

PennSERVE AmeriCorps Grantee Program & Fiscal Policies Manual 2016-2017

PennSERVE: The Governor's Office of Citizen Service



Introduction and Disclaimer

This Program & Fiscal Policies Manual (Manual) is specifically for AmeriCorps program grantees of PennSERVE: The Governor's Office of Citizen Service. All PennSERVE grantees are considered sub-grantees of The Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS or The Corporation). The terms "program" and "grantee" are used interchangeably and refer to AmeriCorps grantees of PennSERVE.

PennSERVE grantees are subject to policies outlined in this Manual from date of distribution and until notified otherwise in writing by PennSERVE. This revision overrides all previous editions, both written and electronic. Organizations receiving AmeriCorps funds are subject to the terms and conditions of the grant award, as well as state and federal requirements.

The information contained in this Manual does not include all the legal requirements of an AmeriCorps grant. It is provided to acquaint the reader with basic AmeriCorps program information and guidance. Any variance between this Manual and the following documents that outline requirements should be resolved in favor of:

- ❑ The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended
- ❑ The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009
- ❑ Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance (OmniCircular/SuperCircular)
- ❑ Pennsylvania AmeriCorps State Program Sub-grantee Application/ Agreement (Contract)
- ❑ AmeriCorps 2016 Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants
- ❑ CNCS Policy Updates

To search for regulations, statutes, provisions and FAQs, utilize the CNCS Compiled Document for Search (AmeriCorps mega search) at:

http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/ASN_Megasearch_Document_updated_6_8_16.pdf

2016-2017 AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions:

<https://egrants.cns.gov/termsandconditions/Final2016AmeriCorpsTC20160511.pdf>

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: Introduction to PennSERVE and Grantee Responsibilities

History of PennSERVE	pg. 9
PennSERVE’s Mission	pg. 9
PennSERVE AmeriCorps Program Grantee Responsibilities	pg. 10
Getting Started	pg. 11

SECTION 2: Member Eligibility and Enrollment

Member Eligibility	pg. 13
<i>Member Application</i>	
<i>Parental Consent</i>	
Member Selection	pg. 14
Reasonable Accommodation	
National Service Criminal History Checks	pg. 14
<i>Results that Prohibit Individuals from Serving</i>	
<i>Recurring vs. Episodic Access to Vulnerable Populations</i>	
<i>National Sex Offender Public Registry</i>	
<i>State Criminal Registry Search and Out of State Checks</i>	
<i>FBI Background Check</i>	
<i>Childline Child Abuse Clearance</i>	
<i>Required Steps to Complete a Background Check</i>	
<i>Accompaniment</i>	
<i>Timing of Checks and Pre-Existing Checks</i>	
<i>Considering Applicants with a Criminal Conviction</i>	
<i>Written National Service Criminal History Check Policy</i>	
Member Enrollment	pg. 18
Member Contracts	pg. 19
<i>Amendments to the Member Contract</i>	
<i>Member Service Position Description</i>	
<i>Additional Considerations for AmeriCorps Member Service</i>	
<i>Requirements for Member Service as Tutors</i>	

SECTION 3: Member and Program Management

MEMBER SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Member Start Date	pg. 29
Member Orientation/Training	pg. 29
<i>Days of Service</i>	

Member Service Gear and AmeriCorps Branding	pg. 30
Member Records	pg. 30
Member Supervision	pg. 31
<i>Member Safety</i>	
<i>Member Death or Injury</i>	
Time Sheets/Tracking Member Hours	pg. 31
Completion of Terms of Service	pg. 32
Performance Evaluations	pg. 33
Release from Participation	pg. 33
<i>Compelling Personal Circumstances</i>	
<i>Release for Cause</i>	
MEMBER BENEFITS	
Education Award	pg. 35
Living Allowance and Taxes	pg. 35
<i>Late Member Enrollment/Early Member Exit</i>	
<i>Waiving the Living Allowance</i>	
<i>Taxes</i>	
<i>SSI Benefits</i>	
<i>Fines</i>	
<i>Workers' Compensation</i>	
Healthcare	pg. 37
<i>Less Than Full-Time Members</i>	
<i>Fulfilling the Healthcare Requirements</i>	
<i>Reimbursing Members for Coverage Obtained through the Marketplace</i>	
<i>Special Healthcare Enrollment Period for AmeriCorps Members</i>	
Childcare	pg. 38
<i>Part-Time Members</i>	
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT	
Identification as an AmeriCorps Program	pg. 39
Performance Measurements and Quarterly Reports	pg. 40
Recordkeeping and Member Information	pg. 41
<i>Electronic Storage of Member Record</i>	
Liability Insurance Coverage	pg. 41
Host Site (Service Partners) Preparation and Monitoring	pg. 41
Monitoring	pg. 42
<i>Site Monitoring Visits</i>	
<i>Desk Monitoring and Risk Assessment</i>	
Programmatic Changes Requiring Commission /Corporation Approval	pg. 43
<i>Changes in Program Staff</i>	
AmeriCorps Program Resources	pg. 44

SECTION 4: Member Terms of Service, My AmeriCorps Portal, and Slot Management Policies

MEMBER TERMS OF SERVICE

Additional Term of Service	pg. 47
Notifying PennSERVE and the CNCS Trust	pg. 47
Notice to Childcare and Healthcare Providers	pg. 47

MY AMERICORPS PORTAL

My AmeriCorps Portal Overview	pg. 48
Assistance Using the MyAmeriCorps Portal	pg. 48
Member Recruitment and Selection	pg. 48

My AmeriCorps Portal Policies and Procedures: Portal Actions That Programs May Take Under Their Own Authority	pg. 49
--	---------------

Completing Member Applications/Enrollment Forms
Assigning Member Service Locations
Amending a Member Start Date
Changing Member Status: Suspensions & Reinstatements
Completing Member Exit Forms
Refilling Slots

My AmeriCorps Portal Policies and Procedures: Portal Actions That Must Be Approved By PennSERVE	pg. 51
--	---------------

Slot Corrections (unfilled positions)
Member Slot Conversions
Changing a Term of Service (filled positions)
Change in Member Enrollment Period
No-Cost Extensions
Portal Actions Not Allowed At Any Time by Programs

Recap of Enrollment, Exit, and Slot Management Policies	pg. 53
--	---------------

Enrollment, Exit, and Slot/Term Change Timelines
Member Slot Refill Policy
Member Slot Conversion Policy

SECTION 5: Financial Management

GRANT AWARD CONDITIONS

Legislative Authority & Other Applicable Statutory and Administrative Provisions	
OMB Uniform Guidance - SuperCircular	pg. 57
Award Period	pg. 59
Grant Closeout	pg. 59

BUDGETS AND COSTS	
Program Budgets	pg. 59
Budget Revisions	pg. 59
Administrative Costs	pg. 60
Allowable Costs	pg. 61
Allocable Costs	pg. 61
Procurement Requirements and Procedures	pg. 61
Contract Administration	pg. 61
Property Management Standards	pg. 61
Match Requirements	pg. 62
<i>Matching Requirements Chart</i>	
<i>Consequences of Not Meeting Match</i>	
Federal Funds Used as Match	pg. 63
Program Income	pg. 63
Fees for Service	pg. 63
REIMBURSEMENT AND FINANCIAL REPORTING PROCESS	
Grantee Reimbursement	pg. 64
OnCorps PER and Coversheet	pg. 64
Aggregate Financial Reports	pg. 66
Planning Grant Programs Exemptions	pg. 66
Education Award Programs (EAP) Exemptions	pg. 67
Special Grants	pg. 67
AUDITS & MONITORING	
Financial Management Standards	pg. 67
Basics of a Good Financial Management System	pg. 69
Financial Systems Monitoring and Reviews	pg. 69
Financial Records	pg. 70
Exemptions for Fixed Amount Grants	pg. 71

SECTION 6: Special Funding

TRAINING FUNDS (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS PDAT FUNDS)	
Overview of TRAINING Funding	pg. 73
Peer Exchange Site Visits	pg. 73
Instructions for Requesting Training Funds/Obtaining Reimbursement	pg. 74
<i>Request for Funds</i>	
<i>Request for Reimbursement</i>	
DISABILITY FUNDS	
Disability Funds Overview	pg. 76

SECTION 7: OnCorps Reporting System

Introduction to OnCorps	pg. 81
Required Uses of the OnCorps Reporting System	pg. 81
Member Timesheets	pg. 82
Quarterly Reporting Requirements	pg. 82
<i>Performance Measure Progress</i>	
<i>Demographics</i>	
<i>Successes/Challenges</i>	
<i>Best Practices</i>	
<i>Great Stories</i>	
Financial Reporting in OnCorps	pg. 84
<i>Periodic Expense Reports</i>	
<i>Aggregate Financial Reports</i>	
Providing Training to Staff and Members	pg. 85
Ensure Notifications are Received through OnCorps	pg. 85

Section 1: Introduction to PennSERVE and Grantee Responsibilities

History of PennSERVE

PennSERVE's Mission

PennSERVE AmeriCorps Program Grantee Responsibilities

Getting Started

Attachments:

1.1: New Program Resources (**UPDATED**)

History of PennSERVE

PennSERVE: The Governor's Office of Citizen Service has been, and continues to be, a leader in the national service movement. In 1987, under the advice of then Secretary of Labor and Industry, Harris Wofford, the late Governor Robert P. Casey created the Governor's Office of Citizen Service, or PennSERVE, in order to promote and organize statewide service.

PennSERVE's responsibilities increased when the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 was passed by a bipartisan Congress with the support of President Bill Clinton. The Act's purpose was twofold. It established the Corporation for National and Community Service to oversee the distribution of federal funds to national service organizations, and it created AmeriCorps, a national organization responsible for encouraging all Americans to be more involved in their communities and their country and for providing funds to service programs at all governmental levels. After the legislation became law, PennSERVE became the state commission responsible for the administration of AmeriCorps state grants in Pennsylvania. PennSERVE's operations are centered in the state capital of Harrisburg.

PennSERVE's Mission

PennSERVE's mission is:

"To encourage, develop and facilitate volunteer and citizen community service which builds upon the talents, strengths, opportunities and challenges of people and communities in ways which enhance the quality of life for all citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."

PennSERVE is the umbrella agency for volunteerism and community service initiatives throughout the Commonwealth. PennSERVE is also the administrative entity charged with monitoring and overseeing the AmeriCorps state programs in Pennsylvania. PennSERVE is responsible for providing on-going technical assistance support and training to its programs. By distributing AmeriCorps resources across the state, PennSERVE seeks to help citizens improve the quality of life in their communities through innovative and effective volunteer service programs.

AmeriCorps state programs are funded through either a competitive or formula process. Programs may also receive funding through PennSERVE to operate an Education Award only Program (EAP). Under unique circumstances, special grants may be awarded. Grantees receiving competitive, formula or EAP awards are considered to have entered a three-year grant cycle unless federal funding is significantly reduced or the grantee violates AmeriCorps Regulations or the conditions of the contract.

PennSERVE AmeriCorps Program Grantee Responsibilities

Grantees are expected to be familiar with all documents that govern their grant, including the AmeriCorps Regulations, AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions, the PennSERVE Manual, and the grantee's contract with PennSERVE through the Department of Labor & Industry.

The grantee is responsible for attending all training provided and/or required by PennSERVE and to update their practices accordingly should any rules or regulations change.

This list is meant to be a brief description of responsibilities. The information below does not include all the legal requirements of an AmeriCorps grant.

A grantee must:

1. Identify its program as an AmeriCorps program and ensure that members identify themselves as AmeriCorps Members.
2. Ensure that each member provides appropriate documentation of US Citizenship, US national or lawful permanent resident status, and identity verification through a government issued photo identification; provides high school diploma or equivalent; OR agrees to earn GED prior to using award.
3. Conduct appropriate criminal background checks and screening on all members and staff, per the National service Criminal record Check policies. Programs must also receive prior written authorization to conduct the checks and verification of the member's understanding that selection is contingent upon receiving their criminal history check results. If a member is less than 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must sign the authorization.
4. Ensure that each member signs/dates a Member Service Agreement (as defined in the Provisions and Regulations) **before** commencement of service. If a member is less than 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must sign the agreement.
5. Ensure that each member has an appropriate service position description that does not violate prohibited activities.
6. Ensure all member enrollments, change of status and exits in the MyAmeriCorps Portal are in compliance with the 30-day rule. Ensure that each member is assigned to their actual service location as part of enrollment.
7. Conduct an AmeriCorps Orientation for each member and distribute all member resource materials during the Orientation. The Orientation must include education on prohibited activities and attendance must be noted on member's timesheet and an Orientation sign-in log.
8. Ensure members receive appropriate AmeriCorps benefits for their slot type, including a living allowance and healthcare if required, and appropriate education award upon exit.

9. Maintain a file on each member that includes all required documents.
10. Ensure all members have sufficient opportunity to complete the required number of service hours for their slot type.
11. Ensure that a mid and/or end of the year evaluation is conducted for all members. If a member exits early, an end of the year evaluation is still required.
12. Designate an Administrator to oversee the project, serve as PennSERVE contact, attend orientation and participate in other training as necessary throughout the program year. Provide program contact and location information. **Immediately inform PennSERVE of any staff changes.**
13. Participate on all conference calls and related activities and respond to all requests for information and updates by the appointed deadline.
14. Submit member timesheets and quarterly reports using the OnCorps Reports system.
15. Achieve outcomes as outlined in the Performance Measures and meet the outcomes noted in their original AmeriCorps application.
16. Follow the appropriate OMB Circulars for the organization to ensure proper financial management of the program.
17. Establish appropriate systems to accurately track grant expenditure per approved budget and submit required fiscal documentation (PERs, etc.) on a monthly or quarterly basis.

Getting Started

Once a program has been awarded a contract to operate an AmeriCorps program, it must be organized to ensure success. New programs should focus on the following areas:

- Member Eligibility
- Member Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Retention
- Member Terms of Service
- Program Design
- Program Resources
- Administrative Systems
- eGrants, My AmeriCorps Portal, and OnCorps
- Member Files

PennSERVE has compiled a new program checklist to assist grantee in locating resources. **See Attachment 1.1: New Program Resources.**

Section 2: Member Eligibility and Enrollment

Member Eligibility

Member Application

Parental Consent

Member Selection

Reasonable Accommodation

National Service Criminal History Checks

Results that Prohibit Individuals from Serving

Recurring vs. Episodic Access to Vulnerable Populations

National Sex Offender Public Registry

State Criminal Registry Search and Out of State Checks

FBI Background Check

Childline Child Abuse Clearance

Required Steps to Complete a Background Check

Accompaniment

Timing of Checks and Pre-Existing Checks

Considering Applicants with a Criminal Conviction

Written National Service Criminal History Check Policy

Member Enrollment

Member Contracts

Amendments to the Member Contract

Member Service Position Description

Additional Considerations for AmeriCorps Member Service

Requirements for Member Service as Tutors

Changes for 2016-2017:

- National Service Criminal History Checks – eCourse requirement pg. 14
- FY2016 Education Award Amounts pg. 20

Attachments:

2.1: Criminal History Check Verification Form

2.2: 2015 National Service Criminal History Check PowerPoint

2.3: CNCS National Service Criminal History Check FAQ Document, **UPDATED** July 7, 2016

2.4: Grievance Procedure Checklist

Links: CNCS Criminal Background Check Resources:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/criminal-history-check>

Pennsylvania State Background Check Repository: <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>

Pennsylvania FBI Background Check Repository: <https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index.htm>

Member Eligibility

AmeriCorps Programs must document the citizenship, age, and education eligibility of all prospective members. An eligible member is an individual who:

- ❑ Is at least 17 years of age at the commencement of service UNLESS the member is out of school and enrolled in a full-time, year-round youth corps or full-time summer program, in which case he or she must be between the ages of 16 and 25.
- ❑ Has a high school diploma or equivalency certificate (or agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalency before using the education award) and who has not dropped out of an elementary or secondary school in order to enroll as an AmeriCorps member; or who has been determined by an independent assessment to be incapable of obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent
- ❑ Is a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States.

The following are acceptable forms of certifying status as a **U.S. citizen or national**:

- ❑ A birth certificate showing that the individual was born in one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa or the Northern Mariana islands
- ❑ A U.S. Passport
- ❑ A report of birth abroad of a U.S. citizen (FS-240) issued by the State Department
- ❑ A certificate of birth-foreign service (FS 545) issued by the State Department
- ❑ A certificate of report of birth (DS-1350) issued by the State Department
- ❑ A certificate of naturalization (Form N-550 or N-570) issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)
- ❑ A certificate of citizenship (Form N-560 or N-561) issued by the INS.

Please Note: The I-9 is **NOT** an acceptable form for certifying status of a US citizen or national.

The following are acceptable forms of certifying status as a **lawful permanent resident of the United States**:

- ❑ Permanent Resident Card, INS Form I-551
- ❑ Passport indicating that the INS has approved temporary evidence of lawful admission for permanent residence
- ❑ A Departure Record (INS Form I-94) indicating that INS has approved it as temporary evidence of lawful admission for permanent residence

Secondary documentation – If primary documentation is not available, the program must obtain written permission from CNCS **and** PennSERVE to approve other documentation as sufficient to demonstrate the individual’s status as a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or lawful permanent resident.

Member Application

All potential AmeriCorps members must fill out an application to the AmeriCorps program for consideration as a potential member. The application must be designed specifically for the program, and may not be an application for employment with the overall organization. All

applications must include, at a minimum, the AmeriCorps logo, the date of the application, and the member's address at the time of application.

Parental Consent

Parental or legal guardian consent must be obtained for members under 18 years of age before members begin a term of service. Parental consent for members under age 18 must be provided on the member application, the consent for criminal history checks form, and the member agreement.

