

**AmeriCorps Member  
RECRUITMENT  
RESOURCE GUIDE  
2019**

PRODUCED BY

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# SECTION 1

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## INTRODUCTION

Recruiting high-caliber candidates to serve in your AmeriCorps program is essential to achieve the best outcome for the beneficiaries that your organization serves. Onboarding the right AmeriCorps Members will result in high retention rates and a dedicated and passionate corps that helps your organization effectively meet its mission. As your AmeriCorps program develops, community needs change, and national and local economies shift, you will likely have to adjust recruitment tactics to ensure that your program continues to engage high-quality candidates.

Unfortunately, there is no one-size-fits all recruitment strategy that will ensure that your program meets its enrollment goals. To build a highly effective recruitment system, your program will need to clearly define its unique needs, target audience, resources, and work to refine each stage of the recruitment process to ensure that candidates smoothly flow through your recruitment-to-enrollment pipeline. Furthermore, because potential candidates have more service and employment options than ever before,

programs can no longer simply implement a “post and prey” strategy to meet their enrollment goals. Instead, we must be aware that in order to land the top candidates we must effectively market our positions, provide excellent customer service, and adequately evaluate potential AmeriCorps Members.

This guide has been developed to help your program think through each stage of the full-cycle recruitment process and identify realistic adjustments that you can implement to incrementally improve your Member recruitment outcomes. Because many AmeriCorps programs have limited financial and staff resources, special emphasis has been given to identifying free and time-effective strategies that can be easily incorporated into your recruitment systems over time. As with many other things in life, you will get out what you put into your recruitment strategy, and ultimately it is up to your team to implement the practices that will produce the greatest results for your program.



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# SECTION 2

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## STRUCTURING YOUR APPLICATION AND INTERVIEW PROCESS

### A. Developing an Attractive Position Posting

For many potential candidates, your position posting will be the first exposure they have to your program. This means that it is incredibly important to have an attractive posting that grabs their attention and provides them with the information that they need as efficiently as possible. Ensure that your posting clearly and concisely describes:

- The organization/program
- How the AmeriCorps Members contribute towards the mission
- The program’s commitment to diversity and inclusion
- Essential functions of the position
- Minimum requirements (education, physical ability, hours of service/time commitment, etc.)
- Training and support that will be provided
- Tangible and intangible benefits
- Reasonable accommodations language

Additionally, it is crucial that your organization describes itself as an AmeriCorps program and brand its postings as AmeriCorps positions. As much as possible, also make sure to use the AmeriCorps logo. This is not only important in order to help build AmeriCorps brand awareness, it is also an important part of the [AmeriCorps grant terms and conditions \(Sect. III\)](#)

Recommendations for formatting your posting:

#### **Title**

Your posting title needs to stand out from other titles. Make it compelling, fun and informative. For example, “Unlock the World – Teach a Child to Read with AmeriCorps” has much more impact than “AmeriCorps Member Tutoring Specialist”. Additionally, if the “job board” that you are posting

to filters search results alphabetically, ensure that you are posting starts with an “A” to ensure that your posting will generate toward the top of search results.

#### **Position Posting Length**

According to LinkedIn, there are signs that shorter postings may be more effective in the current recruitment market - postings of 300 words or less received higher apply rates than longer postings. Additionally, [ONGIG](#) - a company that works with major employers to optimize their recruiting strategies - found that apply rates go down for postings that have more than 700 words. Because of the need to describe the unique nature of the AmeriCorps service experience as compared to typical employment, the best rule of thumb would likely be to keep your AmeriCorps Member position postings between 300 and 700 words, with shorter postings being geared toward millennials.

#### **Sentence Length**

Shorter sentences lead to a higher comprehension rate. Strive to utilize sentences that are eight words or fewer to increase your program’s chances of clearly communicating the service experience. Removing adverbs can help reduce the length of sentences, while still maintaining the meaning of the sentence (i.e “You could potentially develop lesson plans.” – If you take out the word “potentially” the sentence has the same meaning). Examples of other commonly used adverbs include: Properly, Primarily, Closely, Preferable, and Creatively.

#### **Visual Appeal**

According to ONGIG candidates often reject position postings whose strings of text are too long.

- Keep paragraphs to three sentences or less.
- Use bullet points.
- Have clean section headings (About You, About Us, etc.).

A picture is worth a thousand words. When possible, include a picture or graphic that will have an impact on individuals reviewing your posting.

### Style

Make your posting more inviting to candidates by writing in a conversational and positive way. You can achieve this by asking questions (How would you like to help your community while also developing marketable job skills?) and writing in the first or second person (We/Our or You/Your).

### Position-Specific Postings

If your program has multiple position types available, it is strongly suggested that your program advertise each position separately. Typically, AmeriCorps Member postings that are more specific will receive a greater number of high-quality applicants (i.e. Volunteer Coordinator vs AmeriCorps Positions Available). Position-specific postings will also help clearly communicate the opportunity and keep the length of your postings manageable.

### Review

Have someone else read through your opportunity before you post it to make sure that you are clear and have said exactly what you need to convey in as few words as possible. It is also a good idea to have someone look over it for grammatical errors, as postings with errors typically receive fewer applications.

## B. Strong Customer Service is Key

*Employment equilibrium* is a term that some companies use to describe whether the employee hiring process is in their favor or in favor of the applicant. Typically, employers consider applicants to have the advantage when the

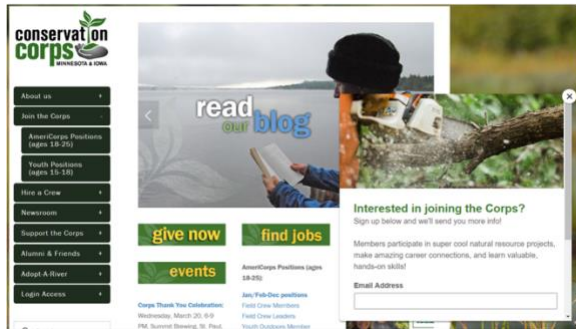
unemployment rate has reached 6% or less. With the U.S. currently experiencing a low unemployment rate, applicants have plenty of choices for employment and service opportunities. This means that your program must ensure that it provides quality customer service to all applicants, if not, candidates will likely choose to take their talents to another company or program that did! Below are some general tips to ensure that your program provides quality customer service:

- When a candidate submits an application, your program should immediately acknowledge that the application has been received and provide initial guidance regarding what the applicant can expect next. Your program will need to develop a unique system that aligns with your application process, but one example would be to have all applications submitted to an email account that has an automated reply that thanks the candidate and describes when they should expect to hear back from someone.
- Your program should ensure that the strategy that it implements for conducting Member interviews takes no longer than three weeks to complete--from the time a candidate submits an application, to the time that they receive an offer or rejection letter. If your program's interview process takes more than three weeks, you may risk losing good applicants to other opportunities.
- At the end of each interview, always outline what the candidate can expect in regard to next steps. Additionally, always allow an opportunity for the candidate to ask questions.
- Dress professionally during interviews, be on-time, and give the applicant 100% of your attention.
- If you promise the applicant follow-up items, be sure to follow-up with them.



## C. Eliminating Barriers to Applying

In a competitive recruitment market, it is important to make the application process as streamlined as possible to ensure that candidates can easily indicate their interest in serving and not become frustrated with the process.



### Application Method

CNCS requires that all AmeriCorps grantees post their positions on the AmeriCorps portal. Although the portal can also be used to accept Member applications, grantees may choose to use an alternative method. Programs using the AmeriCorps portal to accept applications oftentimes cite the following concerns:

- **Delayed Activation:** CNCS staff must approve postings before they become active, this can sometimes take several days. Additionally, if errors are found in a posting, it can remain inactive until the corrections are processed through the state's Service Commission. Both of these delays can cost a program valuable candidates.
- **User Experience:** AmeriCorps programs have indicated that oftentimes their applicants have expressed challenges when attempting to submit an application through the system. This can cause program staff to spend precious working hours on providing TA to potential applicants on how to navigate the AmeriCorps portal.
- **Sharing Postings with Applicants:** It can oftentimes be challenging to direct candidates to the correct AmeriCorps

Portal URL link, as it can change with updates. Additionally, multiple position postings can lead to confusion.

- **Competition:** When applicants are referred to the AmeriCorps portal, they can become aware of additional service opportunities, which can reduce the chances of a candidate applying to serve with your program.
- **Customization:** Programs often report that using an outside application method allows for more flexibility in designing a customized process that meets the unique needs of their program.

For the reasons listed above, it is suggested that programs create an internal application process to reduce the number of barriers that a candidate may experience when applying to your program. When posting your program's required postings to the AmeriCorps Portal, clearly outline that all applications must be received through the program's internal process and describe the process.

### Website/Application Structure

Facilitating a simple/positive user experience is important to ensure candidates choose to submit an application to serve with your program. Listed below are a few items to consider when developing or reviewing your program's website/landing page:

- Make it easy for applicants to find out how to apply. Place your program's "Apply Now" button in multiple places. (Recommendations: At the top of the landing page before the full position description is listed, after the position description, on any drop-down menus associated with the program.)
- Many entry-level and millennial candidates rely on their mobile phones, and not personal computers, to access the internet. When developing an internal application process, it is important that your program works towards ensuring that both the information regarding the position and how to apply, as well as the

application process, interfaces well with mobile devices.

- Applicants viewing your opportunities via mobile device may not want to read through a lot of text. Capture a candidate's attention early by succinctly listing some of your program's greatest selling points on your website. This will hopefully capture a candidate's attention quickly and then you can provide additional details about the program below those key selling points.
- Ensure online content is current and lists up-to-date deadlines and the next Member start date

### Indicating Interest

Many potential candidates prefer to be provided with additional information/guidance before choosing to submit a full application. Ensure that your program has an easy process for candidates to indicate interest in your program. Suggestions:

- At tabling events, ensure that you have a contact sheet that requests name, number and email addresses so that you can follow-up with attendees. Using a tablet or laptop to collect this information can help ensure that you can clearly read the information after the event, and can also help expedite the process of uploading attendee emails to your contact lists.
- Consider adding a "Request More Info" button next the description of the program on your organization's website or social media posts that directs candidates to provide their contact info.

## D. Strategic Writing Samples

Many AmeriCorps programs value the process of incorporating a writing sample into their application process. Instead of asking applicants to respond to a generic question, consider asking candidates to respond to several short-answer

questions that also seek to identify potential red flags based on Member retention challenges your program has experienced in the past.

Examples:

### Members leaving early due to financial challenges:

*Individuals who serve with [Program Name] do not receive an hourly pay or a salary during their term of service with the program. Instead, first-time AmeriCorps Members will receive a \$1,263 monthly living allowance in exchange for their commitment to consistently provide 40 or more hours of service to the program per week. Please briefly describe why you believe that the \$1,263 monthly living allowance will adequately allow you to meet your needs during your term of service.*

### Leaving for alternative employment options:

*In three to five sentences, please describe why you are choosing to pursue a term of service instead of regular employment at this point in your life/career, and what specifically attracted you to the opportunity with [Program Name]?*

### Members struggling to cope with program challenging situations or major life changes:

*Although your AmeriCorps term of service with [Program Name] will be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life, it might also be one of the most challenging experiences. What do you believe will be some of the greatest challenges that you will face while serving with [Program Name]? What strategies will you use to help you adjust to these challenges?*



## E. Applicant Tracking

In order to consistently improve the performance of your recruitment strategies, it is important to know what applicant sourcing strategies are producing the highest:

- number of candidates,
- percentage of enrolled candidates, and
- quality Members.

Once you begin to capture this data, your program will know where to focus its recruitment efforts in order to maximize valuable staff time and the program's financial resources. Ensure that your program's application includes a question that asks applicants to specify where they first heard about the opportunity.



Many applicants will default to indicating your “website” if that is where they accessed the application. Ensure that “website” is one of the last options to choose from and that you phrase the question to encourage the most accurate answer.

*(i.e. Please indicate where you first heard about the AmeriCorps Program. Be as accurate as possible. Your answer will not be incorporated as part of the application review process.)*

## FREE RESOURCE ALERT!

### [Google Forms](#)

Google Forms is a free and easy-to-use online tool that allows you to create documents that can collect information from respondents. Google Forms can be easily linked to webpages and online posts and could be used as a simple tool for collecting applications for your program.

### [Bitly](#)

Bitly is a free online tool that can be used to shorten the length URL links and make it easier for candidates to locate your program's application. Additionally, Bitly can be used to track how many “clicks” a link has received. This feature can help your program track the performance of different types of recruitment ads.

## F. Developing Your Program's Interview and Selection Philosophy

Before beginning the process of interviewing applicants, it is strongly suggested that your AmeriCorps program take time to develop an *Interview Philosophy*. In general, an *Interview Philosophy* is a list of guiding principles that your program can use to help develop its recruitment marketing and selection processes to ensure that you are engaging candidates that are well-suited to serve in the program. You should include all key stakeholders including supervisors and staff at Member placement sites in the development of its *Interview Philosophy*. This will ensure that all parties agree on and are committed to the philosophy. Furthermore, a program's *Interview Philosophy* should be used to help shape all components of the recruitment and selection process including marketing, outreach, interviewing, and Member selection. Below is a sample of an existing AmeriCorps program's *Interview Philosophy* and an outline of how it has been used to shape the program's recruitment and selection process.

*SBP's AmeriCorps Member Interview Philosophy:*

### Identifying Key Traits

*We believe that hard skills are teachable if a candidate possesses the key traits that typically lead to success at SBP and he or she embraces our organizational values.*

- *The program uses behavioral interviewing questions that are geared towards identifying the attributes that typically lead to a Member having a successful term of service with the organization. – Coachable, Accountable, Problem Solver, Takes Initiative, Possess Leadership Qualities, Resilient, Adaptive, Excels in a Fast-Pace/Challenging Environment, and Team Player)*

### Defining Level of Experience

*We recognize that many of our AmeriCorps applicants have limited job experience and may be seeking to gain professional experience while serving with SBP.*

- *The program has geared its interview questions around young professionals (i.e. questions are not limited to only past work experiences.)*

### Determining Key Challenges

*We know that for an AmeriCorps Member to be successful, they must also have a strong understanding of the challenges that they will encounter while serving with SBP.*

- *The program incorporates short-answer questions into its Member application to help identify whether or not a candidate has a strong understanding of the challenges that they will face during their term of service.*

### Committing to Diversity

*We know that a diverse corps of AmeriCorps Members will make our organization strong.*

- *The program lists its commitment to diversity in its position postings and educates its staff on how to avoid applicant bias during the interview process.*

### Customer Service Strategy

*We understand that in a strong job market, SBP is competing against traditional employers as well as other AmeriCorps programs for top talent.*

- *Multiple staff are present during each Member interview to ensure that a quick hiring decision can be made.*

## G. Consider Adopting a Behavioral Interviewing Strategy

*What is Behavioral Interviewing?*

An interviewing technique whereby the applicant is asked to describe past behavior in order to determine whether he/she is suitable for a position. For example, an interviewer may ask; "Tell me about a time when you dealt with a

disruptive customer;” rather than asking “What would you do in the event that you had to deal with a disruptive customer?”

- Behavior-based interviewing is rooted in the theory that hiring decisions should not just be made on first impressions or hard skills alone.
- Behavior-based interview questions can help identify candidates who look good on paper, but who may lack essential qualities.
- The technique reveals how candidates react in a given situation, how they collaborate on a team, and how they interact with clients.
- Provides concrete examples or proof that the applicant has the experience and skills for the position.
- Helps organizations evaluate and choose between candidates who, at first glance, may seem equally qualified for the position.

*How should you prepare for conducting a behavioral interview?*

- Be prepared to ask follow-up or probing questions until an applicant fully describes their behavior in a specific situation.
- Encourage applicants with minimal professional experience to use an example from a non-professional environment such as in a study group, athletic team, or while serving as a volunteer.
- Ask your original question again, slightly differently, or use alternative questions on your interview template.
- Ask about the implications and outcomes of a candidate’s answer.
- Familiarize yourself with the S.T.A.R. Method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to help guide applicants in the right direction:  
<https://www.caseinterview.com/star-method>

## H. Training Interviewers

Individuals have different comfort levels regarding the process of facilitating and evaluating interviews. No matter what interview strategy your program chooses to adopt, you should ensure that all individuals who will play a part in the interview process are fully trained on the program’s interview strategies, how to evaluate an applicant and how to avoid illegal interview practices. Below are a few basic tips and recommendations for helping to prepare interviewers.

*How to prepare for an interview?*

Remember that an applicant is also interviewing the organization. It is important to positively represent the program and make the applicant feel welcomed and energized about the idea of joining the team.

- Start with small talk or an ice-breaker.
- Be professional and respectful of the applicant’s time.
- Smile during the interview.
- Discuss the organization and your department with enthusiasm.
- Be willing to share your personal story of why you became involved in national service.
- Be prepared to discuss the next steps in the interview process.
- Be prepared to answer common applicant questions. Some examples of common questions include:
  - *What do you like most about working for the organization/program?*
  - *What is the most challenging part of the AmeriCorps position?*
  - *What is typical day like?*
  - *What is the office culture like?*
  - *What do AmeriCorps Members typically move on to do after serving with the program?*
- Be prepared to share a Member success story.

