect with to advertise the position? How will you reach out to diverse populations, and how will you ensure that your selection process is inclusive and equitable? Is there a specific skill-set needed to deliver the proposed service in your program design, or will your training develop the needed skill-set?

A diverse corps can strengthen your organization's potential for impact in the community, and influence your organization's culture as well. Service Year Alliance is working toward the goal that all corps members collectively represent the full diversity of American young adults. We fully believe that the shared experience of a service year can build bridges across cultural divides, and increase appreciation for people from other backgrounds. Review your organization-wide strategy for building a diverse,

Once you have a strategy in place, consider your recruitment tactics. Several large-scale service organizations have found success in the following methods for identifying potential corps members:

- **Ask active corps members in similar organizations to encourage friends/family to apply.**
- **Place online postings on nonprofit job sites like the SYx, Idealist, and the Chronicle of Philanthropy.**
- **Use social media ads, and advertise positions on your social media platforms.**
- **Look to recruit through nearby colleges, universities, and community colleges.**
- **Staff a booth at a local career fair.**

Refer back to Appendix 1 as a template for a basic position description. This template can be used to design a position posting on the SYx. Additional resources and guidelines on how to post positions on the SYx can be found at ServiceYr.org and on our Youtube channel.

Appendix 8. Template Service Year Position Description
Appendix 9. Posting Positions to ServiceYr.org

10. Leverage the Service Year Exchange

The SYx is the most advanced tech platform for connecting service host organizations to current and prospective corps members. Guidelines for getting set up on the exchange are below. As the SYx develops, we will eventually provide pre-certified position templates to streamline the process of creating positions and listings.

More information about the SYx can be found in Appendix 10.

HOW TO JOIN THE EXCHANGE

Go to the Website: *ServiceYr.org*

Create a User Account: *To start the process, you need to create a unique personal account. Once you have an account, you will be able to enroll your organization or be added as an administrator for an existing organization.*

Enroll Your Organization: *Click "Enroll" on the About Hosting Page to complete the brief process of enrolling your organization on the Exchange.*

Add an Organization Profile and Positions: *Once your organization is enrolled, you will be able to add your organization profile and positions. You will have the option to group similar positions together as programs, if desired.*
Submit your Positions for Certification: When you have completed your profile and are satisfied with the positions you created, you can submit them to the Service Year team for certification on the Exchange. Once certified, your profile and positions will become public.

Create Recruitment Listings: *You can recruit for certified positions by creating listings. Listings will allow you to recruit based on additional information, including locations, start and end dates, and recruitment window.*

FINDING CORPS MEMBERS ON THE EXCHANGE

The SYx provides tools to help organizations find prospective corps members who could be a good fit for their positions. It allows users to find positions based on preferences chosen in their profile or when searching, and it allows organizations to actively look for corps members.

Corps members have opportunities to share stories and photos about their experiences throughout their service year and beyond, and to receive a Certificate of Completion upon the successful end of their service year.

Recruitment: *Once your organization has positions certified on the Exchange, you will be able to create listings to actively recruit corps members. When users find your listing based on searching or being given a suggested match based on their profile preferences, they will be able to express interest in the position. When an individual has expressed interest, you will be able to view their profile and reach out to them with more information about your application process. You can view a listing of users who have expressed interest by going to the "Prospective Corps Members" tab in the left sidebar of your organization dashboard.*

Additionally, you can actively search for future corps members using the Exchange. You can filter prospective corps members based on attributes such as interest, availability, and education level. If you find users that seem like a good fit, you can reach out to them with next steps and encourage them to express interest in your listings.

11. Create a Shared Identity

The orientation and onboarding process is an important stage for bringing your corps members into your organization. This is the time to "set the stage" for expectations around your organization's culture, mission, and values. In addition, it is a crucial element to creating a shared identity for corps members, which is why it is included in the service year certification criteria. For example, all corps members should be sworn in at the beginning of their service. AmeriCorps programs may use the AmeriCorps pledge and programs may use their own pledges.

Appendix 11. Designing Corps Member Orientation
Appendix 12. Certification Criteria and Prohibited Activities
Appendix 13. History of Service

"My service didn't just impact my year, it affected the course of my life. Service invested me in my community. It motivated me to continue seeking solutions to the pressing issues at hand, and inspired me to believe that I could make a difference more profound than I ever thought possible. I would have never started my own service-oriented nonprofit if I hadn't completed my service year."

-WHITNEY PARNELL
CEO & Co-Founder,
Service Never Sleeps

12. Set Up for Success

How will your corps members use their service experience as a stepping stone in their career or academic path? Do they plan to attend college, apply for grad school, enter the workforce, or find another service opportunity? Do they hope to continue working in the nonprofit sector, or perhaps with your organization? These are all questions that corps members and their supervisors should address as soon as the service term begins. As the year progresses and corps members evaluate their life post-service, they can consider the following options.

1. **Explore the job market:** Alums who are looking to explore careers with institutions that support service may look to the list of Employers of National Service. These private, public, and nonprofit organizations have committed to adopting policies and practices that allow applicants to highlight skills gained through national service.

2. **Find new service opportunities:** The SYx is updated daily with new service positions and listings across the country. Alums can use the platform to identify new service programs and positions, and create profiles to share their interests and track their service year experience.

3. **Consider college or graduate school:** Many higher ed institutions place an emphasis on service. Some even actively recruit AmeriCorps alums, and provide additional funding by matching the Segal Education Award Grant. A list of these match institutions can be found on the Corporation for National and Community Service's website.

4. **Advance the nonprofit sector:** The nonprofit sector has consistent demand for talented, skilled, and passionate individuals to take on leadership roles. Alums may want to speak with their program manager about continuing to work with the host organization as a staff member, or seek employment with other nonprofit organizations. Job board sites like idealist.org list thousands of nonprofit job postings, and organizations like the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance identify competencies and training programs for becoming a nonprofit professional.

5. **Be an Entrepreneur:** Several service alums have been so inspired by their experience that they have gone on to create their own social enterprises. These entrepreneurs are leveraging their newfound skills and experiences to start innovative businesses and nonprofits that have a positive impact on the economy as well as the community. NGS Movement has compiled excellent stories and resources for current corps members to explore entrepreneurship as a viable pathway after their service term.