Member Selection

AmeriCorps programs should carefully select members who possess a commitment to the AmeriCorps goals and who meet eligibility guidelines and qualifications as dictated by service positions. Members must be selected in a fair, nonpartisan, nonpolitical and nondiscriminatory manner, without regard to the member's need for reasonable accommodation or childcare and without displacing paid employees or program volunteers.

Reasonable Accommodation

Programs and activities must be accessible to persons with disabilities, and the program must provide reasonable accommodation to the known mental or physical disabilities of otherwise qualified members, service recipients, applicants, and staff. All selections and project assignments must be made without regard to the need to provide reasonable accommodation. See AmeriCorps State and National Policy FAQs for more information, provided on the PennSERVE-provided flash drive. See Section 6 for additional information on funding for reasonable accommodations.

National Service Criminal History Checks

The National Service Criminal History Check is a screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. Under the Serve America Act (SAA), all grantees must conduct criminal history checks on any individual in a covered position. A covered position is one in which an individual receives a living allowance, stipend, education award, or salary through a national service program.

AmeriCorps program staff members who are charged directly to the grant as either federal share or grantee match are subject to the background check requirements. AmeriCorps Site Supervisors outside of the program's fiscal agency are also subject to the requirements if they are charged directly or as match for the grant.

(NEW) All grantees must complete the CNCS NSCHC training every year. The CNCS e-course provides a thorough overview of the requirements and can be found at <http://cncstraining.articulate-online.com/4240214797>. Each grantee must identify, at minimum, one relevant staff person to fulfill this requirement on behalf of the program. PennSERVE encourages all AmeriCorps program staff involved in recruiting, selecting, or placing AmeriCorps members to complete the e-course. The grantee must retain the certificate of course completion and assign staff to retake the course annually prior to the expiration of the certificate. Programs should save certificates of completion from each year as part of the grant record; and must forward copies of the certificate to PennSERVE.

Grantees should familiarize themselves with the available resources on the **CNCS Criminal History Check Resources** page, which include the federal regulations and documents on compliance and enforcement. <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/criminal-history-check>

PennSERVE requires the following criminal history checks:

Check	Recurring Access	Episodic Access	When?
National Sex Offender Public Registry (NSOPW)	X	X	BEFORE service start date
State Criminal Repository Check	X	State Repository OR FBI Background Check	On or before member start date
FBI Background Check	X		On or before member start date
Childline Child Abuse Check	X	N/A	On or before member start date
Out of State Repository Check	X	X OR FBI Background Check	On or before member start date

Please note: Individual school districts or other partners where members serve may have stricter requirements than CNCS and PennSERVE and/or additional requirements. Programs should adhere to these additional requirements, as well as the above required checks.

Programs are required to use the PennSERVE National Service Criminal History Check Verification Form to obtain consent from members for the required checks, to track the initiation and receipt of the required checks, and to document accompaniment if needed. **See attachment 2.1 Criminal History Check Verification Form.**

Detailed instructions for conducting each check and additional information can be found in the PennSERVE National Service Criminal History Check PowerPoint. **See attachment 2.2 National Service Criminal History Check PowerPoint.**

Programs are responsible for reviewing the most recent National Service Criminal History Check Frequently Asked Questions Document in its entirety. See attachment 2.3: CNCS National Service Criminal History Check FAQs, UPDATED July 7, 2016.

Results that Prohibit Individuals from Serving

Anyone listed, or required to be listed, on a sex offender registry is ineligible to serve. Anyone convicted of murder is ineligible to serve. Anyone who refuses to undergo any portion of the Check is ineligible to serve. Anyone who makes a false statement in connection with a program’s inquiry concerning the individual’s criminal history is ineligible to serve.

Recurring vs. Episodic Access to Vulnerable Populations

Vulnerable populations include children age 17 or younger, persons age 60 or older, and/or individuals with disabilities.

Recurring access is defined as “the ability on more than one occasion to approach, observe, or communicate with an individual through physical proximity or other means, including but not limited to electronic or telephonic communication.” Episodic Access is access to a vulnerable population that is not a regular, scheduled, and **anticipated** component of an individual’s service activities.

PennSERVE strongly encourages all grantees to err on the side of caution when considering if a position has recurring vs. episodic access to vulnerable populations and complete all background checks.

National Sex Offender Public Website

The NSOPW is a free internet check and must be completed **prior to enrollment**. An individual’s consent is not needed to conduct the NSOPW. This rule bars enrollment or employment until an individual has been checked against the NSOPW sex offender system. **An individual listed on a sex offender registry, or required to be listed, is not eligible to serve or be employed in any AmeriCorps funded position.**

Programs must retain a record of the NSOPW search and associated results by printing the screen or by some other method that retains paper or digital images of the NSOPW checks. The date of the check **MUST** appear on the print-out, and may not be written on the print out by staff. Programs are required to run the NSOPW check until all state registries are cleared.

The NSOPW check must be completed before the individual’s start date. If a program is unable to demonstrate that an NSOPW check was conducted properly as defined in the regulations, all grant costs for the member or staff person may be disallowed, as well as any member service hours earned.

State Criminal Registry Search and Out of State Checks

Programs are required to conduct any in-state background checks using the state’s approved repository. In Pennsylvania, the approved repository is the ePATCH system:
<https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>

For out of state members, the statewide repository where the applicant resided upon application must be checked, as well as the statewide repository for Pennsylvania.

Please Note: An individual applying to serve who is an enrolled full-time college student is deemed to be residing in the state where he/she lives for the purpose of attending school.

FBI Background Check

CNCS requires that the state repository be used to obtain the FBI Criminal History check. Pennsylvania contracts with Cogent to provide this service: www.pacogentid.com

Childline Child Abuse Clearance

PennSERVE requires that those with recurring access to vulnerable populations receive the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Childline Check. A consent form is available to allow the Childline Child Abuse History Clearance reports to be sent directly to programs rather than to the home of the applicant.

Required Steps to Complete a Background Check

AmeriCorps Regulations and PennSERVE require the following steps when performing the National Service Criminal History checks:

1. Verify the identity of the applicant through government-issued photo identification
2. Obtain written authorization from the applicant to conduct the checks (No consent is needed to search the NSOPW because this is a public site.)
3. Document that the applicant understands that his or her selection is subject to the results of the checks
4. Identify the sources of each check component (required when conducting an out of state check)
5. Initiate all checks on or before the start of service, with the exception of the NSOPW, which **MUST** be completed before service begins
6. Provide and document accompaniment while checks are pending when service involves vulnerable populations
7. Document receipt date when checks results arrive for the State, FBI, and Childline checks
8. Provide opportunity for review of any findings with the applicant
9. Document that the results of the checks were considered in determining an applicant's eligibility to serve
10. Maintain the results of the Check components while providing confidentiality
11. If members paid for any of the checks, ensure that members are reimbursed

Accompaniment

Because the statewide criminal registry check, the FBI background check, and the Childline Check results can sometimes take weeks or more to complete, regulations do not prohibit an individual from serving while these checks are pending. However, the individual may not have unsupervised access to children, persons age 60 and older, and/or individuals with disabilities unless:

- The NSOPW has been conducted **AND**
- The State, FBI, and Childline checks have been initiated **AND**
- The State **OR** FBI check results have been returned and reviewed

If the NSOPW has been conducted and all other checks have been initiated but none of the check results have been returned, the individual (including grant funded staff) must be physically accompanied at all times by an individual who has been cleared for such access.

Accompaniment must be documented. The member, host site, and person providing the physical accompaniment must all acknowledge that accompaniment is required and that the member will not serve unless properly accompanied. Members who are required to be accompanied must have the accompanying party sign off on the member timesheet, in addition to having the regular site supervisor and/or program staff sign off on the timesheet.

Timing of Checks and Pre-Existing Checks

Checks may be initiated as soon as a member's application to serve in a National Service program is received.

Pre-existing checks cannot be accepted. Any checks obtained prior to application to serve or application to be employed would require another check. A program must conduct a criminal registry check and NSOPW check the first time an individual applies to a position. A second check is not required for participants who are serving a consecutive term of service within the same program. A consecutive term of service means that there is no break in service of more than 120 days. If an individual applies for a term of service or employment with a **different** program, with or without any break in service, a new National Service Criminal History check is required.

If a program routinely encounters candidates with pre-existing checks, it may describe the circumstances and apply for an Alternate Search Procedure (ASP) to CNCS through PennSERVE that will allow the use of pre-existing checks.

Considering Applicants with a Criminal Conviction

In situations where an ex-offender or individual with a record that does NOT involve sexual offenses or a murder conviction applies for service, the member may serve if the program deems appropriate. Programs should consider the type of service that is to be conducted, the specific crime committed by an applicant, and the various supervisory levels that exist to manage risks associated with an ex-offender's participation in the program.

Programs are encouraged to develop a policy for considering individuals with criminal convictions and should publish the same in their internal manual.

Written National Service Criminal History Check Policy

All programs are required to have a written policy for conducting the National Service Criminal History Checks. This policy must include each of the required steps to complete a background check as listed above. PennSERVE may ask for a program's policy at the start of the program year.

Member Enrollment

After verifying member eligibility, all members must be enrolled via the MyAmeriCorps Portal. The My AmeriCorps Portal is the system used by CNCS and its grantees for AmeriCorps member enrollment, change of status or term of service, and exit information. Members must be enrolled into My AmeriCorps Portal within 30 days of enrollment date, and must be assigned to a service site

within 30 days of enrollment date. PennSERVE and CNCS do not consider members officially enrolled until entered by programs into the Portal.

Please see Section 4 of this manual for more information on the My AmeriCorps Portal. In addition to enrolling members in the Portal, all programs must enter member information in OnCorps Reports. This information can be edited at any time, but all members enrolled in a program must be listed on that program’s OnCorps Reports website. Program Directors can directly upload members from the My AmeriCorps Portal to OnCorps Reports. This process is detailed in the OnCorps Reports User Guide attached to this manual.

Member Contracts

Grantees must ensure that all members sign a service agreement (also known as the member contract) on or before their first day of service so that members are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities. Minimally, contracts must stipulate or refer to the following:

- ❑ Citizenship and Eligibility Requirements for AmeriCorps members
 - A citizen of the United States, a United States national, or a lawful permanent resident of the United States
 - At least 18 years of age or 17 years of age with parental permission
 - Has a high school degree or equivalency certificate, or agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalency before using the education award and the individual did not drop out of elementary or secondary school to enroll in the program
- ❑ Start and end dates of the member’s service term
- ❑ Member slot type and minimum number of service hours required

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours
Full-time	1700
One-year Half-time	900
Reduced Half-time	675
Quarter-time	450
Minimum-time	300

- ❑ The minimum number of hours per week that the member must serve based on their slot type and start date, and language that they may be exited from the program for failing to serve the required number of hours
- ❑ The maximum living allowance amount and description of all available benefits
- ❑ Explanation of how and when the living stipend will be paid, including the amount of each stipend payment
- ❑ Statement that benefits end upon member exiting service or may end if member changes term of service

- ❑ **(UPDATED)** Education Award Amount and Guidelines- note that education awards have changed for the 2016-2017 program year:

Service Term	Ed Award
Full-time	\$5,775
One-year Half-time	\$2,887.50
Reduced Half-time	\$2,199.92
Quarter-time	\$1,527.45
Minimum-time	\$1,221.96

At a minimum, Education Award guidelines should include:

- Language that, upon successful completion of the term of service, members are eligible for an education award commensurate with their agreed-upon term of service
 - Amount of the award for which the member is eligible
 - Member must certify that he or she has completed high school or its equivalent or will obtain a high school diploma prior to using the education award
 - An education award must be used within seven years of the member completing the term of service
 - Members may earn the equivalent of two full-time education awards
- ❑ Loan Forbearance information
 - ❑ Member service position description (see additional requirements on page 24)
 - ❑ Statement that the member is aware that he/she may request a reasonable accommodation for a disability, including physical, emotional or mental disabilities
 - ❑ Statement that the member may be deployed in times of emergency to provide disaster response
 - ❑ Standards of conduct
 - ❑ Full List of Prohibited activities (must include text as it appears below)
 - Attempting to influence legislation;
 - Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
 - Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
 - Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
 - Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
 - Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
 - Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
 - Providing 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 substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
- An organization engaged in the religious activities described in this section, unless CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
 - Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
 - Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
 - Such other activities as the Corporation may prohibit.

AmeriCorps 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-AmeriCorps time, and using non-CNCS funds. Individuals may not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.

- Language encouraging members to vote
- Suspension and termination rules/ Explanation of Disciplinary Procedures
- The specific circumstances under which a member may be released for cause
- Grievance Procedures (**See Attachment 2.4: Grievance Procedure Checklist**)
- Non-duplication and Nondisplacement Language (must include text as it appears below) as listed in 45 CFR §§ 2540. 100 (e) – (f), which states:

(e) *Nonduplication.* Corporation assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program. And, unless the requirements of paragraph (f) of this section are met, Corporation assistance will not be provided to a private nonprofit entity to conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities provided by a State or local government agency in which such entity resides.

(f) *Nondisplacement.*

(1) An employer may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the use by such employer of a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance.

(2) An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance.

(3) A service opportunity will not be created under this chapter that will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual.

(4) A participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance may not perform any services or duties or engage in activities that would otherwise be performed by an employee as part of the assigned duties of such employee.

(5) A participant in any program receiving assistance under this chapter may not perform any services or duties, or engage in activities, that—

(i) Will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or

(ii) Are services, duties, or activities with respect to which an individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures.

(6) A participant in any program receiving assistance under this chapter may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any—

- (i) Presently employed worker;
 - (ii) Employee who recently resigned or was discharged;
 - (iii) Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures;
 - (iv) Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick); or
 - (v) Employee who is on strike or who is being locked out.
- Language regarding Restrictions on fundraising by members (must include text as it appears below) as listed in 45 CFR §§ 2520.40-45, which states:

§ 2520.40 Under what circumstances may AmeriCorps members in my program raise resources?

(a) AmeriCorps members may raise resources directly in support of your program's service activities.

(b) Examples of fundraising activities AmeriCorps members may perform include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) Seeking donations of books from companies and individuals for a program in which volunteers teach children to read;
- (2) Writing a grant proposal to a foundation to secure resources to support the training of volunteers;
- (3) Securing supplies and equipment from the community to enable volunteers to help build houses for low-income individuals;
- (4) Securing financial resources from the community to assist in launching or expanding a program that provides social services to the members of the community and is delivered, in whole or in part, through the members of a community-based organization;
- (5) Seeking donations from alumni of the program for specific service projects being performed by current members.

(c) AmeriCorps members may not:

- (1) Raise funds for living allowances or for an organization's general (as opposed to project) operating expenses or endowment;
- (2) Write a grant application to the Corporation or to any other Federal agency.

§ 2520.45 How much time may an AmeriCorps member spend fundraising?

An AmeriCorps member may spend no more than ten percent of his or her originally agreed-upon term of service, as reflected in the member enrollment in the National Service Trust, performing fundraising activities, as described in § 2520.40.

- Requirements under the Drug-Free Workplace Act
- Civil Rights requirements, complaint procedures, and rights of beneficiaries as follows:
This program is available to all, without regard to race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, political affiliation, or, in most instances, religion. It is also unlawful to retaliate against any person who, or organization that, files a complaint about such discrimination. In addition to filing a complaint with local and state agencies that are responsible for resolving discrimination complaints, you may bring a complaint to the attention of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

If you believe that you or others have been discriminated against, or if you want more information, contact:

PennSERVE

Department of Labor & Industry

651 Boas Street, Room 1306

Harrisburg, PA 17121-0750

(866)6-SERVE-U

(717) 705-4215 (FAX); pennserve@pa.gov (email)

- ❑ Any other Nondiscrimination clause as required by a program's parent organization
- ❑ Election/decline of healthcare
- ❑ Election/decline of childcare
- ❑ Written release/informed consent for publicity
- ❑ Other requirements established by the program
- ❑ Member signature and date
- ❑ Parental Consent, if the member is under 18 at the time of signature
- ❑ Staff member signature and date

A signed member contract must be included in each member's file and a copy **must** be given to the member.

Member handbooks are useful in providing information and resources to the member that may assist in enhancing the service experience. Contracts may reference the member handbook for more detailed information on specific topics.

Amendments to the Member Contract

Any changes to provisions contained in the contract, such as a member's service assignment or service start and end dates, must be incorporated into an amendment to the member's contract. Any amendments must be signed and dated by the member and the Program Director or designee. All contract amendments must be maintained in the member's file.

Member Service Position Description

Programs must develop member service position descriptions that provide for meaningful service activities and performance criteria that are appropriate to the skill level of the members. The activities must be within the scope of the approved program grant and cannot be contrary to the law.

The program is responsible for ensuring that the positions do **NOT** include or put the AmeriCorps member in a situation in which the member is at risk for:

- Engaging in any prohibited activity
- Activity that would violate the non-duplication and non-displacement requirements
- Prohibited fundraising activity

The position description must accurately and completely describe the activities to be performed by each member. The program must make sure that each member has sufficient opportunity to complete the required number of hours to qualify for an education award. In planning for the member's term of service, the program must account for holidays and other time off, and must provide each member with sufficient opportunity to make up missed hours.