### How to evaluate an applicant?

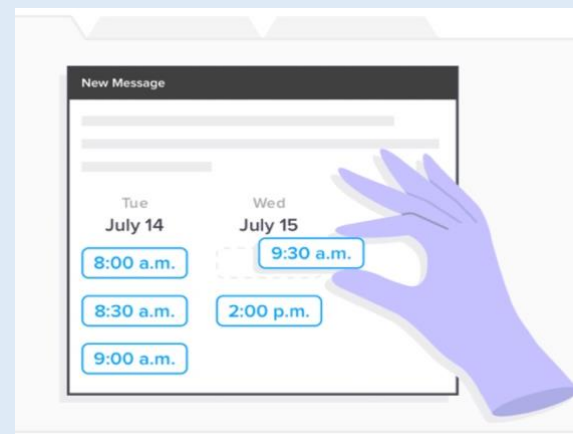
- Be realistic! No one is perfect. AmeriCorps programs are fantastic at developing future leaders.
- Past behavior does not always predict future behaviors - was a lesson learned?
- Be cautious of canned answers. Candidates should be able to include specific details and answer any additional questions.
- Stay out of the “WOULDS”. When a candidate’s response contains the word “would” (e.g., would do, would have done) you are probably getting a theoretical answer about possible future behavior. Re-focus the candidate on telling you about real past behavior.
- When a candidate uses the words “typically”, “generally” or “usually”, he or she is being vague. Ask them to tell you what he or she actually did in one specific situation.
- A candidate who describes the actions of a group using words like “we” or “the team” is being vague about his or her specific thoughts, actions, contributions, and impact. Ask the candidate to tell you what he or she did.
- You can also evaluate candidates on their inactions – what a person did not say or do in a certain situation can indicate potential red flags.
- Pay attention to the kinds of examples your candidates choose. From their answers, you’ll be able to determine how they define a challenging situation/problem, a difficult client, or a demanding work environment.
- Consider whether or not the applicant’s behavioral traits would allow them to build the skills they need to be successful at the position.
- Body language - be careful. Various personality attributes can result in negative body language. A person who does not make eye contact may just be shy, not dishonest.

- Body language is also dependent on culture. For example, eye contact may be important in Western cultures, but in Japan, it is sometimes viewed negatively.
- Paying too much attention to nervous tics can lead you astray but being relaxed when interacting with people is important for certain roles.

## FREE RESOURCE ALERT!

### Calendly

Calendly can help you schedule meetings without the back-and-forth emails. The service has the ability to link to most popular online calendar systems and allows applicants to self-schedule when their interview will occur based on the availability that you have indicated. Meeting details will automatically populate on your calendar and will also send a notification to the applicant.



## I. Legal Considerations While Interviewing

Generally, it is illegal to ask candidates questions associated with the categories listed below. AmeriCorps programs should ensure that all individuals who will be conducting interviews have been fully trained on how to avoid illegal interview practices, and it is recommended that an attorney is consulted if the program has any questions regarding the legality of their practices. Additionally, a simple Google search regarding *legal interviewing* will produce a plethora of resources on the topic.

- Age
- Race or Color
- Disabilities
- Marital status
- Religion
- Height and weight
- Non-professional affiliations
- Personal life such as spouse, children, or financial situation

## J. Best Practice for Conducting Virtual Interviews

### **Be aware of Your Environment**

Ensure that your environment/background looks professional and the interview is conducted in a quiet, well-lit space (lighting and windows can cast shadows). If possible, lock the room to prevent people from going inside and interrupting you while you are on a video call. It is also best to direct all incoming calls to voicemail to avoid disruptions.

### **Double-Check Your Hardware**

With video interviews, you are dependent on your internet connection and hardware such as your computer, speaker or headphones, and microphone. Make sure that your gadgets are working before the interview to prevent delays and technical disruptions.



When a candidate self-discloses information, it is generally ok to acknowledge the information, but it is best to focus on the essential functions of the posting.

### **Test**

Test your voice/microphone prior to the call if you can. If you can record a practice call, try to view your body language and tone of your voice to see how you present yourself. This is the first impression the candidate will get.

### **Be Professional**

Don't allow a remote interview to cause you to relax in the way you conduct the interview. Conduct this interview with the same level of professionalism and importance as you would a face-to-face interview.

### **Punctuality & Timing Are Crucial**

Users want to be sure they retain professionalism. A good way to do this is through being on time. It can be very distracting when individuals arrive late, even if they are merely sitting in on an interview. A late entrance creates unexpected background noise that can really hinder the interview.

### **Expect a Delay**

Not all areas or cities have a fast and stable internet connection. When interviewing candidates expect a delay in Skype or Google Hangouts. Allow for a long pause after your question. Avoid interrupting your interviewee mid-sentence, and do not talk too fast.

### **Check Your Eye Contact**

It's tempting to check yourself out on the screen during video interviews, but remember to look at the camera instead so it appears you're talking.

### **No Multitasking During the Interview**

Just like you expect the applicant to be respectful of your time, you should also be respectful of the applicant's time.

### **Remember to Smile**

Put the candidate at ease by smiling early and often. You are interviewing the candidate with the intent of making a hiring decision. The candidate is also interviewing you with the intent of making an employment decision. Have the candidate leave with a positive experience.

## **K. Candidate Engagement – Preventing “Ghosting”**

As if sourcing and selecting candidates wasn't hard enough, many AmeriCorps programs also struggle with the challenge of candidates “ghosting”, or not showing-up for their interview or even their first day of service. To address the challenge of ghosting, it is important for your program to have a well-rounded candidate engagement strategy that will not only ensure that applicants feel valued, but they will also know the negative impact that ghosting can have of the community being served.

Even if a candidate seems nice, committed, and provided good references, it is a best practice to assume that they do present a potential of ghosting, rather than assuming that they do not.

As discussed at the beginning of this section, ensuring a high level of customer service can go a long way. If there is a lack of communication or

feedback from the program during the application and interview process, it can very well lead to candidates justifying their action of not communicating their intention to skip an interview or not show-up for the start of service.

Use free online scheduling software like [Calendly](#) (further described in sect. Sec. 2.H) to give candidates more control over the interview scheduling process.

Use the application writing sample/short-answer questions to emphasize the negative impact that ghosting can cause. Ex. *When individuals who are selected to serve with [Program Name] withdraw before or during their term of service, it dramatically impacts the ability of an organization to fulfill its mission to [insert program mission] and can ultimately lead to a loss in the ability of the organization to host an AmeriCorps Program. In three to five sentences, please briefly describe why you are committed to starting and completing your term of service.*

Use the interview process to have a real conversation with candidates about ghosting.

- Broach the subject. Discuss the impact that ghosting can have not only on the organization, but how it can also burn bridges for an individual within the community.
- Determine if the applicant is also applying for other jobs or service positions.
- Pay close attention to applicants' career goals. Many candidates who ghost have short-term goals. Ask how your program fits into their plans and what motivates them. If they hesitate, or don't seem excited, it may be a red-flag.

When extending an offer to an applicant, set expectations for a timely answer –  
“To accept the position please complete the following two action items by 5pm on Tuesday January 24<sup>th</sup>.

A) Respond back to this email indicating your acceptance of the position.



*B) Schedule your FBI fingerprint-based background check using the attached guidance document.*

Ensure that there is communication and engagement with candidates in-between the time that they receive their offer letter and their start date with the program.

Ask current members to make personal phone calls, email, or send hand-written notes/care packages to incoming Members. These communications should:

- stress how important the incoming Member's service will be to the community
- how excited everyone is to have the individual joining the program
- discuss whether or not the individual needs any additional information to help them prepare for their service.

Continue communicating with the incoming Members by scheduling periodic check-in calls with the candidate to provide them with updates, let them know what to expect, and gauge if they have any questions or concerns.

Form social media groups for incoming members, and spur conversations by asking questions to the group – “What excites everyone the most about their upcoming service?” If you notice that one of the incoming members is not active in the group, it may be a good time to check-in with them.



Organize volunteer or social events for incoming Members. Kickball games between current and incoming members are usually a big success. These may be great leadership opportunities for current AmeriCorps Members!

## L. Engaging Member Placement Sites in Recruitment

Significantly engaging AmeriCorps Member placement sites in your program's recruitment strategy is oftentimes easier said than done, but it will typically increase your program's ability to meet its enrollment, retention, and quality assurance goals.

We know that one of the very strongest methods for sourcing AmeriCorps applicants is through word-of-mouth, and if clear recruitment expectations are not established for your placement site partners, your program is likely operating at a disadvantage by not effectively tapping into sites' existing networks. Furthermore, if placement sites are not significantly engaged in the Member selection process, it reduces their buy-in and investment in the success of the Members who are placed with them and the program may be blamed for Member performance issues. Below are a few best practices to consider when developing a placement site recruitment strategy:

It is important to establish the specific roles that both the placement site and your organization will be expected to fulfill during the Member recruitment process. Be sure to clearly outline these expectations in your Placement Site MOU/Agreement/Contract.

Placement site staff are typically less-informed regarding the specifics that govern AmeriCorps and your program. To ensure a high level of customer service, it is suggested that all applicants should submit their application through a program-administered application portal/process. Additionally, it is also suggested that program staff be the first individuals who makes contact with applicants (i.e. next-step guidance, scheduling an interview, conducting and initial screening or first-round interview).

There are several methods that your program can use to match applicants to a placement site and your program should utilize the method that is most applicable to your unique program design.

- Applicants can indicate the specific placement site/opportunity that they are interested in applying for.
- Applicants can rate their placement site choices.
- Candidates can be matched after acceptance to the program.

Consider setting the expectation that the program will not refer additional “general applicants” to the placement site position until the placement site has successfully secured a minimum number of applications/referrals from their internal outreach efforts.

To avoid duplicative opportunity postings and unnecessary competition between placement sites that serve the same community, it is likely that the program should be responsible for managing position postings that are intended to engage a broad-base public audience (i.e. AmeriCorps Portal, Indeed, Craigslist, etc.).

It is important to set clear and specific expectations for placement sites. If the program will be managing broad-base public postings, at a minimum placement sites should be expected to:

- Advertise their service opportunities on their organization’s website
- Distribute the service opportunity through their organization’s list serve and newsletters
- Notify their current volunteers of the service opportunity
- Educate the organization’s staff regarding the service opportunity and ask them to assist with outreach
- Share position announcements made by the program on their organization’s social media accounts

Applicable placement sites staff should be required to provide dates and blocks of time that they will be available to conduct interviews with qualified applicants.

Consider having sites submit a recruitment plan and contribute towards the development of Member position descriptions as part of the placement site application process.

Consider developing a “recruitment launch kit” to distribute to your placement site partners to assist them in their internal efforts. The launch kit could include:

- A guide that outlines items such program/position overview, benefits/selling points, effective recruitment strategies, interviewing best practices, and required timelines and expectations
- Print and digital recruitment marketing materials
- Graphics and sample language for social media posts
- *Note: Some programs also find that provided recruitment information in a concise document is more effective. If you believe that this may be the case for your program, consider simply developing a one-page document that lists key “must know” items.*

If possible, it is always ideal to supplement written guidance with group or one-on-one training and support. To assist in developing your placement site recruitment training and support strategy, consider referencing the following sections of this guide:

- Interview and selection philosophy - Sect. 2.F
- Behavioral Interviewing - Sect. 2.G
- Training interviewers - Sect. 2.H
- Legal considerations while interviewing - Sect 2.I
- Engaging Member Placement Sites - Sect. 2.K

Consider providing prizes or incentives to placement sites that meet certain recruitment milestones.

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# SECTION 3

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## STRATEGIC ONLINE RECRUITMENT MARKETING

Recruitment marketing is the process of nurturing and attracting talented individuals to your organization using marketing methods and tactics. Online marketing can be advantageous and cost-effective, but only if your program has a digital recruitment strategy. With limited recruitment funds, it is essential that you talk to the right people, at the right time, with the right message.

A digital recruitment marketing strategy should be actionable and include specific steps you'll take to achieve your recruitment goals, while also translating the strategic vision of your program/organization. Your goals will help shape your messaging and the tactics you deploy.

The four main goals of every digital recruitment marketing strategy are to:

1. make potential candidates aware of your organization and open positions,
2. trigger their interest into your organization,
3. make them consider you as their next "employer" of choice, and
4. drive talent to apply to the open positions your organization has available.

Your recruitment marketing strategy should be designed to create a structure that will guide all marketing, advertising, and content-related items throughout the year. Included below are some useful strategies and resources that are intended to help you build a successful recruitment marketing campaign centered around these goals.

### A. Engaging Your Target Audience

#### Developing Your Message

By now you should have developed a good idea of who your target applicant pool is for your

organization and why they may consider becoming a Member. Now you need to craft a personalized, consistent message to capture their attention and address their individual questions and needs. Your messaging should communicate concrete benefits and set your program apart from other opportunities.

Consider developing multiple versions to target different audiences. Candidates' demographics, behavior patterns, motivations and goals will vary and the way you communicate with them needs to be tailored to their needs. For example, a blog geared toward college students may highlight loan deferment and the education award. Material geared towards recruiting individuals age 55+ may highlight the ability to transfer the education award to a child or grandchild.

Here are some additional examples of practical methods for gathering information about your target audiences to develop personalized messaging:

- Complete the recruitment mapping exercise included in Sect. 8
- Interview or survey current Members to discover how they first heard about your organization and what convinced them to join.
- Contact potential candidates that did not convert to find out why they decided not to become a Member.
- Look through your contacts database to uncover trends about Member demographics and how they find and consume your content (i.e. how did they first learn about the program, what motivated them to apply, did a high number attend the same high school, college, or earn a similar degree, etc.).

## Develop Recruitment Motto/Slogan

Now that you have the messaging down, it's time to get fun with it! Think about developing a recruitment motto to be used consistently throughout your advertising that is easy to remember and has the type of impact that will get people talking. Then use the recruitment motto on everything! From social media cover photos, to video, email signatures, billboards, flyers, program T-shirts, hashtags, etc. Examples include:

- CNCS's "Be the Greater Good"
- SBP's "Get Paid, Learn Skills, Repay Student Loans, Do Good"
- Teach for America's "Change Starts Here - Become a Teacher,"
- Service Year Alliance's "A Better You. A Greater us."



## B. Developing Content that Convinces and Converts

With consistent, engaging content, you can hit touchpoints that attract and pull candidates through every stage of the decision-making journey, build connections with them, and position your organization to be top-of-mind when they are ready to consider new opportunities.

It's important to understand that you need a recruitment marketing strategy including the why, who, what, and where BEFORE you build your content plan. A content plan is very tactical. It documents the specifics of how you will execute your strategy and who on your team will be handling each task. It should include details such as the key topic areas you will cover, what content you will create, when and how to share your

content, and specific calls to action you will include. If you don't create a content plan all of your communications can look completely disconnected. Use this information to not only create a long-term content plan but also organize daily, monthly, quarterly, and yearly efforts in pursuit of your goals.

## Consistent Flow of Content

Creating a few pieces of content here and there might help someone understand a single topic better, but they won't help you hit all of those touchpoints in the Member journey - and your target audience will quickly forget who you are. You need to be consistent in the frequency and messaging of your content.

Set a schedule of when and how much you are going to post on social, blog, update your position postings, etc., and stick to it. There is no point in creating a content plan when it is not feasible to follow. Be realistic in how much you plan to create and post content.

## Reuse, Repurpose and Repost Content

A great way to keep a consistent flow of content is to think about how content you have already created can be adapted and repurposed to fit other formats. For example, take the information in your blog post to create slide presentations, videos, infographics, a series of tweets or invite your audience to discuss your content in a webinar. So-called 'evergreen' content with a longer shelf life containing useful tips and advice can be reposted over a longer period of time.

## Elements of Effective Content

Before creating content, it is important understand the elements of effective, engaging content that will convert potential applicants into Members. The following best practices can be applied across social media, website landing pages, blogs, email marketing, and more:

- Grab their attention by using compelling headlines that highlight the key benefits of joining the program, invoke curiosity, or pose a question.

- Keep it simple—use basic language and avoid program jargon, acronyms, and more detail than is necessary.
- Speak directly to your audience. You want your content to feel personal.
- Include strong call-to-actions (CTAs) that lead them to contact information and/or link to the program’s application process. When developing online content, ensure that there is an easy way for prospective applicants to indicate interest (i.e. Add a “Request More Info” button next to social media posts that directs candidates to provide their basic contact info).
- Include important deadlines.
- Incorporate pictures, illustrations, video, and infographics throughout the content.

When developing content for your AmeriCorps program you will also want to ensure that your organization is adhering to the AmeriCorps branding requirements. The CNCS [Communications Resource](#) page not only contains a branding guide that your program can reference, but also additional helpful resources such as content templates, fact sheets, and sample event forms.

### Pictures

A picture is worth a thousand words. When designing recruitment material for your program, make sure to use high-quality pictures that showcase a diverse corps to help illustrate what the Member experience is all about. Studies conducted by Service Year Alliance found that action-shot pictures that showcase non-staged smiling Members are most effective (regardless of the service activity). Below is an example of one of Service Year Alliance’s most successful online flyers.



*Don't miss out! Paid service year opportunities are closing this month with [Repair the World](#), [American Conservation Experience](#), [OneStar Foundation](#), and more! Apply today to spend a year gaining real-world skills and making an impact in a local community: [bit.ly/closinginmay](http://bit.ly/closinginmay)*

It is always best for you to use pictures from your own program, but if needed, there are several open-source resources for accessing quality stock photos of AmeriCorps Members in action.

- [Official National Service Photo Repository](#)
- [ASC AmeriCorps State Dropbox](#)

### Illustrations

Illustrations are a mix of pictures and graphic design used throughout social media, blog posts, website, etc. to visually convey one single message. The most effective illustrations follow the branding of the organization, utilize large, eye-catching pictures and graphics, limit typeface to 1-2 font choices, stick with 2-3 contrasting (or ‘complimentary’) colors, use white space to contrast with a bold, colorful element in the design.



## Video

If a picture is worth a thousand words, how much is a video worth? Video recruitment guarantees an expansion in the reach of any recruitment effort. In fact, 4x as many consumers would rather watch a video about a product rather than read about it. Shorter videos are typically more effective (30sec-1min) and keep in mind about 20% of people will leave after the first 10 seconds of your video. To convince the viewer to keep watching, clearly explain what they are about to see, and how it is of benefit to them. Additionally, try to include important information and call-to-actions early.

All programs are encouraged to develop an AmeriCorps Member recruitment video that highlights the program's Member experience and include the video on the applicant landing page. If

your program offers several position types, consider making multiple videos that discusses each specific position and provide a direct link to those videos as part of the position description associated with those service specific opportunities.

## Infographics

Infographics are graphic visual representations of information, data or knowledge intended to present information quickly and clearly. In fact, great infographic design can translate complex data into something everyone should be able to understand at a glance. (i.e. Ideas for infographic content include showcasing how many people your organization has served, homes you have built, or top 5 skills you will learn as an AmeriCorps member serving with your program).

### FREE RESOURCE ALERT!

#### [Bitable](#)

Bitable is a free online tool that can be used to create simple animated videos that can help draw attention to your online recruitment initiatives. You can create your own video from scratch or use one of the free templates available on the site. Additional features can also be purchased.