13. Evaluate and Adapt

Your program will likely evolve throughout the service term. Even the most well thought-out implementation strategies and processes may need to adjust in order to accommodate the realities of execution. Corps members may face barriers, or find unexpected opportunities, when performing their tasks. Consider how you will be able to collect feedback regularly from your corps members, constituents, and staff, to adjust course as necessary. These periodic evaluations can be conducted through tests, interviews, surveys, and other methods, and can help to inform the final program assessment.

Create a Vision for the Future

14. Acknowledge Accomplishments

Upon completion of the term of service, corps members should be recognized for their service, ideally through a graduation ceremony. Organizations, especially those operating small programs, are encouraged to conduct the graduation or recognition event in collaboration with other programs in the community.

15. Assess and Expand Your Service Years

The impact of a Service Year is not limited to the metrics of success identified in step 2B. Throughout the service term you have likely identified additional areas to measure the quality of the program. In addition to measuring outcomes, consider using the surveys and interviews collected during the periodic program evaluation to inform the final assessment. Share this information with the relevant stakeholders to assess the program's success, identify areas for improvement, and determine whether or not to increase the number of service year positions for the next service cycle.

In the coming months, the SYx will feature additional resources for organizations hoping to improve the quality of their programs and/or increase the size of their service corps.

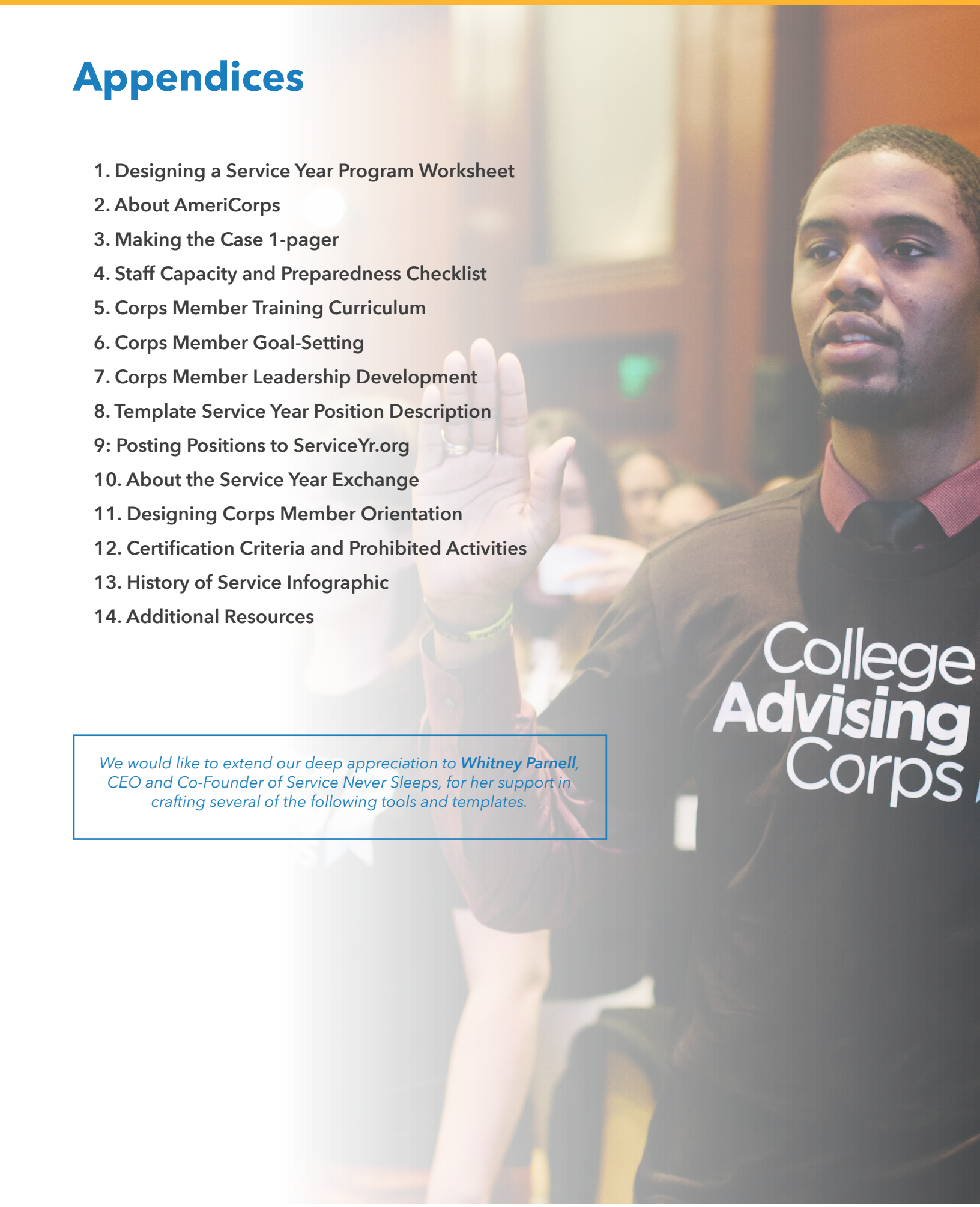
16. Conclusion

A Service Year is a catalyst for deep social change. Service years change the lives of corps members of all backgrounds, opening doors to careers and educational advancement. They improve the capacity for nonprofits to advance their missions. But most importantly, the strength of a service year lies in the opportunity for people to serve alongside others of different backgrounds and in communities. Through these shared experiences, we can build bridges across disparate social groups, break down racial, ethnic, religious, and economic barriers, and ensure that all Americans have the chance to change their lives through service.

We are thrilled to have your organization join us in advancing service to address social needs, united our country, and develop the next generation of leaders.

Appendices

1. Designing a Service Year Program Worksheet
2. About AmeriCorps
3. Making the Case 1-pager
4. Staff Capacity and Preparedness Checklist
5. Corps Member Training Curriculum
6. Corps Member Goal-Setting
7. Corps Member Leadership Development
8. Template Service Year Position Description
9: Posting Positions to ServiceYr.org
10. About the Service Year Exchange
11. Designing Corps Member Orientation
12. Certification Criteria and Prohibited Activities
13. History of Service Infographic
14. Additional Resources



*We would like to extend our deep appreciation to **Whitney Parnell**, CEO and Co-Founder of Service Never Sleeps, for her support in crafting several of the following tools and templates.*

1. Designing a Service Year Program Worksheet

PROGRAM DESIGN

1) Identify the Need: How will your service year program address an unmet need in your community? What role does your organization play in the community, and how can a service year program support your goals?