The following are the **Required** and *Recommended* components of Member Position Descriptions:

Required

- **Member Name:** If position description is an attachment to the member contract, this may be omitted.
- **Host Site Name and Address:** If the name of the organization is ambiguous, consider providing a brief description of the organization so that it is clear the site is a nonprofit organization.
- **Member's Immediate Supervisor Information:** Include the supervisor's name, title, and contact information.
- **Member Position Summary:** In a narrative format, describe the responsibilities of the position. A successful position summary will include quantifiable performance goals and projected accomplishments; will identify the community/population being served; and will identify the unmet need that the members are filling. Members should be clearly identified as AmeriCorps **members** – NOT interns, fellows, staff, workers, etc...
- **Required Number of Hours Per Week:** State the number of hours per week that the member is expected to serve at the site
- **Essential Functions of the Position:** List all basic service activities that the member must perform on a daily basis. Avoid phrases such as "other duties as assigned" or vague statements about member responsibilities. Member activities should be described as explicitly as possible to ensure that prohibited activities are not taking place. As an alternate, the full list of prohibited activities can serve as part of the position description.
 - Do not use terms such as: employment, work/job, job description, hired, employee, etc... Instead, use the appropriate national service terminology such as: serve/service, position description, enrolled, and member/service participant.
 - If a member position description includes member participation in volunteer recruitment, management, or similar activities, a brief description of the potential volunteer activities for which the member will be recruiting should be added within the position description.
 - If members are required to participate in individual or group service projects away from their service site and outside the scope of their typical service activities, the description should include examples of what typical projects entail.
- **Access to Vulnerable Populations:** All position descriptions must identify if the position has recurring or episodic access to vulnerable populations. Please see attachment 2.3, the National Service Criminal History Check FAQs for information on recurring and episodic access.
- **Host Site Signature and Date:** the host site is required to sign and date the member position description as proof of acknowledgement that they understand the capacity in which the member may serve at their site.
- **Member Signature and Date:** the member is required to sign and date the member position description

Recommended

- Member Position/Title
- Position Start and End Date
- Days/Hours of Service
- Mission and Goals for the grantee's AmeriCorps Program
- Community Need

- **Necessary Training or Training Plan:** Describes required training after beginning service but prior to starting service at a host site.
- **Academic, Physical, and Experience Requirements:** List the minimum qualifications that members serving in this position must have. For example, “members will be required to carry equipment and supplies;” “members providing tutoring must have a bachelor’s degree;” “members must have access to transportation.”
- **Full List of Prohibited Activities:** While the full list of prohibited activities is included in the member contract, it is useful to attach it to the member position description.

Additional Considerations for AmeriCorps Member Service

Member Training: No more than 20% of the aggregate of all AmeriCorps member service hours in a program year may be spent in education and training activities. Capacity-building activities and direct service activities do not count towards the 20% cap on education and training activities.

Federal and State Assistance: It is prohibited to use service under an AmeriCorps grant for the sole purpose of referring individuals to Federal assistance programs or State assistance programs funded wholly or in part by the Federal Government.

Members as Team Leaders: AmeriCorps Members designated by a program as “team leaders” are not permitted to act in a staff capacity. Supervising members is a staff responsibility. Team Leaders must not be responsible for program development and coordination; however, they may assist by providing information and resources on best practices or by helping develop portions of the program such as the training curriculum. In essence, under no circumstances should an AmeriCorps member serving as a Team Leader be the individual responsible for the program or other members.

The Team Leader position description should emphasize activities that involve them in performing direct service or providing support to members engaged in direct service.

Member Fundraising: Members may not spend more than 10% of their time on ALLOWABLE fundraising activities. Refer to fundraising language required for the contract to see full list of allowable and unallowable fundraising activities.

Requirements for Member Service as Tutors

Tutor is defined as someone whose primary goal is to increase academic achievement in reading or other core subjects through planned, consistent, one-to-one or small-group sessions and activities that build on the academic strengths of students in kindergarten through 12th grade and that target their academic needs. A tutor does not include someone engaged in other academic support activities, such as mentoring and after-school program support, whose primary goal is something other than increasing academic achievement. For example, providing a safe place for children is not tutoring, even if some of the program activities focus on homework help.

A program in which members engage in tutoring for children must:

- (a) Articulate appropriate criteria for selecting and qualifying tutors

- (1) If a member serving as a tutor does not have a high-school diploma, its equivalent, or a higher degree, the member must pass a proficiency test that the program has determined effective in ensuring that members serving as tutors have the necessary skills to achieve program goals;
- (2) The program must maintain documentation on the proficiency test selected and the results in the file of each member who takes the test.

(b) Identify the strategies or tools it will use to assess student progress and measure student outcomes

(c) Certify that the tutoring curriculum and pre-service and in-service training content are high-quality and research-based, consistent with the instructional program of the local educational agency or with state academic content standards

(d) Include appropriate member supervision by individuals with expertise in tutoring

(e) Provide specialized high-quality and research-based member pre-service and in-service training consistent with the activities the member will perform.

Section 3: Member and Program Management

MEMBER SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Member Start Date

Member Orientation/Training

Days of Service

Member Service Gear and AmeriCorps Branding

Member Records

Member Supervision

Member Safety

Member Death or Injury

Time Sheets/Tracking Member Hours

Completion of Terms of Service

Performance Evaluations

Release from Participation

Compelling Personal Circumstances

Release for Cause

MEMBER BENEFITS

Education Award

Living Allowance and Taxes

Late Member Enrollment/Early Member Exit

Waiving the Living Allowance

Taxes

SSI Benefits

Fines

Workers' Compensation

Healthcare

Less Than Full-Time Members

Fulfilling the Healthcare Requirements

Reimbursing Members for Coverage Obtained through the Marketplace

Special Healthcare Enrollment Period for AmeriCorps Members

Childcare

Part-Time Members

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Identification as an AmeriCorps Program

Performance Measurements and Quarterly Reports

Recordkeeping and Member Information

Electronic Storage of Member Records

Liability Insurance Coverage
Host Site (Service Partners) Preparation and Monitoring
Monitoring

Site Monitoring Visits

Desk Monitoring and Risk Assessment

Programmatic Changes Requiring Commission /Corporation Approval

Changes in Program Staff

AmeriCorps Program Resources

Changes for 2016-2017:

- Timesheets – Professional Corps Requirements pg. 32
- Required Suspensions for Controlled Substances pg. 34
- Record Retention pg. 34

Attachments:

- 3.1: Sample Member Hours Plan
- 3.2: Segal AmeriCorps Education Award FAQs
- 3.3: Education Award List of Eligible Schools
- 3.4: Living Allowance FAQs
- 3.5: Healthcare Special Enrollment Period Guidance for AmeriCorps Members
- 3.6: AmeriCorps Childcare Benefits Program
- 3.7: 2016-2017 AmeriCorps Branding and Messaging Guidance (**UPDATED**)
- 3.8: PennSERVE Site Visit Tool
- 3.9: PennSERVE Member File Review Tool
- 3.10: PennSERVE Desk Monitoring Tool

Links:

CERT Training Information and Locator: <http://www.fema.gov/community-emergency-response-teams/>

Childcare Information: www.americorpschildcare.com

CNCS Knowledge Network: <http://www.nationalservicerresources.gov/>

AmeriCorps Mega Search:

http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/ASN_Megasearch_Document_7-25-16.pdf

MEMBER SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Member Start Date

The member start date, or start of service date, is the first day in which an AmeriCorps member begins participation in your program as an AmeriCorps member. In almost all cases, members attend orientation on their first day of service.

The member start date as listed in the MyAmeriCorps Portal and on the member's contract should align. The first day of service listed on the member's timesheet should align with the member start date.

Member Orientation and Training

AmeriCorps programs are required to plan and conduct member orientation for all members.

Orientation must cover:

- An introduction to AmeriCorps and national service, including how the program is part of the national AmeriCorps program and about other national service programs of CNCS
- A review of the program's service objectives, activities and how members will be evaluated
- AmeriCorps prohibited activities
- Member rights, benefits, and responsibilities, including a review of the member contract
- Information on members' expected code of conduct and safety protocol
- Suspension and release from service and the grievance procedure
- Drug-Free Workplace requirements, sexual harassment and nondiscrimination issues

All programs with full-time and half-time members should provide CERT training if it is available in their area. Programs in areas where CERT training is not readily available are expected to be aware of their local area's emergency response plan and are strongly encouraged to determine how their members might participate in disaster response activities. Information for CERT training can be found at: <http://www.fema.gov/community-emergency-response-teams/>

In addition, programs are strongly encouraged to offer training, both at orientation and throughout the year, that will enhance the members' abilities to perform their service activities.

Programs are required to provide members without a high school diploma access to GED support services.

Programs are required to provide "Life After AmeriCorps" training to exiting members who have completed their term of service. At a minimum, this training must include information on using the Segal Education Award and how to describe skills gained through service on a resume and with potential employers.

Programs are reminded that no more than 20% of the aggregate of all AmeriCorps member service hours in a program may be spent on education, training or other non-direct activities. Programs are expected to maintain sign-in sheets and agendas for all member trainings.

Days of Service

Programs are expected to participate in Days of Service such as MLK Day and AmeriCorps Week. Programs may be required to submit reports providing information on their service activities during these days of service.

Member Service Gear and AmeriCorps Branding

All AmeriCorps members must wear gear while in service that includes the AmeriCorps logo.

Programs should stress during orientation that service gear is to be worn while in service, and should be removed after hours and especially when members may engage in any prohibited activities outside of service.

AmeriCorps members should state they are AmeriCorps members during public speaking opportunities related to their service activities.

Member Records

Every enrolled AmeriCorps member must have a records file. Documents in the member file are considered federal documents. Documents requiring a member signature and date may not be completed or altered by program staff.

Member record files must contain the following:

- ❑ Member Application Form
- ❑ Proof of identity/age verification
- ❑ Proof of citizenship verification
(Note on Proof of age and proof of citizenship verification: CNCS does not require programs to make and retain copies of the actual documents used to confirm eligibility as long as the program has a consistent practice of identifying the documents that were reviewed and maintaining a record of the review. A consistent practice for documenting eligibility should:
 - Identify the specific original document reviewed;
 - Identify the eligibility criterion or criteria that the document confirms;
 - Include any identification number and issuing/expiration date for the document reviewed; and
 - Include the signature of the reviewer confirming the review and the date of the review.
- ❑ CNCS Enrollment Form (as filed on My AmeriCorps Portal)
 - Name, Address, and Social Security Number
 - Start Date
 - Anticipated End Date
 - Member Classification: Full Time, Part Time or Less than part time
 - Certification of Education Attainment

- If member does not have high school diploma or GED: document that member has agreed to obtain the same before using the education award, OR that member is incapable of earning
 - If member has no high school diploma or GED: acknowledgement of GED support services available
- W-4 Tax Form, for members receiving a living allowance
- Consent for Criminal History Check form
- All required Criminal History Checks for the member's access type, including:
 - NSOPW
 - PA State Background Check
 - Out of State Background Check, if applicable
 - FBI Background Check
 - DPW Childline Check
 - Accompaniment details, if applicable
- Signed and Dated Member Contract, including the following:
 - Offer of Childcare Subsidy, and if approved:
 - Childcare Subsidy Eligibility and Enrollment documentation, including Birth Certificate(s) of Child(ren)
 - Offer of Healthcare for full-time members:
 - If enrolled, proof of enrollment
 - If waived, proof of alternate coverage
 - Signed Member Position Description
- Member Evaluations (see separate list of required elements of the evaluation)
- Copies of all Correspondence to or about the member, **including any correspondence related to early exits or suspensions**
- Change of Status Form (As filed on My AmeriCorps Portal, for members requiring a suspension, reinstatement or transfer)
- Exit Form (As filed on My AmeriCorps Portal)

Member Supervision

Programs must provide members with adequate supervision by qualified supervisors consistent with the program's approved application. **At no time may AmeriCorps members supervise other members.**

Member Safety

The program must institute safeguards as necessary and appropriate to ensure the safety of members. Members may not participate in projects that pose undue safety risks.

Member Death or Injury

The program must immediately report any member deaths or serious injuries to PennSERVE.

Time Sheets/Tracking Member Hours

All programs must use timesheets in OnCorps Reports as the official record of member service hours. Members must submit their hours individually, no less than monthly, to be reviewed and

approved in a timely fashion by the member's direct, on-site supervisor AND by a staff person of the AmeriCorps program in which the member is serving. PennSERVE staff may periodically review member service hours using OnCorps Reports. **(UPDATED) Exception:** If a Professional Corps program wants to follow the timekeeping practices of its profession and certify that members have completed the minimum required hours, excluding sick and vacation days, it must get advanced written approval from CNCS and/or PennSERVE.

The member timesheet serves as the official time and attendance record. The time and attendance record is used to document member eligibility for in-service and post-service benefits.

Members may not receive service hours for:

- Lunch or rest periods. Exceptions include members who may remain in service during lunch periods, such as members serving at education-related host sites who take lunch with youth/students
- Engaging in any AmeriCorps prohibited activity
- Serving outside the United States

Programs must be able to verify all member service hours, including any hours earned away from the member's host site and/or outside the member's normal service hours.

All time and attendance records for individuals must be available for review upon demand. Multi-site programs need to stress the importance of this requirement to host sites/service partners. Member hours must be certified by the program in the My AmeriCorps Portal at time of exit to ensure eligibility for an education award.

See the PennSERVE Member Timesheet Training for more information on member timesheets and program requirements. See attachment 7.1: OnCorps User Guide for instructions on initial set-up of member timesheets in OnCorps.

Completion of Terms of Service

Programs must ensure that each member has sufficient opportunity to complete the required number of hours of service to qualify for the education award. Members who fail to serve the required number of hours for reasons other than Compelling Personal Circumstances (see next page) may not receive an education award.

When planning the term of service, the program must account for holidays and other time off, and must provide each member with sufficient opportunity to make up missed hours. **See attachment 3.1: Sample Member Hours Plan.**

In certain circumstances, a member may receive a partial education award before completion of service if he or she has served more than 15% of the required number of hours AND it is discovered that the program has failed to offer an adequate number of service hours. Failure of a program to offer adequate service opportunities may be reason to terminate the grant.

Performance Evaluations

Mid-term evaluations must be completed for all full-time and half-time members. **End-of-term evaluations must be completed for ALL members, regardless of slot type or date of exit.** Programs should use the member service position descriptions as the basis for a midterm and end-of-term written evaluation of a member's performance.

Member evaluations must include:

- ❑ Whether the member is completing/has completed the required number of hours
- ❑ Whether the member has satisfactorily completed assignments, both as assigned by the host site supervisor and as described in the position description
- ❑ Whether the member has met other performance criteria that were clearly communicated at the beginning of the term of service
- ❑ The host site supervisor's dated signature
- ❑ The member's dated signature

Please Note: Even when members leave service early, an end of term evaluation must be completed and retained in the member's file.

Release from Participation

Programs may release members from participation for two reasons: 1) for compelling personal circumstances, or 2) for cause.

Compelling Personal Circumstances

The AmeriCorps member has the primary responsibility for demonstrating that a compelling personal circumstance prevents him or her from completing the term of service. Documentation must include BOTH a request from the member to be released due to compelling personal circumstances AND outside documentation that determines that compelling personal circumstances prevented a member from being able to serve the required hours to complete their term of service. **Failure to follow the requirements for releasing members for compelling personal circumstances is considered non-compliance with award requirements and may result in disallowed costs and other remedies for non-compliance.**

Compelling personal circumstances include:

- A member's disability or serious illness
- Disability, serious illness, or death of a member's family member if it makes completing a term unreasonably difficult or impossible
- A military service obligation
- Acceptance by a participant of an opportunity to make the transition from welfare to work
- Acceptance of employment opportunity **IF** the member is serving in a program that includes member employment in its approved performance measures
- Unforeseeable conditions beyond the participant's control, such as a natural disaster, strike, relocation of a spouse, or the nonrenewal or premature closing of a program

Compelling personal circumstances do **NOT** include:

- Enrolling in school
- Obtaining employment, other than the two instances listed above
- Dissatisfaction with the program

Documentation for Compelling Personal Circumstances must include:

- A request letter by the member expressing the need to be suspended from the program due to Compelling Personal Circumstances OR
- A resignation letter by the member communicating his or her departure from the program due to Compelling Personal Circumstances; AND
- External documentation from a source other than the member or grantee that validates the Compelling Personal Circumstance, such as a medical note or court order; AND
- A copy of the member's exit form noting the reason for the early departure, signed by the program director or program staff person, AND
- Documentation from the program director or staff person who authorized and approved the partial education award.

Release for Cause

A release for cause covers all circumstances in which a member does not successfully complete his or her term of service for reasons other than compelling personal circumstances. A participant who is released for cause may not receive any portion of the AmeriCorps education award or any other payment from the National Service Trust.

A member released for cause may contest the program's decision by filing a grievance. Pending the resolution of a grievance procedure, the member's service is considered to be suspended. For this type of grievance, a program may not – while the grievance is pending or as part of its resolution – provide a member with federally-funded benefits beyond those attributable to service actually performed, without receiving written approval from the Corporation.

(UPDATED) A program must suspend the service of an individual who faces an official charge of a violent felony (e.g., rape, homicide) or sale or distribution of a controlled substance. A program must suspend the service of an individual who is convicted of possession of a controlled substance. AmeriCorps programs must release for cause any participant who is convicted of a felony or the sale or distribution of a controlled substance during a term of service. See Section 4, page 50 for more information about member suspensions and reinstatements.

It is possible for a member to receive a satisfactory performance review and be released for cause. For example, a member who is released for cause from a first term – e.g. the individual has decided to take a job offer – but who, otherwise, performed well, would not be disqualified from enrolling for a subsequent term as long as the individual received a satisfactory performance evaluation for the first period of service.

(NEW) Record Retention

Per 45 CFR 200.33, documentation of a member's release from participation must be retained for a period of three years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report (grant closure).

**MEMBER BENEFITS
FY 2016**

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Ed Award	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1700	\$5,775	\$12,530	\$25,060
One-year Half-time	900	\$2,887.50	n/a	\$13,265
Reduced Half-time	675	\$2,199.92	n/a	\$9,950
Quarter-time	450	\$1,527.45	n/a	\$6,635
Minimum-time	300	\$1,221.96	n/a	\$4,420

Education Award

AmeriCorps members successfully completing a term of service are eligible for a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, paid by the National Service Trust.

