

Member  
Position  
Descriptions

PennSERVE Summer  
Webinar Series  
June 10, 2014

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### Housekeeping Items

- Should be able to hear AND see the webinar. Use both the call-in number AND the weblink provided
- Handouts received
- Shhhh – please mute your phone!

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### Why are Position Descriptions Important?

- Protects the member
- Protects the program
- Service Speaks Louder than Words!

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**In this Webinar you will....**

- Learn what CNCS says about position descriptions
- Receive a quick recap of prohibited activities
- Learn more about Duplication and Displacement
- Review limitations on certain other activities
- Review the required elements of a position description

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**What does CNCS say about Position Descriptions?**

- Member activities must be within the scope of the approved program grant and cannot be contrary to the law
- The grantee must develop member positions that provide for meaningful service activities and performance criteria that are appropriate for the skill level of the members

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**What does CNCS say about Position Descriptions (cont)**

As a grantee, you are responsible for making sure that the positions do not put members in a situation in which the member is at risk for:

- Engaging in a prohibited activity
- Violating the non-duplication and non-displacement requirements
- Prohibited fundraising activity

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**What Members Cannot Do: Prohibited Activities**

- 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, conducting 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 Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
- Conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation 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.

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**What Members Cannot Do:  
Duplication**

- *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.

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**Examples of Duplication:**

- Placing tutors in a school already served by another AmeriCorps program
- Operating a conservation corps in a geographic area already being served by another AmeriCorps program
- A program that receives significant funding from HHS uses AmeriCorps members as healthcare navigators for the new healthcare law

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**What Members Cannot Do:  
Displacement**

- (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.

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### What Members Cannot do: Displacement (cont)

- (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.

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### Displacement: not just about replacing laid-off workers!

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.

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 presently employed worker.

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### Ask Yourself:

- What is unique about the AmeriCorps members' service?
- What would not otherwise take place without them?
- Is the activity within the scope of my grant?
- Is the service activity meaningful?

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**Examples of Displacement:**

- A nonprofit applies for an AmeriCorps member because they have had recent lay-offs and cannot keep up with their caseload
- A host site requests members because their existing volunteers have irregular schedules and the organization wants to replace them with more reliable individuals
- A member adds "capacity" to a government organization by carrying out administrative tasks, such as administering forms to the general public or creating a database

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**Clerical Tasks: Not Meaningful Service Activities!**

- Answering Phones
- Processing Forms
- Data Entry/ Filing
- Handling calls for a family/youth crisis hotline
- Assisting low-income families to apply for assistance
- Reporting their performance metrics

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**What's wrong with this position description?**

A member is serving at the St. Vincent's Early Childcare Center. Essential Functions include:

- Members will care for 4 – 5 year old children in before and after school programs
- Members will help plan and carry out special enrichment activities

Position Requirements include:

- Previous work with children
- A positive Catholic worldview
- Driver's license

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### What's wrong with this position description?

A member is serving at the North Springfield Environmental Education Center. Essential Functions include:

- Improve acres of public lands and miles of trails, reporting results in the data management system
- Assist staff with front desk duties at the nature center
- Serve as environmental outreach advocate in the mayor's or legislator's office
- Provide outreach to encourage voting on environmental issues

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### What Members May Do – with Limitations

- Member Training – no more than 20% of the member service hours may be spent in education and training activities
- Federal and State Assistance – it is prohibited to use service for the sole purpose of referring individuals to Federal/State assistance programs
- Members as Team Leaders – team leaders are not permitted to act in a staff capacity. Supervising members is a staff responsibility
- Fundraising – members may spend no more than 10% of their service hours performing ALLOWABLE fundraising activities

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**More on referring others to Government 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 in part by the Federal Government
- This can be *part* of a members service – just not all of their service

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**What Team Leaders Can Do**

Team leaders may:

- Provide information and resources on best practices to other members
- Help develop parts of the program, such as training curriculum
- Provide support to members engaged in direct service

Team Leaders should be engaged in the same type of direct service as other members in the program!

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**What Team Leaders May NOT Do**

Team leaders may **NOT** supervise or be responsible for the AmeriCorps members. This includes

- Signing timesheets
- Evaluating member performance
- Disciplining other members
- Enrolling or exiting members
- Writing or signing program reports
- Managing the program's payroll or budget

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**Examples of Unallowable Team Leader Activities:**

- "Holding down the fort" at a service site with no other program or host site staff present
- Engaging in administrative management of the program, such as working in the My AmeriCorps Portal or working on member timesheets
- Acting as the sole point of contact for members for calling in sick, asking questions, etc...