2) What will service members do to address this need? What is your vision for success? How will you measure your achievements? **Use the following logic model template to design your program.**

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
Who will perform the service, and for how long? Whom will they serve? What tools and resources will they need to be effective?	What will corps members do on a daily basis? Who will they interact with? To whom will they report?	What will these activities and interactions produce?	What will occur as a result of these outputs?	How will the impact of service be measured?

3. Determine your program structure and size. Complete the following sentences:
This program will require (##) corps members across (##) sites to be effective.

If you are serving as a host organization: Our organization will host (##) corps members to serve within the (name of organizations). Corps members will serve (individually or in teams of X) across (##) of sites in our community. We will seek these corps members by (directing the recruitment effort OR seeking a corps member from an umbrella org).

If you are serving as an umbrella organization: Our organization will work with the (XX) organizations to manage the recruitment and placement of (##) corps members across (##) sites in our community. We will work with these organizations to ensure they are meeting the service year criteria and ensuring a quality service experience.

4) Map it out
a. **Budget** - What is the approximate annual budget, and potential sources of funding? Use the following template to map out the costs.

ITEM/ACTIVITY	COST	FUNDING PROVIDED BY
Corps member living allowance		
Additional benefits (food, transportation, housing)		
Training and professional development		
Staff time		
General overhead		
Special equipment and materials		
TOTAL		

b. **Timeline**- use the following template to develop your timeline*

	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Plan														
Fundraise														
Recruit and Select														
Onboard														
Manage														

5) Prepare your organization:

Anticipated staff manager(s): _____
# of corps members they will manage: _____
# of hours per week of supervision and support per corps member: _____

Anticipated benchmarks/measures of success for service:_____
Frequency and tools of measurement: _____
Key Performance Indicators for year-end assessment: _____

6) Develop a Training Curriculum and Support Structure:

Corps members will be onboarded by: _____
Corps members will be trained in the following skills: _____
Corps members will be mentored by: _____
At the end of their service term, we anticipate that corps members' career opportunities will be advanced in the following ways: _____

7) Recruitment and Training

We will recruit a diverse corps through the following networks and platforms:
_____

2. About AmeriCorps

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency established to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation through a wide array of service opportunities. These include projects in six priority areas: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families. CNCS provides core funding for all AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs, as well as the Social Innovation Fund.

There are three types of AmeriCorps programs: AmeriCorps State and National, which is a grant program; AmeriCorps VISTA, which places VISTAs with host organizations; and AmeriCorps NCCC, a residential program run by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). All AmeriCorps members who complete a term of service with one of these programs are eligible to receive Segal Education Awards that can be used to pay for higher education expenses or to pay back student loans.

AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL

AmeriCorps State and National supports a wide range of local service programs that engage thousands of Americans in intensive community service each year. The Corporation for National and Community Service provides grants to local and national organizations and public agencies committed to using service years to address critical community needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. Each of these organizations and agencies, in turn, use their AmeriCorps funding to recruit, place, and supervise AmeriCorps members nationwide.

AmeriCorps State and National programs are open to U.S. citizens, nationals, or lawful permanent resident aliens age 17 and older. Members may serve full- or part-time over a period not to exceed 12 months. Full-time AmeriCorps State and National members receive a living allowance; health care; childcare, if they qualify; and become eligible for the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award upon successful completion of the program.

Organizations may apply for a grant directly from the Corporation for National and Community Service if they are:

- A national nonprofit organization that operates in two or more states
- An Indian tribe
- A consortia formed across two or more states, consisting of institutions of higher education or other nonprofits, including labor, faith-based, and other community organizations
- A state or territory without a State Service Commission

Organizations may apply for a grant through a State Service Commission if program activities take place in a single state and they are a:

- State or local nonprofit organization
- Community or faith-based organization
- Higher education institution
- State or local government
- U.S. territory

Contact your State Service Commission for more information on the Grant application or deadlines. Contact information can be found on the CNCS website at www.nationalservice.gov.

In the FY 2014 AmeriCorps competition, CNCS prioritized the investment of service year resources in economic opportunity, education, veterans and military families, disaster services, and the Governor and Mayor Initiative. CNCS will continue to focus on service year programs that improve academic outcomes for children, youth, and young adults. In addition, CNCS seeks to increase its investment in programs that serve veterans and military families or engage veterans and military families in service. CNCS will also focus investment in programs that increase community resiliency through disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation. CNCS will focus investment in programs that increase economic opportunities for communities and AmeriCorps members. Finally, CNCS focused on summer programming for K-12 students, especially those programs that address the academic "summer slide." Proposed activities will engage youth and young adults as summer members to help support summer reading, math, science, and environmental learning activities for youth in rural and urban areas most likely at risk of summer learning loss. New priorities may be set for next year's competition.

Performance indicators for AmeriCorps programs and more information about funding priorities can be found on the CNCS website, www.nationalservice.gov.

Applicants for AmeriCorps should be capable of managing federal grant funds and plan to engage a minimum number of AmeriCorps members (set by the state - typically 10 or 20). All AmeriCorps grantees must raise matching funds in an amount determined by CNCS and specified in the application materials.

AMERICORPS VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA provides full-time members to community organizations and public agencies to create and expand programs that build capacity and ultimately bring low-income individuals and communities out of poverty. AmeriCorps VISTA members spend one year in full-time service to address the needs of low-income communities. All projects focus on building permanent infrastructure in organizations to help them more effectively bring individuals and communities out of poverty. Public, private, or faith-based nonprofit organizations, as well as, local, state, or federal agencies can become an AmeriCorps VISTA sponsor. Applications for VISTA projects are handled through CNCS State Offices. A list of State Office contacts can be found on the CNCS website, www.nationalservice.gov.

Project sponsors are not required to provide a financial match but must be able to direct the project, supervise the members, and provide necessary administrative support to complete the goals and objectives of the project. (Members are paid directly by CNCS.) The goals and objectives must be clearly defined and directed toward alleviating problems of low-income communities, and meet the regulations of the AmeriCorps VISTA program. One consistent goal for every AmeriCorps VISTA project should be the sustainability of the project by the sponsoring agency and the low-income community after AmeriCorps VISTA project sponsorship ends.