Education Awards can be used in the following ways:

- To repay qualified existing or future student loans
- To pay all or part of the cost of attending a qualified institution of higher learning
- To pay qualified expenses incurred while participating in an approved school-to-work program

The Education Award must be used at an institution or program that has been approved by the United States Department of Education for participation in Title IV programs.

Members may earn up to the equivalent of 2 full-time education awards. The education award is taxable upon use. Members have up to seven years to use the award. The award can be used at more than one institution and can help pay more than one loan. Education Awards can be used outside of the United States. Members who are 55 or older when they enroll in AmeriCorps are eligible to transfer their Education Award to their children, foster children or grandchildren.

For more information on Education Awards, **see attachment 3.2: Segal AmeriCorps Education Award Frequently Asked Questions** and **attachment 3.3: Ed Award List of Eligible Schools**.

Living Allowance and Taxes

Full-time members must receive a living stipend. Programs have the option of offering members with less than full-time terms of service a living allowance.

The Living Allowance is intended to help members with living expenses while they are serving in an AmeriCorps program. Programs may not pay the living allowance on an hourly basis. Programs should pay the living allowance in regular increments, such as weekly or bi-weekly. Payments should not fluctuate based on the number of hours served in a particular time period, and must cease when the member's service ceases. CNCS provides guidelines each program year that establish minimum and maximum Living Allowance amounts.

See attachment 3.4: Living Stipend FAQs for additional information.

Late Member Enrollment/Early Member Exit

The same living allowance must be paid to all members of the same slot type, regardless of member enrollment or member exit date. For instance, if a program is designed for 11 months of service, and the total living allowance is \$12,530, the monthly stipend is \$1,139. Members enrolling late may not be paid a different monthly stipend to “catch up” to other members. Members completing their hours and exiting before the program end date may not be paid a lump sum so that they receive the full amount of the living stipend.

Waiving the Living Allowance

If a living allowance is paid, a member may waive all or part of the payment of a living allowance if he or she believes his or her public assistance may be lost or decreased because of the living allowance. Even if a member waives his or her right to receive the living allowance, it is possible – depending on the specific public assistance program rules – that the amount of the living allowance that the member is eligible to receive will be deemed available. A member who has waived the living allowance may revoke the waiver at any time and may begin receiving the living allowance going forward from the date the individual revoked the waiver. A member may not receive any portion of the living allowance for the period of time the living allowance was waived.

Taxes

FICA and income taxes must be withheld from a member’s living allowance. Members are required to complete a W-4 at the beginning of their term of service and are provided a W-2 at the close of the tax year.

Please Note: The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has ruled that AmeriCorps members are not covered by unemployment compensation law and are not eligible for unemployment insurance. As such, programs do not pay unemployment insurance taxes for AmeriCorps members in Pennsylvania.

SSI Benefits

The Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2008 ("the HEART Act"), makes AmeriCorps more accessible for people with disabilities. In the past, receiving an AmeriCorps living allowance could disqualify an individual from SSI eligibility. The law directs the Social Security Administration to ignore an individual's receipt of AmeriCorps benefits for purposes of SSI eligibility. The HEART Act excludes "any benefit (whether cash or in-kind)" and therefore covers the living allowance, health insurance, childcare and the education award (and related interest payments) made to AmeriCorps members. This law brings all AmeriCorps members under one treatment for SSI determination. Previously, only AmeriCorps VISTA benefits were excluded by law from countable income for SSI purposes. **This exclusion does not apply to SSDI determination at this time.**

Fines

If determined to be necessary for improvement in member performance or attendance, a program may impose a reasonable fine on a member for minor disciplinary problems consistent with the member contract. These fines may not be calculated on an hourly basis. For example, a member who is an hour late may not be fined an hour's worth of living allowance. **Instead, the grantee must establish a written policy on fines that is not linked to an hourly rate. The grantee may deduct fines from that portion of the member's living allowance that is paid by non-federal funds.** Before making any deductions, the grantee should consider how this might affect the status of members under employment laws. Further, a grantee that deducts in this fashion may be required to provide additional matching funds.

Workers' Compensation

AmeriCorps grantees/sub grantees are liable for the payment of workers' compensation for members because the National and Community Service Act expressly authorizes the use of grant funds to pay workers' compensation and FICA to the extent the program is subject to such taxes. Pennsylvania law does allow for members to have Worker's Compensation coverage.

Healthcare

Programs must provide, or make available, healthcare insurance to those members serving a 1700-hour full-time term who are not otherwise covered by a healthcare policy at the time the member begins his or her term of service. The program must also provide, or make available, healthcare insurance to members serving a 1700-hour full-time term who lose coverage during their term of service as a result of service or through no deliberate act of their own. CNCS will not cover healthcare costs for dependent coverage.

Less Than Full-Time Members

Less than full-time members who are serving in a full-time capacity for a sustained period of time are eligible for healthcare benefits. Programs may provide health insurance to less than full-time members serving in a full-time capacity, but are not required to do so. A member is serving in a full-time capacity when his/her regular term of service will involve performing service on a normal full-time schedule for a period of six weeks or more. A member may be serving in a full-time capacity without regard to whether his/her agreed term of service will result in a full-time Segal AmeriCorps Education Award.

Fulfilling the Healthcare Requirements

Any of the following health insurance options will satisfy the requirement for health insurance for full-time AmeriCorps members (or less than full-time members serving in a full-time capacity):

- Insurance obtained through the Federal Health Insurance Marketplace of at least the Bronze-level plan

- Insurance obtained through a private insurance broker
- Staying on parents' or spouse's plan
- Medicaid, Medicare, or military benefits

AmeriCorps programs purchasing their own health insurance for members must ensure plans meet minimum essential coverage and meet the requirements of the Affordable Care Act.

Proof of healthcare coverage must be kept on file for all full-time members.

Reimbursing Members for Coverage Obtained through the Marketplace

If choosing to reimburse members for coverage obtained through the Marketplace, programs must determine what level of coverage (Bronze, Silver, etc.) for which they are willing to reimburse members. All members must be offered equitable coverage.

If coverage is being provided via the Healthcare marketplace, programs must develop a process to reimburse members for monthly premiums. The process should include sufficient documentation (invoice, cancelled check, etc.) to demonstrate that the member has health coverage. Reimbursements for health insurance premiums are considered taxable income for the member, and programs must have a way to document such reimbursements.

Special Healthcare Enrollment Period for AmeriCorps Members

Per a May 2, 2014 notice, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued guidance that created a special healthcare enrollment period for all AmeriCorps State and National members.

Starting Service: If a member starts AmeriCorps service after the open enrollment period, the member has 60 days from the service start date to sign up for healthcare coverage through the federal exchange.

Ending Service: At the conclusion of service, a member will be able to purchase a qualified health plan through the federal exchange outside of the annual open enrollment period. The member has 60 days from the service end date to sign-up for healthcare coverage.

See attachment 3.5: Healthcare Special Enrollment Period Guidance for AmeriCorps Members.

It is important for Program Directors to inform the childcare and healthcare agencies when a member's status or eligibility changes. Any funds paid for healthcare for members no longer enrolled in AmeriCorps will be charged to the program.

Childcare

Programs are required to make full-time members aware that subsidized childcare is available to those who meet the eligibility criteria. Programs may provide childcare to less-than-full-time members serving in a full-time capacity, but they are not required to do so. For all full-time members, an offer of Childcare to each eligible member must be maintained in the member's file.

A participant is considered to need child care in order to participate in the program if he or she:

- Is the parent or legal guardian of, or is acting in loco parentis for, a child under 13 who resides with the participant;
- Has a family income that does not exceed 75% of the state's median income for a family of the same size;
- At the time of acceptance into the program, is not currently receiving child care assistance from another source, including a parent or guardian, which would continue to be provided while the participant serves in the program;
- Certifies that he or she needs child care in order to participate in the program.

CNCS will not cover childcare costs for family members or for members who served on a less than full-time basis or who have ceased serving. Members serving in EAPs are not eligible for childcare benefits. Members who are excluded from healthcare coverage solely on the basis of serving in a Professional Corps, or because they are covered under a collective bargaining agreement, are not excluded from receiving childcare benefits on that basis.

Part-time Members

As of the time of publication of this Manual, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) has stated that it will only consider childcare subsidies for part-time AmeriCorps members if they are working at least 10 hours a week for an employer outside of AmeriCorps service.

Programs may choose to apply for childcare benefits for members who are serving in a full-time capacity, typically 30 hours per week or more. CNCS and its childcare contractor will make the final eligibility determination. Note that CNCS and/or the childcare contractor may contact PennSERVE to confirm that the member is serving in a full-time capacity.

Full requirements and eligibility criteria are in the AmeriCorps regulation 45 CFR §2522.250. Grantees can contact the AmeriCorps hotline at 1-800-942-2677, or visit www.americorpschildcare.com. In addition, see **attachment 3.6: AmeriCorps Child Care Benefits Program**.

It is important for Program Directors to inform the childcare and healthcare agencies when a member's status or eligibility changes. Any funds paid for childcare for members no longer enrolled in AmeriCorps will be charged to the program.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Identification as an AmeriCorps Program

All programs must clearly identify and describe their program as "an AmeriCorps program." Programs must do this by:

- Ensuring that "AmeriCorps" appears in the program name
- Ensuring that members refer to themselves as "AmeriCorps members"
- Noting on all agreements with host sites/service locations that the program is an AmeriCorps program and AmeriCorps members are the resource being provided

- Using the AmeriCorps name and logo on public materials including the program website, stationery, application forms, recruitment brochures, online position postings, orientation materials, member curriculum materials, signs, banners, press releases, and any publications related to AmeriCorps
- Providing training to members about how the program is part of the national AmeriCorps program, and about the other national service programs of CNCS
- Placing signs that include the AmeriCorps name and logo at service sites
- Not altering the AmeriCorps logo, and obtaining written permission from CNCS before using the AmeriCorps name or logo on materials that will be sold
- Not displaying the AmeriCorps name or logo in connection with any activity prohibited by statute, regulation, or CNCS General Terms and Conditions

See attachment 3.7: AmeriCorps Branding and Messaging Guidance.

Performance Measurements and Quarterly Reports

Grant funding is provided to the grantee to meet the objectives and Performance Measures as stated in the grant contract. At a minimum, programs must establish at least one set of aligned Performance Measures related to its primary service activity. Quarterly Reports are expected to address actual progress that is being made toward achievement of established Performance Measures. Data collection to demonstrate achievement of Performance Measures is required and must be maintained as a source of documentation. Failure to make adequate progress in achieving Performance Measures requires that grantees prepare and implement a written corrective action plan. If the corrective action is not successful, CNCS and PennSERVE may move towards grant termination.

All data collected for performance measurement, whether national measures or self-selected, must at a minimum:

- Identify all individuals served (sign-in sheets, attendance rosters, member-kept logs) and may NOT estimate the number served or use general data from the host site(s)
- Count only those individuals who received direct service from AmeriCorps members enrolled in the program, and not from volunteers or host site staff
- Provide a non-duplicative count of individuals served
- Use collection tools containing the program name and AmeriCorps logo
- Self-reporting by members is not an acceptable form of documentation. All data gathered must be verified by program staff, OR verified by host site staff and sampled for review by program staff to ensure completion and accuracy
- Aggregate data reports and all backup documentation must be saved according to the required record keeping policies

Quarterly Reports and performance measure updates are submitted using OnCorps Reports. Further detail concerning the due dates and content covered in Quarterly Reports can be found in Section 7.

Recordkeeping and Member Information

All program materials, including member information, host site agreements, and all data gathered for performance reporting must be kept and be available to PennSERVE and CNCS for 3 years from submission of the program's filing of the year-end financial report, OR 3 years after the completion of an audit.

Programs must maintain the confidentiality of information regarding individual members. The program must obtain the prior written consent of all members before using their names, photographs and other identifying information for publicity, promotion, or other purposes. Programs may release aggregate and other non-identifying information, and are required to release member information to CNCS, PennSERVE, and any designated contractors. The program must permit a member who submits a written request for access to review records that pertain to the member and were created pursuant to the program's grant award from PennSERVE.

Electronic Storage of Member Records

Programs must maintain all required elements of the member file. Programs may store member files electronically and use electronic signatures if the program can ensure the validity and integrity of the record and signature is maintained. The program's electronic storage procedures and system must provide for the safe-keeping and security of records, including:

1. Sufficient prevention of unauthorized alterations or erasures of records;
2. Effective security measures to ensure that only authorized persons have access to records;
3. Adequate measures designed to prevent physical damage to records; and
4. A system providing for back-up and recovery of records, and

The electronic storage procedures and system provide for the easy retrieval of records in a timely fashion, including:

1. Storage of the records in a physically accessible location;
2. Clear and accurate labeling of all records; and
3. Storage of the records in a usable, readable format.

Liability Insurance Coverage

Programs are responsible for ensuring adequate general liability coverage for the organization, employees, and members, including coverage for members engaged in on and off site project activities.

Host Site (Service Partners) Preparation and Monitoring

Multi-site service partners that serve as host sites for AmeriCorps members must be familiar with the AmeriCorps Rules and Regulations and agree to their responsibilities as day-to-day supervisors of members. It is important for the AmeriCorps Program Director/Coordinator to provide an annual orientation for service partners that includes a review of the service objectives, basic AmeriCorps Regulations, Terms and Conditions, and prohibited activities. In most cases, memorandums of understanding or site agreements will need to be developed.

Programs with members serving at multiple sites are responsible for regularly monitoring the sites to assure adequate supervision and compliance with AmeriCorps program requirements. **Grantees must maintain written documentation of monitoring reviews.** Suggestions for monitoring host sites include:

- ❑ Reviewing if sites are meeting their in-kind and cash match requirements
- ❑ Reviewing timely submission of paperwork, such as performance evaluations and member timesheets
- ❑ Member interviews to determine if service activities match the agreed upon position description
- ❑ Ensuring compliance checks on-site for members exist, such as sign-in sheets to verify member hours
- ❑ Review of performance measure data validated by the site

Monitoring

PennSERVE regularly monitors its grantees to ensure compliance with both commonwealth and CNCS rules and regulations, to gather best practices for other programs, and to provide feedback about program design and performance.

Site Monitoring Visits

All PennSERVE-funded programs receive a programmatic site visit a minimum of once every three years. During the site visit conducted by PennSERVE staff, any or all of the AmeriCorps administrative, fiscal, program and training systems can be randomly checked to ensure compliance. Additionally, PennSERVE reserves the right to conduct a financial and/or program audit and CNCS has the right to conduct an audit and/or site visit at their discretion. **See 3.8: PennSERVE Site Visit Tool and 3.9: PennSERVE Member File Review Tool.**

Site visits are conducted over a period of one - two days and may include a review of the program, fiscal and training records. Member files, contracts, agreements, handbooks and administrative systems may also be included in the monitoring visit. In addition, PennSERVE staff may review member timesheets and request copies of other program documents for continued analysis and review following the site visit.

Program files should be maintained for three years from submission of a program year's final FFR filing date, OR three years after completion of an audit.

The site visit will include the following components:

- ❑ Notification of the site visit date and PennSERVE staff or representatives who will be conducting the site visit
- ❑ Meeting with selected program staff
- ❑ Review of program and/or fiscal records
- ❑ Optional interview of AmeriCorps selected staff
- ❑ Optional interview of host site supervisor(s)
- ❑ Optional interview of AmeriCorps member(s)
- ❑ Follow-up written site visit report

Following receipt of the written site visit report, the program will have **30 days** to respond to any corrective actions recommended by PennSERVE.

Please Note: PennSERVE reserves the right to conduct an unannounced site visit to any program when it is deemed necessary. The areas to be reviewed during an unannounced site visit will be determined by PennSERVE staff.

Desk Monitoring and Risk Assessment

To better prepare for site visits and to reduce the burden placed on programs during these visits, PennSERVE may conduct yearly programmatic and fiscal desk monitoring reviews in conjunction with the mid-year Progress Report, due from PennSERVE to CNCS each spring. Desk monitoring reviews take place remotely. Programs may be asked to answer questions via email or phone and may be asked to provide documentation from member files via email or fax.

The information gathered during desk monitoring is used to create a risk assessment score for each program. Programs with a medium or high risk assessment may receive more frequent site visits, and risk scores may be used when determining grant award amounts. **See 3.10: PennSERVE Desk Monitoring Tool.**

Programmatic Changes Requiring PennSERVE/CNCS Approval

Programs must obtain written approval from PennSERVE prior to making the following significant programmatic changes:

- Changes in the scope or specific goals and objectives of the program, whether or not they involve budgetary changes
- Changes in member supervision
- Entering into sub-grants or contracting out any program activities funded by the contract and not specifically identified in the approved application and contract
- Changes in the contract or grant period
- Changes in slot types/configurations (See Section 4 for further instructions.)

Upon notification to PennSERVE, programs may make programmatic changes due to, or in response to, an officially-declared state or national disaster. As soon as practical, programs making disaster-related programmatic changes must discuss the recordkeeping, member activities, performance measure adjustments, and other AmeriCorps award requirements with PennSERVE.

Changes in Program Staff

Program staff turnover can have negative effects on program operations. Programs are required to immediately inform PennSERVE of any staff changes.

AmeriCorps Program Resources

CNCS provides a Knowledge Network, accessible at <http://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/>. The Knowledge Network has an extensive library of online resources, printed publications, effective practices, a calendar of upcoming training events and other related information necessary to run a successful AmeriCorps program. The site also has a user-friendly search engine that can help grantees find tools and instruction under a wide range of program management topics.