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**More on Fundraising: What Members May Do**

AmeriCorps members may raise resources directly in support of the program's service activities (NOT the organization as a whole!) Examples include:

- Seeking donations of supplies to allow volunteers to carry-out the program's mission
- Seeking donations of cash to assist in service projects

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**More on Fundraising: What Members May NOT Do**

Members may NOT:

- Raise funds for the program's living allowances
- Raise funds for the organization's general operating expenses or endowment
- Write applications to the Corporation or any other Federal agency
- Spend more than 10% of their time on allowable fundraising activities

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### What's Wrong with this Position Description?

A member is serving with the CommunityGrow program. Essential functions include:

- Attend service projects with host site partners to assist in the building of homes for low-income families
- Attending academic classes to obtain a high school diploma. Approximately 30% of service time will be devoted to education attainment
- Support fundraising events such as the Walk for Youth and Annual Gala

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### What's Wrong with this Position Description?

A member is serving at the Shelbyville Shelter. Essential functions include:

- Providing outreach to homeless in the area about social services for which they qualify
- Assign daily caseloads to half-time members serving at the site
- Provide bookkeeping and proposal writing support

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**Putting it together: Creating a Strong Position Description**

Required Elements of the Position Description include:

- Member Name
- Host Site Name and Address
- Member's Immediate Supervisor Information
- If Member will have Access to Vulnerable Populations
- Member Position Summary
- Essential Functions of the Position

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**Strong Position Descriptions: Member Position Summary**

In a narrative format, briefly describe the responsibilities of the position. A successful position summary will include

- the community/population being served
- the unmet need that the members are filling
- quantifiable performance goals
- projected accomplishments

Keep it short whenever possible!

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**Examples of Strong Position Summaries**

The member will serve at the St. Vincent's Early Childcare Center. The member will provide enrichment activities for 4 – 5 year olds from low-income families, as well as one-on-one time with children struggling with behavior problems, a need the Center is not able to meet.

The member will serve 30 children throughout school year, with each child receiving at least 1 hour of group or one-on-one time with the member each week. At the end of 38 weeks, the children served will have improved in one of four targeted improvement areas.

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**How Could This Position Summary be Improved?**

The member will serve at the Springfield Community Center and will provide healthy futures training.

INSTEAD:

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**Strong Position Descriptions: Describing Essential Functions**

List all basic service activities that the member must perform on a daily basis.

Member activities should be described as explicitly as possible to ensure that prohibited activities are not taking place.

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**Drafting Strong Essential Functions: Avoid -**

- Avoid phrases such as "other duties as assigned" or vague statements about member responsibilities
- Avoid terms such as employment, work/job, job description, hired, or employee

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**Drafting Strong Essential Functions: Do -**

- Describe the position so that it's clear current staff activities are not being duplicated
- If a member is involved in volunteer recruitment or management, provide a brief description of the potential volunteer activities
- If members are required to participate in individual or group service projects away from their service site and outside their typical service activities, provide a description of typical projects

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**Drafting Strong Essential Functions: Questions to Ask**

- **Member is doing what (verb/action)?**  
Member will offer enrichment activities
- **To/for what or whom?**  
to low-income children at St. Vincent's Childcare
- **How do they do this?**  
in a small group (3 - 4 children) or one-on-one setting.
- **What does success look like?**  
Members will mentor each child they have identified to work with for at least 1 hour per week.

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**How can this task description be improved?**

- Member will create enrichment activities that align with standards.  
INSTEAD

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**In Summary: Things Members CAN'T Do**

- Prohibited Activities
- Violate Non-duplication requirements
- Violate Non-displacement requirements

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**In Summary: Things Members may do (with strings attached)**

- Training
- Guide others to federal or state assistance
- Serve as a Team Leader for other members
- Fundraise for 10% or less of their service hours

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**In Summary: Required Elements of Position Descriptions**

- Member Name
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- Member's Immediate Supervisor Information
- If Member will have Access to Vulnerable Populations
- Member Position Summary
- Essential Functions of the Position

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### In Summary: What to Include in a Position Summary

- the community/population being served
- the unmet need that the members are filling
- quantifiable performance goals
- projected accomplishments

Remember – KISS (Keep it Simple...)

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### In Summary: Questions to ask for Essential Functions

- Member is doing what (verb/action)?
- To/for what or whom?
- How do they do this?
- What does success look like?

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You have all the tools you need to create descriptive, compliant, and USEFUL position descriptions!



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**Where to Find More:**

Materials will be available in the OnCorps Resource Library

Updated position description requirements available in the 2014-2015 Manual (release date TBD)

More Questions?

[kemartini@pa.gov](mailto:kemartini@pa.gov), or (717) 772-4428

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