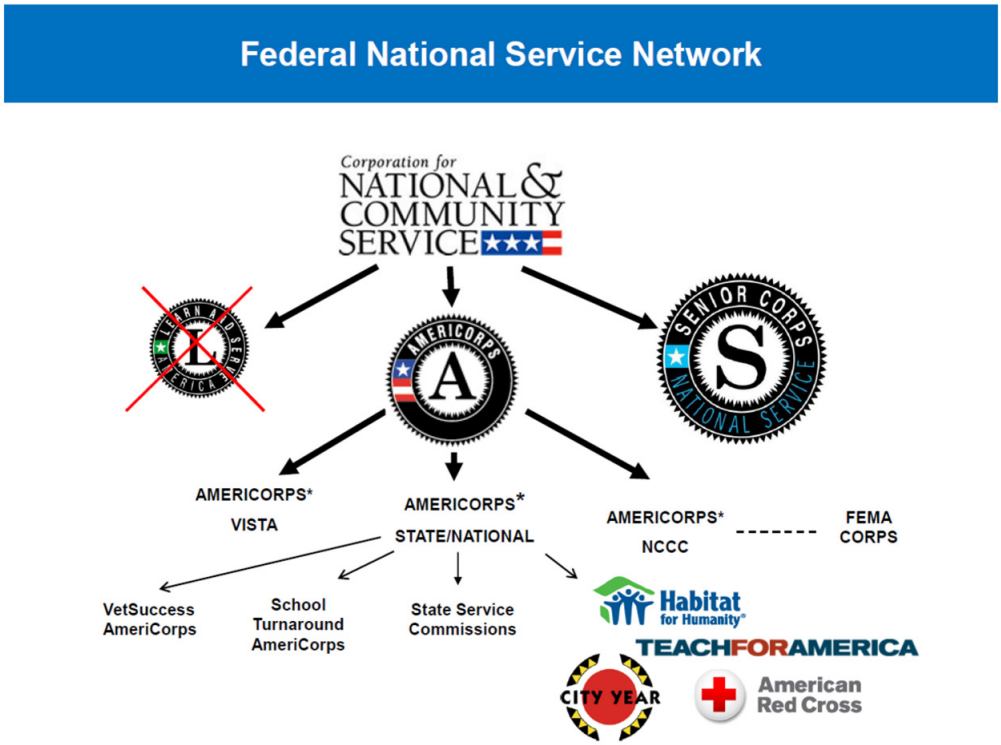
To apply for AmeriCorps VISTA members, a potential sponsor must contact the CNCS State Office covering the area in which the proposed project would be located to discuss application requirements and procedures. The CNCS State Office will provide technical assistance during the application process. You can also download the initial application. The length of the application process varies, but the average time from the initial contact to a final decision is 3 to 5 months.

AmeriCorps VISTA covers the cost of a series of benefits and services for the AmeriCorps VISTA members and your organization. There is no required match for new AmeriCorps VISTA project sponsors, but there is the option to cost-share. Cost share is not required but is strongly encouraged, particularly in projects wishing to have AmeriCorps VISTA resources beyond the third year. As a cost-share project, an organization contributes the living allowance--about $9,500--for each AmeriCorps VISTA member.

AMERICORPS NCCC

The AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) is a full-time residential program for men and women, ages 18-24, that strengthens communities while developing leaders through direct, team-based national and community service. Members are assigned to one of five campuses – Denver, CO; Sacramento, CA; Perry Point, MD; Vicksburg, MS; and Vinton, IA.

AmeriCorps NCCC serves communities in every state. Sponsoring organizations request the assistance of AmeriCorps NCCC teams by submitting a project application to the regional campus that covers that organization's state. The campuses provide assistance in completing the application, developing a work plan, and preparing the project sponsor for the arrival of the AmeriCorps NCCC team.



3. Making the Case - How a Service Year Program Can Affect BIG Change

"What if no American was comfortable having no answer to the question: 'Where did you serve?'"
-General Stanley McChrystal

THE IDEA: Service Year Alliance is a bipartisan organization committed to making a year of full-time service – a service year – a common expectation and opportunity for young Americans of all backgrounds.

THE REASON: The force of service at scale can repair broken cities, uplift and educate children at risk, and empower communities struggling with poverty. It could unite the most diverse nation in history, binding people of different backgrounds through common cause. It can inspire young Americans to serve for a year, and in the process, forge them into the leaders for life our nation needs.

HOW WE'LL DO IT: *[Insert organization's mission, and the position that they would create to help their org and support the SYA movement.]*

HOW A SERVICE YEAR WILL HELP US:

- Increased capacity to accomplish mission and goals more effectively and intensively.
- Identifying innovative approaches to tackling targeted social justice issues, and creating, improving, and expanding the organization's services with measurable results.
- Spreading awareness and engaging the organization's targeted social justice issue.

YOUR SUPPORT: Expanding service years has the power to address our country's most pressing challenges, change the lives of those who serve, and unite our nation. Your support will:

- Strengthen organizations' efforts in supporting vulnerable populations.
- Invest in the positive community transformation and social change.
- Foster issue oriented and strengths based leaders.

4. Staff Capacity and Preparedness Worksheet

ORGANIZATIONAL CRITERIA:

The Service Year Alliance seeks to work with organizations that have the capacity to successfully manage a full-time corps member for an entire year, where there are indications that a corps member successfully completes their service year and has a meaningful impact.

To successfully prepare your organization to host a service year program, make sure that your organization's leadership and staff have completed the following steps:

1. Collaborate on the design of a corps member position description which outlines:
    - Key responsibilities
    - Key partners and stakeholders
    - Project impact
    - Necessary qualifications
2. Identify one or more staff members, or partners to act as supervisor(s) for the corps member
    - Supervisor(s) must have the capacity to commit at least 4-10 hours per month to supervising and supporting the corps member
3. Demonstrate process for measuring the impact of the corps member's service
4. Raise funds or establish fundraising plan to bring in the resources needed to support a corps member for a full-year (including living allowance, benefits, and overhead expenses)
5. Commit to the certification criteria outlined by Service Year Alliance
6. Develop the plan and process for identifying and connecting a mentor to the corps member
7. Outline an orientation session and ongoing dedicated skill development trainings throughout the service term
8. Commit to developing the corps members' skills and experience during their service term
9. Institute necessary HR policies to ensure all legal aspects of employment are covered

5. Corps Member Training Curriculum

To ensure that your corps member has received (or will receive) key pieces of information in order to fully contribute to your organization, their training curriculum should include the following structure for onboarding and training throughout their service term.