#### [Piktochart](#)

Web-based infographic application which allows users without intensive experience as graphic designers to easily create infographics and visuals using themed templates.

#### [Canva](#)

Free tool to easily create beautiful designs + documents. Use Canva's drag-and-drop feature and professional layouts to design consistently stunning graphics.

#### [Thumbtack](#)

Thumbtack is a free online service that matches customers with local professionals in their area. AmeriCorps programs can use the resource to help them identify photographers, videographers, website designers, marketing consultants, translators, etc. that can be contracted to assist in their recruitment marketing efforts.

#### [TapRoot+](#)

TapRoot+ connects nonprofit organizations with companies and volunteers who are willing to provide pro bono professional services like marketing.



# TIP

Consistent messaging does not end online, you need to ensure you have internal collaboration across your organization so you can deliver a compelling and consistent message across all touchpoints in the Member journey.

## C. Campaign Ideas

### Member Spotlights

Member spotlights via social media posts, newsletter articles, etc. can not only help bring additional awareness to your program but can also assist with facilitating a positive service experience for current Members who are featured. Member spotlights also serve as a resource for prospective candidates who are considering whether or not the program is the right fit for them.

- Brief Member quotes help succinctly illustrate how serving with the program will make someone feel. Studies have indicated that showcasing Member or beneficiary stories rather than program impact data does a better job inspiring action (such as applying to serve).
- Alumni Spotlights: Highlighting program alumni also produces increased awareness to your program and can help illustrate how prospective candidates can leverage the service experience to advance their careers.





### SYA – “This Was My Office”

Throughout 2018, Service Year Alliance is encouraging AmeriCorps programs to join their coordinated recruitment marketing campaign and highlight their Members’ “offices” in order to inspire young people to think outside the box when making decisions about their futures. Full campaign details, as well as helpful templates can be found at the following web address:

[https://about.serviceyear.org/my\\_office\\_campaign](https://about.serviceyear.org/my_office_campaign)



### Additional Ideas:

- Survey or poll
- Behind the scenes
- Write a post-event summary
- Interview industry experts
- Detail a day in the life of a member
- Create an archive of old newsletters
- Record a guided tour of your program
- Clarify AmeriCorps Misconceptions
- Reason # \_\_\_ to Join [Program Name]
- Ask your audience to create a GIF that best represents their service
- Stages of Getting the Position (1. Shock 2. Excitement 3. Panic 4. Acceptance (You got this!) 5. Success)
- Tag a friend who would love our mission
- Member social media takeover
- Trivia questions
- Play off timely topics like National Parks Day

### D. Effective Social Media Marketing

#### Identifying the Most Effective Strategies to Engage Your Audience

You now need to consider how you are going to reach your target applicant pool online. Are they on social media, if so, which platforms? Do they read online reviews? Alternatively, do they go straight to Google to search for what they need? Understanding who your ideal candidate is will guide you in a variety of ways from choosing the right online platforms to use, to creating the best mix of content to share, to being able to target advertising to the right audience. This helps control your cost and reduce wasteful spending, since your content and advertisements will only appear where your audience will see them. The table included below may be a useful tool for helping your organization establish its social media strategy.

## US Adults' Social Platform Use, by Demographic Group



% of US adults who use:	YouTube	Facebook	Instagram	Pinterest	Snapchat	LinkedIn	Twitter	WhatsApp
<b>Total</b>	73%	68%	35%	29%	27%	25%	24%	22%
<b>Men</b>	75%	62%	30%	16%	23%	25%	23%	20%
<b>Women</b>	72%	74%	39%	41%	31%	25%	24%	24%
<b>White</b>	71%	67%	32%	32%	24%	26%	24%	14%
<b>Black</b>	76%	70%	43%	23%	36%	28%	26%	21%
<b>Hispanic</b>	78%	73%	38%	23%	31%	13%	20%	49%
<b>Ages 18-24</b>	94%	80%	71%	31%	78%	25%	45%	25%
<b>Ages 25-29</b>	88%	82%	54%	39%	54%	34%	33%	31%
<b>Ages 30-49</b>	85%	78%	40%	34%	26%	33%	27%	32%
<b>Ages 50-64</b>	68%	65%	21%	26%	10%	24%	19%	17%
<b>Ages 65+</b>	40%	41%	10%	15%	3%	9%	8%	6%
<b>HHI: &lt;\$30k</b>	68%	66%	30%	20%	23%	13%	20%	20%
<b>HHI: \$30-50k</b>	78%	74%	42%	32%	33%	20%	21%	19%
<b>HHI: \$50-75k</b>	77%	70%	32%	34%	26%	24%	26%	21%
<b>HHI: \$75k+</b>	84%	75%	42%	39%	30%	45%	32%	25%
<b>High school or less</b>	65%	60%	29%	18%	24%	9%	18%	20%
<b>Some college</b>	74%	71%	36%	32%	31%	22%	25%	18%
<b>College+</b>	85%	77%	42%	40%	26%	50%	32%	29%
<b>Urban</b>	80%	75%	42%	29%	32%	30%	29%	28%
<b>Suburban</b>	74%	67%	34%	31%	26%	27%	23%	19%
<b>Rural</b>	59%	58%	25%	28%	18%	13%	17%	9%

Published by MarketingCharts.com in March 2018 | Data Source: Pew Research Center

Based on telephone surveys conducted in January 2018 among a national sample of 2,002 adults (18+)

The most effective recruitment strategies utilize a combination of online marketing tactics; however, not all social media and online tactics are suitable for every organization. Before you go diving into anything, plan-out what platforms may be most effective for the recruitment goals that your program has set. If one particular tactic doesn't work with your goals, you aren't obliged to use it and can find other more suitable options to fit into your multi-channel strategy. The following sections will help your program refine the platforms and strategies that you have identified as key focus areas of your online recruitment strategy.

If you brand your company correctly online, candidates will come to you and sourcing will become less time consuming, in fact strong employment brand saves an average of 15% of employment costs (AIRS). Social media can help accomplish this goal.

Why incorporate social media into your strategy?

- It helps you expand your other marketing efforts.
- It will help you build brand awareness.

- It is one of the most powerful drivers for word of mouth.
- You can use social media to attract and convert candidates.

### Social Media: The Basics

#### Organic Vs. Paid Social Media

- Paid social media is anything that is influenced by advertising dollars spent whereas with organic social media, these posts are "free." Any post in your news feed that has the "Sponsored" tag is paid social media. Paid social media includes boosted posts, ads optimized for clicks, lead generation forms, video ads, among other objectives, and can be targeted by a variety of demographic and behavioral factors.

#### Develop Engaging Content to Promote your Brand

- Make it human, engaging, and fun. Share organization news, industry related information, pictures of Members, inspirational stories, or make people laugh.

- Also, make it educational. Give people a reason to come back to your social media pages - to get more information about your organization, mission, and how they can play a role in it. Utilize blogs, statistics, and testimonials to engage users.
- Always include some type of imagery (photos, videos, infographics, animated gifs, and illustrations). Posting images on Twitter, for example, can increase your engagement by 200%! These days a smartphone camera is all you need to take photos. Use real images of Members doing different things. Add photos and videos of events, behind the scenes, and completed projects.
- It is important to keep in mind that you do not always need original content and not every post is going to be perfect. Having a consistent stream of content is the most effective way to stay top-of-mind.
- A good rule of thumb is four regular posts to every one position post.
- Timing your posts and position announcements to optimize their performance across different social media platforms can help your program reach a higher audience (see *tables below*).

### Optimal Social Media Posting

Facebook (Avoid early morning/late night)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TH/F 1-3pm ET best days and times</li> <li>- Thursday #1 day @1pm ET</li> <li>- Best times of day (9am, 1pm and 3pm) ET</li> <li>- SA/SU 32% TH/F 18% higher engagement</li> <li>- Friday is the happiest day of the week</li> </ul>
LinkedIn (Lunch and after work)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- T/TH 7-8am; 12 noon; 5-6pm ET</li> <li>- Optimal midweek T/W/TH 5-6pm ET</li> </ul>
Twitter (Lunch and commute time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- M-F 12 noon ET</li> <li>- 3pm ET and between 4-5pm ET</li> <li>- Best time overall Wednesday 12 noon ET</li> </ul>
Instagram (Lunch and after work)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- M/TH 8-9am; 5pm ET</li> <li>- 9pm ET videos get 34% more interactions</li> <li>- M-F 5pm ET</li> </ul>

Sources: CoSchedule®, Social Sprout®

## Social Media Posting Schedule

Having an idea of what to post and where to post it as well as which days or the week and times to yield the best engagement opportunity can make a huge difference. Below is a chart that outlines the most optimum days and times to posting in Eastern Standard time for specific social sites.

Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday ☺	Saturday
7-8am ET			LinkedIn		LinkedIn		
8-9am ET		Instagram			Instagram		
9am ET	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook
12 noon ET		Twitter	Twitter/ LinkedIn	Twitter	Twitter/ LinkedIn	Twitter	
1pm ET	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook
1-3pm ET					Facebook	Facebook	
3pm ET	Facebook	Twitter/ Facebook	Twitter/ Facebook	Twitter/ Facebook	Twitter/ Facebook	Twitter/ Facebook	Facebook
4-5pm ET		Twitter	Twitter	Twitter	Twitter	Twitter	
5pm ET		Instagram	Instagram	Instagram	Instagram	Instagram	
5-6pm ET			LinkedIn	LinkedIn	LinkedIn		
9pm ET		Instagram			Instagram		

Sources: CoSchedule®, Social Sprout®

### Interaction is Key


- Get Members sharing and liking your recruitment posts. Within the last couple of years major changes happened to Facebook decreasing how often people see business posts. Now one of the most effective ways to increase reach and engagement is by having Members and staff share posts from the organization's social media pages. (See Sect. 5 for more info.)
- Allow Members to take over for a day or a week. This is a great way to show followers what it's like to work for an organization through the eyes of current Members. It also provides current Members the opportunity to be a part of the social media action and they will likely encourage friend and family to begin following your page.

**AmeriCorps SC** is with T'keyah Tiarra. January 31 at 1:16 PM · 🌐

Happy Thursday AmericorpsSC! My name is T'keyah Kittrell, and I serve at the best "in my opinion" elementary school in Sumter, SC, Crosswell Drive Elementary. I am in my second term as an Americorps member for United way of Sumter, Clarendon and Lee. I am originally from Brooklyn, New York. Being apart of this program is one of the many things that has made South Carolina a second home for me. I found out about Americorps reading success program from volunteering at an after school program that recommended me. I believe this is just the beginning of a great career for me as well as for the other members serving.

A quote that resonates with me is "There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up" - John Holmes.

I strongly believe that our purpose in life is to help others. Tutoring children who are our next police officers, lawyers, and doctors is a great honor.





- Engage and interact with candidates online. Social media allows organizations to easily respond to comments and messages from people that are interested in the organization. Liking posts or commenting on them is a great way to boost your social media engagement and foster a brand voice that is approachable and relatable.

#### **Tell people about your social media presence.**

- Add your social links into the header and footer of your website, add social sharing links on position listings, blog articles, and email marketing, embed YouTube or Facebook Live videos on your site.

#### **Have a consistent presence across all platforms.**

Update your cover photos and profile pictures to the same message and design.

#### **Use Hashtags Effectively**

- Hashtags are words, phrases or acronyms preceded by the # symbol. They began at Twitter as a way to identify or associate a post with something or someone. They are now used on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Hashtags should always be used in addition to post content, not just the hashtag(s) by itself. It's a best practice to add at least a few for each post to let followers know about the topic of the post.

## **E. Facebook**

Facebook currently is and has been one the most used social media platforms on the web today. With close to two billion members worldwide, your program should be thoroughly embracing this site as one of the most valuable resources for finding talent.

- Organic Posting Frequency
  - Post 3-5 times per week depending on happenings around the organization.
- Make sure a photo is uploaded along with any position postings that you share on Facebook.
- Facebook Live allows organizations to stream video, engage with an audience in real-time, and build a personal relationship with prospects. Using this medium can help your organization create a humanistic appeal with your target audience. Here are just a few ways your organization can use Facebook Live to create engagement:
  - Livestream Q&A sessions
  - Broadcast your events
- Join/create industry or skill specific groups.
- The Facebook search functionality does not work well; however, there are external Facebook search tools that allows users to conduct more detailed searches such as by position title, location, likes, college major, etc.
  - [Search is Back \(searchisback.com\)](http://searchisback.com) helps advance search Facebook, but also defaults to your friends.
  - [Lookup-id.com](http://lookup-id.com) is an easy-to-use advanced search option that allows you to choose between a large variety of criteria.



## FREE RESOURCE ALERT!

### [RiteTag](#)

Use RiteTag.com to help your program determine what hashtags are being most heavily use by your target audience.

### [Giphy](#)

Find trending gifs or create your own gifs at Giphy.com. Put multiple pictures together in a slideshow then add captions or stickers and export it out into a gif file.

## F. Instagram

Owned by Facebook, Instagram is the third largest social media network behind Facebook and YouTube and is the fastest growing. It is a photo and video-based network with 90% of Instagram's audience being under the age of 35.

- Organic Posting Frequency
  - Post more during off-work hours than during the work day.
- To get started, convert your organization's personal page into a business page or simply start out with a business page. Be sure to include links to the careers page and information to describe what the organization does. The only way to include a link on Instagram is by including it in your bio.
- Utilize stories and live videos. Stories allow users to create a collection of images or videos that last for 24 hours, as well as Live Video options to broadcast information real-time. The average viewing time is 24-32 minutes. When users view your story, users can either swipe to see more which can then take them to your program's position listings.
- Instagram search can produce profiles that contain specific terms and also posts

that are tagged with the search terms so be sure to use 5-7 relevant hashtags to increase your reach and add relevance to your post.

## G. Facebook and Instagram Advertising

Facebook and Instagram advertising allows you to hyper-target the audiences you care about most including your own Member lists, passive candidates, cut through the noise and easily reach interested candidates. Facebook owns Instagram so you are able to easily advertise on Facebook and Instagram within the Facebook platform (as long as it matches your target audience). Through Facebook advertising, you can engage your audience by being able to publish a variety of content including text, photos, videos, carousel ads.

### Facebook Ads Guide

#### Choosing Your Campaign Objective

When you choose an objective, it optimizes your campaign for a certain result or goal. It also determines how your ads are delivered to your audience. Facebook breaks them out like this:

- **Awareness:** This is when candidates are just learning about your organization and program. Objectives for the Awareness

Stage are Brand Awareness, Reach, and Boosting Your Posts.

- **Consideration (Passive):** This stage is where people know about your organization and are trying to decide whether they want to pursue a position or not. Objectives for the Consideration Stage are Traffic, Video Views, Lead Generation, Engagement, and Messages.
- **Conversion:** This stage is where you specifically want to get a potential applicant to take an action by either filling out the application or contacting you for more information. Objectives for Conversion Stage are Conversions.

### Budgeting

When it comes to running a paid ad on Facebook/Instagram, you can spend as much or as little as you want depending on your budget. As with any kind of paid advertising, the more you spend, the more candidates you're likely to reach, so it's worth bearing this in mind when rolling out your ad.

To get a better idea of what you'll get in return for your cash, head over to 'Facebook Ads Manager' and set up a test ad with your ideal audience to see what Facebook recommends you spend per day.

### Audience Targeting

Facebook's ad targeting is mind-blowing. You just have to know exactly who you're looking for when you're recruiting for new team members. You can target by interest or business pages people follow, life events and some profile status, age and gender, people who speak a certain language, and lookalike audiences.

Lookalike audiences are a very useful type of targeting where you can request Facebook to serve ads to people who are similar to an audience you provide. Simply upload a Member email list to Facebook and start building a lookalike audience of people in your area with the same interests as your current Members.

### Geographic Targeting

Location or geographic targeting is critical. With Facebook ads, you can setup geographic targeting within a few miles of your organization or even target the entire state - it is completely up to your target audience and budget.

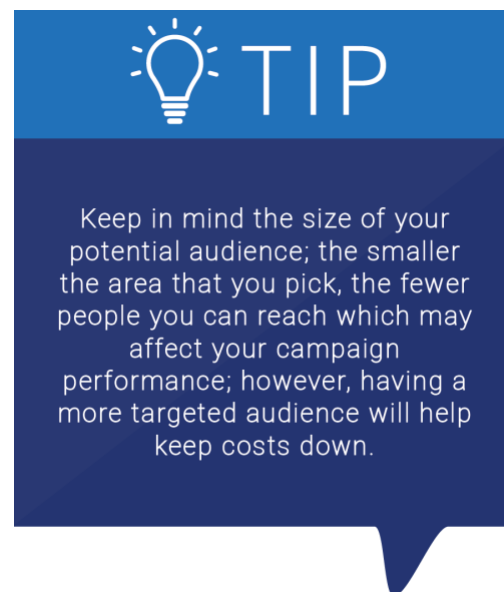
### Geofencing

Use geofencing for hyperlocal targeted advertising that leads to more conversions and less cost. Geofencing is targeting a customer or potential customer within a predetermined distance around a fixed location for the purpose of advertising to them when they enter the geofence. By building a virtual "fence" around a location, geofencing lets you target a very specific group of potential consumers. Organizations can use geofencing to engage with Members when they are close to a physical location (i.e. geofencing a university in order to advertise to students of that university).

### Retargeting

A Facebook pixel is a piece of code that is placed on your website to help track users who visit the site. This allows you to create a new audience of people who have already visited your website, so you can retarget them with a relevant Facebook ad. To add a Facebook pixel to your website, follow these steps:

<https://www.facebook.com/business/help/952192354843755>



**TIP**

Keep in mind the size of your potential audience; the smaller the area that you pick, the fewer people you can reach which may affect your campaign performance; however, having a more targeted audience will help keep costs down.

## H. Twitter

Twitter is a popular microblogging network and the ultimate by the minute news resource.

According to a recent Jobvite survey, 45% of jobseekers whose use social media to find a job use Twitter compared to only 40% of jobseekers who use LinkedIn.