It is to the advantage of the programs to be familiar with many of the key documents that created and/or govern AmeriCorps operations. They include:

- ❑ The National and Community Service Act of 1990
- ❑ The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act
- ❑ AmeriCorps Regulations (45 CFR Parts 2500-2599, 2510 et seq. Parts 2541-2543)
- ❑ A program's specific Grant Award
- ❑ AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions (updated annually)

To search for regulations, statutes, provisions and FAQs, utilize the AmeriCorps mega search at: http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/ASN_Megasearch_Document_updated_6_8_16.pdf

2016-2017 AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions:

<https://egrants.cns.gov/termsandconditions/Final2016AmeriCorpsTC20160511.pdf>

Section 4: Member Terms of Service, My AmeriCorps Portal, and Slot Management Policies

MEMBER TERMS OF SERVICE

Additional Term of Service

Notifying PennSERVE and the CNCS Trust

Notice to Childcare and Healthcare Providers

MY AMERICORPS PORTAL

My AmeriCorps Portal Overview

Assistance Using the MyAmeriCorps Portal

Member Recruitment and Selection

My AmeriCorps Portal Policies and Procedures: Portal Actions That Programs May Take Under Their Own Authority

Completing Member Applications/Enrollment Forms

Assigning Member Service Locations

Amending a Member Start Date

Changing Member Status: Suspensions & Reinstatements

Completing Member Exit Forms

Refilling Slots

My AmeriCorps Portal Policies and Procedures: Portal Actions That Must Be Approved By PennSERVE

Slot Corrections (unfilled positions)

Member Slot Conversions

Changing a Term of Service (filled positions)

Change in Member Enrollment Period

No-Cost Extensions

Portal Actions Not Allowed At Any Time by Programs

Recap of Enrollment, Exit, and Slot Management Policies

Enrollment, Exit, and Slot/Term Change Timelines

Member Slot Refill Policy

Member Slot Conversion Policy

Changes for 2016-2017:

- Completing Member Applications/Enrollment Forms pg. 49
- Completing Member Exit Forms pg. 50

Attachments:

4.1: Slot Conversion/Member Change of Term Request Form

4.2: MSY Calculator

Links:

My AmeriCorps Portal Tutorials:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/amicorps/myamicorps-support-amicorps-state-commission-and-sub-grantees-egrants>

MEMBER TERMS OF SERVICE

At the start of the term of service, each program establishes guidelines for the successful completion of the program year that ensure members meet the CNCS service hour requirements. CNCS established these requirements as member terms of service slot categories (listed below). Member benefits, including the AmeriCorps Education Award, are based on terms of service and the yearly Pell grant award. Less than full-time members may or may not receive a living stipend. **Terms of service must be completed within 365 days (one year).** Award amounts for 2016 are:

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Ed Award	MSY
Full-time	1700	\$5,775	1.000
One-year Half-time	900	\$2,887.5	0.500
Reduced Half-time	675	\$2,199.92	0.381
Quarter-time	450	\$1,527.45	0.265
Minimum-time	300	\$1,221.96	0.212

Additional Term of Service

Programs are under no obligation to enroll members for an additional term, but may do so when the member has received satisfactory performance reviews for the previous terms. Individuals may serve up to four terms of service **and** earn the equivalent of two full-time education awards.

UPDATE: Previous manuals stated that individuals may serve up to four terms of service **or** earn the equivalent of two full-time education awards.

Notifying PennSERVE and the CNCS Trust

Programs must notify PennSERVE and the CNCS National Service Trust, via the MyAmeriCorps Portal, **within 30 calendar days** of a member's start of, completion of, suspension from, or release from a term of service. Suspension of service is defined as an extended period during which the member is neither serving nor accumulating service hours or receiving AmeriCorps benefits. Failure to report such changes within 30 days may result in sanctions up to and including suspension or termination or the program.

These changes must also be reflected in OnCorps Reports, as the member timesheet reflects the member's term of service.

Notice to Childcare and Healthcare Providers

Programs are required to notify CNCS designated agents immediately in writing when a member's status change will affect eligibility for childcare or healthcare. Examples of changes in status are converting a full-time member to part-time, termination of or release from service and suspensions for cause or lengthy/indefinite suspensions.

MY AMERICORPS PORTAL

My AmeriCorps Portal Overview

The My AmeriCorps Portal is a web-based system connected to eGrants used to recruit and manage AmeriCorps members. **All member management functions, including member information, enrollments, exits, transfers, changes of term, suspensions/reinstatements, slot corrections and refills, and assignments to member actual service locations are conducted using the My AmeriCorps Portal.**

The My AmeriCorps Portal provides grantees of PennSERVE with an online secure system for AmeriCorps program and member management. However, the Portal's functionalities do not necessarily ensure that grantees stay compliant with all CNCS and PennSERVE regulations. Thus, PennSERVE implements policies and procedures for the use of the AmeriCorps Portal.

It is important to note the My AmeriCorps Portal does not serve as a compliance check for all grant requirements or policies. For example, it is possible for the system to allow grantees to perform actions that are not compliant with grant requirements. Therefore, it is important to stay apprised of and follow all requirements rather than rely on the system for compliance checks.

Assistance Using the MyAmeriCorps Portal

When a user is navigating the AmeriCorps Portal and needs help, he/she can click on "Click here for help" link at the top of every page. This will give the user an overview of the page, as well as the entire index of help. (If the entire index is not visible, click "show index"). From the main help index, the user can view all the different help topics, as well as search by keywords and look for definitions within the glossary.

Additionally, there are help links next to certain items indicated with question marks. These links provide explanations for or definitions of specific terms.

Finally, tutorials are available at

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/amicorps/myamericorps-support-amicorps-state-commission-and-sub-grantees-egrants> .

Member Recruitment and Selection

The My AmeriCorps Portal is an online space that is designed to manage the AmeriCorps experience for members and house all member-related information. The Portal links the program and its applicants and members and vice versa. Using this functionality a program can:

- Create and update service opportunity descriptions (recruitment postings)
- View applications and references
- Search for applicants by individuals, skill sets, education level and availability
- Select or reject applicants

The site is interactive so that when a member applies to a program, the staff members of that program will receive an email notification. As the staff changes the status of the application or request forms, applicants or members also receive an alert to check the status. This keeps the process as transparent and progressive as possible.

My AmeriCorps Portal Policies and Procedures: Portal Actions That Programs May Take Under Their Own Authority

Programs should use the MyAmeriCorps Portal for the following Member Management actions, and may do so WITHOUT PennSERVE approval:

- Complete Member Applications/Enrollment Forms
- Assign Member Service Locations
- Amend Member Start Dates
- Change Member Status
- Complete Member Exit Forms
- Refill Slots

Completing Member Applications/Enrollment Forms

(NEW) AmeriCorps members must complete their own enrollment and exit forms on-line in the My AmeriCorps Portal. Any program that wishes to utilize staff Portal enrollments and exits must send a request to PennSERVE. Requests will be approved in cases where the recipient is able to demonstrate that technological limitations make it impossible or extremely burdensome for members to complete their own enrollment and exit forms in the Portal. Technological limitations would include lack of internet access, computer and/or cell phone, or a member population with low computer literacy skills that cannot be addressed through training or technical assistance. Approved waivers are for one year only; programs are required to reapply for a waiver each year as necessary.

If members are unable to sign electronically and a waiver has been approved by PennSERVE and/or CNCS, a paper copy of all portions of the Member Application (including member sections) must be printed and kept on file with the members' signatures. **Within 30 days of a member's enrollment start date, his/her enrollment information must be approved in the Portal.** Programs are strongly encouraged to include screen prints from the My AmeriCorps Portal in the member file when enrolling and exiting a member.

Assigning or Changing Member Service Locations

Programs must ensure that all operating sites and all service locations are entered in the MyAmeriCorps portal for all members within 30 days of members' starting a term of service. Programs must ensure that any change to a member's service location is reflected in the Portal within 30 days. Programs are required to include the name of the organization and the full address or zip-plus-four of the service locations where each member will be serving. If a member is serving at multiple service locations, the program must select the one where the member serves a majority of his or her hours for the member's assignment; however, all service locations must be listed in the portal.

Service location means the organization where or with which a member actually provides his or her service in the community. Typical service locations are schools, food banks, health clinics, community parks, etc. The service location may be the same as the program's operating site, but only if the member actually serves at or with the operating site organization. Again, a member may serve at multiple service locations, all of which must be listed in the Portal, although the program must select only one service site for the member's primary assignment.

Amending a Member Start Date

Occasionally errors occur that require amending member start dates. The amended start date must match the start date in the member contract and the AmeriCorps Program staff must indicate that the member did not complete any hours or receive payment during the period between the original and amended start date.

Changing Member Status: Suspensions & Reinstatements

Circumstances may arise within a program that necessitates a member being suspended and subsequently reinstated in his/her service position. Typical causes for suspension are serious health issues of the member or an immediate family member caused by accidents or sudden illness, or program disciplinary reasons. **Events like vacations or securing employment are not justifiable reasons for suspending a member.** Members should provide a written request to be suspended in cases where suspension is warranted outside of the disciplinary process. Whenever possible, members should also provide documentation of the cause of the request. Suspended members cannot accrue hours during their suspension and are therefore not eligible to receive a stipend during their suspension.

It is the program's responsibility to closely track member suspensions and to support the member in returning to service as quickly as possible following the initial suspension. Members serving in programs under PennSERVE's jurisdiction must return to and complete service following a suspension by the program year's end date. If a member is unable to return and successfully complete service before the end of the program year, then he or she must be reinstated and exited with or without an education award. In the event of Compelling Circumstance with appropriate supporting documentation, the member can be eligible for a pro-rated partial education award (see pg. 34)

Please Note: Once a member is exited with a partial education award, the remaining portion of that education award is not available for use. All changes in status, as well as exits, must be approved in the My AmeriCorps Portal within 30 days of their effective date.

Completing Member Exit Forms

(NEW) AmeriCorps members must complete their own enrollment and exit forms on-line in the My AmeriCorps Portal. Any program that wishes to utilize staff Portal enrollments and exits must send a request to PennSERVE. Requests will be approved in cases where the recipient is able to demonstrate that technological limitations make it impossible or extremely burdensome for members to complete their own enrollment and exit forms in the Portal. Technological limitations would include lack of internet access, computer and/or cell phone, or a member population with

low computer literacy skills that cannot be addressed through training or technical assistance. Approved waivers are for one year only; programs are required to reapply for a waiver each year as necessary.

If members are unable to sign electronically, a paper copy of all portions of the Member Exit (including member sections) must be printed and kept on file with the member's signature. **Within 30 days of a member's exit date, his/her exit information must be approved in the Portal.**

In order for a member to receive an education award from the National Service Trust, the program must certify to the National Service Trust that the member satisfactorily and successfully completed the term of service, and is eligible to receive the education benefit.

The program is responsible for the accuracy of the information certified on the end-of-term certification. Any individual who makes a materially false statement or representation in connection with the approval or disbursement of an education award or other payment from the National Service Trust may be liable for the recovery of funds and subject to civil and criminal sanctions.

Refilling Slots

Eligible AmeriCorps State and National programs that have fully enrolled their awarded member slots are allowed to replace any member who terminates service before completing 30 percent of his/her term, provided that the member who terminates is not eligible for and does not receive a pro-rated education award. The slot being refilled must be equal to or lesser than the original slot.

Please Note: Programs **may not** refill the same slot more than once. Please see the Slot Refill Policy on pg. 53 for additional guidance and restrictions on refilling slots.

As a fail-safe mechanism to ensure that resources are available in the National Service Trust to finance all earned education awards, CNCS will suspend refilling if either total AmeriCorps enrollment reaches 97 percent of awarded slots, or the number of refills reaches five percent of awarded slots.

My AmeriCorps Portal Policies and Procedures: Portal Actions That Must Be Approved By PennSERVE

Certain functions require prior approval from a PennSERVE Program Officer before being changed in the AmeriCorps Portal, including

- Slot Corrections
- Slot Conversions/ Refill Slot Conversions
- Changing Member Terms of Service
- Changing Member Enrollment Periods
- No Cost Extensions

Attachment 4.1: PennSERVE AmeriCorps Slot Conversion Request/Member Change of Term Request Form must be completed and forwarded to PennSERVE for review and approval before programs make any of these changes in the Portal.

Slot Corrections (unfilled positions)

Programs may request to change the type of slots awarded to their program if the change does not increase or substantially decrease the total MSYs authorized in the program Grant Award (e.g. one half-time position cannot be changed to one full-time position) AND the change does not increase the amount of the education award. All changes to slot type are subject to availability of funds in the Trust. **NOTE:** Full-cost Fixed Amount or Professional Corps programs must be filled by a member serving in a full-time capacity.

Member Slot Conversions

Sometimes, through less than expected enrollment rates or because of member attrition, it may become necessary to convert member slots. Slot Conversions may not result in an increased number of MSYs for the program. However, they should maximize the original number of awarded MSYs. **See attachment 4.2: MSY Calculator.**

Please Note: Refill slots may also be converted, but must be done separately and cannot be combined with original unfilled slots. Refill slot conversions must be requested as a separate step from original slot conversion requests, but may be requested on the same form.

Changing a Term of Service (filled positions)

Changes in terms of service may not result in an increased number of MSYs for the program. Also, when changing a member's term, a slot must be unfilled and available for that member to move into. If a member moves into a refill slot, and subsequently exits early, that refill slot cannot be refilled a second time.

- a. *Full-Time Members*—Programs may make occasional changes of currently enrolled full-time members to part-time members within the first three months of the member's service. Impact on program quality will be factored into decisions on member changes of term. The Corporation will not cover healthcare or childcare costs for part-time members, therefore appropriate adjustments must be made.

Please Note: It is not allowable to transfer currently enrolled full-time members to a part-time status simply to provide a part-time education award.

- b. *Part-Time Members*—changing part-time members to full-time is discouraged because it is difficult to facilitate, unless done very early in the member's term of service. Grantees may request to make such changes using the My AmeriCorps Portal so long as it is within the first three months of the member's service and the current budget can accommodate such changes. Grantees must keep in mind that a member's minimum 1700 hours must be completed within 12 months of his or her original start date. (NOTE: With the exception of Education Award only programs, recipients of Fixed Amount awards may not convert members to less-than-full-time slots.)

Change in Member Enrollment Period

Programs must request approval from PennSERVE before Enrollment Period dates can be modified. PennSERVE staff will make any necessary changes and care will be taken to ensure that the new dates remain within the Budget Period dates. The new dates may not overlap with the Member Enrollment Period dates of a different program year for the same operating site.

Please Note: The grantee will be held responsible during monitoring or compliance visits and audits to verify that the program budget, member payroll and/or member time record and/or contract reconcile to reflect any change(s) in the member enrollment period.

No-Cost Extensions

In general, no-cost extensions are not allowable. However, PennSERVE will allow programs to apply for a no-cost extension in instances where funding or MSYs are not awarded in time to allow programs to carry out their grant activities as listed in their application for funding.

Portal Actions Not Allowed At Any Time by Programs

PennSERVE does not allow the transfer of member slots between programs. Grantees are confined to the slots awarded in the AmeriCorps grant contract.

Recap of Enrollment, Exit, and Slot Management Policies

Enrollment, Exit, and Slot/Term Change Timelines

- **Member Enrollments:** Within 30 days of start date
- **Member Exits:** Within 30 days of end date
- **Member Change of Status:** Within 30 days of change date for member suspensions, reinstatements and transfers to other AmeriCorps programs
- **Member Change of Term:** Must be requested within 90 days of a member's date of enrollment when changing from a larger to lesser term. The request form must be entered and approved within 30 days of the effective change date. A change of term over 90 days into a member's term of service may require a CNCS Program Officer's approval. Programs should make sure there is ample time for a member to complete his or her term before processing change of term requests.

Member Slot Refill Policy

- Programs can refill certain slots: When a member is exited who served less than 30% of his or her hours the slot can be refilled, but only once. If a member in a refilled slot exits with less than 30% hours served, that slot will not become available again for refilling.
 - No slot of a particular type will be available for refilling until all slots of that type are filled.

- The refill policy applies to each slot type independently for a given program and grant year. The refill policy also applies separately to stipend and Ed Award Only within each slot type.

Member Slot Conversion Policy

- This policy allows grantees to convert slot types on other than a one-to-one basis. For example, grantees are allowed to convert one full-time position to up to three quarter-time positions. All conversions will be Trust neutral, are subject to availability of funds in the Trust, and will comply with all assumptions on which Trust prudence and continued solvency are predicated.
- This policy allows AmeriCorps slots to be converted in accordance with the grant award but without regard to the limitation therein on increasing the number of slots in the program. Thus, when converting a slot to one requiring fewer hours, the grantee is not limited to a one-for-one slot conversion and may increase the number of members correspondingly. **However, the total number of MSYs and education award amounts in the grant may not increase as a result of the slot conversion.**

For example:

- 1 full-time member position (1 MSY and a \$5,775 education award) **may** be converted into 2 half-time slots (2 x .5 members = 1 MSY) and a total education award amount of \$5,775 (2 x \$2,887.50).
- 1 full-time member position **may not** be converted into 4 quarter-time positions as the education awards would total \$6,109.80 (4 x \$1,527.45 and 1.06 MSY (4 x .265); The maximum number of allowable quarter-time positions would be 3 in this example.

Grantees may also combine and convert less than full-time positions to full-time positions **as long as such changes do not increase the total MSYs or total education award amounts** awarded in the grant. The table below shows hours, education awards, and MSYs by slot type. Programs are encouraged to consider the increased demands on supervision with an increased number of slots.