- Introduction between NPO supervisor and corps member
- Organization introduction and overview (Share history, challenges and success stories. Include explanation of how the fellows' work fits into the big picture, mission, and why their work is important)
- Review relevant organization policies, procedures, and information (office equipment training, volunteer handbook if applicable, health and safety, confidentiality)
- Discuss position description & impact metrics (what will corps member be doing? What will be the impact? How will that be measured?)
- Review materials relevant to project (Does corps member need access to certain materials and folders? Will the corps member need an email?). Please detail
- Discuss supervisor availability and access (Easy method and time to contact supervisor? Weekly or monthly check ins?)
  * Regular check-ins day/time:_____
- Introduce Quarterly Service Plan Template (to be completed by first monthly check-in)
  * Quarter 1 > Understanding role ("training wheels" support)
  * Quarter 2 > Independent direct work in role
  * Quarter 3 > Role enhancement/innovation
  * Quarter 4 > Wrap up and transition/transferrable plan
- Introduce Corps Member Goals Template (how does corps member hope to grow/learn? How can site help facilitate that?)

To be completed during first month of service (copies given to both the corps member and their supervisors)

This orientation checklist was completed on _____ at _____.
date xx/xx/xx host organization

Host Organization Supervisor: Corps Member:

Signature_____ and _____

Printed Name:_____ _____

6. Corps Member Goal Setting

ESTABLISHING GOALS:

Understanding your corps members' goals is key to a successful service year. Work with your corps members to identify and map how their goals align with those of the organization. Use the following list of questions to clarify goals and develop a work plan to achieve them.

POTENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Please list 3-5 professional skills that you hope to develop, enhance, and/or learn.
- Please identify any specific ways that you hope to grow as a leader.
- How do you best work on a team?
- What traits do you most need in a supervisor?
- What are your three biggest goals for this year?
- What are your biggest strengths that will prove most effective during your service year?
- What are your areas of improvement as you enter this service year?
- How informed do you feel about your issue-area? How would you like to learn more?
- What skills do you hope to develop through this position?
- How do you hope to grow as a leader?
- What resources and structures do you need for specific development?
- What environment do you need for optimal development/experience?

7. Leadership Through Service - Nonprofit Leadership Development Worksheet

SERVICE CREATES BETTER LEADERS.

The experience of serving can also transform the lives of those who serve. A service year provides corps members with opportunities and resources to increase their capability for leadership, anchored in a commitment to service as citizens. The By providing them with cognitive and experiential points of reference corps members can chart their own provisional path toward leadership.

HOW WILL YOU HELP YOUR CORPS MEMBER BECOME A BETTER LEADER?

- **Issue Area**
  - Trainings about issue addressed/population served
  - Systems-thinking and advocacy
  - What else? _____
- **Soft Skills**
  - Empathy/social intelligence
  - Communication
  - What else? _____
- **Hard Skills**
  - Specific skill-sets acquired through position:
    - _____
    - _____
    - _____
- **Applied Imagination and Creativity**
  - Through what avenues will you allow your corps member to explore, innovate, create?
    - _____
    - _____
    - _____
- **Other Considerations**
  - What resources and structures do you have in place for specific development?
  - What flexibility and structures do you have in place to facilitate development?
  - How will you track achievement of set development goals?

8. Template Service Year Position Description

Below is a brief sample description for a service year position in which a corps member will perform direct service. This example outlines the basic components of a position listing that may be used for internal and external recruitment, and for use on the Service Year Exchange.

Additional resources and guidelines for submitting positions on the Service Year Exchange can be found on Serviceyr.org, as well as on our YouTube channel.

If you have any questions about the certification criteria, or how to post positions on the exchange, please contact Jonas Kane at jkane@serviceyr.org.

PROGRAM

Program Name
After School

Program Description
Our After School program targets 3,000 students in California—students who are under-performing in low-income schools where families face multiple socioeconomic, academic, and health challenges. Students participate in small group Literacy, STEM, and Healthy Behaviors tutoring to help them achieve academically and engage in healthy life choices. Students in need of the most intensive support are referred to small-group tutoring with an AmeriCorps Tutor. Groups of 4-5 students meet daily for 30 minutes, and stay together throughout the school year, allowing students the time they need to build strong connections with their Tutor and make significant growth in their skills. Taking an inquiry-based, multi-disciplinary approach, AmeriCorps Tutors guide students through curriculum designed to ignite their excitement for learning and build their skills. Tutors follow structured, research-based lesson plans to further each student's ability to reach academic and/or health goals.

POSITION DETAILS

BASIC INFORMATION

Name: Literacy Tutor

In what setting will this service take place?
Charter School
Elementary School
High School
Middle School
School-based Nonprofit

COMMUNITY & BENEFITS

What specific unmet community need will this position address?
Low literacy and graduation rates in underserved communities

Position Outcomes – What desired result, or quantifiable change will occur due to the service of this position? See sample outcomes provided in the handbook.
A+ Tutoring's goal is to increase literacy skills of the students they serve. Students will received two formal assessments during their time with A+ Tutoring, one at the start of their enrollment and one when they exit the program. These assessments will inform A+ of the skills the student is lacking and the skill they have gained at the end of the program because of the successful targeted tutoring A+ offers.

ACTIVITIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Position Description:
Students in need of the most intensive support are referred to small-group tutoring with an AmeriCorps Tutor. Groups of 4-5 students meet daily for 30 minutes, and stay together throughout the school year, allowing students the time they need to build strong connections with their Tutor and make significant growth in their literacy skills. Tutors follow structured, research-based lesson plans, including supported student reading and guided skills practice. The program draws from a menu of curricula to offer quality instruction specifically targeted to each student's unique needs, with the goal of building fluent, confident readers who have excellent comprehension skills and ever expanding academic vocabularies.

SERVICE TERM

What is the term of service for this position? (months)
11

LIVING ALLOWANCE

Specify the living allowance amount per month for this position:
Living allowance min: 1044
Living allowance max: 2088

Specify the benefits corps members will receive while serving in this position.
Education award upon successful completion of service
Health coverage
Training
Childcare assistance if eligible
Living allowance
Student loan forbearance

How many hours per week will the corps members serve in direct service or capacity building activities outlined above?
40

Will your corps members serve as a team at the same service site, or will our corps members serve individually?
Examples- Team: 5 tutors at each elementary school. Single: 1 tutor alone at each elementary school. Combination of Both: 2 elementary schools have 1 tutor and 3 elementary schools have 4 tutors. Single and Multiple Placement

SUPERVISION & MENTORING

Who will supervise corps members?
The supervisor is the individual responsible for tracking whether a corps member is meeting his or her responsibilities, such as attendance, performance, and completing required paperwork. The supervisor cannot be a fellow corps member.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Please provide an overview of your approach, or plan for training of corps members, covering ongoing training and professional development that your organization will provide or facilitate for corps members throughout their service year.