- Organic Posting Frequency
  - Tweets are fleeting meaning there is a constant flow of tweets going out by the minute. To stay in front of candidates, post 5-10x per week at a minimum.
- Twitter recently changed their character limits from 140 characters to 280 characters so that photos, videos, links, and animated gifs do not count as additional characters.
- Grow your followers. Follow others that follow you, by leveraging the “who to Follow” option or by searching for industry specific candidates directly on the site.
- A user can create a list of other Twitter users by interest, skill, location, or really anything. This can be a list of people who work for the same company, attend the same school or Tweet about a specific topic. Users can subscribe to a list and thereby receive Tweets from all of that list’s members.

## I. Snapchat

Snapchat is a channel that lost a bit of market share to Instagram when Instagram Stories launched. Like Instagram Stories, Snapchat Stories disappear after 24 hours and have tons of filters users can use.

- Snapchat allows users to send a Snap (photos or videos) that have a lifespan of up to 10 seconds and Stories (compilations of photos or videos) that are only viewable to followers for 24 hours.
- Advertising on Snapchat can be expensive and **Snap Ads** campaigns start at

\$3,000/month in ad spending creation costs

Create geofilters to target people using Snapchat at a certain location for a specific period of time. These filters have varied costs depending on the size of the location and the date-range selected.

Learn more here

[geofilters.com/purchase/choose-area](https://geofilters.com/purchase/choose-area)

## J. Email Marketing

*85% of recruiters rely on email as their top channel to contact and build relationships with talent. Email is still number one.*

### When to Send

According to data gathered by Yesware, you’ve got a better chance of having your emails opened and replied to if you send them on a weekend when there is less competition. Sunday evening works the best, as people tend to be preparing for the week ahead and have time to read and respond to your messages.

Contacting candidates after 8 pm can also work well. Experian Services found that emails sent between 8 pm - 12 midnight had the highest open rate.

Whatever time you choose, make sure you test whether it’s a fit for your audience. Testing a few different times is the only way to get a clear answer.

### Who to Send To

Taking the time to analyze and segment your organizations email lists can lead to higher open rates, more clicks and less unsubscribes. Segmenting your lists also can create a more personalized experience for your target prospects. Different segment examples could be different positions that you have available or different audience age ranges.

### Email Content and Design

Just like any piece of content, email content and design should have a catchy headline, eye-

catching imagery, benefits driven content, and clear call-to-actions. Creating a template for all emails to follow will help keep communication consistent as well as quick and easy to deploy. 66% of emails are opened on mobile devices - if you ignore the way that your messages appear on mobile phones, you're ruining the experience for two-thirds of your audience.

## Format

### Subject Line:

When recruiting AmeriCorps Members using email marketing, it is very important that the subject of your email grabs their attention. The best strategy is to personalize the subject line with the candidate's name or a key piece of information that pertains directly to them (Jane – it was a pleasure meeting you at the USC Career Fair). When it is not possible to personalize a subject line, it is still best to try to make it appear as if it is directed specifically towards the candidate (Your qualifications match-up well with our AmeriCorps Position).

### Introduction:

Briefly introduce who you are, why you are contacting the candidate, and how you found the person's name.

### Body:

Although you will want to keep the email concise, it is important to:

- Describe the positions that are available.
- Include a statement that that you believe will speak to the candidate's motivation.
- Direct link or concise instructions on how to apply.

### Closing:

Close on a concise positive note.

### Example

*Subject: Your qualifications match-up well with our AmeriCorps opportunities*

*Hello,*

*I am the Program Manager for Conservation Carolinas, an environmental-focus AmeriCorps program based out of Greenville, SC. I reviewed the profile you created on AmeriCorps.gov, and I believe*

*you may be well suited for one of the AmeriCorps positions we currently have available.*

*Our organization is currently recruiting for AmeriCorps Trail Building Team Members, as well as Fire Mitigation Team Members. Based on your interest in the environmental field, I believe that these positions may not only align well with your motivations but are also great opportunities for you to expand your knowledge about careers in the environmental field, as you will receive training from our knowledgeable staff and land management partners during your term of service. To learn more about our organization and the AmeriCorps positions that are currently available, please visit [www.conservation-carolinas.org/AC](http://www.conservation-carolinas.org/AC). Submitting your application only takes a couple of minutes!*

*Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, and I really hope you consider joining our fun and passionate team!*

*All the best,*

*Brent Kossick*

*AmeriCorps Program Manager*

*Conservation Carolinas*

*555-555-5555*

*[Bkossick@CC.org](mailto:Bkossick@CC.org)*

## FREE RESOURCE ALERT!

### [MailChimp](#)

Mailchimp is a marketing automation platform with free options that help you create email campaigns. With an easy to use email design builder, MailChimp also offers guides and tutorials, marketing automation, segmenting, basic reports, A/B testing, and landing pages for free.

## K. Website Design

If a candidate is interested in your program or a similar type of opportunity, he or she will immediately go into research mode and scour the Internet for more information. You should expect potential candidates to visit your website to learn more about AmeriCorps, your program's mission and culture, available positions, and benefits. Your website and service listings landing pages should be set up properly and ready to convert potential candidates before driving advertisements there.

### Elements of appealing service opportunities page and website design:

Make it easy for someone to navigate your website and to find your service opportunities page. It's important to keep your website and careers section well-organized so searchers can find the information they need quickly and easily.

- If your Members will be serving in or based out of a specific city, use that geographic keyword(s) in your position titles and descriptions. Since many people search by typing in keywords like "employment Columbia, SC," adding these location-based keywords will help potential candidates find your listing.
- Make sure every page of content on your website is unique; never be tempted to copy other website content. Google is some of the world's most powerful plagiarism software and it will send you right to the bottom of the pile if your content is repeated word-for-word in various locations, on or off your site.
- Include strong call-to-actions (CTAs) above the fold and throughout and at the end of the content. In conjunction with the CTA, add ways to contact you throughout your website. If someone has to hunt for a form or phone number, they will end up leaving your website.
- Include images and videos to visually break up your text.
- Include relevant internal and external links within the content.

## L. Website Design - Search Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) helps your website show up in (organic) search results when an individual searches for something related to the service you provide or positions you have available. The greater visibility you have in search engines (Google or Bing), the greater opportunity you have for people to visit your position listings and become a Member.

Whether you're taking over, improving, or just starting your SEO strategy, the basics of SEO are mostly common sense because SEO ranking algorithm is built around the way people navigate naturally. Optimizing your website can be a never-ending job, and requires consistence maintenance and updating. SEO is constantly changing as search engines like Google continue to update their algorithms, but below there are a few simple steps that your AmeriCorps program could implement to start improving your rankings online. Your program can also gain additional information at the following sites:

- [Network for Good's Marketing Blog](#)
- [Nonprofits Source Marketing Agency](#)

### Incorporate relevant keywords throughout your website

Before you write recruitment content for your website, choose one or two keywords or phrases that you think potential candidates are likely to use to find your service opportunities. Step inside the "job" hunter's shoes. What word or string of words would they use to search for your program or positions? What are they looking for in their first professional experience? What do they need from their next position? Ask interviewees how they searched for the position that they are applying for. Look at what keywords similar programs or opportunities are using to attract potential candidates.

- Example: *education positions, social work positions, etc.*

Whenever a candidate uses a highly specific search phrase, they tend to be looking for exactly what they are actually going to be interested in

pursuing. These search phrases are called long-tail keywords- three- and four-word phrases that are very specific to whatever you are marketing. In addition to being highly relevant, there is less competition with long-tail keywords making it easier to rank higher for that keyword.

- Example: *Get paid to travel with AmeriCorps.*

After selecting your keywords, work them into your page title, meta description, and content. Google considers your page titles and meta descriptions as a summary of the content on your page, and it uses them to figure out whether your page is relevant to a search.

Stick to one or two keywords per page and try to use a selection across your website to capture a wider variety of searches.



**TIP**

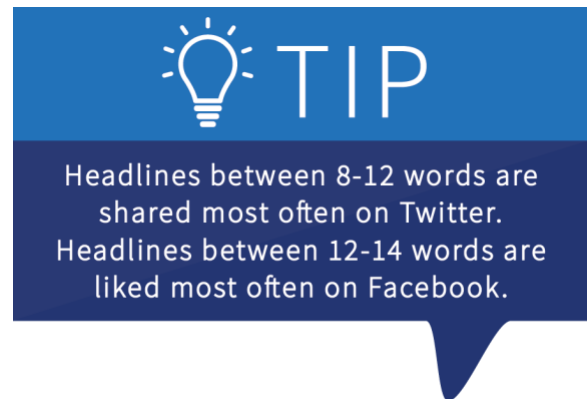
Think of your meta description as your website page/position posting's elevator pitch - why is it in someone's interest to read and click on it?

### Updating Content

Fresh, relevant content is proven to help your website to move up in the search results page. Through blogging or a news section, you can keep things current even if you don't have lots of fresh positions to post. Keep the content well-structured with bullet points and conclude with a call-to-action to encourage visitors to comment, subscribe to regular updates or find out more about your organization.

- Be consistent, decide how often you're going to publish, whether twice a week or once a month, and stick to your schedule.

- Pick one long-tail keyword to focus on per post. The ideal blog post title length is no longer than 60 characters.
  - *Blog title examples: 7 Benefits of Becoming an AmeriCorps Member; Why AmeriCorps Members are the Backbone of [program name]; Top 9 Skills You Can Gain as an AmeriCorps Member; Find Out How Becoming an AmeriCorps Member Can Kick start Your Career*
- Your Members are a great resource to help keep fresh content flowing into your website! Ask them questions and post their answers online.



**TIP**

Headlines between 8-12 words are shared most often on Twitter.  
Headlines between 12-14 words are liked most often on Facebook.

### M. Managing Online Reviews

Many applicants will review an organization's online employee reviews through websites such as Glassdoor and Indeed before making a decision as to whether or not to accept an offer of "employment."

- Ensure that your program maintains a favorable rating on these websites by personally requesting that high-performing Members and staff post positive reviews of your organization/program.
- Inevitably, negative comments will be posted. In this case, the best action for your organization to take would be to issue a polite response to the feedback that speaks to how the organization may



be ensuring that similar negative experiences do not occur in the future.

## N. Google Adwords and Applying for an Adwords Grant

Google AdWords is an online advertising service developed by Google where advertisers pay to display brief advertisements, service offerings, product listings, and video content within the Google ad network to web users.

### Setup

Identify Relevant Keywords using the following methods:

- Use the keywords incorporated into your website and job postings
- Use Google Adword's Keyword Planner (under "Tools")
- Reference Google Trends: <https://trends.google.com/trends/>
- Google's Autocomplete Feature – start typing open positions into Google search bar and see which keywords automatically appear in the dropdown to select

### Categorize Your Keywords

Put similar keywords into buckets or in Adwords these are called "ad groups".

- An example of an ad group could be "AmeriCorps" and the keywords inside the "AmeriCorps" ad group could be "AmeriCorps positions", "AmeriCorps pay", "what does AmeriCorps do"
- Use only between 3-7 keywords per ad group

### Write Your Ads

Your ads should have a catchy headline, ideally including the keyword, showcase the benefits of the position, and include a call-to-action driving them to a position listing or related landing page.

- A good rule of thumb is to start with 2 ads per ad group and make improvements based on performance

### Ongoing Maintenance

At the very minimum, login once a week and spend at least 1 hour of maintenance. Maintenance includes reviewing analytics, making changes to low performing ads, or increasing the budget for great performing ads.

### Applying for a Google Adwords Grant

Google offers a grant opportunity to nonprofits that allows them to utilize up to \$10,000 in in-kind Google Ad service per month.

This additional financial allocation can be used to bid on the keywords your prospects are searching for and place your nonprofits website link at the top of the search engine results page. If you are looking to pursue Google Grants as a marketing avenue, make sure that your nonprofit has the structure and expertise in place to make the most out of the Google AdWords spend.

In order to qualify for Google Grants, your nonprofit must meet the following basic requirements:

- Hold a valid charity status
- Agree to Google terms and conditions, certifications and donation receipt
- Have a live website with updated content

To review eligibility requirements and apply to the grant, visit: <https://www.google.com/grants/>

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# SECTION 4

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## APPLICANT SOURCING STRATEGIES AND PRIORITY CONSIDERATIONS

Over the course of 2018, over 120 AmeriCorps programs of various sizes, program models, and geographic reach were surveyed and asked to rate the effectiveness of over 75 AmeriCorps applicant-sourcing techniques. Programs that were surveyed were then given an opportunity to provide additional narrative to highlight the methods that produced the greatest return on their time and financial investment.





### EFFECTIVENESS RATING

Responses were assigned a numerical value between 1-4 and averaged in order to assign an “Effectiveness Rating” to each sourcing strategy:

<b>Very Effective = 4</b>	<b>Effective = 3</b>	<b>Somewhat Effective = 2</b>	<b>Ineffective = 1</b>	<b>Not Applicable = 0</b>
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### MERITS

Additional “Merits” were then assigned to sourcing strategies based on commonalities identified throughout narrative responses, or if they were considered to be underutilized based on the level of N/A responses.

MERITS KEY			
 <b>Underutilized/Opportunity</b>	 <b>Time Effective</b>	 <b>Quality Members</b>	 <b>Cost Effective</b>

### RECOMMENDATION







Sourcing strategies were then informally divided into three primary categories based on their effectiveness rating:






<b>Strong Recommendation</b>	<b>Moderate Recommendation</b>	<b>Low Recommendation</b>
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On the next page, you will find a table that contains both the information that was produced from the 2018 survey, as well as best practices that are associated with key strategies. It is suggested that program staff ask themselves the following questions while reviewing the entirety of the table:
















1. What recommended sourcing strategies are we currently underutilizing or not using at all?
2. Are there any best practices that we can incorporate into the sourcing strategies that we are using that may help increase their effectiveness?
3. Are there any strategies that we are using that may not be producing the greatest return on our investment?

## STRONG RECOMMENDATION







APPLICANT SOURCING STRATEGY	EFFECTIVENESS RATING	MERITS	Section
<b>Organic Member, staff or community partner referrals</b>	3.07		5
<b>Incentive-based Member, staff, or community partner referrals</b>	3		5
<b>Referrals from college/university staff who the program has built a relationship</b>	2.83		4.C/6.F
<b>Referrals from high school teachers, counselors, or principals with who the program has built a relationship</b>	2.81		
<b>Retaining Members between the ages of 17-30 for multiple terms of service</b>	2.81		7
<b>Referrals from college professors who the program has built a relationship</b>	2.79		4.C/6.F








<p><b>Offering internship hours as part of an individual's term of service</b></p> <p>Generally, it is acceptable for AmeriCorps programs to also certify academic internship hours during a Member's term of service if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The program receives approval from a college or university to serve as an internship opportunity for the institution's students.</li> <li>2. The hours requirement for the Member's term of service exceeds the academic internship hours requirement (i.e 300hr AC term, 250hr internship requirement.)</li> <li>3. The Member's AmeriCorps term of service allows the Member to serve at a location not already offered as an internship opportunity.</li> <li>4. The AmeriCorps Member is not receiving additional compensation.</li> </ol> <p>Generally, your program will need to apply to a university's career center to become accredited to serve as an approved internship site. Once approved, your program may gain access to additional resources that will allow you to recruit students for the internship opportunity.</p>	2.71		
<p><b>Speaking or correspondence with parent-teacher organizations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This strategy can be particularly effective when recruiting in rural communities.</li> <li>• Aligning your Member service schedule to better accommodate parents' schedules can help increase the effectiveness of your recruitment efforts.</li> </ul>	2.68		
<p><b>Retaining Members between the ages of 31-54 for multiple terms of service</b></p>	2.57		7
<p><b>Retaining Members between the age 55+ for multiple terms of service</b></p>	2.57		6.C/7
<p><b>Indeed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although this sourcing strategy can produce a high number of applicants, many programs report that it yields low-quality applicants/Members based on the fact that most platform users are looking for a job, rather than a service experience.</li> </ul>	2.45		2.A



<b>Utilizing partner agencies to distribute service opportunities through their networks/email lists</b>	2.44	  	2.K
<b>University campus-based newspaper or periodical</b>	2.42	 	6.F
<b>Local college/university job boards</b>	2.42	 	2.A
<b>Outreach/Partnerships with college-based career centers</b>	2.37	 	4.C/6.F
<b>Sponsorship of campus or community events</b>	2.33		4.C
<b>Facebook ad</b>	2.32	 	3
<p><b>Offering professional certifications as part of the individual's term of service</b></p> <p>Many individuals that join AmeriCorps seek to gain marketable job skills. Offering professional certifications to Members during their term of service can significantly increase your program's recruitment power. Examples Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutor Certification</li> <li>• CRM (ex. Salesforce) Certification</li> <li>• Various Certifications in Construction</li> <li>• Wilderness First-Aid</li> <li>• Chainsaw Operation Certification</li> <li>• Tax Preparation Certification</li> <li>• Financial Literacy Certification</li> </ul>	2.32		
<b>Using geofencing options to target social media ads to audience in a specific location (i.e. Snapchat ads to individuals located on a college campus)</b>	2.31	 	Sect. 3.I
<p><b>Earned Media</b> (i.e. Issuing press releases and inviting media to attend events)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This sourcing strategy can be time-intensive.</li> <li>• State that your program is seeking motivated individuals to serve as AmeriCorps Members at the end of all press releases and media interviews.</li> </ul>	3.31	 	

<b>Posting flyers at schools and school district offices</b>	2.31	  	
<b>Outreach to local high schools</b>  Program's generally report that it is important to ensure that high school students who wish to serve in AmeriCorps are not over-committed with outside responsibilities (i.e. Academics, sports, social events, clubs, etc.)	2.31	 	
<b>College/University-affiliated service events</b>	2.29		4.C/6.F
<b>Field-specific job fairs or youth career fairs</b>  These types of events are oftentimes listed on local library websites.	2.29		
<b>Texting or automated texting systems</b>  Software such as textmagic.com can be used to upload contact lists from Excel documents and send potential candidates updates about open positions.	2.29		
<b>Sharing a service opportunity via Facebook</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging your AmeriCorps Members to <i>like</i> and <i>share</i> your program's position announcements can vastly increase the reach of your posting, and it's free!</li> <li>Encouraging members to post about their own service experience is a great way for them to broadcast your message for you.</li> <li>Programs report having had success with facilitating small contests through social media.</li> </ul>	2.27	 	3/5
<b>Twitter</b>	2.27		3
<b>State or regional college/university job boards</b>	2.27	 	
<b>Google ad</b>  Utilizing Google Ads can be expensive. Consider applying for a Google Adwords Grant for Nonprofits.	2.27	 	3.N
<b>Outreach/Partnerships with job training programs</b>  Some programs have indicated that this strategy can produce low quality members.	2.32	 	