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Ed Award	MSY
Full-time	1700	\$5,775	1.000
One-year Half-time	900	\$2,887.50	0.500
Reduced Half-time	675	\$2,199.92	0.381
Quarter-time	450	\$1,527.45	0.2646
Minimum-time	300	\$1,221.96	0.2116

REMINDER:

Whenever possible, My AmeriCorps Portal information should be input by one program staff person and double-checked and approved by another. For programs with only one staff person responsible for entry, all information should be entered and double-checked and approved during separate My AmeriCorps Portal login sessions.

Section 5: Financial Management

GRANT AWARD CONDITIONS

- Legislative Authority & Other Applicable Statutory and Administrative Provisions**
- OMB SUPER CIRCULAR**
- Award Period**
- Grant Closeout**

BUDGETS AND COSTS

- Program Budgets**
- Budget Revisions**
- Administrative Costs**
- Allowable Costs**
- Allocable Costs**
- Procurement Requirements and Procedures**
- Contract Administration**
- Property Management Standards**
- Match Requirements**
 - Matching Requirements Chart*
 - Consequences of Not Meeting Match*
- Federal Funds Used as Match**
- Program Income**
- Fees for Service**

REIMBURSEMENT AND FINANCIAL REPORTING PROCESS

- Grantee Reimbursement**
- OnCorps PER and Coversheet**
- Aggregate Financial Reports**
- Planning Grant Program Exemptions**
- Education Award Programs (EAP) Exemptions**
- Special Grants**

AUDITS & MONITORING

- Financial Management Standards**
- Basics of a Good Financial Management System**
- Financial Systems Monitoring and Reviews**
- Financial Records**
- Exemptions for Fixed Amount Grants**

Changes for 2016-2017:

- Invoices must be emailed

pg. 64

Attachments:

- 5.1: OMB Uniform Guidance (SuperCircular/OmniCircular)
- 5.2: Sample Final Financial Status Report
- 5.3: Equipment Inventory
- 5.4: Inventory of Unused or Residual Supplies
- 5.5: Sample Inventory Form
- 5.6: Federal Funds as Match Authorization Letters
- 5.7: Invoice Cover Sheet
- 5.8: PennSERVE Fiscal Monitoring Tool
- 5.9: PennSERVE Match Review Tool
- 5.10: Sample In-Kind Contribution Form

Links:

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards: <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=2:1.1.2.2.1>

National Service Uniform Guidance Resources:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/uniform-guidance>

Financial and Grant Management Resources:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management>

Pennsylvania Office of the Budget Website

<http://www.budget.state.pa.us>

GRANT AWARD CONDITIONS

Legislative Authority and Other Applicable Statutory and Administrative Provisions

All PennSERVE grantees are authorized by and subject to the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act, (42 U.S.C. 12501 *et seq.*, at §4993) and the implementing regulations at 45 CFR 2510 *et seq.* Grantees must comply with the requirements of the Act and its implementing regulations.

The grantee must comply with all other applicable statutes, executive orders, regulations and policies governing the grant, including, but not limited to, those cited in the Terms and Conditions, Grant Provisions, the Grant Assurances and Certifications and those cited in 45 CFR Parts 2541 and 2543.

OMB Uniform Guidance - “Super Circular”

On December 26, 2013, the Office of Management and Budget (“OMB”) released a comprehensive guidance that makes changes to the fragmented existing guidance on Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. **This new guidance incorporated eight previous guidance circulars into one comprehensive policy guideline, commonly called the Omni-Circular, or “Super Circular.”**

The goals of the new guidance are threefold: to maximize uniformity for federal awards among all agencies granting awards and Non Federal Entities (NFEs) receiving awards; to remove duplicative and conflicting requirements in order to increase efficiency and decrease administrative burden; and to increase oversight of federal awards to reduce the risk of waste, fraud, and abuse. **Programs are expected to read this new guidance and be aware of changes affecting their organization. See attachment 5.1: OMB Super Circular.**

Overview of Key Policy Changes

A summary of some of the key policy changes and goals for federal awards and cooperative agreements in the OMB’s new Omni-Circular are highlighted below.

Eliminate Duplicative and Conflicting Guidance

As previously noted, a major goal of combining the eight guidance circulars into one comprehensive policy guide is to eliminate duplicative and conflicting guidance and to reduce administrative burdens on NFEs receiving federal awards. Specifically, the changes in the Omni-Circular eliminate the duplicative and conflicting guidance of the three current cost principles Circulars—A-21 for educational institutions; A-87 for state, local, and tribal governments; and A-122 for nonprofit organizations.

Encourage Efficient Use of Information Technology and Shared Services

The Omni-Circular includes an explicit requirement that NFEs must safeguard protected personally identifiable information for federal awards. This applies, for example, to the required posting of Single Audit Reports on the Internet, which must not contain any protected personally identifiable information.

Provide for Consistent and Transparent Treatment of Costs

The new Omni-Circular makes clear the applicability of the new guidance on cost principles to various kinds of assistance. Loans, scholarships, fellowships, institutes of higher education where capitation awards have been made, fixed-amount awards, and hospitals are specifically excluded from the cost principles.

The new Omni-Circular also makes the application of cost principles more consistent across federal awards and seeks to update policies on direct and indirect costs.

NFEs that do have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate may now apply for a onetime extension of up to four years without further negotiation, subject to the approval of the negotiating federal agency.

Other notable changes are new and limit allowable costs. For example, costs incurred by an NFE to recover improper payments are allowable as either direct or indirect costs, as appropriate. Allowable conference spending is addressed in a new way and requires conference hosts or sponsors to exercise discretion and judgment in ensuring that conference costs are appropriate, and necessary.

Strengthening Oversight

The Omni-Circular requires NFEs to disclose in writing any potential conflict of interest to the federal awarding agency in accordance with the federal agency's policy. NFEs must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the performance of its employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts. A new provision requires NFEs to maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflicts of interest if the entity has a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a state or local government or an Indian tribe. Additionally, NFEs receiving federal awards must disclose all violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award.

Other provisions seek to strengthen oversight of federal awards with regard to internal controls for NFEs. Required certifications must be signed by an organization official who can legally bind the NFE. When annual fiscal reports or vouchers requesting payment under an award are requested, the signatory official certifies the reports to be accurate and true, understanding that there are potential penalties under the False Claims Act.

Target Audit Requirements to Reduce Risk of Waste, Fraud, and Abuse

The current audit requirements found in Circular A-133 have been replaced in the new Omni-Circular. COFAR took the approach that below a certain federal award dollar amount, the Single Audit process is not cost-effective. The Omni-Circular adjusts the scope of the Single Audit requirements to strengthen oversight of programs that are audited, while at the same time focusing audits on NFEs where there is the greatest risk of waste, fraud, and abuse. To this end, the most important change is the audit **threshold increase from \$500,000 to \$750,000**. This increase relieves the audit burden on approximately 5,000 NFEs that are spending relatively small amounts of federal awards, while at the same time maintaining oversight over 99.7% of the dollars currently subject to Single Audit. Other changes to the determination of Major Programs also reinforce this risk-based approach by focusing audits on the areas with internal control deficiencies that have been identified as material weaknesses.

In addition, Single Audit Reports must now be posted online with safeguards for personally identifiable information. This change increases transparency in the audit process. Although these represent significant changes, the basic structure of the single audit process has not changed, since the new requirements are still grounded in the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996. Any changes to audit requirements guidance had to be consistent with the requirements of that legislation.

Award Period

The program's award period is noted in the program's Application Face Sheet and approved Budget in eGrants. The award period covers a one-year project period. Additional funding is contingent upon satisfactory performance, the program's demonstrated capacity to manage an award and comply with award requirements, and the availability of Congressional appropriations. PennSERVE and CNCS reserve the right to adjust the amount of an award, or elect not to continue funding for subsequent years.

Grant Closeout

PennSERVE must receive certain documentation from grantees when a grant cycle is completed (either a PennSERVE grant cycle or a program's grant cycle.) Please see **attachment 5.2: Sample Final Financial Status Report**, **attachment 5.3: Equipment Inventory** and **attachment 5.4: Inventory of Unused or Residual Supplies**.

BUDGETS AND COSTS

Program Budgets

AmeriCorps programs are required to adhere to annual budgets as submitted and approved during the application and award process and as entered into the OnCorps System (see Section 7 for instructions).

In addition to budget constraints, PennSERVE requires programs to adhere to the AmeriCorps program year end date of **August 19, 2017**. This requires that all members complete service by August 19 unless receiving express permission from PennSERVE (see page 53 on requesting no-cost extensions).

Budget Revisions

Any and all budget changes must be made in OnCorps and must be approved by PennSERVE.

All changes to budgets must be accompanied by a full explanation, including the reason for the change and what the adverse consequences would be if the request were denied. This information should be sent to the PennSERVE Grants Officer via email OR the PennSERVE email address of pennserve@pa.gov Please note in the subject line of the email: "Request for Budget Revision"

The one match requirement means grantees do not need CNCS prior approval to move costs from one budget section to another if the total is less than ten percent (10%) of the budget, but transfer costs at or greater than ten percent (10%) will still require prior approval from the Corporation via PennSERVE.

Exception: Any purchases of equipment over five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) which were not included in the approved budget, must be submitted to PennSERVE and approved by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Please Note: Programs are still required to meet the original budgeted match percentage even if a budget revision is necessary.

Administrative Costs

Administrative costs are expenses associated with the overall administration of the AmeriCorps program. These costs relate to the support of a program's general operation. No more than five percent (5%) of the total CNCS grant amount expended may be used to pay for administrative costs. These costs are budgeted in Section III of the approved grant application.

Administrative costs include the following:

- Indirect costs such as legal staff, central management, and support functions that are not specifically assigned to projects, but are accumulated as a whole and proportionately spread across projects usually as a percentage of the project costs
- Costs for financial, accounting, auditing, internal evaluation, and contracting functions
- Costs for insurance that protect the entity that operates the program
- The portion of salaries and benefits of administrative staff **not spent** in direct support of project objectives

Administrative costs do not include allowable costs directly related to program or project operations, such as:

- Costs for members, including living allowances, insurance payments, and expenses for training and travel
- Costs for staff who recruit, train, place or supervise members, including costs for staff salaries, benefits, training and travel, if the purpose is for a specific program or project objective
- Costs for independent evaluations and any internal evaluations of the program or project that are related specifically to creative methods of quality improvement

Particular costs, such as those associated with staff that perform both administrative and program functions may be prorated between administrative and program costs, if included in the budget and approved by both PennSERVE and CNCS. Signed time and attendance records must be maintained, appropriately distributing an individual's time to the different programs or functions on which an individual works. The costs need to be allocated in a consistent manner.

REMINDER:

For an organization with an approved indirect cost rate, the organization's indirect cost rate applies. However, for all programs without an approved indirect cost rate, Administrative costs cannot exceed 5% of the total Corporation funds **actually expended** under the grant award.

Allowable Costs

A cost is considered allowable under the grant if it is:

- Necessary and reasonable
- Budgeted for under the grant
- Complies with generally accepted accounting principles
- Complies with OMB circulars,
- Is not charged against any other grant or used to match other grant funds

Is treated consistently with other costs incurred by the organization and documented

Allocable Costs

A cost is allocable to a particular cost objective, such as a grant, contract, project, service, or other activity, in accordance with the relative benefits received. A cost is allocable to a Federal award if it is treated consistently with other costs incurred for the same in like circumstances and is necessary to the overall administration of the program.

Procurement Requirements and Procedures

Programs shall obtain prior written approval for the purchase or lease of equipment with either an acquisition cost of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or a useful life of one or more years, unless such intent is listed and defined in the program budget. Programs must inventory equipment purchased with grant funds.

All programs must establish written procurement procedures to comply with the requirements set forth in the Regulations (AmeriCorps Regulations 45 CFR Section 2541.360). Every program is required to confirm the existence of such procedures.

Contract Administration

A system for contract administration shall be maintained to ensure contractor conformance with the terms, conditions, and specifications of the contract. Contractor performance (this includes any sub-grantees programs may have) shall be evaluated to ensure they have met the terms, conditions, and specifications of the contract.

Property Management Standards

Property management standards for equipment acquired with federal funds include keeping accurate records, adequate safeguards to prevent loss, damage, or theft, and procedures to keep the equipment in good condition. A physical inventory of equipment purchased with grant funds

must be taken at least once a year. A copy of an inventory report must be submitted to PennSERVE with all Close Out Documentation at the end of a grant cycle. See **attachment 5.5: Sample Inventory Form**.

Match Requirements

Sub grantees are required to provide an overall minimum match of 24% for the first three years of funding by CNCS. Starting with year four, match requirements gradually increases to 50% by year ten according to the schedule put into place through rulemaking in 2005. (Source: 2521.60 of Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations.)

For matching purposes there is no any distinction between member support costs and program operating costs. Therefore, there is also no requirement that the member support costs be matched with non-federal cash. Grantees are allowed to meet matching requirements with a combination of cash and/or in-kind contributions. **However, grantees still must seek prior approval from any federal agency to use their funds for match for an AmeriCorps grant.** PennSERVE requires that this approval be provided by the grantee or the Federal agency within **thirty (30) days** of the program start date.

Please note: PennSERVE requires grantees to provide and account for the match as agreed upon in the approved Application/Agreement and Budget. The grantee will be held accountable and responsible to the approved budgeted match on the AmeriCorps (contract) Application/ Agreement during the course of the program year.

All AmeriCorps programs are required to build sustainability and to increase minimum match after an initial three-year grant period. The purpose of increasing the minimum overall match is to share the costs of the program in a more equitable manner as the program grows, builds its capacity and matures so that the grantee eventually becomes an equal partner with the Corporation.

Matching Requirements Chart

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10 and after
Minimum Overall Share	24%	24%	24%	26%	30%	34%	38%	42%	46%	50%

Consequences of Not Meeting Match

All PennSERVE AmeriCorps grantees are required to meet their budgeted match throughout the program year in order to receive reimbursement for program expenditures via the Periodic Expense Reports submitted by programs in OnCorps Reports. PennSERVE staff and the Comptroller's Office review each PER to ensure that the budgeted match is being met incrementally throughout the grant period. If the budgeted match is not met for any reason, PennSERVE may take the following steps:

First Instance: PennSERVE staff will write to the Program Director and/or fiscal staff informing them of the lack of match for that time period and requesting that the grantee meet its budgeted match prior to submitting their next PER.

Second Instance: Again PennSERVE staff will write to the Program Director and/or fiscal staff informing them of the lack of match for that time period, however, PennSERVE will require the grantee to meet its budgeted match prior to reimbursement being made.

Any subsequent instances will result in no reimbursement to the grantee until the required match is met, or in special circumstances, until any special emergency arrangements have been made and agreed upon in writing by PennSERVE staff.

In every case, a copy of the letter and response will become a part of the grantee's fiscal files and may be taken into consideration when the grantee applies for the next year's funding or is re-competing.

Federal Funds Used as Match

Programs must report the amount and sources of federal funds, other than those provided by CNCS, claimed as matching funds. This includes other federal funds expended by sub recipients and operating sites and claimed as match.

Federal funds may not be used as match without the express written permission of the federal entity providing the matching funds. Programs are expected to note any federal funds used as match in their application budget narrative. Please **see Attachment 5.6: Federal Funds as Match Authorization Letters** which sets forth Federal funds that are authorized to be used as match.

Program Income

General: Income, including fees for service earned as a direct result of the grant-funded program activities during the award period, must be retained by the grantee and used to finance the grant's non-Corporation share.

Excess Program Income: Program income earned in excess of the amount needed to finance the grantee share must follow the appropriate requirements of 2 CFR Part 220 and be deducted from total claimed costs. Grantees that earn excess income must specify the amount of the excess in the comment box on the financial status report.

Fees for Service

When using assistance under the grant, the grantee may not enter into a contract for or accept fees for service performed by members when:

1. The service benefits a for-profit entity
2. The service falls within the other prohibited activities set forth in the grant provisions as follows:
 - a. Attempting to influence legislation;
 - b. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
 - c. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
 - d. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
 - e. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the

- outcome of an election to any public office;
- f. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
 - g. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
 - h. Providing a direct benefit to—
 - i. A business organized for profit;
 - ii. A labor union;
 - iii. A partisan political organization;
 - iv. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
 - v. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (g) of this section, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
 - i. Conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
 - j. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
 - k. Such other activities as the Corporation may prohibit.
3. The service violates the provisions of 42 U.S.C 12637 – Nonduplication and Nondisplacement..

REIMBURSEMENT AND FINANCIAL REPORTING PROCESS

Grantee Reimbursement

PennSERVE reimburses grantees on either a monthly or quarterly basis for approved, budgeted expenditures that have been incurred. **Under no circumstances will PennSERVE advance funds or reimburse grantees for unauthorized or unallowable expenses.** PennSERVE staff will review financial reports to ensure spending is consistent with the budget plan and match is being generated in the amounts required by the contract.

OnCorps PER and Coversheet

OnCorps reports should be used to submit Periodic Expense Reports (PERs). Instructions are detailed in Section 7 and the attached OnCorps User Guide. After completing the PER in OnCorps, a PDF should be created. Programs must attach the PER PDF to the Invoice Cover Sheet (**See attachment 5.7: Invoice Cover Sheet**) and email the coversheet and PER directly to 69183@pa.gov as directed below. **(NEW)** All invoices must be emailed; program should not send any invoices in the mail.

The Invoice Coversheet must be the first page of the invoice; however, the PER to support the Invoice Coversheet is to be included in the pdf document, attached and sent to 69183@pa.gov. **The terms and conditions for submitting your “Non-Procurement” invoice coversheets and PERs via email for payment are as follows.**

Terms

1. Invoices must be submitted in portable document format (PDF)
2. Invoices must not exceed 150KB per page
3. Invoices exceeding five pages must be made searchable (allow for text searched within Adobe Acrobat or in third party search tools)
4. **MUST** submit one invoice per attachment (including PER and any required back up documentation)
5. Each invoice **MUST** be saved and attached using a unique name (suggest using “invoice #xxxxx,” where “xxxxx” represents the invoice number)
6. Individual emails must not exceed 10MB
7. **DO NOT** send delivery/accounting documents (statement, packing slip, bill of lading, purchase order, etc.) with the invoice
8. Do not mail any invoices; duplicate submissions will delay payments.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has the right to refuse files that are not accepted by the commonwealth’s information technology systems.