A+ Tutors will be formally observed once a month to ensure program goals are met, as well as to create an opportunity for constructive feedback. A+ Tutors will participate in professional development days at least twice a month that cover a broad range of topics including behavior management, targeted tutoring, parent engagement, conflict management, goal setting, time management, and resume building.

Include below, any certifications or other learning outcomes the corps members will attain through your program that have not already been mentioned.
A+ Tutoring Reading Assessment Proctor

On average, how many training hours will the corps member participate in each week?
5

What type of Criminal History Check will you conduct?
National sex Offender Public registry
State Repository
FBI

How will you conduct the Criminal History Check?
As the Custodian of Records, our organization will directly receive results from state repositories and/or the FBI
Utilize another third party vendor to conduct the checks

9. Posting Positions to the Service Year Exchange

For a tutorial on how to post positions to the Service Year Exchange, or other tutorials on how to use the website, **please visit our YouTube Channel.**

HOW TO JOIN THE EXCHANGE

Go to the Website: *ServiceYr.org*

Create a User Account: *To start the process, you need to create a unique personal account. Once you have an account, you will be able to enroll your organization or be added as an administrator for an existing organization.*

Enroll Your Organization: *Click "Enroll" on the About Hosting Page to complete the brief process of enrolling your organization on the Exchange.*

Add an Organization Profile and Positions: *Once your organization is enrolled, you will be able to add your organization profile and positions. You will have the option to group similar positions together as programs, if desired.*
Submit your Positions for Certification: When you have completed your profile and are satisfied with the positions you created, you can submit them to the Service Year team for certification on the Exchange. Once certified, your profile and positions will become public.

Create Recruitment Listings: *You can recruit for certified positions by creating listings. Listings will allow you to recruit based on additional information, including locations, start and end dates, and recruitment window.*

FINDING CORPS MEMBERS ON THE EXCHANGE

The SYx provides tools to help organizations find prospective corps members who could be a good fit for their positions. It allows users to find positions based on preferences chosen in their profile or when searching, and it allows organizations to actively look for corps members.

Corps members have opportunities to share stories and photos about their experiences throughout their service year and beyond, and to receive a Certificate of Completion upon the successful end of their service year.

Recruitment: *Once your organization has positions certified on the Exchange, you will be able to create listings to actively recruit corps members. When users find your listing based on searching or being given a suggested match based on their profile preferences, they will be able to express interest in the position. When an individual has expressed interest, you will be able to view their profile and reach out to them with more information about your application process. You can view a listing of users who have expressed interest by going to the "Prospective Corps Members" tab in the left sidebar of your organization dashboard.*

Additionally, you can actively search for future corps members using the Exchange. You can filter prospective corps members based on attributes such as interest, availability, and education level. If you find users that seem like a good fit, you can reach out to them with next steps and encourage them to express interest in your listings.

10. About the Service Year Exchange

ABOUT THE SERVICE YEAR EXCHANGE

The Service Year Exchange is a dynamic online marketplace that unites full-time service year programs, corps members, and supporters. The Exchange is currently available (and free) to nonprofit organizations and public agencies (both those funded by AmeriCorps and those that are not) offering full-time service positions within the United States that are open to young adults. In the future, positions offered by social enterprises, international positions, and those targeting other populations (such as older adults) may also be incorporated.

CURRENT FEATURES AND BENEFITS

Certify. Organizations can submit information about their proposed or existing service programs and/or positions and have them approved through a streamlined process. AmeriCorps programs are automatically certified through an abbreviated process, including verification of AmeriCorps status.

Post. Once certified, positions are posted online and are searchable by prospective corps members. Organizations can tailor listings based on attributes such as location, skills and interests, start and end dates, and more. Note that positions may be posted even if they are not yet fully funded.

Search and Match. Individuals interested in serving can search for and be given suggested matches for opportunities on the Exchange. The tailored listings created by the organization help create better match suggestions and search results for corps members. At the same time, organizations have the ability to search for corps members based on skills and areas of interest that corps members can choose to make public in their profiles. Listings will contain links to the organization's application that individuals can follow when they think they have found a good match.

FUTURE FUNCTIONS AND BENEFITS

Micro-credentials and badges awarded to corps members to highlight the learning and 21st century skills they've gained during their service year

Rewards for corps members

A ratings system that will allow your corps members' great experiences with your program to help attract new members

For host organizations that enroll their corps members in the exchange, access to recruitment data and the ability to learn more about the demographics and profiles of individuals that are interested in your service opportunities

For host organizations that enroll their corps members in the exchange, access to data to better understand the career and educational outcomes for your alums
Resources for starting, improving, and growing your service program

MEMBERSHIP DUES

To be a member of the Service Year Exchange, organizations will be asked to pay modest annual membership dues. Membership gives you access to a community of like-minded organizations and peers, as well as all of the Exchange's features, including the ability to post positions, search for corps members, crowdfund, and utilize all future features that will be added.

FUNDING

The Service Year Exchange will not provide funding for your positions. We encourage you to raise funds for positions through your traditional funding sources.

You may want to apply to the Corporation for National and Community Service for funding. More information about the Corporation's AmeriCorps programs can be found in the appendix.

You will be able to post positions even if they are not yet funded.

The Service Year Exchange will include opportunities for individuals and organizations to crowdfund positions. Crowdfunding allows you to create a campaign you can share with family, friends, community members and other individuals to help fund your position. It also will enable funders to challenge other funders to support a set of programs, positions, or individuals who have things in common – for example, programs that will serve a specific neighborhood, work on a single issue, or engage people who have similar backgrounds (e.g. veterans, alumni of a higher education institution, disadvantaged youth, or children of employees). More information on the fundraising benefits of the Exchange will be shared as soon as it is available.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS

Contact the Service Year team at support@serviceyr.org.