<p><b>Other Industry-specific job boards</b> (i.e. construction, social work, etc.)</p> <p>Identifying local industry-specific job boards to post your program’s service opportunities to will likely be the most effective strategy.</p>	2.23		4.B
<p><b>AmeriCorps/eGrants Portal listing</b></p> <p>HOW TO:  <a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/resource/Member-Recruitment-Presentation-National.pdf">https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/resource/Member-Recruitment-Presentation-National.pdf</a></p>	2.19		2.C
<p><b>Attendance at college/university club days or events (including fraternity and sorority events)</b></p>	2.19		4.C
<p><b>Coordination with other AmeriCorps or VISTA Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once all positions have been filled by other programs in your area, ask that those programs direct refer applicants to your application process.</li> <li>Request that your program’s recruitment material be distributed to graduating Members from other programs or fields of national service.</li> <li>Offer to assist with other program’s Life After AmeriCorps training and use the opportunity to discuss your program’s open positions.</li> <li>Attending recruitment events can be time and cost restrictive. Programs with similar recruitment regions have found success by partnering together, educating one another on their program model and recruitment goals, and sharing the responsibility of representing all partnering programs at recruitment events.</li> <li>Example: <a href="https://serviceyear.org/serveaustin/">https://serviceyear.org/serveaustin/</a></li> </ul>	2.13		
<p><b>Outreach to English as a second language communities</b></p>	2.12		6.A
<p><b>Handshake</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handshake is a platform that can be used to list your service opportunity on multiple college job boards at one time (generally for free).</li> <li>Premium accounts are available that enable additional outreach to prospective applicants, but those options are generally very expensive.</li> </ul>	2.10		
<p><b>College-based career fairs</b></p>	2.07		4.C/6.F






















<p><b>Organizing other engaged-audience info sessions</b></p>	2.06		4.C
<p><b>Facebook job posting</b></p> <p>Consider posting a job for free in the Facebook Marketplace. The ad requires basic information such as location, job category, subcategory, title, why you need to fill this position, description and if you want to post a photo with the job posting or another image. The limitation of a free job posting is that you can't target it to a specific group of people like you can with a Facebook Ad. More information can be found here: <a href="https://www.betterteam.com/facebook-job-postings">https://www.betterteam.com/facebook-job-postings</a></p>	2.06		8
<p><b>Outreach/Partnerships with community-based career center</b></p> <p>Some programs have indicated that this strategy can produce low quality member.</p>	2.05		
<p><b>State-specific non-profit job boards</b> (<i>i.e. an association for nonprofits operating in the state</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This strategy can be highly effective in states that have strong nonprofit associations.</li> <li>Typically, this strategy produces high quality Members.</li> </ul>	2.04		2.A
<p><b>Outreach to community-based organizations</b> (<i>i.e. Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, etc.</i>)</p>	2.04		
<p><b>Outreach to potential applicants via AmeriCorps/eGrants Portal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOW TO: <a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/resource/Member-Recruitment-Presentation-National.pdf">https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/resource/Member-Recruitment-Presentation-National.pdf</a></li> <li>Informal surveys indicate that prospective AmeriCorps applicants are more likely to join the AmeriCorps program that first contacts them via eGrants. For this reason, it is recommended that each program devote several hours a week during primary recruiting seasons to conduct outreach via the AmeriCorps portal.</li> <li>The biggest challenge with this strategy is that it can be time intensive. To combat this challenge, utilize IMacros to partially automate the outreach process. <a href="https://imacros.net/download/free-versions/">https://imacros.net/download/free-versions/</a></li> </ul>	2.04		
<p><b>Hosting service/gap year info sessions at universities/colleges</b></p>	2.03		4.C





<p><b>Outreach to AmeriCorps NCCC Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally, NCCC Campuses are open to distributing electronic recruitment material to their Members once they are approaching their graduation date. Consider building a relationship with NCCC campuses and distributing your program’s recruitment material electronically.</li> <li>• Upon request, NCCC campuses will provide a list of their campus’ quarterly deployments to your state. NCCC teams are generally encouraged to schedule additional volunteer days during their deployments. Invite the teams to serve with you program and use it as a recruitment opportunity.</li> <li>• Oftentimes, NCCC campuses allow programs to attend the Life After AmeriCorps and graduation events and are given an opportunity to showcase their program to graduating Members. Consider sending staff or Members to present at these events.</li> </ul>	2.03		
<p><b>Service Year Exchange</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HOW TO: <a href="http://docs.serviceyear.org/recruiting-on-serviceyear-org/recommending-your-listings-to-candidates">http://docs.serviceyear.org/recruiting-on-serviceyear-org/recommending-your-listings-to-candidates</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://about.serviceyear.org/recruitment_toolkit">https://about.serviceyear.org/recruitment_toolkit</a></li> </ul>	2.15		2.A
<p><b>CoolWorks.com</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs report that this sourcing strategy can yield high-quality AmeriCorps Members.</li> </ul>	2.11		2.A

## MODERATE RECOMMENDATION

*\*Recommended Based Availability of Resources*












APPLICANT SOURCING STRATEGY	EFFECTIVENESS RATING	MERITS	SECTIONS
<p><b>Outreach to potential applicants via Service Year Exchange</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOW TO <a href="https://s3.amazonaws.com/sy-resources/SY-FAQS.pdf">https://s3.amazonaws.com/sy-resources/SY-FAQS.pdf</a></li> <li>Make use of the chat feature on the website to request that a Service Year staff person review your position posting and offer suggestions on how to make it more appealing to potential applicants. This is a free service that Service Year provides.</li> </ul>	2		
<p><b>Snapchat ad</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program’s report that Snapchat can be an effective recruitment tool, but advertising campaigns generally start at \$3,000.</li> <li>More information can be at the following link: <a href="https://wallaroomedia.com/snapchat-advertising-cost/">https://wallaroomedia.com/snapchat-advertising-cost/</a></li> </ul>	2		8
<p><b>Out-of-state college/university job boards</b></p>	2	   	
<p><b>Hosting open interview days</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant advertising is essential.</li> </ul>	2	 	
<p><b>TV ads</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Radio and TV ads are generally very effective, but can be very expensive unless your program can negotiate an in-kind service.</li> <li>During the 2018/19 program year, CNCS and many State Service Commissions will be working with local and national TV and radio outlets to promote AmeriCorps service opportunities through the Be the Greater Good campaign. <a href="https://www.nationalservice.gov/newsroom/communication-resources/videos-and-psas/ameri-corps-be-greater-good">https://www.nationalservice.gov/newsroom/communication-resources/videos-and-psas/ameri-corps-be-greater-good</a></li> </ul>	2		

<p><b>Serving as a volunteer for college or community career services</b> (i.e. Resume help, mock interviews, public speaking, etc.)</p>	1.97	  	6.F
<p><b>Community-based newspaper or periodical</b></p>	1.96		
<p><b>Outreach to organizations that engage adults age 55+</b></p>	1.93	 	6.C
<p><b>Nonprofit Career Network</b> <a href="http://www.nonprofitcareer.com/postjob.htm">http://www.nonprofitcareer.com/postjob.htm</a></p>	1.92	  	
<p><b>Glassdoor</b></p>	1.90	 	3.M
<p><b>Outreach to faith-based groups</b></p>	1.88	 	
<p><b>National Days of Service or other service events</b></p> <p>If your program participates in a large event that attracts multiple organizations and a large number of volunteers, ensure that your program has a plan for distributing recruitment material and engaging the audience.</p>	1.87	 	
<p><b>Flyers placed throughout the community</b></p> <p>Ensure that your program familiarizes itself with local city/town ordinances before placing flyers.</p>	1.87		
<p><b>Instagram ad</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although Facebook has more active users, Instagram is becoming more popular with college-aged individuals.</li> <li>Instagram ads usually cost slightly more than Facebook Ads – usually around \$5 per one thousand impressions.</li> </ul>	1.86		8
<p><b>Flyers placed on college campuses</b></p> <p>Most colleges have specific policies that need to be followed in order to distribute flyers on their campus. Your program should ensure that they are familiar with the institution's processes before distributing any print material.</p>	1.86	 	6.F
<p><b>AmeriCorps Alumni Events/Tools</b></p>	1.86	 	

<p>The AmeriCorps Alumni job board can be effective for recruiting Member-Leader positions.  <a href="https://americorpsalums-jobs.careerwebsite.com/jobseeker/search/results/">https://americorpsalums-jobs.careerwebsite.com/jobseeker/search/results/</a></p>			
<p><b>Cold calling or automatic calling system</b></p>	<p>1.83</p>		
<p><b>Nationally-organized career fairs</b>  Example: <a href="https://www.nationalcareerfaairs.com/">https://www.nationalcareerfaairs.com/</a></p>	<p>1.80</p>		<p>4.C</p>
<p><b>Nonprofitjobs.org</b></p>	<p>1.78</p>		
<p><b>Purple Briefcase</b>  Similar to Handshake, Purple Briefcase is a platform that can be used to list your position posting on multiple college job boards at one time (generally for free).</p>	<p>1.71</p>		



## LOW RECOMMENDATION

APPLICANT SOURCING STRATEGY	EFFECTIVENESS RATING	MERITS	SECTION
<p><b>Monster.com, ZipRecruiter, Simply Hired, or other large national recruitment platform</b></p> <p>Although this sourcing strategy can produce a high number of applicants, many programs report that these types of job boards yield low-quality applicants/Members based on the fact that most of the platform users are looking for a job, rather than a service experience.</p>	1.67		2.A
<p><b>Workforgood.org</b></p>	1.67	 	2.A
<p><b>LinkedIn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LinkedIn can be expensive (typically \$195 for a 30-day posting).</li> <li>• Free option: Consider asking staff and Members to share your program's position postings from other online platforms on their personal LinkedIn accounts.</li> </ul>	1.65	 	
<p><b>The Corps Network job board</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This job board may be more effective for conservation corps and programs that engage AmeriCorps Members in outdoor service activities or provide travel opportunities.</li> <li>• The site can also be effective for recruiting Member-Leaders.</li> </ul>	1.64	 	2.A
<p><b>Idealist.com</b></p> <p>Programs have reported that the platform typically yields high-quality Members, but few applications are generally received.</p>	1.60	  	2.A
<p><b>Billboard ads</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising companies such as Lamar and Adams Outdoors are typically very generous with providing in-kind billboard space to nonprofits; however, the nonprofit is usually responsible for covering the cost of printing the vinyl advertisement that will be placed on the billboard. Generally, the cost is around \$1,200 per billboard.</li> <li>• Billboards can be effective to build brand awareness and also generate in-kind match for your program, but they usually do not attract a large number of high-quality applicants.</li> </ul>	1.60		

<b>Craigslist</b> Programs have reported that this sourcing strategy can yield low-quality Members.	1.54		2.A
<b>Radio ads</b>	1.50		
<b>Coordination with Peace Corps</b> Use the following website to connect with Peace Corps recruiters who serve your area: <a href="https://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/connect-with-a-recruiter/">https://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/connect-with-a-recruiter/</a>	1.44		
<b>Virtual career fairs</b>	1.33		
<b>Community Career Fairs</b> Generally, attendees are searching for employment opportunities rather than a service experience. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some local career fairs for your area can be found by visiting <a href="https://www.nationalcareerfairs.com/">https://www.nationalcareerfairs.com/</a></li> </ul>	1.3		4.C

## FREE RESOURCE ALERT!

### [Mighty Recruiter](#)

Mighty Recruiter offers a free basic applicant-tracking system that your program can utilize to manage multiple position postings, application reviews, interview/selection status, and help track the total number of applications received. Additionally, the service allows you to post on 26 free job boards with just one position write-up. The service will also recommend resumes that currently exist within their database for candidates that your program may be interested in reaching out to.

### [IMacros](#)

IMacros' free browser add-on allows you to automate browser tasks. This can save you hundreds of hours each year by reducing the staff time that is needed to manage repetitive outreach process. TIP: IMacros can be used to automate the process of highlighting email addresses in the AmeriCorps Portal and sending marketing emails to those applicants.

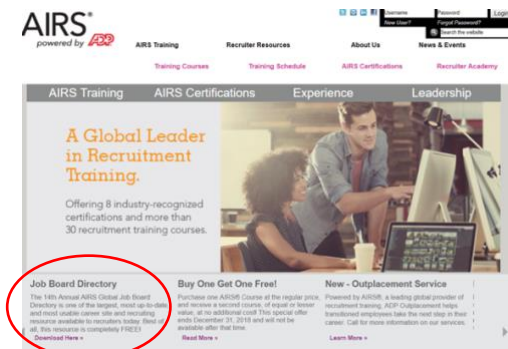
## B. Targeted Job Boards by Industry

AIRS offer a Global Job Board Directory that can be downloaded from their website for free, although you must create a free account. The Global Job Board Directory is a comprehensive list that is updated on an annual basis that features job boards, websites, and associations that target and engage individuals looking for opportunities in specific industries. AmeriCorps programs can advertise their hard-to-fill positions on these applicable sites, or reach-out to the organizations that are featured to ask for their help in promoting your service opportunities with their membership. These sites can be great resources to engage individuals who are seeking to gain experience in a particular career field, or skilled individuals who are looking for post-retirement opportunities. Example industries featured in the directory that may be applicable to your AmeriCorps Member recruitment:

- National and Regional Career Hubs
- Agriculture & Forestry
- Associations and Organizations
- Construction
- Education
- Environmental
- Non-Profit
- Science
- Sports and Recreation
- Healthcare
- Diversity
- Internships & Summer Jobs

Download the directory here:

[www.airsdirectory.com](http://www.airsdirectory.com)



## C. Career Fairs and Captive Audience Events

### Captive Audience Events

Career fairs can produce high quality applicants and should likely be incorporated into your program's recruitment strategy; however, many AmeriCorps programs report that when factoring-in cost and time, career fairs produce a low return on investment for their program. The assumption is that unless the program is participating in a career fair that attracts service-minded individuals, career fair attendees are oftentimes seeking traditional employment and it is challenging for AmeriCorps programs to compete against corporate employers that can offer higher compensation and benefits. Many programs find it more effective to focus their resources towards "Captive Audience Events".

A captive audience event is a platform where you have an engaged group that has agreed to a presentation from your program. Oftentimes these events will attract an audience that is much more interested and engaged. Several examples of captive audience events are listed in sect. 4.C. Additional captive audience events that have been effective in engaging potential AmeriCorps candidates include:

- Hosting a service/gap year panel discussion.



- Schedule information sessions to coincide with national recognition days/weeks that

are associated with service (i.e. MLK Day, Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>, Volunteer Week, Day of Caring, etc.).



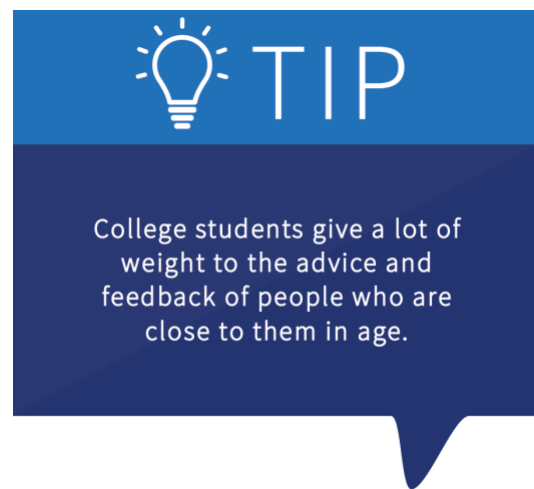
**TIP**

Student Activity Center staff or VISTAs serving on college campuses are typically happy to assist in coordinating and advertising these types of events.

### Community and College Career Fairs Booth Setup

- Ensure that the booth looks professional and neat, as your program will likely be competing with established corporations and businesses. Consider investing in a professional table runner, recruitment banner, recruitment poster board, etc. Generally, these items can be produced for around \$500 total, which is a good way to invest unexpended CNCS funds towards the end of a program year.
- Use a laptop to play a looped presentation of pictures from your program, or if your program has one, your recruitment video. Guidance on how to setup repeating presentation using PowerPoint can be found here: <https://www.cedarville.edu/help/PowerPoint-Create-a-Looping-Slideshow>
- Ensure that you bring plenty of flyers and brochures to pass-out to event attendees.
- Provide swag to encourage attendees to visit the booth. (i.e. candy, stickers, chapstick, buttons, etc.)
- Bring a copy of each of your program's position descriptions so that you can review and discuss with attendees.

- Ensure that you have a sign-up sheet where attendees can leave their email and phone number to be contacted later.
- Send a follow-up email(s) to interested attendees with links to the online application.
- Bring AmeriCorps Members who are enthusiastic with you to help staff the recruitment booth.
- If you are attending a college career fair, determine if you have any Members who are alumni of the school and ask them to attend the event with you.



**TIP**

College students give a lot of weight to the advice and feedback of people who are close to them in age.

- Consider establishing a process for conducting on-the-spot first round interviews to get attendees bought-in quickly. If the individual seems like a good fit, ask them to submit a formal application.
- For attendees that exhibit a high level of interest, ask them to connect you to additional friends, faculty, staff, or student groups who may be interested in learning about the opportunity.
- Inform attendees of Member start dates that will occur after they have graduated and encourage them to apply.
- Encourage attendees to connect to your program's social media pages on-the-spot.
- Always collect resumes and store resumes. Even if someone is not interested in serving in AmeriCorps at the

moment that you speak with them, they could be worth contacting at a later date.

- Use the career fairs as an opportunity to post additional recruitment material around campus.

### **Selling Your AmeriCorps Program During Career and Engagement Events**

Sales, similar to recruitment, is much more science than art. AmeriCorps programs offer countless unique benefits; however, to effectively recruit high-quality Members, programs need to present the right benefit to the right person at the right time. The information below contains guidance for you to consider while speaking with potential applicants or attending recruitment events.