Questions on E-Invoicing

For more information about the E-Invoicing Program or to inquire about an e-invoice you have already submitted, please contact the Payable Service Center call center via telephone or email:
Toll Free: 877.435.7363 Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. EST (except state holidays)
Email: RA-PSCPAYMENTINQUIRE@PA.GOV

PennSERVE staff will review all Periodic Expense Reports (PERs) against the program budget, and will review the match amounts and sources to determine if the budgetary match is met. Failure to meet the budgeted match could result in termination of the program.

After PennSERVE has approved the PER, the Comptroller’s Office is notified to pay the program invoice in the Supplier Relationship Management System (SAP).

After the PER is submitted and approved by PennSERVE staff, it can be viewed in OnCorps Reports. OnCorps Reports will store all submitted and approved PERs for a program, including PERs from past program years.

Programs must determine if they will be submitting PERs monthly or quarterly. PERs are due by the 15th of the following month. For example:

- Program's September 2016 invoice (submitting monthly): due October 15, 2016
- Program's first quarter invoice covering August 20 – November 30, 2016: due December 15, 2016

REMINDER:

This is a reimbursement system. Funding cannot be requested in advance for future expenses. Programs will only be reimbursed for expenditures already made.

Aggregate Financial Reports

In addition to the PERs monthly or quarterly, grantees must submit an Aggregate Financial Report (AFR) to PennSERVE quarterly via OnCorps Reports. Please note that AFR information is automatically updated on the AFR template in OnCorps using previously submitted PERs; simply select the PERs from the current quarter.

AFRs should be submitted by the following dates:

- ❑ 10/31/16 (include PERs for July* - September)
- ❑ 1/31/17 (include PERs for October – December)
- ❑ 4/30/17 (include PERs for January – March)
- ❑ 7/30/17 (include PERs for April – June)
- ❑ 10/1/17 (include all PY '16-'17 PERs)

*Only programs with a PY '16-'17 start date earlier than August 20 should include a July PER in their 10/31/16 AFR

Planning Grant Programs Exemptions

Unlike other AmeriCorps state programs, Planning Grants are:

- ❑ Not required to have AmeriCorps members; and
- ❑ Not required to provide a match for members.

- ❑ They ARE required, however, to submit PERs and AFRs in OnCorps Reports;
- ❑ They ARE required to provide the budgeted match for the grant award.

To obtain reimbursement, Planning Grant programs must submit a request for reimbursement with an invoice coversheet and PER to 69183@pa.gov per directions above.

Education Award Programs (EAP) Exemptions

Unlike other AmeriCorps State programs, EAPs are:

- ❑ Not required to submit PERs and AFRs via OnCorps
- ❑ Not required to provide a living allowance or stipend to members
- ❑ Not required to provide a match for the \$800 per MSY

EAPs are fixed amount grants and the current maximum cost per MSY is \$800. The Corporation cost per MSY is determined by dividing the Corporation's share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested in the grant.

To obtain reimbursement, EAPs must submit a request for reimbursement form with invoice coversheet to: 69183@pa.gov per directions above.

Special Grants

In rare circumstances, other funds are provided for programs under special provisions and for specific programming initiatives. Often, the funding for these special grants is made possible by corporate donation to the Corporation.

This Manual provides guidance to AmeriCorps State Competitive, AmeriCorps State Formula, EAP, Planning Grant grantees and Fixed Amount Grantees. Special Grants program grantees are provided information according to their specific grant's guidelines and provisions.

AUDITS & MONITORING

Financial Management Standards

General: The grantee must maintain financial management systems that include standard accounting practices, sufficient internal controls, a clear audit trail, and written cost allocation procedures, as necessary. Financial management systems must be capable of distinguishing expenditures attributable to this grant from expenditures not attributable to this grant. The systems must be able to identify costs by program year and by budget category and to differentiate between direct and indirect costs, or administrative costs.

For further details about the grantee's financial management responsibilities, refer to OMB Uniform Guidance (OmniCircular/SuperCircular) and its implementing regulations (45 CFR§2541).

Consistency of Treatment: To be allowable under an award, costs must be consistent with policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both federally financed and other activities of the organization. Furthermore, the costs must be accorded consistent treatment in both federally

financed and other activities, as well as between activities, supported by different sources of federal funds.

Audit Requirements: Grantee organizations that expend \$750,000 or more in a year in federal awards shall have a single or program-specific audit conducted for that year in accordance with the Single Audit Act, as amended by the new Omni-Circular (see website below). If the grantee expends federal awards under only one federal program, it may elect to have a program specific audit, if it is otherwise eligible. A grantee that does not expend \$750,000 in federal awards is exempt from the single audit requirements of the Omni-Circular, however, it must continue to conduct financial management reviews of its sub-grantees and records must be available for review and audit.

As the sub-recipient of federal funds, grantees must submit copies of their most recent audit to PennSERVE as required in their yearly Application for funding. The Office of the Budget, Office of Comptroller Operations, Bureau of Audits accepts only electronic submissions of single audit/program-specific audit reporting packages. Instructions and information regarding submission of the single audit/program-specific audit reporting package are available to the public on the Single Audit Submissions page of the Office of the Budget website (<http://www.budget.pa.gov/Services/ForGranteesAndSubrecipients/Pages/SingleAuditSubmissions.aspx>) which states:

Single Audit Submissions

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

On December 26, 2013 the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued at 2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (commonly known as “Uniform Guidance”), which supersedes and streamlines requirements from OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A-110, and A-122; Circulars A-89, A-102, and A-133; and the guidance in Circular A-50 on Single Audit Act follow-up.

This Uniform Guidance was developed in response to the November 23, 2009 Executive Order 13520 on Reducing Improper Payments and February 28, 2011 Presidential Memorandum on Administrative Flexibility, Lower Costs, and Better Results of State, Local, and Tribal Governments. The Council on Financial Assistance Reform (COFAR) was established in October 2011 and has led several efforts to improve delivery, management, coordination, and accountability of Federal grants and cooperative agreements, which includes the development of the uniform guidance.

*The audit requirements of 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F (Subpart F) apply to audits of non-Federal entity fiscal years beginning on or after December 26, 2014 (i.e., audits for calendar year-end December 31, 2015 or fiscal year-end June 30, 2016). The revised audit requirements are not applicable to fiscal years beginning prior to that date. Early implementation is **not** permissible.*

Links to the Uniform Guidance, training presentations, and training webcasts can be found at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_docs. Please continue to monitor the Office of the Budget website for additional information regarding this guidance and potential commonwealth specific guidance.

Basics of a Good Financial Management System

Programs are strongly encouraged to review Financial and Grant Management resources available through the CNCS Knowledge Network: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management>

Financial Systems Monitoring and Reviews

Financial systems are monitored primarily via the pre-award assessment, review and monitoring of approved budgets, desk monitoring, fiscal review site visits, and review of match documentation.

See attachment 5.8: PennSERVE Fiscal Monitoring Tool and attachment 5.9: PennSERVE Match Review Tool for full expectations of PennSERVE fiscal reviews.

PennSERVE has the right to conduct financial systems reviews of all AmeriCorps State programs. All financial reporting and accounting systems should contain sufficient detailed information to accurately account for grant and contract awards, obligations, unobligated balances, assets, liabilities, expenses, and income. Such reviews shall include but not be limited to the following areas:

- ❑ Review of program accounts for separation of funds and accounting of income and expenditures
- ❑ Review of policies, procedures and accounting manuals governing financial reporting and the accounting system
- ❑ A clear audit trail from financial reports to supporting documentation
- ❑ Expense review for eligibility, accuracy, consistent treatment, proper classification and reasonable, necessary, supportable, allowable, and proper authorization
- ❑ Matching requirements and documentation, including a review of in-kind contributions
- ❑ Budgetary requirements and documentation
- ❑ Property management
- ❑ Internal controls safeguarding assets and ensuring their proper use
- ❑ Separation of staff duties
- ❑ Review of staff timesheets
- ❑ Review of financial reporting submitted through OnCorps

PennSERVE may at any time request an AmeriCorps State program to submit all supporting documentation for expenditures including both the CNCS and match share with any request for reimbursement. The documentation will be reviewed for compliance with the grant award provisions.

Any program that is determined through PennSERVE financial systems monitoring to be deficient must take appropriate action to correct any deficiency within 30 days of notice by PennSERVE.

If the grantee has not taken appropriate corrective action and notified PennSERVE within the 30 days or if sufficient improvements have not been made, PennSERVE may suspend or terminate the program during the current program year. PennSERVE will follow Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and CNCS guidelines regarding the suspension and termination of a program.

Financial Records

Grantees must document every cost charged to the grant, whether it be the federal share of the program or the grantee's share. Programs must keep source documentation for costs such as receipts, travel vouchers, invoices and bills.

- ❑ Payroll, Time, and Attendance Records
 - Programs must have approved time and attendance records for each individual employee and member available upon request. Programs allocating an employee's salary between this grant and another funding source must keep individual time distribution records.
- ❑ Matching Funds and In-Kind Contributions
 - Programs must document all in-kind and other matching contributions. In-kind contributions are the value of goods, services, property, or equipment used in direct support of program objectives. Matching funds are allowable as documented according to the following criteria:
 - can be verified
 - not included as contributions for any other federally-assisted program
 - necessary and reasonable
 - allowable under applicable cost principles
 - not paid for with other federal funds (except when authorized).
 - Records of in-kind contributions must include:
 - The name of the donor
 - Description of the contribution
 - Date of contribution
 - Value of contribution and how the value was determined
 - Signature of the donor
 - Statement that donor verifies funds are not from other Federal sources

See Attachment 5.10: Sample In-Kind Contribution Form

- ❑ Disposal of Records
 - Programs must make reasonable efforts to protect the confidentiality of disposed program records in such a way as to protect the identity and privacy of members.
- ❑ Retention of Financial Records
 - All financial records, supporting documentation, member information, statistical records, evaluation data and personnel records must be kept and be available to PennSERVE and CNCS for three years from "submission of the final FFR by PennSERVE or three years after the completion of an audit." This requirement is included in CNCS regulations.
- ❑ Receipts for Program Costs Incurred
 - Programs must keep adequate records so an auditor can link billable items to source payment documentation.
- ❑ Liability Insurance
 - Programs must have sufficient liability insurance to protect the organization, its employees, and AmeriCorps members. Members engaged in both on and off site project activities must be covered. Programs decide how much liability coverage is sufficient, given the specific risk factors the programs present. General liability insurance is an administrative cost that can be charged against the grant, subject to the grant's administrative cost limit, or included in the program's match. If it is in

the approved budget, insurance purchased specifically to cover member liability can be charged as a direct program cost.

- Fundraising
 - Staff time and effort spent on raising the match requirements should be incidental to the overall management of the Program and should be focused primarily on developing and disseminating information to potential funders on the AmeriCorps Program and its achievements. Staff can make presentations and educate funders on the objectives, goals, and accomplishments of the program. Efforts to involve the community in support of the AmeriCorps program, such as obtaining medical contributions or assistance at a health fair, donations of building supplies for an AmeriCorps construction project, and coordinating community participation in and support of a serve-a-thon and other service activities, are also allowable.

Exemptions for Fixed Amount Grants

Fixed Amount grants are exempt from the Cost Principles. Fixed Amount award payments are based on meeting specific requirements, milestones, and accountability is based on performance and results. The goal of the coverage for fixed-amount awards is to minimize compliance requirements in favor of increased focus on meeting performance milestones. The award is negotiated using cost principles as a guide, so while there is a review of the costs up front, there is no government review of the actual costs incurred. For this reason, in order to ensure the grant is used for its original purpose, significant changes must receive prior written approval by the awarding agency.

Section 6: Special Funding

TRAINING FUNDS

Overview of TRAINING Funding

Peer Exchange Site Visits

Instructions for Requesting TRAINING Funds and Obtaining Reimbursement

Request for Funds

Request for Reimbursement

DISABILITY FUNDS

Disability Funds Overview (UPDATED)

Changes for 2016-2017:

- Request for Reimbursement of meal costs pg. 75
- New Partnership with Workforce Recruitment Program pg. 76
- Disability Funds Overview and Process pg. 76
- Procurement Standards pg. 79

Attachments:

6.1: Training Funds RFR Form

6.2: Training Funds Request Form

6.3: Training RFR Invoice Cover Sheet

6.4: Training Summary Report (Sample)

Links:

Commonwealth Travel Directive:

http://www.oa.pa.gov/Policies/md/Documents/230_10.pdf

TRAINING FUNDS

Overview of Funding

From time to time, and if funds are available from PennSERVE's Administrative or other special funding pool, PennSERVE will consider providing training funds to a program or programs for a particular need. These training funds may or may not require a match and allow commissions to enhance and maintain the infrastructure to support training and technical assistance for national and community service programs. If available, PennSERVE will utilize training funds in a variety of ways to ensure programs receive training and technical support throughout each program year. Some of the uses of training funds may include:

- ❑ Leadership development, training and technical assistance activities to enhance the effectiveness of AmeriCorps programs and program staff
- ❑ Training events and other training activities in support of a unified state plan
- ❑ Statewide or regional events for member training when conducted collaboratively among multiple programs or organized by multiple states
- ❑ Evaluation or research activities
- ❑ Travel costs for program staff to state-sponsored and national-provider training events, such as the National Conference on Volunteering and Service, National Service-Learning Conference, etc.
- ❑ Travel costs for member/participant attendance at regional and national training events
- ❑ Cost sharing with national T/TA providers
- ❑ Communication equipment and systems that link programs for T/TA purposes

Programs that wish to receive funding for training must request the funding in advance of making any arrangements for the training or carrying out any training activities.

Peer Exchange Site Visits

Programs may be recommended to complete a peer exchange as the result of a PennSERVE program monitoring site visit or by virtue of being a grantee. If funding is available from PennSERVE, Programs may also request assistance to complete a peer exchange to another program. The approved visit allows the opportunity to:

- ❑ Observe already established systems
- ❑ Ask questions and seek advice
- ❑ Learn from colleagues experienced in operating an AmeriCorps program

Upon notification of approval for a peer exchange site visit, the visiting program must contact the hosting program, schedule the visit and inform PennSERVE staff of the dates for the visit within 15 days. Programs must keep PennSERVE apprised of any changes or updates, should it become necessary to reschedule the visit. Visiting programs are required to incur the cost of travel and lodging and then may be able to submit a completed request for reimbursement form (**See attachment 6.1: Training Funds RFR Form**), along with any necessary receipts, for expense reimbursement. The RFR, along with a follow-up training report, are to be filed within 30 days of

return from the peer exchange site visit. See **attachment 6.2: Program Peer Exchange Training Report**.

Instructions for Requesting Training Funds and Obtaining Reimbursement

Request for Funds

Utilizing its limited Administrative grant funds, PennSERVE may reimburse grantees up to a maximum estimated amount for the cost of staff to attend approved training programs or conferences. These trainings may either be of a program's individual choice or may be required by PennSERVE.

When an individual program has fully utilized its staff training money from its AmeriCorps program budget and wishes to seek training reimbursement for the incurred costs, the Program Director must submit a **attachment 6.3: Training Funds Request Form** to PennSERVE staff. Remember that program budgets must be used first before requesting Training funds. PennSERVE staff SHOULD receive the form no less than 15 days prior to the beginning date of the training. When there are extenuating circumstances, a request sent less than 15 days prior to the requested training may still be considered. Programs must complete sections 1- 6 of the Training Funds Request Form:

- ❑ **SECTION 1** asks for the name of the program and of the Program Director making the request for Training funds.

- ❑ **SECTION 2** asks for specific information on the desired training, including date(s), location, description and an explanation of how the training will benefit the program. Staff and/or program development must be an outcome of the training for which training funds are requested. For example, a program requesting funds for staff to attend a seminar on "How to Raise Llamas for Fun and Profit" will likely be declined since it bears no definitive relationship to enhancing the objectives of any "current" AmeriCorps program initiative. On the other hand, requesting funds for staff to attend leadership development training may be approved depending on the experience of the staff, role of the staff at the training and/or availability of training resources.

- ❑ **SECTION 3** asks for an itemized breakdown of the anticipated costs for attending the training and a total of the funds requested. Where exact costs are not easy to identify (taxi fare to and from the airport) use best judgment in estimating the approximate costs. **Estimate appropriately, because once approved, PennSERVE will only reimburse programs up to the estimated amount.** Any additional expenses incurred over and above this approved estimate will be the responsibility of the grantee. Meals are reimbursed on a per diem basis, which varies depending on location both within and outside of Pennsylvania. PennSERVE reminds all travelers that they are not to automatically claim the maximum subsistence amount allowed per day when in overnight travel status. Please see Management Directive 230.10 Amended, Travel and Subsistence Allowances, Section 11 a.(1). It clearly states "**However, they are not flat allowances and only amounts actually expended may be claimed.**" Also, PennSERVE cannot reimburse the program at the maximum state rates, if the program's policies reflect a lower amount.

Please Note: The Commonwealth will only reimburse travel costs at the approved rates on the travel dates. Management Directive 230.10 addresses travel reimbursement procedures, including the current mileage and subsistence rates.