11. Designing Corps Member Orientation

Guidelines for making the Orientation meaningful:

- Balance giving information and creating an experience
- Provide information on timing- upfront and through the year (ongoing check-ins, reviews, etc.)
- Provide something prior to start: welcome card, welcome phone call, swag
- Plan a welcome to the team lunch or activity
- Teach access more than content- where does someone go for info?
- Give an introduction to target population
- Consider how Corps members will experience your organization's mission and values
- Include the following items outlined in the orientation checklist

Orientation Checklist:

Corps Member specific training:

- Review contracts
- Review corps member benefits, including living allowance
- Swearing-in ceremony where corps members receive a pledge (service year pledge)
- Training on national service topics and overview of prohibited activities
- Training specific to the skills corps members will need to provide the service outlined in the position description

Policies/ procedures

- Emergency procedures
- Confidentiality agreement
- Communication/ media policy
- Code of conduct
- Grievance policy
- Vacation policy
- Sexual harassment policy
- Resignation policy
- Timesheets and payroll methods
- Reimbursements

Logistics

- Where to park
- Office supplies
- Filing system
- Email Logistics and guidelines
- Names/responsibilities (org chart)
- Personalities
- Jargon
- Bathroom
- Dress code
- Lunch
- Start time/ end time
- Site map
- Schedule of training and onboardings

Background on Organization

- Mission statement
- History
- Vision/Theory of Change/Strategic Plan
- List of Board Members, relevant committees, contacts, and partner organizations
- Brand standards and guidelines

Background on Issues/Content

- Relevant books and articles on the issue Corps Members will work on
- History, demographics, and relevant information about the population and communities with which Corps Members will work
- Background on Service

12. Certification Criteria and Prohibited Activites

Access Service Year's Certification Criteria by following this link.

Prohibited Activities

While on duty or in uniform, corps members may not:

- Attempt to influence legislation;
- Organize or engage in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- Assist, promote, or deter union organizing;
- Impair existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- Engage in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- Participate in, or endorse, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
- Engage in religious instruction, conduct worship services, provide instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, construct or operate facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintain facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engage in any form of religious proselytization;
- Provide a direct benefit to–
    * A business organized for profit;
    * A labor union;
    * A partisan political organization;
    * A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section
    * 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or a substantial amount of lobbying.
- Conduct a voter registration drive;
- Provide abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services.

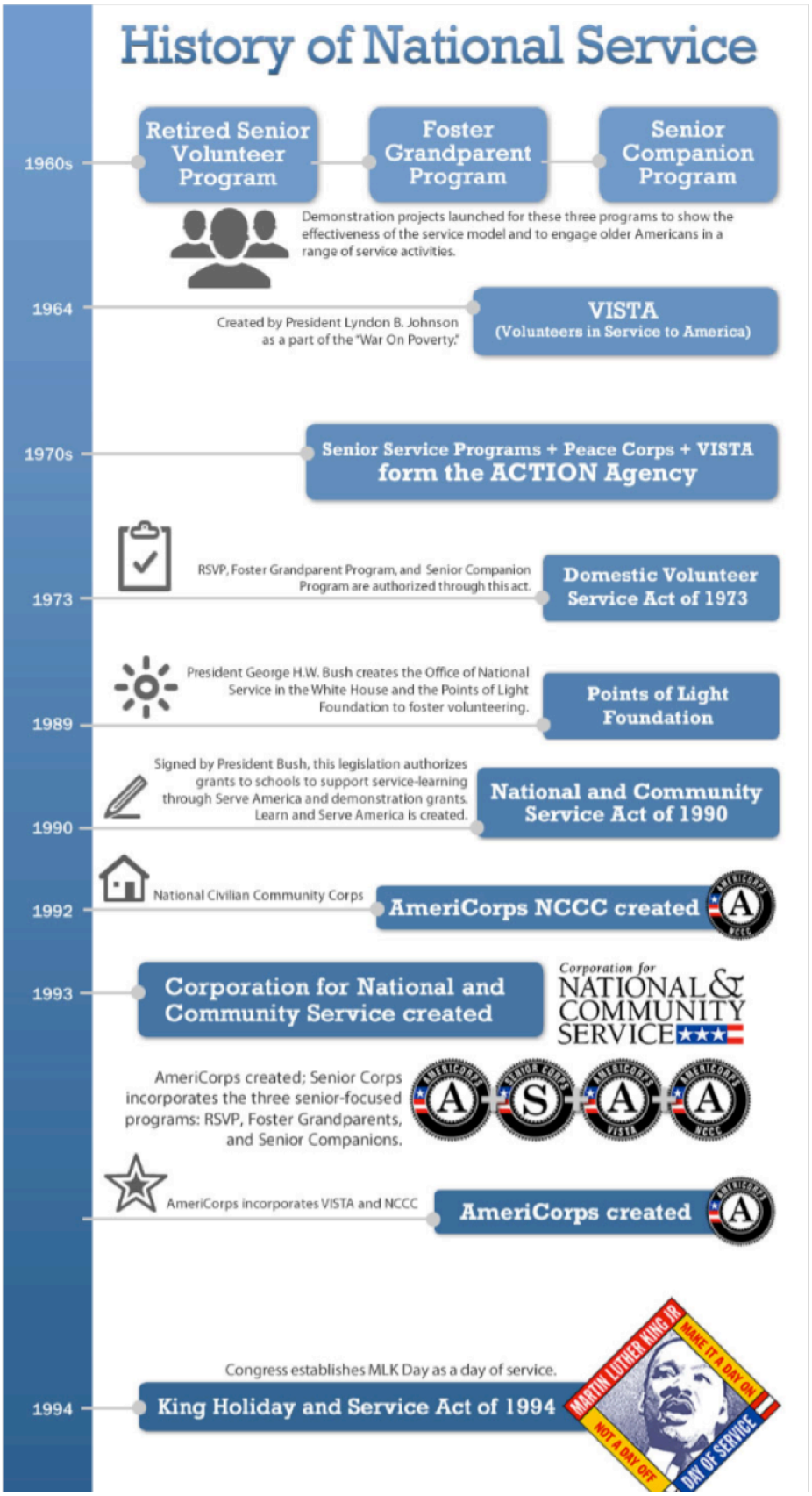
Corps members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-program time, and using non-program funds. Individuals should not wear their uniforms while participating in these activities.