### **Dominating the Conversation is Oftentimes Not Effective**

Many who are starting off selling are well-intentioned but often push away buyers by providing too much information – overwhelming candidates and turning away potential applicants. Part of this is excitement, and another part of this is control. In the desire of closing a deal, the individuals selling the opportunity tend to monopolize a conversation to talk someone into making a decision. This is the wrong approach. You control a conversation not by talking the most, but by asking the most questions.

#### *Theory into Practice:*

When pitching your AmeriCorps Member opportunity, have you ever jumped right in to listing off a laundry list of benefits without first understanding the needs of our audience? Have you ever talked at a candidate, going over standard talking points rather than talking with a candidate to highlight the program benefits as it relates to their individual needs? If this sounds like you, try instead to engage potential applicants in a conversation by interjecting questions into your program's pitch.

### **Selling Before Knowing Your Buyer**

Let us say you have a beautiful house with an Olympic size pool in the backyard that you have placed on the market. How would you sell it? Many will jump in and immediately start pitching

the house – “it’s truly gorgeous, has an amazing pool etc.” Not only is this the wrong approach but also, and more importantly, it will potentially cost you top prospects. Here’s why – you simply don’t know enough about the potential buyer to make an informed pitch.

On one hand, if you’re selling the home to an Olympic swimmer highlighting the pool is critical to closing the sale. On the flipside, if we’re selling the home to a couple who have young children who do not yet know how to swim– the pool may be perceived as a drowning risk.

Another example of this same concept is *A Strong Selling Point to You, May Not be Strong Selling Points to Others:*

Individuals naturally sell benefits that they themselves see and hold valuable. This is great if you’re selling to your identical twin, but it’s a bad idea if you’re selling to anyone else.

Example: You may not be a car person in the slightest, but when you go to buy a car the dealer may enthusiastically jump in and start talking about heated cup holders, alloy wheels, Bluetooth that could connect to the moon and a whole host of other features. It was clear that these items matter to the sales representative, but he failed to take into account that they didn’t matter to you as the buyer. A second dealer may first ask you what you are looking for (something easy to maintain, cheap to operate, etc.) and then sell you what you want.

*Theory into Practice:* Stop and think – how many of us in selling AmeriCorps highlight the benefit that most appeals to us first without giving thought to what our candidate needs? While it’s great that a term of service with AmeriCorps can help you pay down student loans, if your prospect doesn’t have loans, you’re missing the mark. You cannot effectively sell until you know what your buyer (i.e. potential applicant) is looking for. When speaking to potential AmeriCorps applicants, seek out their motivations during the first phase of your conversation, before trying to sell applying to serve with your program.

Some of the most common inspirational selling points applicable to many AmeriCorps programs include:

- Jump starting your career – For individuals wanting to advance professionally highlighting the leadership opportunities, networking potentials, and professional development available both within your program as well as through access to Employers of National Service.
- Put your values into action – For individuals whose first motivation is faith, focusing on the opportunity to serve others and obtaining spiritual fulfillment may be an effective selling point.
- Establish a career in the nonprofit sector- If true, highlight that the program hires program alumni for staff positions, and cite past Member success stories.
- Further education – Highlight educational award, loan deferment, university partnerships, priority admissions, and invaluable work experience.
- Gain trade skills – Highlight the program’s training curriculum and access to on-the-job-training and mentoring from industry veterans.
- Take a gap year – Highlight the Member experience, outcomes, and the support provided during the service year.
- Find purpose in retirement – For older candidates, highlight the fulfillment from service and how they can use their decades of experience for good. Be sure to mention that the education award can also be gifted to children and grandchildren if the individual is over the age of 55, what a birthday present!
- Switch industries – Highlight the temporary nature of the term and the bevy of skills one will gain via service, which will help them transition careers without going back to school.
- Opportunity to travel – If applicable to your program, highlight the ability for Members to travel or to deploy to disaster events to be some of the first boots on the ground after a storm.

## Overcoming Objections

At times candidates will initially voice concerns about an AmeriCorps term. That’s ok. Remember to ensure strong Member retention rates, programs want an individual to make an informed and well-rationed decision. It is critical in this moment that we ask why? In addition, we want to tease out more information. Examples:

- *I understand you are concerned about X, can you tell me more about that?*
- *Serving with AmeriCorps is a big commitment with even bigger benefits, what other worries do you have?*

To overcome objections, first reassure the potential applicant that their worry is valid. Many candidates are worried about paying bills on the modest living allowance. Provide reassurance by discussing the affordability of your area or areas around where the prospective Member will serve, the network of current Members that act as a great support network for finding affordable housing and fun activities around town. Further, the collective value of the living allowance, healthcare, and education award, etc. Participation in service becomes much more appealing to many when all benefits are outlined together. Ensure that there are no additional outstanding questions – *What other concerns do you have about living off of our living allowance?* Repeat until no more outstanding questions.



Consider outlining the total financial value of the benefits and compare to local wages. Oftentimes your AmeriCorps opportunity will exceed average compensation for entry level positions in the area.



## Making the Close

A compelling pitch is great, but it is not the last step. In closing every interaction, provide targeted, tailored, and timely next steps. Candidates need structure and action steps. In addition, they value and appreciate options. While you want to provide choice, you don't want to overwhelm them. Three is oftentimes the sweet spot. Example:

*Thank you so much for your time today. I enjoyed learning more about you and your interest in serving with our AmeriCorps program today. I invite you to:*

- *Volunteer with the program.*
- *Learn more about AmeriCorps openings with our organization by visiting the following website...*
- *This is what the application process will look like and this is when you would potentially begin serving with our program.*

Follow through and leverage your team – it goes without saying if you tell a lead you'll connect them with someone, it needs to happen in a timely manner. Moreover, if you don't know an answer to his or her questions, this a great opportunity to connect the individual to someone who can answer them.

## D. Sourcing Passive Candidates

Passive candidates are individuals who may be motivated and qualified for a service position but may not be aware of the opportunities available to them or actively seeking-out service positions. Incorporating a passive candidate sourcing strategy into your program's recruitment strategy may be a cost-effective way to broaden your program's applicant pool. Professional recruiters utilized a wide-range of increasingly complex methods to contact qualified applicants for their open positions; however, there are also simple strategies that your program could consider implementing.

## Utilizing Online Groups and Clubs

Consider using popular social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Meetup to identify groups in your area that may have members who would be interested in your service positions. In addition to posting you position within the group forum, you may also want to consider contacting Members directly using features like direct messaging.

- Facebook has a notoriously poor search function. Try using <https://lookup-id.com/facebooksearch.html> to refine your search parameters to target passive candidates. For example, you can find Facebook member profiles that live within your target area and have liked Facebook group pages such as *Peace Corps*, which may indicate they would also be open to serving in an AmeriCorps term.



Sites like <https://www.scoutzen.com/twitter-lists/search> can be used to help you locate twitter list that may attract passive candidates.



View group members' profiles to see what other groups they are active in to locate additional recruitment sources.

### Advance Search Engine Operators – “Boolean Operators”

Using Boolean Operators in conjunction with popular search engines like Google and Bing, allows you to drastically narrow down the search results to better aligned with the specific information that you are seeking. Incorporating Boolean Operators into your online searches can not only help you find groups where you could potentially source passive candidates, but can also help you determine additional sites, groups, or clubs that can be used to share your service activities.

#### Examples

- 1) If you are hoping to find email addresses for members of a math club at a local university so you could tell them about your service opportunities, you could use *quotation marks* to help the search engine produce specific results instead of search for each word in the phrase.

- Clemson Math Club = 506,000 results
  - "Clemson Math Club" = 9 results
- 2) If you find that your program has a lot of success recruiting high-quality applicants from Craigslist, you can use the *related* command to help you identify similar sites that you could also consider positing you positions to.
    - related:craigslist.org

When using Boolean Operators to refine your search, it is important to pay close attention to spacing, capitalization and punctuation to ensure that the commands that you enter will function in the correct manner. Below, there is a list of some of the most command operators utilized by recruiters.

Play around with different search commands that could potentially help your program identify passive candidates. Once you have identified a search command that works well for your purpose, save the search so that you can use it during your next recruitment cycle.

Example search strings include:

#### Locating Associations or Clubs:

*"Social Work" and "South Carolina" (organization OR association OR club OR Group)*

*Outdoor and "South Carolina" (organization OR association OR club OR Group OR Foundation OR project)*

#### Classes or alumni at local universities:

*"class of 2017" AND "social work" (Clemson OR "South Carolina")*

### Common Boolean Search Commands

Command	Function/Notes	Example
Quotation Marks “ ”	Eliminates false positives by asking the search engine to identify exact phrases	"Clemson Math Club" = 9 results Clemson Math Club = 506,000 results
Parenthesis ( )	Separates two or more phrases and prevents Google from stemming the word.	"Class of 2018" (Clemson OR Auburn)
AND	All keywords must be found	students AND volunteers AND South Carolina

OR	Broadens search for any of the words it connects are acceptable	(Greenwood High School) AND (alumni OR graduate OR senior)
NOT	Eliminate all terms that follow it from your search results	“Volunteer Coordinator” NOT event OR opportunity
Wildcard *	Search wildcard or unknown words.	Volunteer *
site:	Put "site:" without a space in front of a site or domain.	site:sc.edu Math and Directory
related:	Put "related:" without a space in front of a web address you already know.	related:craigslist.org

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## SECTION 5

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### ENGAGING MEMBERS, STAFF, ALUMNI, VOLUNTEERS, AND CANDIDATES IN RECRUITMENT

AmeriCorps programs may not have unlimited financial resources, but they are rich in the world’s most valuable resource; *people*. Effectively engaging AmeriCorps Members, current applicants, program alumni, and volunteers in the recruitment process has been proven to be one of the most powerful ways that a program can enhance its recruitment results. Below are a number of suggestions for how programs may want to consider engaging these groups in the recruitment process.

- Establish a regular “Bring a Friend to Service Day” that asks Members to bring a friend to volunteer with them and to learn about the program and available service opportunities. Even if their friend doesn’t choose to apply to serve with the program, they will still have the knowledge to share the opportunity with their friends, family, and acquaintances.

#### Ask Your Members for Help

- Establish a “Fill Your Position” campaign at the beginning of each service year that challenges your Members to identify a candidate that can pick up the torch for them at the completion of their term of service. Use regular check-ins with Members to ask them about the progress they have made.
- Regularly share the program’s recruitment goals, strategies, progress, and challenges with your Members. Set limitations but allow time for your Members to brainstorm and implement Member-lead recruitment initiatives.

#### Incentivize Member/Alumni Support

It is allowable for programs to provide recognition gifts to Members as long as all Members are treated equally, and the gift is of “nominal” value.

- Set a corps-wide recruitment goals (i.e. Member-referred applications received, or individuals enrolled during the next quarter.). If the corps reaches the goal, recognize their achievement by throwing a pizza party, implementing a professional development of their choosing, etc.
- Consider using funds outside of the AmeriCorps grant budget to engage program alumni. Offer prizes such as gift cards, etc.



Ensure that the program establishes clear systems for tracking referrals as part of its application process.

**Online Reviews**

Many potential applicants will review an organization’s online “employee” reviews on sites such as Glassdoor or Indeed to help them decide whether or not to apply or serve with a program.

- Make a personalized request to high-performing Members and alumni asking them to complete a positive review of the program.
- Request organization staff and volunteers to also submit reviews.

**Boost Social Media Posts**

Requesting that AmeriCorps Members boost (i.e. like, share, etc.) your program’s social media recruitment posting is a free and very effective way to increase the engagement that your program will receive from its social media marketing efforts.

To ensure that your AmeriCorps Members and volunteers assist in boosting your program’s recruitment posting, it is important that you make as much effort as possible to eliminate any barriers to their participation. Some ways to eliminate barriers is to send the posting links and sample

language to them via email or to ask them to use their phones to share the post on-the-spot during a team meetings or service events.

**Use Current Members to Assist with Incoming Members Engagement**

- See Sect. 2.K for more information

**Ask AmeriCorps Members to Make Introductions to Key Recruitment Partners**

- College Professors, Faculty, and Staff
- Student Clubs and Organizations
- Church Groups

**24-Hour Recruitment**

Ensure the program assists its Members in developing their “Elevators Speeches” that can be directed towards potential candidates. (i.e. Ensure the Members are fully prepared to speak about the benefits of the program and the application process.)

- Make Members aware of potential opportunities to disseminate information about the positions that are available. (i.e. sports leagues, clubs, church events, etc.)
- Provide all Members and staff with recruitment business cards that they can have readily available to hand out to potential applicants.

**FREE RESOURCE ALERT!**

**4over4**

This site will provide 200 professional-quality business cards free of charge if you will share the opportunity on your social media account.

**Attendance at Recruitment Events**

Individuals put a lot of weight into the recommendations they receive from their peers.

Ask Members and/or alumni to attend recruitment events with program staff (especially if they are associated with the school/organization hosting the recruitment event.).

### **Work Towards Retaining Members for Multiple Terms of Service**

- See Sect. 7 for more information.

### **Use the Interview Pool to Source Applicants**

A highly effective strategy to source candidates that is oftentimes overlooked by AmeriCorps programs is establishing a standardized system for requesting high-quality interviewees to recommend additional friends, family, and acquaintances to apply to the program.

Candidates who are working their way through the interview process are more likely to make an effort to conduct outreach for the program and offer referrals. Consider sending brief “thank-you” emails after good interviews that also ask if the candidate could provide contact information for friends, family, or colleagues that they think may also be interested in joining the program.

### **Structure Systems for Engaging Your Organization’s Volunteers**

Nonprofits have the unique advantage of having the ability to utilize their volunteer force as a way to recruit quality applicants for less money than other forms of advertising. Oftentimes, AmeriCorps programs have not developed structured processes to ensure that organizational volunteers become engaged in the recruitment process.

- Provide all volunteers with program recruitment material and ask them to refer family and friends to the program.

- Identify if a volunteer group plans on providing a presentation of their volunteer experience to their class, church, or co-workers. Specifically ask them to incorporate the program’s AmeriCorps Member recruitment goals into their presentation.
- Provide volunteers with an opportunity to express their interest in serving with the program, and follow-up with them after their volunteer experience. This can be accomplished by ensuring all volunteers are provided with a contact info card that asks whether or not they would like to learn more about AmeriCorps positions that will be available.



Pre-develop PowerPoint slides that can be electronically distributed that outlines the AmeriCorps program, service opportunities, and how to apply.

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# SECTION 6

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## Best Practices for Engaging Additional Applicant Pools

### A. Recruiting for Diversity

The term diversity can be defined differently for each organization and can even be different for each department within an organization. Simply put, diversity can be described as everything an organization or program *is not* and should reflect a wide-range of characteristics that can exist. Diversity encompasses all differences that individuals have regarding their backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, ideas, lifestyle, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, family situation, nationality, ability/disability, communication style, geographic location, marital status, military service, primary language, thoughts, personality and age, but is certainly not inclusive of just these factors.

Recent research has demonstrated that companies and groups with a greater level of diversity can produce greater profits, make better decisions, and develop more innovative ideas. Retention rates are also generally higher for managers that embrace diversity. Moreover, AmeriCorps programs that have a higher level of diversity have a greater ability to place members to serve beneficiaries of similar cultural or socioeconomic status, which a growing level of research suggests can produce both cognitive and social benefits.

Clearly there are advantages to AmeriCorps program incorporating diversity recruitment goals and strategies into their recruitment plan. Recruiting towards diversity and inclusion goals does not mean that your program should adjust its standards for Members or its applicant evaluation processes in order to meet those goals. Setting diversity recruitment goals simply means that the program is taking active steps towards analyzing its internal processes to ensure; that bias is

prevented, the program's inclusive environment is promoted, and that the program's recruitment outreach plan supports its diversity recruitment goals. Below are strategies and resources that can help your program achieve its goals.

References:

\*Harvard Business Review - <https://hbr.org/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are-smarter>

\*AIRS Diversity Recruiting - [www.airsdirectory.com](http://www.airsdirectory.com)

\*Taylor and Francis - <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00940771.2014.11461907>

### Diversity Brand Evaluation

Ensure that your organization's website clearly communicates the program's commitment to diversity. To help evaluate how well your program is communicating its support of an inclusive environment to prospective applicants, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does your organization/program's vision statement include information regarding the organization's commitment to promoting an inclusive environment?
- When reviewing the pictures featured on the website, what diversity-related characteristics are well-represented? What additional characteristics could be further featured to help the recruit individuals who could add additional perspectives?
- Does the website utilize inclusive language?
- Would applicants be able to easily find information about the organization's diversity inclusion initiatives?

### Know the Communities that Your Program Serves

Several free tools can help your program learn more about the communities that it



serves. Further understanding of this information can then allow your program to define its diversity recruitment goals so that your membership better reflects the communities that are being served.

- Sites like city-data.com, census.gov, and zipwho.com can provide your program with data on topics such as local population by race, place of birth, medium age, education, etc.
- City-data.com will oftentimes also includes demographic data related to the largest public and private high, middle, and elementary schools in a specific area.

### AmeriCorps Member Elevator Speeches

Your current Members are oftentimes your program’s most important recruitment resource and speak about their AmeriCorps experience on a daily basis; therefore, consider including diversity as part of your Members’ elevator speech training.

- Consider what would be most important for potential candidates to know about your organization during their first conversation with a program representative.
- Practice the elevator speech that you develop and get feedback from your

AmeriCorps Members and members of the community.

### Diversity-Minded Outreach

Send quick emails to local parent-teacher organizations, community groups, churches, mosques, temples, organizations that represent a wide array of individuals and provide them with information about your AmeriCorps Member service opportunities. Most groups are happy to share the information with their community.

Identify cultural events and fairs that will be happening in your community and consider purchasing a sponsor booth.