The directives may be accessed via the web at:

<http://www.oa.pa.gov/Policies/md/Pages/default.aspx>

- ❑ **SECTION 4** asks for the names, titles, and **signatures of all staff** attending the requested training.
- ❑ **SECTION 5** allows for any additional information that may assist PennSERVE in making its approval or disapproval decision.
- ❑ **SECTION 6** is the certification of understanding and it requires the signature of the Program Director and the date of the request.
- ❑ **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** When possible, the program should attach a copy of any brochures, agendas, etc. for the training event they wish to attend.

While PennSERVE strongly encourages the use of training funds to enhance overall program staff development, it must consider cost efficiency when reviewing requests for funding. For example, if a program requests training funds for staff to attend a workshop on violence prevention held in Maui, Hawaii, and the same workshop is also held in Philadelphia two weeks later, the request to attend the Maui session will most likely be denied. Unless it can be proven that it will be more efficient to attend the Maui session, the Philadelphia workshop will be the likely alternative.

Once the PennSERVE office receives the Training Funds Request Form containing all pertinent information, PennSERVE staff will review it in a timely fashion. The grantee will be sent either an email of approval or an email of disapproval stating the reasons why the request for training funds was denied within 15 days of receiving the request.

Request for Reimbursement

- ❑ **No later than 30 days** following the conclusion of any training (program selected or PennSERVE mandated), which requires reimbursement by training funds, the grantee must submit a Training RFR Form and Training RFR Invoice Cover Sheet PennSERVE staff via email to 69183@pa.gov as directed in Section 5 of this manual
- ❑ **See attachment 6.1: Training Funds RFR Form and attachment 6.4: Training RFR Invoice Cover Sheet.** Both forms should be completely filled out and the RFR form must be signed and dated. Receipts for registration; airline, train or bus tickets; car rental; other ground transportation and parking must be submitted with the RFR. It is not necessary to submit receipts for meals, but only actual meal expenditures should be claimed and all meal receipts should be kept on file in case of an audit. Any meals included in the conference or training registration must be deducted from the per diem reimbursement. **(UPDATED)** The maximum reimbursement for meals is not to exceed maximum GSA overnight subsistence allowance in a 24 hour period (as of the printing of this manual, \$11 for breakfast, \$12 for lunch, and \$23 for dinner). Again, please consult Management Directives 230.10 the

accompanying Manual 230.1, Commonwealth Travel Procedures Manual for allowable food costs.

- ❑ **Also, no later than 30 days** following the conclusion of a program selected training event, a brief report must be submitted to PennSERVE staff outlining the training sessions attended, see **attachment 6.5: Training Summary Report**. If more than one person attends a training session, one report covering the group's participation is sufficient.

Please Note: Failure to submit a written report and the **Document: Training Funds RFR** with supporting receipts to the PennSERVE office within 30 days after attending a Training-funded training session may result in a program being ineligible for future use of training funds.

REMINDER:

The Training Funds RFR with Training Invoice Cover Sheet and supporting receipts and a Training Summary Report is due to PennSERVE within 30 days after attending a Training- funded training session.

DISABILITY FUNDS

AmeriCorps welcomes members who may have a disability. Therefore it is PennSERVE's policy that:

"Qualified individuals with disabilities and those from diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply. We provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals and conduct all activities in fully accessible settings."

(NEW) CNCS has announced a new Partnership with the Workforce Recruitment Program at Department of Labor. The Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) is a recruitment and referral program that connects highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities to employment and service opportunities. Federal personnel first conduct recruitment interviews with interested candidates who range from college freshmen to graduate students and recent graduates from all majors and fields. Federal personnel then compile the candidates' information into a searchable database for federal agencies, private sector employers, and other partners to identify candidates with disabilities for their work and service opportunities. The WRP program will make their database available to interested AmeriCorps grantees to search for candidates that may be a good fit for your program. Interested programs can email disability@cns.gov for additional information about this partnership. Please note that candidate searches may be completed on a first-come, first-served basis if interest is high for this partnership.

(UPDATED) Disability Funds Overview

Programs may apply to PennSERVE to support their request to provide reasonable accommodations. PennSERVE will apply to CNCS directly for Disability reimbursement funds for your program. Please find complete information on how to apply for a disability accommodation grant below.

Things to know about the process:

It is important to understand that by applying for reasonable accommodation reimbursement grants, you are requesting to be reimbursed for expenses incurred. CNCS will not be making advance payments to cover reasonable accommodation expenses.

The reasonable accommodation grant funds are available on a noncompetitive basis and requests are processed in the order they are received.

CNCS encourages your program to determine what each of your service members' accommodation needs are for the service term/FY 2016 so you can submit requests for reimbursement. Requests for reimbursement of a single expense can be submitted at any time. If you intend to request reimbursement for multiple expenses throughout the year, your initial request must estimate what your total reimbursable expenses will be.

Grantees must retain and be prepared to provide documentation for each member for whom reasonable accommodation grant funds are requested. The documentation must show that:

- The goods or services needed to provide the reasonable accommodation were procured in conformance with the procurement standard specified in 2 C.F.R. 200.317 – 200.326 (see below for more detail); and
- Verification by the member that the accommodation was provided.

Process for submitting applications:

Submit an email to PennSERVE with the following information. Please include this information in the body of the email or as a Word attachment. Do not send this information as a PDF. Additional attachments, such as copies of a receipt, may be in PDF format.

- Name of Organization (consistent with the name of the your organization in eGrants)
- Organization's point person for request: Contact name, telephone, and email address
- NSIP number for member with disability (no other Personally Identifiable Information (PII))
- Type of disability for which an accommodation has been provided
- Type of accommodation for which reimbursement requested
- A statement of how the accommodation helps the member achieve full participation in their service assignment(s)
- The amount of reimbursement being requested (If there is more than one receipt, please submit an itemized list with the total as well as each receipt.)
- A statement of whether this is a one-time request or a quarterly request for multiple reimbursements (i.e. for providing services that will yield many receipts, batching them into quarterly submissions is needed)
- Estimated total reimbursement that will be needed for accommodations in FY 2016 if it is not a one-time request
- Whether outside community resources were used or consulted in arranging the accommodation (i.e. Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.)

Also attached to the email is the program documentation of the claimed reimbursement, such as copies of a contract and/or invoice and evidence of payment of the expense. This documentation may be in PDF.

PennSERVE will submit this documentation to CNCS on behalf of your program including the grant and subgrant numbers and will receive a response to your request for disability accommodation grant funds within a few weeks of submitting it to CNCS.

NOTE:

- Do not include Personally Identifying Information (PII) in your request.
- Reimbursements will be made from CNCS to PennSERVE; PennSERVE will then reimburse the grantee
- Submission of this application for reasonable accommodation grant funds serves as a certification by the Grantee that the AmeriCorps member for whom the accommodation funds are sought has a disability as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). (“A person has a disability if they have a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.”)

You are not required to obtain documentation that the service member has a disability if the disability is apparent. You should obtain documentation from a medical or rehabilitation expert to better understand the need for the reasonable accommodation for service member requests where a disability is non-apparent or the accommodation request is not straightforward. These professionals can also verify that someone meets disability status. *Please note, there is much broader coverage under the ADA after the Amendments in 2008.*

Resources for Finding Reasonable Accommodations

The process of selecting the accommodation should be an interactive collaboration between the AmeriCorps member, his or her supervisor, and program managers.

Job Accommodation Network

Free technical assistance regarding disability accommodation is available through the Job Accommodation Network: www.askjan.org

Many individuals with disabilities may be clients of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, an agency that exists in each state, dedicated to training and supporting people with disabilities in search of gainful employment. It is worth exploring whether the member you are arranging accommodations for has a rehabilitation plan or whether they have access to equipment and services through Vocational Rehabilitation because of their affiliation with the agency. Here’s a directory of state-based Vocational Rehabilitation agencies:

<http://askjan.org/cgi-win/TypeQuery.exe?902>

Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Central Office

1521 N. 6th Street

TTY: 717-787-4885

Harrisburg, PA 17102

Toll-free Voice: 800-442-6351

Voice: 717-787-5244

Toll-free TTY: 866-830-7327

<http://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/ovr/Pages/default.aspx>

Assistive Technology Programs

Each state also has an Assistive Technology program which can assist with information and referral, loan, and technical assistance questions. Here is a directory broken down by state:

<http://www.resnaprojects.org/allcontacts/statewidecontacts.html>

Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT)

Institute on Disabilities, Temple University

Howard Gittis Student Center, Suite 411

1755 N. 13th Street

Philadelphia, PA 19122

Amy S. Goldman

215-204-5967

800-204-7428

866-268-0579

215-204-6336

atinfo@temple.edu

<http://disabilities.temple.edu>

(NEW) Procurement Standards

§200.316 Property trust relationship.

Real property, equipment, and intangible property, that are acquired or improved with a Federal award must be held in trust by the non-Federal entity as trustee for the beneficiaries of the project or program under which the property was acquired or improved. The Federal awarding agency may require the non-Federal entity to record liens or other appropriate notices of record to indicate that personal or real property has been acquired or improved with a Federal award and that use and disposition conditions apply to the property.

Section 7: OnCorps Reporting System

Introduction to OnCorps

Required Uses of the OnCorps Reporting System

Member Timesheets

Quarterly Reporting Requirements

Performance Measure Progress

Demographics

Successes/Challenges

Best Practices

Great Stories

Financial Reporting in OnCorps

Periodic Expense Reports

Aggregate Financial Reports

Providing Training to Staff and Members

Ensure Notifications are Received through OnCorps

Attachments:

7.1: OnCorps User Guide

Introduction to OnCorps

OnCorps is PennSERVE's online reporting system for all of its AmeriCorps grantees. OnCorps provides a repository for all financial and programmatic reporting so that PennSERVE can monitor grantees and gather data for required reporting to CNCS. **OnCorps is NOT linked to eGrants or the MyAmeriCorps Portal. It is a separate system that is unique to PennSERVE grantees.**

New programs must have their account created by PennSERVE. After initial set-up, programs are responsible for assigning staff access. Program directors are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the OnCorps reporting requirements and determine what user access levels are appropriate for different levels of staff.

Required Uses of the OnCorps Reporting System

The following shall be applicable to all programs:

1. Member information shall be entered into OnCorps within 60 days of a member's AmeriCorps enrollment date and shall be updated within 60 days of a member's exit date.
2. Member timesheets in OnCorps serve as the official record of member service hours. Member timesheets must be available upon request, and PennSERVE reserves the right to access timesheets via OnCorps at any time. Programs should use only approved Service and Training sub-categories to track members' activities. **(Exception: Professional Corps with approval for alternate timekeeping methods.)**
3. Program's Budgets shall be entered into OnCorps within 60 days of the program year start date. All requests for budget modifications shall be submitted via OnCorps. **(Exception: Fixed Cost Grants)**
4. All Periodic Expense Reports (PERs) and Aggregate Financial Reports (AFRs) shall be submitted via OnCorps, as well as emailed to 69183@pa.gov, as directed in section 5 of this Manual. **(Exception: Fixed-Cost Grants)**
5. Performance Measures shall be entered into OnCorps within 60 days of the program year start date. All Performance Measures appearing in the program's e-grants funding submission shall be entered into OnCorps, including volunteer and member development goals. **Performance measures must appear in OnCorps as they appear in the programs approved application for funding.**
6. Quarterly reporting shall be entered according to the schedule below, and must contain all required elements.

The attached OnCorps User Guide has step-by-step instructions for entering all required information into OnCorps.

Member Timesheets

All programs must use timesheets in OnCorps Reports as the official record of member service hours. Members must submit their hours in OnCorps no less than monthly to be reviewed and approved by the member’s direct, on-site supervisor AND by a staff person of the AmeriCorps program in which the member is serving. PennSERVE staff may periodically review member service hours using OnCorps Reports. **Exception:** Professional Corps programs may use an alternate timekeeping system if approved by PennSERVE and/or CNCS, as noted in Section 3 of this manual.

The member timesheet serves as the official time and attendance record. The time and attendance record is used to document member eligibility for in-service and post-service benefits.

Members may not receive service hours for:

- Lunch or rest periods. Exceptions include members who may remain in service during lunch periods, such as members serving at education-related host sites who take lunch with youth/students
- Engaging in any AmeriCorps prohibited activity
- Serving outside the United States

See the PennSERVE Member Timesheet Training for more information on member timesheets and program requirements. See attachment 7.1: OnCorps User Guide for instructions on initial set-up of member timesheets.

Quarterly Reporting Requirements

Below are the 2016-2017 Quarterly Reporting Due Dates, as well as the required elements of each report.

Reporting Due Date	For Time Period	PM Progress	Demographics	Successes/Challenges	Best Practices	Great Stories
11/30/16	Start of Program – 10/31/16	X	X	X		
2/28/17	11/1/16 – 1/31/17	X	X	X	X	X
5/30/17	2/1/17 – 4/30/17	X	X	X		
9/30/17*	5/1/17 – program year-end	X	X	X	X	X

***This report will serve as the year-end progress report; the due date is subject to change based on CNCS reporting deadlines. Programs will receive additional instruction regarding this report.**

Each of the above reports is considered part of the quarterly reporting requirement, and must be completed and/or updated by the above due dates. All Quarterly Reporting information will be used when compiling mid-year and end of year reports; PennSERVE may request additional information from programs as needed.

More information on completing each report in OnCorps can be found in the OnCorps User Guide.

Performance Measure Progress

Performance measure progress must be submitted quarterly. OnCorps only allows text to be entered in the performance measures progress report. Programs are strongly encouraged to explain their progress via the narrative space provided. However, should a program need to include tables or additional documentation that is not compatible with the text box format, they may attach additional documents. Please see the Performance Measure section of the OnCorps User Guide for specific instructions on including additional documentation on performance measure progress with quarterly progress reports.

Demographics

The Demographics Report requires data to be entered concerning a program's volunteers, applicants, and populations served. This information can be edited at any time throughout the quarter, but the data must be accurate and complete by each quarterly reporting due date.

Please note that only demographic data for the most current quarter should be entered, rather than cumulative data; OnCorps automatically compiles the cumulative numbers based on each quarter's reporting.

Successes/Challenges

Each quarter, programs should highlight one success and one challenge that they hope to overcome. Examples of success and challenges include enrollment, retention, recruitment, training, supervision, program and financial management, systems, data collection, evaluation, capacity building, and resource development, including raising match funds.

This report should also include information concerning a program's Enrollment Rate and Retention Rate. These numbers should be easily identifiable in the report and match the rates listed on *My AmeriCorps* Portal. If these rates are below 100%, an explanation should be provided and any corrective action the program will take should be identified as well.

This information presented in the Successes/Challenges report should be from the current quarter; a challenge one quarter, such as a problem recruiting volunteers, may turn into a success for the next quarter's report. This information will be used to track each program's progress; to determine if trainings and/or technical assistance may be need in certain areas; and if certain programs may be able to provide or may benefit from peer-to-peer technical assistance.

Programs required to complete corrective action plans should provide information on their progress in this section.

Best Practices

Unlike the Successes/Challenges report that informs PennSERVE of issues from the current quarter, the Best Practices report is for programs to highlight their long-term best practices for possible

duplication by other programs. This section is due for the second quarter report and for the year-end report.

This section may be as brief or as detailed as you wish; PennSERVE may contact your organization to ask for more information on your best practices and to share them with other programs. Please highlight practices that you would feel are duplicable to some, if not all, of Pennsylvania's AmeriCorps programs, and that you are comfortable explaining to other programs.

Great Stories

During the second quarter and end of year reporting, programs should submit two (2) Great Stories. Great Stories should preferably be from members and discuss a profound change that service has had on the community, an individual, or the member.

Financial Reporting in OnCorps

Periodic Expense Reports

As per Section 5 of this Manual, requests for reimbursements must be submitted in the form of Periodic Expense Reports (PERs). PERs may be submitted monthly or quarterly. If submitting quarterly, please note a separate PER must still be filled out for each month's expenses. Should a mistake in a PER be recognized after the PER is submitted, the PennSERVE fiscal officer should be contacted; he or she will then return the PER electronically for edits.

Programs must determine if they will be submitting PERs monthly or quarterly. PERs are due by the 15th of the following month. For example:

- Program's September 2016 invoice (submitting monthly): due October 15, 2016
- Program's first quarter invoice covering August 20 – November 30, 2016: due December 15, 2016

Aggregate Financial Reports

As per Section 5 of the Manual, PennSERVE requires Aggregate Financial Reports (AFRs) to be submitted quarterly. AFRs are created automatically using information entered into the Periodic Expense Reports (PERs). The quarter's current PERs should be selected to create the AFR.

AFRs should be submitted by the following dates:

- ❑ 10/31/16 (include PERs for July* - September)
- ❑ 1/31/17 (include PERs for October – December)
- ❑ 4/30/17 (include PERs for January – March)
- ❑ 7/30/17 (include PERs for April – June)
- ❑ 10/1/17 (include all PY '16-'17 PERs)

*Only programs with a PY '16-'17 start date earlier than August 20 should include a July PER in their 10/31/16 AFR

Providing Training to Staff and Members

Programs are responsible for ensuring that staff, site supervisors, and members obtain training in OnCorps. General OnCorps training may be accessed on the OnCorps site under the “Help” tab by viewing various tutorials. In addition, programs are strongly encouraged to create user manuals for their members. Examples of these manuals are uploaded to the OnCorps site on the Resources page.

Ensure Notifications are Received through OnCorps

PennSERVE may also use OnCorps as a communication tool. Programs should ensure that they receive notifications both on their OnCorps home page and via email. Program directors should ensure that all notifications are turned “on,” and that other user types (regional directors, site supervisors) are also receiving notifications. See the OnCorps user guide for more information on changing notification preferences.

REMINDER:

Questions regarding technical issues and site functionality should be directed to OnCorps via the “Help” tab on your OnCorps home screen.

Questions regarding PennSERVE policy on OnCorps usage and regarding reporting requirements or submitted reports should be directed to PennSERVE at Pennserve@pa.gov.