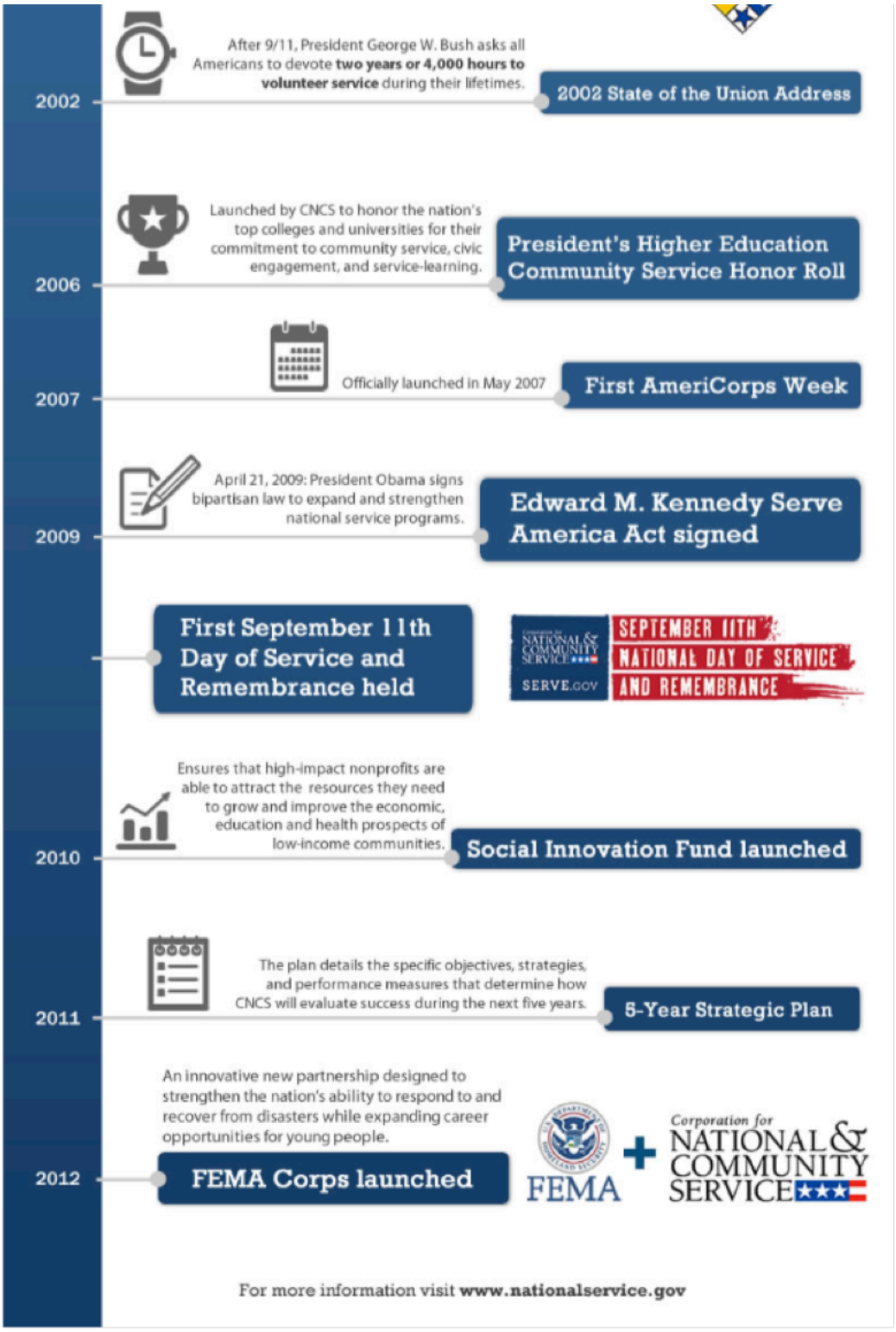
Organizations may not use corps members to displace paid employees.

OPTIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS SEEKING CERTIFICATION:

	Fewer than 10 positions	10 or more positions
Focused on building the infrastructure of organizations that work on poverty alleviation	Apply for AmeriCorps VISTA or Cost Share Service Year Certification	Apply for AmeriCorps VISTA or Cost Share Service Year Certification
Focused on directly addressing economic opportunity, education, veterans and military families, environment, disaster services, other health and human needs	Service Year Certification	Apply for AmeriCorps State and National Service Year Certification
Focused on directly addressing other community needs or building the capacity of nonprofit organizations that provide direct service	Service Year Certification	Service Year Certification

13. History of Service Infographic




2002
After 9/11, President George W. Bush asks all Americans to devote two years or 4,000 hours to volunteer service during their lifetimes.
2002 State of the Union Address
2006
Launched by CNCS to honor the nation's top colleges and universities for their commitment to community service, civic engagement, and service-learning.
President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll
2007
Officially launched in May 2007
First AmeriCorps Week
2009
April 21, 2009: President Obama signs bipartisan law to expand and strengthen national service programs.
Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act signed
First September 11th Day of Service and Remembrance held
SERVE.GOV
SEPTEMBER 11TH
NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE
AND REMEMBRANCE
2010
Ensures that high-impact nonprofits are able to attract the resources they need to grow and improve the economic, education and health prospects of low-income communities.
Social Innovation Fund launched
2011
The plan details the specific objectives, strategies, and performance measures that determine how CNCS will evaluate success during the next five years.
5-Year Strategic Plan
2012
An innovative new partnership designed to strengthen the nation's ability to respond to and recover from disasters while expanding career opportunities for young people.
FEMA Corps launched
FEMA
Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE
For more information visit www.nationalservice.gov

14. Additional Resources

1. Main Corporation for National and Community Service website: www.nationalservice.gov

2. AmeriCorps knowledge network (including performance measures): https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/npm/home

AmeriCorps performance indicators can be found online here: http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Performance_Measure_Instructions_2016.pdf.

3. AmeriCorps grant application information: http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/Resources_for_AmeriCorps_Grant_Applicants_10_22_13.pdf

4. AmeriCorps program planning blueprint: https://www.nationalserviceresources.org/americorps-building-high-quality-americorps-program-blueprint-implementation-new-program-start-guide

5. Resources for youth corps: www.corpsnetwork.org

6. Background on service years: www.waytochange.com

7. W.K. Kellogg Foundation handbooks on logic model design and evaluation: https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resource/2010/w-k-kellogg-foundation-evaluation-handbook

Resources for Corps members:

Tips for living on a stipend: http://ngsmovement.org/2014/11/15/10-tips-for-living-on-a-stipend/

How service years prepare you for entrepeneurship: http://ngsmovement.org/2016/01/11/5-ways-service-years-prepare-you-for-entrepreneurship/