Leverage diverse organizations to help disseminate your program’s service opportunities:

- Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
- League of United Latin American Citizens
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- National Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Services Organizations
- National Urban League
- National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations
- Array of sororities and fraternities such as:

LATINO	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ASIAN AMERICAN	LGBT
Alpha Phi Sigma	Alpha Kappa Alpha	Alpha Kappa Delta	Alpha Lambda Tau
Alpha Psi Lambda	Alpha Lambda Omega	Phi	Delta Lambda Phi
Alpha Rho Lambda	Alpha Phi Alpha	Alpha Phi Gamma	Delta Phi Upsilon
Beta Kappa Psi	Delta Phi Upsilon	Alpha Sigma Rho	Lambda Delta
Chi Upsilon Sigma	Delta Sigma Theta	Chi Delta Theta	Omega
Delta Sigma Chi	Eta Phi Beta	Kappa Zeta Phi	
Gamma Alpha Omega	Gamma Phi Delta	Lambda Phi Epsilon	
Gamma Phi Omega	Lota Phi Lambda	Mu Sigma Upsilon	
Gamma Zeta Alpha	Kappa Alpha Psi	Nu Alpha Phi	
Kappa Delta Chi	Mu Sigma Upsilon	Pi Alpha Phi	
Lambda Alpha Upsilon	Omega Psi Phi	Pi Delta Psi	
Lambda Pi Chi	Phi Beta Sigma	Psi Chi Omega	
Lambda Pi Upsilon	Phi Delta Psi	Sigma Beta Rho	
Lambda Sigma Upsilon	Phi Omicron Psi	Sigma Omicron Pi	
Lambda Theta Alpha	Pi Psi	Sigma Psi Zet	
Lambda Theta Nu	Sigma Gamma Rho	Zeta Chi Epsilon	
Lambda Theta Phi	Zeta Phi Beta		
Lambda Upsilon			
Lambda			
Omega Phi Beta			
Phi Iota Alpha			
Sigma Iota Alpha			
Sigma Lambda Upsilon			

## Position Postings

Consider utilizing diversity and inclusion hashtags when posting your position posting to social

media sites. Sites like ritetag.com can help you identify effective hashtags to use. Below are a few specific examples:

ETHNICITY	DIFFERENTLY-ABLED	VETERANS	GENDER
#deltasigmatheta	#Dyslexia	#WoundedWarriorProject	#HeForShe
#blackgrieks	#DyslexiaAwareness	#AAfWH	#ChangeTheRatio
#BlackGreekSuccess	#Disabled	#honoringVets	#AskForMore
#alphakappaalpha	#DifferentlyAble	#usaf	#BringtOut (Women in STEM)
#DivineNice (Historically black Greek Organizations)	#AutismSpeaks	#RallyPoint	#Leanin (Hashtag to empower women to talk about professional goals)
#WhatLatinoMeansToMe	#AutismChampions	#goarmy	#BanBossy (Encourages women to lead)
#AAWiSTEM		#navyseals	
#BLACKandSTEM		#infantry	
#HBCU			

Consider promoting your position to a diverse of social sites. Some options that your program may want to consider include:

- [www.migente.com](http://www.migente.com) – Largest online Latin American community
- [www.blackplanet.com](http://www.blackplanet.com) - Largest free African-American online community
- [www.asianave.com](http://www.asianave.com) – A social networking site targeted towards Asian Americans

Share your position posting on a wide variety of group and event pages that are present on social media.

According to ZipRecruiter, 70% of job listings contain “masculine themes,” and women are less likely to apply to these positions. The opposite could also be true if postings overly stress “feminine themes.” <http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/> offers a free tool that allows you to upload a position posting and then screens the posting for masculine and feminine-coded words. This can help your program determine if there are alternative neutral words that could be used instead. Below is a brief example:

## Neutral Language

Male Biased Phrasing	More Neutral Wording
We're looking for strong...	We're looking for exceptional...
Who thrive in a competitive atmosphere...	Who are motivated by...
Candidates who are assertive...	Candidates who are go-getters...
Female Biased Phrasing	More Neutral Wording
We are a community of concerned...	We are a team focused on...
Have a polite and pleasant style...	Are professional and courteous...
Nurture and connect with customers...	Provide great customer service...

## Bilingual Candidates

To help attract bilingual candidates, be very specific about the languages and proficiency levels that you are seeking and whether or not the candidate must be able to not only speak, but also read the language. You may want to showcase the languages your program needs in the position description. Half of the description might be written in one language and the other half written in the other language. You can write a description of the position responsibilities in English and list qualifications and how to apply using the second language. Writing a position description in multiple

languages will weed out some of the candidates who don't qualify, and the posting may appeal to and encourage bilingual candidates to apply.

Instead of using free services like Google Translate, which are oftentimes inaccurate, to translate your position postings, commit to soliciting the help of a bilingual Member, staff person, or professional translator to review your postings before they are published.



The AmeriCorps Portal advance applicant search feature can be used to identify bilingual candidates.



Outreach to local university and high school language classes could help expand your bilingual applicant pool.

- Educate and have open-conversation about unconscious bias with your interviewers. This will help them self-analyze whether or not unconscious decisions are affecting their hiring decisions.
- Develop a standardized interview process that is used to conduct all interviews.
- All decisions to *not hire* a candidate should be discussed between at least two staff members. This will further help identify whether or not unconscious decisions are being made and will help identify hiring trends.
- Research has shown that applicants with less ethnic names receive more callbacks than applicants with more ethnic sounding names. Consider developing processes to remove names from the application review process (i.e. applicant reference numbers) or using only applicant's first names to schedule and conduct interviews.
- Promote a culture within your organization where cultural stereotypes are questioned. Open discussions or required readings around this topic can be incorporated into team meetings, etc.

### **Avoid Unconscious Bias during the Interview Process**

It is natural for interviewers to unconsciously favor candidates that look, act, or have similar backgrounds to that of the interviewer. For example, the interviewer may have previously excelled in an AmeriCorps position, and since they majored in political science, they tend to favor applicants who also majored in political science.

Unconscious applicant bias can lead to a lack of diversity within corps. Below are a few strategies that your program could consider implementing to help interviewers avoid the tendency of allowing unconscious bias to affect the AmeriCorps Member interview and selection process.

### **B. Individuals with Disabilities**

By recruiting and enrolling people with disabilities, you are adding highly motivated individuals to your corps and promoting an inclusive culture. AmeriCorps Members with disabilities bring unique skills, experiences and understanding that can enhance your program's services and are oftentimes very committed to completing their term. Moreover, their knowledge of assistive technology and other innovations can help your program increase productivity. A study conducted by the Institute for Corporate Productivity revealed that 3 out of 4 employers surveyed ranked their employees with disabilities as good or very good on work quality, motivation, engagement,

integration with coworkers, dependability, and attendance.

To ensure that your program is providing everyone, including individuals with disabilities, the opportunity to serve, your program should be proactive with incorporating inclusive outreach strategies into its recruitment efforts. There are many resources available to AmeriCorps programs to help with these efforts.

- CNCS provides a variety of online courses, resources, and tools that can be accessed at:  
<https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/disability-inclusion>
- The National Service Inclusion Project is another great CNCS-sponsored resource that offers a wide-variety of disability inclusion resources.  
<http://serviceandinclusion.org/index.php?page=request>
- The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) provides free, confidential technical assistance about reasonable job accommodations and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): <https://askjan.org/a-to-z.cfm>

Some of the most effective disability inclusion initiatives within the websites listed above for your program to consider include:

- Ensure that your program's position descriptions and postings clearly state that reasonable accommodations can be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform essential functions of the position.
- Conduct specific outreach activities to engage communities or persons with disabilities and organizations that serve these communities: Examples:
  - [Centers for independent living](#)
  - [Self-advocacy organizations](#)
  - [Departments of Vocational Rehabilitation](#)
  - [United Cerebral Palsy](#)
  - [National Federation for the Blind](#)

### Ensure that your website is accessible

- Use *Alt Tags* - When you hover your mouse over an image on a website, the small words that pop up are called *alt tags*. For someone who has a visual impairment and uses a screen reader (a software program that reads text on a website aloud), the alt tags are read aloud, and are the only way a user knows what the image is.
- Make sure that videos that are featured on your website are captioned.

 TIP

Michigan State University offers additional practical guidance regarding accessible websites:  
[https://webaccess.msu.edu/Help\\_and\\_Resources/checklist.html](https://webaccess.msu.edu/Help_and_Resources/checklist.html)

Make sure your program's brand is inclusive by integrating people with disabilities in your advertising campaigns as models, actors, and spokespersons. Recent statistics tell us that 1 in 3 people know someone with a disability. By placing a person using a wheelchair or man and his service dog in your advertising materials, you are speaking very loudly to the disability community.



This doesn't cost extra money. The message you send will say, "...people of all abilities are welcome here."

#### Preparing for the Interviews:

- Ensure that your program's application and interviewing procedures comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which prohibits asking disability-related questions before a position offer is made.
- Review to ensure that your application forms, employment offices and interviewing locations are accessible to persons with a variety of disabilities.
- Be willing to make appropriate and reasonable accommodations to enable an applicant with a disability to participate in the interview. Explain to applicants ahead of time what is involved in the process. For example, if an applicant who is blind states that he or she will need help completing forms, provide that assistance.
- If the applicant has a visible disability or reveals a disability during the interview, concentrate on the individual, not the disability.
- Treat the individual with the same respect you would treat any candidate whose skills you are seeking. Likewise, hold individuals with disabilities to the same standards as all applicants.
- Do not try to imagine how you would perform the service if you had the applicant's disability. He or she has mastered alternate ways of living, working, and serving others. If the

applicant has a known disability, either because it is obvious or was revealed by the applicant, you may ask him or her to describe how he or she would perform the essential requirement of the position.

#### C. Experienced Candidates Age 55+

For many AmeriCorps programs, outreach to the growing population of experienced candidates age 55+ is an underutilized opportunity. Experienced Members can bring a lot of value and skill to your organization, and because experienced Members oftentimes do not have to rely on the AmeriCorps living allowance to cover the entirety of their living expenses, they can be the perfect fit for serving in part-time AmeriCorps positions that provide limited financial support.

When recruiting experienced candidates, it is important for your program to understand the audience:

- Experienced persons typically want to be valued for their abilities and expertise. For this reason, your outreach messaging should focus on utilizing them as a resource to help your organization achieve impact for the community, rather than an opportunity for them to stay active and busy in their older years.



Studies do also support that service can help older populations maintain their health.

- Many experienced candidates highly value ownership over their time and commitments; therefore, your program may want to consider exploring options for scheduling flexibility for part-time service terms that are geared towards experienced candidates.
- According to Seniors for Habitat, experienced candidates are drawn to opportunities where they can serve with like-minded individuals. If your program model is not already team-based, you will likely want to support and promote the opportunities where the program brings Members together for service projects, planning and preparation, trainings, and team building/reflection events.
- Because the AmeriCorps living allowance and education award may not be as effective for assisting in the recruitment of experienced Members, your program should highlight the ability for individuals who are age 55+ to transfer their education award to children or grandchildren. - “How would you like to provide your child or grandchild with the gift of a \$1,612 education award while using your experience to help a child learn to read?”

Although online marketing and advertisement is an important recruitment strategy, these methods may not be as effective for reaching experienced candidates. Consider prioritizing some of these additional strategies to better engage experienced candidates.

- Make in-person visits to senior living communities, local places of worship, retirement organizations, city/county recreation centers, or fraternal organizations such as Kiwanis and Rotary clubs, and provide them with hard copies of your program’s recruitment materials. Ask staff if there would be any opportunities for you to speak in-front of classes or meetings that they may be hosting in the future. Additionally, inquire

if there would be any opportunity to share your service opportunities through their newsletters or contact lists.

- Visit local businesses, restaurants, barbershops, etc. that surround communities with high concentrations of individuals who are age 55+. Get to know storeowners — shake hands, talk with folks, and sell the opportunity to serve with your organization and ask for their assistance with promoting it with their customers.
- Advertise your service opportunities in local newspapers and periodicals.
- Post the service opportunity on local volunteer boards such as Get Connected or VolunteerHub.
- Word of mouth is likely the most effective recruitment tool for engaging experienced candidates. Ask your Members who are 55+ to discuss the program’s service opportunities with members of their church, activity groups, and community. Providing your current members with recruitment business cards-with key details regarding your service opportunities and how to apply is a cost-effective way to help ensure that information can be easily provided to their contacts.
- Don’t wait until experienced candidates are retired to recruit them! - Consult your state’s retirement system website to identify if the agency will be sponsoring any pre-retirement workshops in your area and ask if you can be added to the agenda. - Conduct outreach to local companies and request an opportunity to discuss your service opportunities with pre-retirees at their business. Many corporations have volunteer initiatives that may allow pre-retirees to begin volunteering or serving with the program part-time.

## D. Rural Communities

Programs that administer both urban and rural sites must oftentimes develop two distinct recruitment strategies in order to be successful in both areas. Because rural service sites are typically most successful in recruiting from the local community, an even greater emphasis should be placed on active recruitment and relationship building when developing a recruitment strategy for rural service sites. Additionally, your program may want to reconsider what selling points to emphasize in its rural marketing materials, as the AmeriCorps living allowance can be more competitive in rural markets as compared to urban sites.

According to the Workforce Institute, the top three sources for minimum wage employees are those in school, retiree, and balancing multiple jobs. Additionally, 80% of the hourly workforce lives within five miles of their jobs. Your program can utilize this information to also help develop priorities for its rural recruitment strategies.

- Consider if there would be opportunity within your program model to adjust service schedules to better accommodate for parents or individuals who also have outside employment or are currently enrolled in school.
- Even if your program is not school-based, working with local school districts to advertise your open positions to parents can be very effective. Ask that schools include information in their parent-teacher newsletters, attend school meetings and events to talk about your positions, discuss your opportunities with school counselors, and place your marketing materials in career resource centers.
- Although they can be expensive, sending direct recruitment mailers to the communities that are within a five-mile radius from the Member service site can be a more financially realistic option in rural communities.

- Word of mouth can be huge for your rural recruitment efforts. It is strongly suggested that programs with rural Member placement sites emphasize the guidance covered in Sect. 5 *Engaging Members, Volunteers, and Alumni* as a primary component of their recruitment strategy. Specifically, ensure that your Members are equipped with *recruitment business cards* so that they can easily share the opportunity with acquaintances that run into at the local grocery store or pizza joint.
- Building specific champions at local branches of institutions of higher learning that are located in the community is very important. Consider incorporating some of the strategies included in Sect. 7.F, especially those related to building specific relationships with professors and staff.
- Visit local businesses and gathering places and inquire if they can help spread the word of the service opportunities that you have available. Local libraries will also oftentimes have information about community career initiatives that you can connect to your program.
- Community newspaper, newsletters and magazines still reach local markets and have loyal readership in many rural communities.
- Consider developing strategies to market directly to individuals age 55+. Reference Sect. 7.C for more information.

## E. Military Veterans

Veterans have the same needs as the rest of the civilian population and existing program models designed for civilians can serve and engage veterans easily with slight adjustments. To better engage veterans, identify specific policies and procedures that might need to be altered to successfully engage veterans without compromising integrity and safety of the program activities - (i.e. build in time for VA/doctor appointments, etc., actively recruit Veterans to



serve in staff positions, increase opportunities for Members to serve together as a team, etc.)

Over the course of the past several years, CNCS has worked closely with grantees who focus on military veteran engagement to provide valuable recruitment resources that can be accessed through the Knowledge Network. Specifically, the following link contains a list of key organizations that programs can consider collaborating with in order to market their service positions:

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/veterans-and-military-families/recruiting-veterans-national-service-programs>.

It is also important to keep in-mind that in addition to working directly with organizations that focus on veteran engagement to market your service positions, veterans also engage in online and print media just as the civilian population does, so it is important to utilize a broad-reaching strategy for advertising your positions to veterans.

Similar to candidates who are age 55+, the living allowance, healthcare, and education award won't likely be the primary attraction point for military veterans. For this reason, it is important for your program's marketing and outreach materials to focus on the lasting impact that AmeriCorps service will make both to the community being served and the personal and professional lives of the Veterans themselves. Ensure that the program clearly illustrates why it values military service experience and how a Veteran's past military service will be an asset to the program. If your program model is primarily team-based, this will be another selling point for many Veterans who continue to seek camaraderie through AmeriCorps service.

Be very specific in the goals, duties and outcomes for the member service position. Make sure the objectives are clearly understood. Take the time to set up your position ads and descriptions to relate to the language that is used in the military. It will be easier for veterans to understand how their skills will relate to your service opportunity when you break it down for them in words they understand. This will also help them in their

transition to civilian life. [Military.com](http://Military.com) and [mynextmove.org](http://mynextmove.org) offer skills translators that to help you find civilian translations for military skills and positions. It is always best if you can have a group of Veterans review your program's marketing material and incorporate their feedback before distributing the material.



## F. College Students

One of the most effective strategies for recruiting AmeriCorps Members is to build strong relationships with targeted colleges and universities. The information below is intended to serve as a resource that AmeriCorps Program staff can use to help them build a successful recruitment strategy at these institutions.

### Identifying Target Universities

Identify at least three institutions of higher learning to build an ongoing recruitment presence. Below is a list of criteria that should be considered when determining which institutions to target.

- Proximity to Member service sites
- Majors/Degrees offered (*Institutions that offer degrees in social services, public service, nonprofit management, or produce a high number of liberal arts graduates typically are good campuses to target, but other majors may also be applicable to your program design.*)
- Presence of service/volunteer-oriented clubs, groups, sororities, or fraternities

- Whether or not the institution has produced individuals that have served with your AmeriCorps program in the past.
- When developing a target list, it is also highly recommended that programs also reference the CNCS Matching Institutions list that is available at the link included below. There are currently over 200 institutions that either match the AmeriCorps Education Award or offer additional incentives to AmeriCorps Alumni who enroll in their academic programs. Many of these institutions offer graduate, professional, or continuing education credentials that their current students may be interested in pursuing; therefore, targeting these institutions may add additional incentives that your program can promote when recruiting their current students:  
<https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps/segal-ameri-corps-education-award/matching-institutions>

### **Best Practices for Building Long-Term Relationships/Presence**

Before attempting to build partnerships, always think about what value-add you/your program may be able to offer to the individual or group that you plan on approaching.

Use the campus career center as the base for your relationship with a college or university. Campus career centers can be helpful in the following capacities:

- Resource to help navigate campus environment.
- Primary connection to career fairs and job boards.
- Oftentimes serves as the point of distribution for recruitment material.
- Have the ability to connect you to staff, faculty, and students.

Consistent presence on campus is key. Attend as many events and networking opportunities as possible. Introduce yourself to a wide-array of individuals associated with the university or student body and ask them to connect you with others who may be willing to help support your recruitment efforts or may be interested in serving with the program.

Make personal connections with as many faculty, staff, graduate assistants, and club leaders as possible. Emails do not always work; pick up the phone or visit faculty during open office hours. Create champions to help you market the AmeriCorps opportunity by inviting contacts out for a cup of coffee or lunch.

Ask your AmeriCorps Members to introduce you to past college professors, faculty, staff, or student groups.

Sponsor campus service events. (i.e. Offer to purchase hot dogs for service event participants in exchange for having five minutes to speak to the group.)

Increase your “value” to the campus career center and meet potential AmeriCorps applicants by volunteering to facilitate mock interviews and resume-building workshops, etc.

Advertise AmeriCorps positions in campus newspapers and campus career guides (Yes, students still read campus papers).

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# SECTION 7

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## STRATEGIES FOR RETAINING MEMBERS FOR MULTIPLE TERMS

Typically, the AmeriCorps programs that excels at maintaining a high Member Enrollment rate are the programs that have also developed strategies to enable them to retain their Members for multiple terms of service. Below is a list of several best practices that your program may want to consider in order to further encourage your Members to serve multiple terms with your program.

### Prioritize the Member Experience

Actively facilitating a positive Member experience is not only important for retaining Members for multiple terms of service, but it is also important for maintaining a high retention rate within each program year. An entire manual could be written about facilitating a positive Member experience, but below is a list of some of the most common principles to consider.

- Provide high quality training and development activities throughout the service year.
- Ensure that your program’s supervisors are adequately qualified, trained, and supported.
- Identify ways to remind AmeriCorps Members that their service matters.
- Give your Members a voice in deciding service activities and projects—promote program “ownership.”
- Manage towards each Members’ strengths. Identify each Member’s soft and hard skills and involve them in projects that allow them to use their skill sets.
- Facilitate opportunities for Members to reflect about their term of service and share their experience with others.
- Offer variety within the Members’ service experience.

- Find opportunities to regularly celebrate accomplishments and milestones, both personal and program-related.
- Offer ongoing support and be proactive in addressing Members’ needs and problems.
- Occasionally send handwritten “thank-you” notes on personal stationery to your members to thank them for something specific that they have done to make the program or community better.
- Consider creating reward coupons to give to Members when they have achieved something outstanding (i.e. free dress-down day, additional vacation day, etc.)

### Additional Financial Incentives for Returning Members

AmeriCorps programs may offer additional compensation to returning AmeriCorps Members if their position descriptions outline that they will be asked to perform additional responsibilities because of their experience. Some examples include, mentoring or providing training to new Members, facilitating additional service activities, etc. Consider budgeting for returning Members to receive a modest increase to their living allowance or offering returning Members an additional housing stipend.

### Increase Leadership Experience

Many AmeriCorps programs incorporate Member Leader positions into their program model that are oftentimes filled by a returning Members. These positions do not perform a supervisory function but do oftentimes allow for the Member Leaders to implement new projects, mentor others, lead trainings, promote positive team morale, and take on additional responsibility. Incorporating Member Leader positions into your program design can encourage Members to serve multiple

terms by allowing an opportunity for them to increase their marketable leadership and management skills.



Providing additional or alternative service gear to Members who have stepped-up to be leaders also helps motivate others to strive towards obtaining a leadership position.

### **Engaging Retirees in Service**

Unlike many younger Members who may be interested in AmeriCorps, in part, to help jump-start their career, retirees are not typically looking for a next-step opportunity and may be more willing to enroll in additional terms of service.

### **Professional Certifications and Trainings**

If an AmeriCorps program will require returning Members to take on additional responsibilities, the program can provide additional trainings or professional certifications to those Members. Consider offering returning Members opportunities to gain valuable and marketable professional certifications that can help advance their career as part of participating in an additional term of service with the program.

### **Use Exit Data to Enhance Your Program**

Many AmeriCorps programs fail to use AmeriCorps Member exits as a learning opportunity. In addition to completing an end-of-term

performance evaluation, make sure that your program has a formal process for soliciting feedback from exiting members regarding what aspects of the program could be improved, and what specific factors lead to their resignation. Take full advantage of the information that is collected to improve the member experience at your program. This should help improve your program's retention rate and increase the number of members that enroll for multiple terms.

### **Develop and Hone Staff Management Skills**

Oftentimes, individuals are promoted to program management positions because of their prior work ethic and quality, but are never taught how to be effective managers. As a manager, individuals can no longer work their way to success; they must instead learn key skills such as; delegation, time management, conflict resolution, communication strategies, and how to promote a healthy team dynamic in order to achieve success for their team. There are many free and low-cost continuing education resources outside of the National Service Knowledge Network that your organization can utilize to help support your program's managers and staff.

## **RESOURCE ALERT!**

### **Online Courses**

[Udemy](#)  
[LinkedIn Learning](#)  
[iTunes U](#)  
[Ted Talks](#)  
[SkillPath – Star12 Membership](#)

### **Recommended Management Readings**

On Managing People – Harvard Business Review  
Bankable Leadership – Tasha Eurich  
The Big Leap – Gay Hendrick

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# SECTION 8

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## CONCLUSION AND FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We hope that this guide has provided you with some additional resources and strategies that will help support your program's recruitment efforts. Although AmeriCorps Member recruitment can sometimes feel like a daunting and exhausting task, please remember that your efforts will undoubtedly result in your program engaging talented individuals who will serve to make the communities that you serve a better place.

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# ADDENDUM

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- **RECRUITMENT BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS (SEE ATTACHED)**
- **MEMBER RECRUITMENT MAPPING TEMPLATE (SEE ATTACHED)**
- **SAMPLE AMERICORPS INTERVIEW TEMPLATE (SEE ATTACHED)**

## AMERICORPS MEMBER RECRUITMENT BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

When establishing a recruitment budget for your program, the most essential element that must first be considered is your program’s staff capacity. Your program can have a recruitment budget of \$100,000, but if your staff does not have an enough time to adequately manage, analyze, and optimize the resources, you will likely not be able to meet your enrollment goals. Since we know that relationship building and establishing a word-of-mouth network is still the most effective recruitment strategy, investing in adequate staffing for your program is the most valuable thing your program can do to meet your Member enrollment goals and best serve the community. Additionally, there are many free and extremely low-cost tactics outlined in the ASC AmeriCorps Member Recruitment Resource Guide that can substantially increase the effectiveness of your recruitment efforts if program staff have adequate time to devote to implement those tactics.

Many factors will need to be considered when developing a recruitment budget that will adequately address the needs of your unique program design, but below you will find some generalized recommendations on budget items to consider based on your program’s available resources. Keep in mind that updating your recruitment strategy is also a great way to spend unutilized funds towards the end of each program year.

<b>STARTUP</b> Estimate Budget Range \$800+	
Item/Strategy	Budget Notes
Quality Print Materials	The templates included in the ASC Recruitment Online Marketing Starter Pack can be used for free. -Est. \$150 - \$400 for printing high-quality items like flyers, rack cards, recruitment business cards, etc.
Supplies for Job Fairs and Other Events	Retractable Banner, Table Runner, Candy/Swag. -Est. \$600-\$800.

<b>FIRST TIER ANNUAL EXPENSES</b> Estimated Budget Range: \$1,500 - \$5,000+	
Mileage for Travel to Network with Recruitment Partners, Attend Recruitment Events, etc.	Ensure that your staff has an adequate budget to make in-person visits that will be needed in order to build a network of recruitment champions/partners. -Est. \$0.58/mile.
Partnership Development Incentives	Incentivize interest by offering to take potential recruitment partners out for a cup of coffee etc. This cost should likely be included outside of the AmeriCorps program budget (non-CNCS funds). -Est. \$10/meeting.



Job Board Postings	-Each job board is unique, but a general rule-of-thumb would be to budget between \$3-\$5 per job board per day.
Corps-Wide Member Recruitment Support Incentives	Example: Corps-wide pizza party. -Est. \$4-\$5 per person.
Engaged Audience Events	Snacks, swag, refreshments, gear, etc. -Est. \$50-\$250 per event.
Registrations for Job Fairs	-Est. \$250/event.
Advertising in College-Based Periodicals	-Est. \$50-\$100 per print.

**SECOND TIER ANNUAL EXPENSES**  
Estimated Budget Range: \$1,500-\$6,000+

Alumni and Staff Recruitment Support Incentives	-Est. \$250 per recruitment period.
Social Media Advertising	-Est. \$500 per platform per month.
Professional Certifications	-Cost can vary greatly based on the certification type.
Increase Member Living Allowance for Returning Members that will Have Additional Responsibilities.	-Est. \$150-\$300 per Member per month.
Radio	-Est. \$1,500-\$3,500
Automated Texting System	-Est. \$0.04 per text per phone number.
GeoFencing Social Media Ads During Graduation Events	-Est. \$100-\$300
Website Optimization Consultant	-Est. \$1,500-\$3,000 per month
Applicant Tracking System	-Est. \$0 - \$3,000
Video Production and Editing	-Est. \$1,500-\$2,000
Professional Photo Shoot	-Est. \$1,000-\$1,500
Snapchat Ads	-Est. \$4,000 for Development and Distribution

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RURAL PROGRAMS**  
Estimated Budget Range: \$500+

Direct Mailers	-Est. \$0.75 per household if applicable flyers have already been printed.
Advertising in Local Periodicals	-Est. \$50-\$100 per print edition.

## AMERICORPS MEMBER RECRUITMENT MAPPING TEMPLATE

<b>CURRENT RECRUITMENT GOALS</b>			
Consideration	Response	Notes / Action Items	
Number of new Member positions to fill:			
Target # of current Members to retain for an additional term of service:			
<b>ANALYZING PAST PERFORMANCE</b>			
Consideration	Response	Notes / Action Items	Assigned To
Number of applications received during last recruitment period:			
Member Enrollment Rate:			
Member Retention Rate:			
Sourcing Strategies that produced the highest number of applications:			
Sourcing Strategies that produced the highest percentage of Member enrollments:			
Sourcing Strategies the produced the highest quality Members:			
Key challenges and strategies to address these challenges:			

<b>BUDGET</b>			
<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Notes / Action items</b>	<b>Assigned To</b>
What is the program's total recruitment budget for the recruitment period or program year?			
What are key recruitment line-items listed in the budget, and what is the current amount allocated to each item?			
What is the program's current budget-to-actual spending on recruitment line-items?			
Are any budget revisions needed in order to meet the program's recruitment goals?			
Should the program revise any components of its recruitment budget requests as part of the next year's grant application or internal budgeting?			
<b>TARGET AUDIENCES AND RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT</b>			
<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Notes / Action items</b>	<b>Assigned To</b>
Who are the key audience groups that the program intends to target in its recruitment and marketing activities?			
How will the program prioritize between local, regional, and national recruitment efforts?			
What is the program's diversity target goals?			
What forms of traditional recruitment marketing could be most effective for marketing to the target audiences?			
What social media/online platforms are most used by the target audiences?			
Key messaging to purvey to target audiences:			
Campaign ideas for marketing the positions:			
Strategies for engaging staff, Members, alumni, volunteers, candidates in recruitment:			

List the key relationships to form or to continue to manage that will assist the program to engage its target audiences:

Partnership	Specific Champion(s)	What Does a Win-Win Look Like?	Staff Person Managing the Relationship	Current Status of The Relationship	Next Steps
<i>Ex. Local Colleges</i>	<i>- USC Department of Social Work (Dean Dr. Jane Doe)</i>	<i>Providing internship hours to the students in the department.</i>	<i>Rachel Bruns</i>	<i>- Strong – Professor is a strong supporter and hands-out recruitment material during office hours.</i>	<i>- Send hand-written thank-you note. - Drop-off additional recruitment material.</i>
<i>Ex. Retirement Community</i>	<i>- Director of Seven Oaks Senior Activities (Mr. Peter Parker)</i>	<i>Increasing social interactions for senior citizens.</i>	<i>Emily Steinburg</i>	<i>- No Current Relationship</i>	<i>-Invite to the local coffee shop for cup of coffee and to learn about the program. -Request an opportunity to speak at next social gathering.</i>

<b>POSITION POSTINGS</b>			
<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Notes / Action items</b>	<b>Assigned To</b>
Is the title compelling, fun, and informative?			
Does the Program Overview paint a descriptive and enticing picture of the program?			
Is the Member Position Description informative? Does the section include key elements that might be attractive to the program's target audiences?			
Are the benefits (both tangible and intangible) listed clearly and concisely?			
Does the position description clearly define the essential skills and/or experience that is necessary for an individual to successfully fulfill the functions of the position?			
(If Applicable) Is it clearly stated that candidates will be trained to fulfill specific duties and no prior experience is necessary?			
Does the posting list specific college majors or career tracks that the position may appeal to?			
Is the posting written in a conversational way using first or second person?			
Does the posting use gender-neutral wording?			
Has the program developed multiple positions posting in order to target a variety of key audiences?			
Are sentences concise?			
Is the posting between 300 and 700 words in length?			
Has the posting been reviewed by someone else or by using the chat feature of the Service Year Exchange?			

<b>IMPLEMENTATION PLAN</b>			
<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Notes / Action Items</b>	<b>Assigned To</b>
Member start date:			
Application deadline:			
Date range to conduct interviews:			
Date to secure incoming Member class:			
Strategies/timeline for continuing to engage candidates selected to join the program:			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline / Due Date/When to Update</b>	<b>Notes/Action Items</b>	<b>Assigned To</b>
Create/Update position posting(s):			
Create/Update print marketing material:			
Create/Update digital marketing material:			
Create/Update interview strategy/questions:			
Post open positions:			
Communicate with external partners/key relationships:			
Implement _____ Sourcing Strategy			
Implement _____ Sourcing Strategy			
Implement _____ Sourcing Strategy			
Implement _____ Sourcing Strategy			
Implement _____ Sourcing Strategy			
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Implement _____ Sourcing Strategy			
Implement _____ Sourcing Strategy			
Implement _____ Sourcing Strategy			

## **AMERICORPS MEMBER INTERVIEW TEMPLATE**

### **CONFIRM**

Candidate Name:

Position of Interest:

Other positions of interest:

Location(s) of Interest:

Start Date:

Driver's License: Y / N

**DISCUSS AMERICORPS BASICS** (Living allowance, hours requirement, hours per week, etc.)

### **COACHABLE / ACCOUNTABLE**

Tell me about a time that you received feedback from a supervisor, coach, or teacher about how to improve your performance.

What changes did you make based upon the feedback?

- *Strong: Demonstrates willingness to learn, receptive of constructive criticism, and adjusts actions.*
- *Moderate: Adjusts actions, but demonstrates a level of contempt.*
- **Possible Red flags:** *Did not adequately adjust behavior - Points out how former supervisor was wrong.*

### **PROBLEM SOLVING / INITIATIVE / LEADERSHIP**

Tell me about a time when you were a member of a team that had to solve a problem. What approach did the team take, and how was it resolved?

-OR-

Describe a recent problem that you handled and the specific steps you took after you identified the cause. What was the outcome?

- *Strong: Demonstrates ability to identify problems and takes a leadership role in addressing the concern.*
- *Moderate: Demonstrates ability to identify problems and to take initiative to address the challenge, but overly emphasizes "we" instead of "I" in their response.*
- **Possible Red Flags:** *Does not demonstrate initiative. Instead just illustrates the ability to following directions.*

### **RESILIENCE / ABILITY TO NAVIGATE ADVERSITY / ADAPTIVE**

Tell me about a time when you were able to maintain your focus when encountering a crisis? How did you handle it?

-OR-

Tell me about a time when your "tough skin" helped you handle rejection and you persevered until the desired outcome was resolved.

- *Strong: Demonstrates that they have been exposed to challenging situations and have utilized the experience as an opportunity for growth.*
- *Moderate: Demonstrates that they have been exposed to challenging situations, but may have difficulty with navigating these types of situations.*
- **Possible Red Flags:** *Did not demonstrate that they have been exposed to difficult situations. - May respond poorly when faced with challenges or rejection.*



### **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

Tell me about some of the things that you enjoyed most and least about previous jobs that you have held.

- *Strong: Excels in a fast-paced and challenging environment.*
- *Moderate: Limited job experience, but potential to succeed with the AmeriCorps program.*
- **Possible Red Flags:** *Overly negative regarding past employer. - Did not excel in a fast-paced or challenging environment.*

### **WILLINGNESS TO STEP OUTSIDE OF COMFORT ZONE**

Tell me about a difficult experience in which you had to tell someone “no.”

- *Strong: Demonstrates that they have been exposed to challenging situations and are comfortable making hard decisions while also maintaining positive relationships.*
- *Moderate: May have challenges with being exposed to uncomfortable situations.*
- **Possible Red Flags:** *May have had to make difficult decisions, but was not sensitive to maintaining positive relationships when making those decisions. Did not demonstrate that they have been exposed to difficult situations.*

### **TEAMWORK / NOT A PROBLEM STARTER**

Provide an example of when team requirements came into conflict with your individual goals and objectives. How did you handle it and what was the outcome?

- OR -

Provide an example of when you were too direct and straightforward with a coworker, supervisor, coach, or peer. What was the effect or impact on your relationship?

- *Strong: Demonstrates ability to adapt to meet the greater goals of the team and maintain positive relationships.*
- *Moderate: Demonstrates ability to adapt to meet the greater goals of the team, but may have struggled to adequately manage relationships.*
- **Possible Red Flags:** *There are concerns that the applicant has poorly managed relationships in the past and may have not adequately learned from their mistakes.*

### **ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATIONS REGARDING CANDIDATE'S APPLICATION/RESUME**

#### **WRAP-UP**

- Provide candidate with information regarding next steps.
- Ask if the candidate has any questions for you.
- If he or she was a high-quality applicant, please ask them to refer their friends and family to the program and inform them of the current referral incentive that the program is offering.
- Thank them for their time.

**STAFF MEMBERS NOTES**

**Were any significant red flags or concerns identified during the interview?**

<p><b>YES / NO</b> <i>If yes, please briefly describe below.</i></p>
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**DECISION:**

- Hire for position of interest**
- Recommend for alternative position (list recommended position)**
- Notify applicant that a decision will be made within one week**
- Reject**